

# NAWAPA XXI-Plus Is Not Optional, as Starvation Stalks Mexico, Americas

*EIR Ibero-American specialist Cynthia Rush was interviewed on The LaRouche Show, a weekly Internet radio program (<http://www.larouchepub.com/radio/index.html>), by host Marcia Merry Baker on June 15. What follows is an edited transcript of their discussion.*

**Baker:** Cynthia has an overview of developments in Mexico, and Central and South America, regarding food and water, but also the related political developments.

What we have confronting us is a growing horror of malnutrition, hunger, and death toll in the Americas. At the same time, we appreciate that some of the most beautiful agroclimatic potentials are here—in South America, in the Caribbean, and here in North America. And we have a history of many projects; but right now, we have an emergency situation, because there have been deliberate policies to deplete and ruin land, water, and food-producing regions, and this is for reasons of intent emanating out of the financial, commodity, and power networks that are best called the Empire, the British Empire, the Anglo-Dutch Empire.

There are names of the famous commodity companies, everything from Royal Dutch Shell to Unilever involved, names of operatives—you know some of them, like George Soros, but I also include the philanthro-fascist Bill Gates. Many names like this.

It's this network that's operating on behalf of the royalist imperial interests to literally force depopulation in the world.

This kind of holdover from continuities of empires in the past, whether it's the Roman Empire or the Venetians who ruled the Mediterranean, and decided who would eat and who wouldn't eat during the 1300s—this kind of thing is what we're facing here. And we'll get

into that in specific with reports by Cynthia on different aspects of this picture.

Cynthia, do you want to begin by giving us the dimensions of, when it comes to the means of existence of food, the crisis situation in Central America, parts of South America, the Caribbean?

## Mexico: Severe Drought

**Rush:** Well, what I would like to do first is give kind of an overview, starting with Mexico, because, of course, it's not only on our border, but the area of that nation that is most affected by drought—northern and north-central Mexico—are part of what we call the Great American Desert, which, of course, includes the areas most affected by the drought in the southwestern United States and western Canada. So, there's a real premium, as you said, on building the kind of great infrastructure projects—the North American Water and Power Alliance, NAWAPA, and some specific infrastructure projects in Mexico

that would connect with NAWAPA.

To address the magnitude of this crisis, if you look at Mexico right now, you have a situation where of 32 states, 21 are affected by severe drought. We're talking about approximately 48 million people living in that region, out of Mexico's total population of 115 million. You have had a dramatic decline in agricultural production, obviously; a dramatic kill-off of the national cattle herd, either dying of starvation or being sold off because farmers can't afford to feed their animals, and the United States has actually purchased large quantities of Mexican cattle.

Some Mexican political activists and representatives of the farming and peasant sector have warned that Mexico now faces a national security threat, because it's estimated there could be a 20% drop in agri-



EIRNS/Steve Carr

*Cynthia Rush was interviewed on The LaRouche Show June 15.*

cultural production this year; and this comes on top of last year, in which agricultural production had already dropped by 40%.

Compared to 30 years ago, when Mexico was about 80% self-sufficient in food production, today it has to import 40-50% of the food it needs for national consumption.

**Baker:** I think in the 1960s, they were exporters of grain, anyway.

**Rush:** Yes, exporters of both corn and wheat.

I've seen estimates of as high as 60% of the national territory that is now affected by the drought; and you have a process also of desertification, where the land is being completely dried out, where there's no vegetation, so you can't grow anything or retain moisture.

One figure I saw recently, also from northern Mexican farmers, is that 5 million hectares, which translates into a little over 12 million acres, have been taken out of food production, grains specifically, in that part of Mexico.

**Baker:** That would be like taking out the production of the entire state of Iowa in the United States.

**Rush:** We have the situation where last year, Mexico had to import 50% of the wheat that it needs for national food consumption, 25% of its corn, and 70% of rice, because these crops are no longer being produced in the country.

### López Portillo Brought Food Self-Sufficiency

If you go back to the mid-1970s, Mexico was about 80% food self-sufficient, and up until the period of the José López Portillo presidency, which ended in 1982, you had a number of structures, agencies, state-run entities, that were put in place decades earlier to protect the producer, the farmer, and the citizens—to make sure that they would have access to cheap and nutritious food and that farmers could make a reasonable profit.

