“The continuing wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and onward are not only about ‘blood for oil;’ as they unfold, we will see that they are about ‘blood for food,’ ‘blood for genes and biodiversity,’ and ‘blood for water’” Vandana Shiva

There is no more basic need than survival and no substance on earth more crucial to survival than water. This makes it attractive to privatize and commodify, and one worth fighting and dying for. It is a capitalist’s dream, and a warrior’s cause. But water cannot be a commodity to be exchanged and bartered by a few corporations, owned and controlled by Big Business. It is a human need and right.

Faced with the suddenly well-documented freshwater crisis, governments and international financial institutions are advocating the privatization and commodification of water.

“If the wars of this century were fought over oil, the wars of the next century will be fought over water” Ismail Serageldin – World Bank VP

“Water is elemental, live giving and sustaining. It is ours to drink, ours to play in, to grow with, to build on. Water is more fundamental than any other substance on Earth: you can live 3 weeks without food, but without water you’ll be dead in 3 days.” Anita Roddick

Because water is running out, freshwater has become the “blue gold” of the 21st Century. A precious commodity that will determine the fate of nations and societies. Suddenly, the private sector has become intensely interested in the future of water and is moving in to take control of this finite and depleting resource. Competitive nation-states are abandoning natural resources protection and privatizing their ecological commons. Price water, they in chorus; put it up for sale and let the market determine its future. The agenda is clear: water should be treated like any other tradable good, with its use determined by the principles of profit.

"When the Well is dry we know the value of water " Benjamin Franklin

Amount of fresh water needed to open the locks to the Panama Canal one time ..........................................................200 million liters

Number of gallons of water needed to produce a day’s supply of newsprint in the U.S..............................................................3 million

Number of gallons of water to run a dishwasher one load ......................20 gallons

Cost ratio of bottled water to New York City tap water.......................1000 to one

Percentage of Americans who regularly drink bottled water .................................54%

Amount of water down the drain for one tooth brushing.........................4-6 gallons

Number of gallons for a 10 minute shower ........................................25 gallons
Number of gallons for a typical bath tub bath ............................................. 40 gallons

A single toilet flush (non-conservative toilet) ................................. 3-7 gallons

Number of people who do not have any water within a 15 minute walk from home............. 1 billion

Each number of seconds that a child dies from contaminated water....... 8

Number of multiples that people in developing countries may pay for water over city dwellers of Europe and America................................. 50 times

"Whiskey is for drinkin’ and water is for fightin’ over" Mark Twain, out West we all know this quote!

About 1.1 billion people worldwide can’t get clean drinking water and 2.4 billion lack access to basic sanitation, the International Herald Tribune reports in a series on the looming global problem of freshwater scarcity. The U.N. wants to halve these numbers by 2015, but current progress suggests that target won’t be met -- it would effectively mean hooking up more than 100,000 people to clean water sources every day for the next 10 years.

In much of the world, centralized irrigation and municipal water sources have taken the place of older water-management methods, but they’re also putting more stress on the supply. The paradox, say experts, is that improving water quality and provision increases development, which puts further strain on freshwater supply. Make water cheap and abundant and people waste it; make it expensive and difficult to obtain and people die. The proper balance is tough to strike. Gulp.

"Water that has been begged for does not quench the thirst" Ugandan proverb

"Nothing on earth is so weak and yielding as water, but for breaking down the firm and strong, it has no equal" Lao-Tsze

Percent of water that composes the human body............................... 70%

Percent of the Earth composed of water..................................................... 70%

A leaky faucet that loses a drop per second loses 16 bathtubs full a month, and 10,000 liters/year

The average human should consume 2.5 liters of water/day. Urine loses 1.5 liters, crying loose 1ml, and sweating from 1-3 liters/day.

The Aral Sea used to be the fourth largest lake on Earth. Because of water diversion for cotton crops, the lake could totally disappear by the year 2015. The dry lake bed has been poisoned by pesticides, and the remaining water is too saline to be used for anything. It doesn’t even contain enough live to support the fishing industry- once a thriving business along the Aral shore.

Water corporations do not bring investment. They use World Bank/IMF loans that have water privatization as a condition built into them. The investment is public, the profits are private. The same mechanisms and policies that privatize water also impoverish
municipalities and local governments by reducing tax collections and revenue generated at the local and regional level.

Fresh water or potable water is a closed system. All the fresh water that exists on earth today existed when the planet was first formed. The river water polluted by toxic runoff may be in a baby’s formula in 10 years.

Number of people that die every year from contaminated water..........................................................25 million
Population of Canada....................................................................................................................25 million

In India, communities near Coca-cola bottling plants are finding their wells drying up. For some, a coke is easier to come by than a glass of water.

Water used daily by a Coca-cola bottling plant in India .................................................................20,000 gallons

Estimated number of people who lack access to clean drinking water worldwide........................................1.4 billion

Estimated number of people lacking access to sanitation..................2.4 billion

Percent of expected increase in water use by 2020.................................................................40%

Projected cost per year of bringing universal access of water to the poor by 2015 ............................................$30 billion

Thailand’s Public Health Ministry tells rain collectors to wait an hour after a shower starts because the rain in industrial areas is as acid as tomato juice.