**Baker:** Yes, I remember one—Conasupo [National Company of Popular Subsistence].

**Rush:** Yes, right.

**Baker:** And I think they would deal with orderly import of milk powder, which had a special role in the Mexican diet.



Coordinación de Material Gráfico

*President José López Portillo created the Mexican Food System in the early 1980s, which ensured that, by 1985, Mexico was largely food self-sufficient. Here, he leads a rally in support of the nationalization of the banks, Sept. 3, 1982.*

**Rush:** I think also they handled marketing, to offer fair prices to producers.

López Portillo created what was called the Mexican Food System (SAM) in the early 1980s, which established specific goals for increasing food production, and bringing more land under cultivation, so that by 1985, Mexico could once again become largely food self-sufficient.

**Baker:** And he also had a nuclear power development program—it was integral to the idea that you'd have enough power so that you could organize what you would need to improve the soils or to reorganize water supplies. He had a certain number of power plants he proposed, right?

**Rush:** Yes, I think eight was the number planned. Of course, that's now been pretty much abandoned.

**Baker:** There's just one.

**Rush:** Yes, the one in Laguna Verde is the only one. And of course, people may remember that Lyndon LaRouche was a key ally of López Portillo, who met with him personally a couple of times, and that was really emblematic of, as LaRouche constantly reiterates, an alliance between sovereign nation-states, between leaders who are committed to the same policy outlook of mutual self-interest of their nations, and promoting the development programs required.

After 1982—the successor to López Portillo was a neoliberal monetarist, as were all subsequent Presidents—that nationalist tradition was completely

crushed, and all of the mechanisms that had been created to defend the general welfare, were dismantled. One example was the 1994 enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, which led to the complete destruction of Mexican agriculture, because all protective tariffs were eliminated, and the country was flooded with cheap U.S. food, and Mexican farmers who produced corn, wheat, and rice could simply not compete with that.

This was also the case throughout Central America. That's the way Haiti's rice-producing capacity was completely wiped out; Haiti had also been 80% self-sufficient in rice production up through the 1980s, and it was actually under Bill Clinton's administration that American rice flooded Haiti, such that today Haiti has to import 80% of its rice for national consumption, and half of its food. So this is really the kind of insanity which for all these nations has resulted in unbelievable rates of death, malnutrition, starvation—especially among children, which, if that's not addressed immediately, there will be no future generations.

**Baker:** Mass depopulation.

**Rush:** Absolutely.

**Baker:** And to your chronology, it was January 1995, but then on a world scale, came the World Trade Organization, so the same process became very severe.

### Don't Mess with 'Mother Nature'

**Rush:** Just last week, we put out in *EIR*<sup>1</sup> a package on Mexico, looking toward what is the programmatic approach that is required immediately, including the necessary defeat of this green fascism, environmentalism, which is unfortunately very prevalent in Mexico today, still, even though there's been a change in government. And the new President, Peña Nieto, has indicated some determination to change policy, agricultural policy, in particular, to provide more credit, to address the hunger and drought, etc. But fundamentally, there is no significant change in the overall economic and political policy framework that has created this devastation in the first place.

**Baker:** When you mentioned "green": This whole time, in addition to the borderless trade that was imposed, there was this evil outlook imposed, saying that you shouldn't even intervene to reorganize and upgrade water, to move it from where it's prevalent, which is

pretty much southern Mexico, and off the slopes of the Sierra Madre, because that would be in violation of "Mother Earth."

**Rush:** Yes. We had the case in the previous Felipe Calderón administration of this character we identified at the time as an agent of the genocidal Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) of Prince Philip. This individual, José Luis Luege Tamargo, was the head of the National Water Commission in Mexico, and he was completely opposed to development of water infrastructure, or moving of water anywhere. The philosophy was, manage your austerity, manage your scarcity, have more "efficient" use of resources, but don't tamper with Mother Nature.

From what I've seen so far, that outlook remains in place. The new head of the National Water Commission, who otherwise seems to be fairly competent, is saying that water rationing will now be necessary. So they're stuck in this outlook.

**Baker:** That resources are fixed, as opposed to something you develop.

**Rush:** Yes.

**Baker:** You've been stressing that we have millions, in effect, in the Americas now currently without enough food.

**Rush:** Yes. Let me mention parts of Central America, and, as we were discussing earlier, looking back five years ago, almost to the month, April of 2008, Central America was in an absolutely dire food emergency. Regional agricultural and other government officials were meeting almost weekly, to try to figure out what to do, because there had been such a destruction of their ability to produce food and people were starving and dying.

**Baker:** It was called a world food shock at the time, too.

### The Biofuels Hoax

**Rush:** Right, there were food riots in several countries—Egypt was one of them, and Haiti, and throughout Central America. And, that situation coincided with a huge push toward the production of biofuels in Central and South America at the time. Of course, as we know here in the U.S., we're taking 40% of our corn crop and putting it into ethanol production.

There was a drive under the George W. Bush Administration for ethanol production in Central and South America, which supposedly was going to be the basis for consolidating a new development revolution.

---

1. Cynthia R. Rush, "Mexico's Drought Demands NAWAPA-Plus Infrastructure Projects," *EIR*, June 14, 2013.



*Mexican farmers have been forced to turn their corn crops over to the biofuel mega-cartels, instead of producing for food for their families and communities.*

Ethanol was going to be the basis for ending poverty, and creating jobs!

Well, that didn't happen. Bush did a junket himself, to five or six countries in Central and South America, with special targetting of Brazil to pull them into this. In all of these Central American countries which once had been—let's say, 30 years ago, they were pretty much able to produce corn and wheat, for their own domestic consumption—maybe 80%. But you started to get the same phenomenon I mentioned in Mexico with NAFTA. There were similar agreements rammed through, like the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which began to flood these countries with cheap corn, wheat, and rice, which wiped out domestic producers and farmers, so they were forced to import corn, for example.

That was in mid-2006, into 2007 and 2008.

**Baker:** You're talking about Guatemala?

**Rush:** Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, pretty much all of them.

But at the point where you started getting the drive for biofuels, and the demand for corn went up, you also saw a consequent rise in the price of corn, so these countries were starting to have to pay much more money for imported corn, which took a huge toll in terms of poor farmers, peasants who were subsistence farmers, who were producing a little bit of food, mostly for their families, and maybe selling some on the side, to make some money.

Small producers couldn't afford to pay for corn, either to eat or to use for animal feed; and then you also had gigantic pressure from agribusiness, cartels, financial speculators, predators, George Soros's friends in the private equity funds, the guys who are based in the

Cayman Islands and Hong Kong and other such locations, jumping into these countries, demanding that biofuels be produced. More and more land—what little corn, let's say, was being produced—was being gobbled up, in fact, by these larger operations.

**Baker:** Converted into neo-plantations for sugarcane, ethanol, and I guess you're saying palm was introduced for biodiesel.

**Rush:** African palm, sugar, also, large sugarcane plantations. A lot of farmers were being pressured to sell their land to these

large outfits—Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge—the big cartels are involved in this.

You had the price of commodities going up tremendously, worldwide, as a result of this phenomenon, and people unable to afford to buy food.

I can mention the case of Guatemala, which is really quite astounding, where according to one researcher for a local non-profit who's really looked into this phenomenon, "the average Guatemalan is now hungrier because of biofuels development."

This country is actually a decent-sized country.

**Baker:** I think there are 15 million people...

**Rush:** It has good land, but an incredibly impoverished population; it has *the* highest rate of child malnutrition in the Western hemisphere: 50% of all children under the age of five, which is higher even than Haiti. When you get into the really poor indigenous populations, the malnutrition rate goes up to 80% of children under age five.

So, you could go country by country, you combine that situation with the drought. There's been a very severe drought in parts of Central America, in Guatemala. Panama just had a devastating drought. Honduras—70% of land under cultivation was affected by drought over the past nine to ten months, affecting food and cattle production. So, this is just absolute devastation, and there's absolutely nothing that can address this, other than what Lyndon LaRouche and his associates have put forward, in terms of the kind of infrastructure—urgently needed infrastructure—and if we're going wipe out Wall Street, and these financial vultures who prey on populations, in order to have their gigantic biofuel profit, then we have to have Glass-Steagall. It's the only possible solution.