“Water is sometimes sharp and sometimes strong, sometimes acid and sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet and sometimes thick or thin, sometimes health giving, sometimes poisonous. It suffers change into as many natures as the different places through which it passes. And as the mirror changes with the color of its subject, so water alters with the nature of the place, becoming noisome, laxative, astringent, sulfurous, salty, incarnadined, mournful, raging, angry, red, yellow, green, black, blue, greasy, fat, or slim. Sometimes it starts a conflagration, sometimes it extinguishes one; is warm and is cold, carries away or sets down, hollows out or builds up, tears or establishes, fills or empties, raises itself or burrows down, speeds or is still; is the cause at times of life or death, or increase or privation, nourishes at times and at others does the contrary; at times has a tang, at times is without savor, sometimes submerging the valleys with great floods. In time and with water everything changes.” Leonardo da Vinci

It’s among the fastest growing and least regulated industries in the world. Now some of the largest beverage companies in the world are getting into the bottled water act, a $46bln industry,

“it struck me ... that all you had to do is take the water out of the ground and then sell it for more than the price of wine, milk, or for that matter, oil.” Perrier executive
Global corporate giants in the bottled water industry include – Nestle’, Coca-cola, PepsiCo, Proctor and Gamble and Danone. Many bottlers take their water from the tap and add minerals and then sell it.

Yet in contrast to the image of “pure spring water” that is projected by the industry, bottled water is not always safer than tap water and some is less so. That was a conclusion of a 1999 study by the U.S. Based Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which found that 1/3 of the 103 brands they studied contained detectable levels of contamination, including traces of Arsenic, and E. coli.

All bottled water sold in North America comes in plastic bottles which add to the environmental concerns. The bottled water industry uses 1/5 million tons of plastic every year and when plastic bottles are being manufactured or disposed of, they release toxic chemicals into the atmosphere.

Claiming private property rights, bottled water corporations generally pay no fee for the water they remove from lakes, rivers, and streams. In Canada, for example, where the amount of water extracted by the bottling industry has grown by 50% in the past decade, bottlers have a legal right to take about 30bln liters a year - approx 1000 liters for every person in the country. Close to 50% of all this bottled water is exported to the U.S. Yet unlike the oil industry, which pays stumpage fees to the government, the water bottling business is not required to pay fees for the extraction of water in most Canadian jurisdictions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Water Consumption (liters/person/year)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>85liters/person</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>35liters/person/year</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>19liters</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>15liters</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>12liters</td>
<td>.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa and the Near East</td>
<td>10liters</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>3liters</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>2liters</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Number of glasses of water needed to produce 1 glass of Orange juice...........50

Percentage of all food poisoning cases in Britain caused by bottled Water..................................................12%

Number of plastic water bottles Americans empty every hour..........................2.5 million

Number of years to decompose a plastic water bottle ........................................500 years

Number of gallons of fresh water required to produce a pound of beef.................................2500/pound

"The fresh water that goes into a 1000 pound steer would float a destroyer"

Newsweek

Big dams are plain bad. They flood people out of their homes and off their lands; wipe out endangered habitats and species; spread water-borne diseases; deprive flood plains of the water and sediments of life-giving floods.
Damming It All to Hell
Dams ruin beautiful landscapes and submerged places of great cultural and spiritual importance. Big dams even cause earthquakes (because of the weight of water in reservoirs), release greenhouse gases (because of the rotting of flooded vegetation), destroy marine fisheries (because they disrupt river-borne flows of freshwater and nutrients into oceans) and lead to coastal erosion (because the sediments that eventually fill reservoirs would previously have flowed out through estuaries and then been washed back by waves to protect the shoreline). Occasionally, they collapse and drown people. In the world's worst dam disaster - a mega-catastrophe that struck central China in 1975 when two large dams burst - as many as 230,000 people died.

The world's worst dam has to be the gargantuan Three Gorges project in China. It will cause all of the problems above - on a mind-bending scale. More than half a million people had been moved from their homes along the Yangtze by June 2003 when the first stage of filling the Three Gorges reservoir began. By the start of the final phase of reservoir filling in 2008 a further 700,000 people (according to government statistics) will have been evicted. Chinese critics claim the final number will reach nearly 2 million. For their trouble, these critics have been beaten up, imprisoned, and had their books and articles banned.

Human-rights abuses regularly accompany big dams, and not just in China. In the 1980s, more than 400 Guatemalans, mainly women and children, were murdered by paramilitaries because of their refusal to accept the resettlement package offered by the World Bank-funded electricity utility building the Chixoy dam.

Today, almost everywhere that a big dam is being proposed or built there is a community or a group of activists organizing against it. In southern Mexico indigenous communities are fighting to win reparations for dams built 50 years ago.

Corruption and the power of the big dam lobby... has meant that feasibility studies for new dams have regularly underestimated their cost and exaggerated their benefits.

Number of indigenous people displaced by
840,000 dams worldwide..........................................................38 million
Percent of the world's rivers dammed........................................60%

In most developing countries, the task of collecting water falls to women. In rural Africa women often walk 10 miles or more every day to bring water in containers that can weigh upwards of 50 pounds. Backache and joint pains are common, and in extreme cases, curved spines and pelvic deformities can result, creating complications in childbirth.

“We can’t help being thirsty, moving toward the voice of water. Milk drinkers draw close to the mother. Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, shamans, everyone hears the intelligent sound and moves with thirst to meet it.” Rumi

"Thousands have lived without love, not one without water.” W.H. Auden

Sources include: google, UNESCO, Anita Roddick with Brooke Shelby Biggs, Greenpeace, Oxfam; Maude Barlow-Chair of the Council of Canadians, Tony Clarke- Polaris Inst, Blue Gold; Jim Schultz – Director of the Democracy Center in Cochabamba, Bolivia, Grist Magazine, and many others who felt you should know.