## Haiti: A Case of Deliberate Genocide

**Baker:** Let me ask you to take one special feature of all of this, which you were involved in bringing out at the time. You take a place like Haiti, which you said, in the past—it has a glorious past as being a friend of the new American Republic. But let's take the recent past.

In 2010, there was the earthquake there, and knowing that already this process was going on, this dumping of rice, free trade, was impoverishing them deliberately. But then came the earthquake. So the question was called: We should change policy here; and people went to the White House and said, we should change the policy in the sense that, we should move the stricken people to higher ground, and let's intervene with infrastructure so you have sanitation in Port au Prince, and you have electricity. You have the means to protect these people.

The only reason I'm throwing this in here is, it's about President Obama's reaction; but in the 1950s, I think it was under President Eisenhower, there had been a watershed development with an electric dam, the means to irrigate, and so forth. But, this particular case of Haiti after 2010 is grounds for impeachment for Obama, LaRouche and we said at the time. Would you address that?

**Rush:** Well, Haiti is just a deliberate case of genocide, precisely because what LaRouche proposed at the time—and you were involved in putting together the program that we published, for immediate emergency Army Corps of Engineer involvement, a military mobilization that would have been required to build housing, etc. And that wasn't done. We had the subsequent outbreak of cholera.

**Baker:** Within, I think, eight months.

**Rush:** In October of 2010, following the January earthquake. The official figure of deaths from cholera is something like 8,000 people, but the danger is not eradicated in any way.

The UN's World Food Programme just put out the figure, that two out of three Haitians are starving. There's no food; and keep in mind, billions of dollars were pledged, supposedly, to rebuild Haiti. They called it "Building Back Better." The basis of that reconstruc-



EIRNS

*Lyndon LaRouche visited Mexico several times in the late '70s and early '80s. Here, he is seen in front of the pyramids in Teotihuacán, in September 1979.*

tion program is, what? Building luxury hotels—that's your job creation. Building slave-labor textile assembly plants.

**Baker:** Oh, yes, the garment industry—cheap labor to undercut Bangladesh.

**Rush:** Yes. Some of these predators pulled out of Nicaragua and Honduras because those countries were considered to be *too expensive*—labor costs were too high—and they moved to Haiti! And unfortunately, Bill and Hillary Clinton have pushed this thing to the hilt. A huge new textile assembly "industry" built on the northern coast—this is supposed to provide jobs and infrastructure.

**Baker:** To service the cruise ships. They do have set-aside ports for the cruise ships.

**Rush:** Yes. I don't even think the wage [for the assembly plants] is \$1 a day, maybe 90 cents a day. This is just slave labor. And we put out our own proposal for how you could increase food production. Nuclear energy—why not? And any number of projects that could very quickly provide jobs, training, and education—universities were wiped out with the earthquake.

So, this is just a catastrophe, and if you look back, not only was Haiti crucial in U.S. history—Alexander Hamilton had input into the writing of the Haitian Constitution, and there was actually a very important collaborative relationship there. The Haitian Revolution of 1804 was the second revolution in the Western Hemisphere (the first being the American Revolution); and of



course, it was by a black population and nation, which the British and French imperialists weren't too happy about.

Franklin Roosevelt had a very interesting relationship with Haiti, and through the Good Neighbor policy, established mechanisms that helped Haiti to produce food. So that's something that is really significant to keep in mind when we're looking at the current situation. In 1934, FDR proposed setting up CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps]-style camps in Haiti to provide job training, among other things—a very different approach from the genocide we see today.

**Baker:** You mentioned the garment industry. This is called “Building Back Better,” but it's a neo-British East India Company, if there ever was one, and the one particular agriculture-related thing is Obama's USAID, which specialized in giving contracts for partnerships, such as to Coca Cola, to build a facility in Haiti, and several other places where local mangoes could be grown, the pulp concentrated, and the mango pulp shipped to the United States, so that you could buy your health-food drinks, of mango-pineapple juice from Haiti. This was motivated.

This is actually the leading edge of USAID-Bill Gates policy for Africa and everything else: private partnerships with Coca Cola and others.

So it's a genocidal food policy.

Now, with that in mind, do you want at this point to describe the general outline of the North American Water and Power Alliance sister projects, what's involved in moving water from where it is in southern Mexico, northward?

**Rush:** Well, there are two basic projects which, like NAWAPA, have been on the shelf for a number of years.

**Baker:** Particularly from the 1960s, probably.

**Rush:** About the same time as NAWAPA. You have the PLHINO, which is the North West Hydraulic Plan, and then you have Northern Gulf Hydraulic Plan, which is called the PLHIGON. We've written about these extensively (see footnote 1).

### FDR's 'Good Neighbor Policy'

**Rush:** I mentioned [Franklin] Roosevelt earlier, and his relationship to Mexico. There's this really wonderful example from 1940, because of course, Roosevelt



National Archives

*President Franklin Roosevelt had a close relationship with Mexico, as evidenced by his Good Neighbor policy. He is shown here with Mexican President Avila Camacho in Monterey, April 20, 1943.*

had a close relationship with Mexico, and there were many enemies of Mexico within the United States, who sought to blow up the U.S.-Mexican relationship, especially after Mexico nationalized its oil industry in 1938. But Roosevelt handled it in a very, very astute way, always thinking of what our nations had in common, and how can we work on that.

In 1940, right after Roosevelt was nominated to run for his third term, he chose Henry Wallace as his Vice President.

**Baker:** He had been Agriculture Secretary for a couple of terms.

**Rush:** Right. Henry Wallace took a trip to Mexico. He went to Mexico, being an agronomist, wasn't he?

**Baker:** Yes, he was a specialist in corn. Of course, he was thrilled because Mexico is the home of the origin of corn.

**Rush:** So he went to Mexico, and I believe he was there for about a month, and he travelled all around, because he wanted to investigate what was happening with corn yields, different breeds of corn, and wheat also. He was welcomed so warmly by the Mexican farmers, because he visited every different kind of farm—subsistence farms, larger industrial farms, experimental stations—and he was genuinely concerned and interested in how Mexico might increase its yields and productivity, of both corn and beans, traditional staples of the Mexican diet. And he went through the Rockefeller Foundation to get funding.



*FDR's Agriculture Secretary and later, Vice President, Henry Wallace (center) visited Mexico in 1940, where he worked with farmers to improve their productivity, especially in corn, including by bringing in the Nobel Laureate agronomist Dr. Norman Borlaug (the two are shown here inspecting crops).*

**Baker:** The problem is that most of the money resources were so tied up in the war effort that he had to seek some other source of funding.

**Rush:** So he ended up creating an experimental station outside of Mexico City, which began operating in 1943, after the Rockefeller Foundation and the Mexican government agreed to set up the Mexican Agricultural Program (MAP). He brought in Dr. Norman Borlaug, among other U.S. scientists, whom we associate with the successful Green Revolution. And Borlaug worked on increasing yields for corn, looking first at how you might create rust-resistant wheat. He then moved beyond that to determine how to increase yields of other crops, and 20 years after the MAP began operating, Mexico went from becoming a wheat importer to an exporter; corn production doubled and wheat production increased fivefold.

*Nota bene:* Borlaug's "Green Revolution" is not to be confused with the Queen's green fascism. This program represented a wonderful collaborative effort, and Wallace so endeared himself to the Mexicans because of his approach, which was based on the idea of, how can we work together to figure out this problem, and help you increase your corn and wheat production and yields in order to feed people?

I wanted to read from a letter that Franklin Roosevelt received in 1940, following his reelection, from Mexico's then-President Lázaro Cárdenas, who was just about to leave office, congratulating him. Cárdenas said in his letter, "By being re-elected, Mr. President, you give us hope that the policies of reciprocal respect

may be consolidated as a lasting kind of relationship, between countries whose proximity requires cordiality." He talks about "the motives of justice" which Roosevelt was committed to, and expresses the confidence that "your government's policies will be reaffirmed in the direction of an attitude of justice toward the American nations."

He ended by saying, "I firmly believe that your policy will do away with the vestiges of international mistrust which are still evident among the nations of our continent, whose political and economic solidarity requires, without doubt, the strengthening of ties of good understanding and friendship."

And Roosevelt responded, saying that it was his "profound conviction that ... the people of this country [the U.S.] expressed their approval of that policy of inter-American solidarity and cooperation, in which you and I so firmly believe, and which is so essential to improve the welfare of the peoples and the nations of America." And he said, "I know that these policies can only be successful when they are based on a sincere respect for the rights inherent in national independence and sovereignty, and on an equally sincere desire to carry out the obligations of same."

### **The Artibonite Valley and the Darién Gap**

**Baker:** And there might be other examples, during the war, and in other parts of South America, but even at other times—I think I mentioned Haiti, that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers did a project, under Eisenhower, I think...

**Rush:** Yes, that was the Péligre Dam, which is located on the Artibonite River.

**Baker:** Right, yes. It's the largest, longest river—Haiti is half an island nation, and small...

**Rush:** Right, and the Artibonite Valley is actually Haiti's breadbasket—it's the most fertile land, and interestingly, the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IICA) that Wallace set up in 1942, based in Costa Rica, was involved in 1952 in devising a development program for the Artibonite Valley, from the standpoint of how not only to increase food production, but going beyond that, creating new educational and technical facilities to train agronomists and raise the educational and skill level of the population.

When the Péligre Dam construction got underway in 1953, observers referred to its location as the "Valley

FIGURE 1

## The Pan American Highway and Darién Gap



of Hope,” because of the enthusiasm it generated among local residents and its potential for creating jobs, expanding food and other commodity production, controlling floods and soil erosion, and raising living standards through an expanding tax base. In the March 10, 1953 edition of *The New York Times*, reporter Herbert Matthews referred to the project as the “TVA of Haiti,” a smaller version of Roosevelt’s Tennessee Valley Authority.

One other project—and this really is taking things to the level of the global land-bridge development that we’ve talked about: Three years ago, we put out the proposal for what’s called the Darién Gap, the 60-mile piece of rainforest or marshland between Colombia and Panama (**Figure 1**).<sup>2</sup>

**Baker:** The isthmus.

**Rush:** Yes, the isthmus which is kind of a no-man’s land because it’s completely uninhabitable, except for the narco-terrorists of the the Colombian FARC—the cocaine cartel that has made it their territory. They operate there. This is an area also which the WWF has proclaimed to be a biosphere reserve.

**Baker:** Untouchable by humans?

**Rush:** Yes, so of course there can be no development. But, we put forward a program on how to bridge the Darién Gap, through railroad construction—our

friend Hal Cooper also has some interesting proposals for this—bridging the Darién Gap, but seeing it also as a key piece of what would be a hemispheric plan for infrastructure development, railroads, the Pan American Railroad, which our President McKinley had proposed, and was a key aspect of his continental development perspective. The railroad only goes to the Darién Gap; it never got further than that. The Pan American Highway goes to the Darién Gap and then continues—

stops, and then continues further down.

But the point is, if you built the tunnel under the Bering Strait, you could have a connection to all of North America, and also into Europe. In North America, Central America, this could then connect into key infrastructure projects: the north-south corridors in South America that include the Venezuelan and Colombian plains that are very fertile, like the Great Plains of the United States.

**Baker:** Yes, one part was a great cattle region—is that the idea?

**Rush:** Yes. And then there’s the Brazilian *cerrado* area. You could vastly increase food production in the heartland of South America, which would obviously have a huge impact. You’ve got the agricultural producers of Argentina, grains—unfortunately, today, they’re also producing gigantic amounts of soybeans, which have replaced wheat as their main export item.

So, the perspective that I just outlined is a crucial aspect, that obviously connects into the whole NAWAPA perspective as well.

**Baker:** Well, I think that takes us back around to where we started: that there’s no reason for the scale of this disaster. It’s horrifying that we’ve reached the end of the line, in terms of taking of human life, which is the goal behind these financial networks and operations that have brought us to this point. And so, it’s going to be one way or another, and we know what we’re committed to.

2. See Dennis Small, “NAWAPA: Bridging the Darién Gap,” *EIR*, Aug. 20, 2010.