



Dedicated to Abolishing War, Establishing Justice, and Fighting Climate Disaster
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The Pentagon: Enemy of the Pacific



By Koohan Paik-Mander

The U.S. military is the single largest industrial consumer of petroleum products in the world and the largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Its carbon emissions exceed those released by more than 100 countries combined. To add insult to injury, President Donald Trump is doubling down, recently responding to supply chain disruptions caused by turmoil in the Middle East by commanding: “Drill, Baby, Drill!”

In the meantime, the Pentagon plays a continuing role in destroying Earth’s natural systems that sequester carbon and generate oxygen. The U.S. military continues to annihilate whales, despite the crucial role that large cetaceans have played in delaying climate catastrophe and maintaining healthy marine ecosystems, according to a report by Whale and Dolphin Conservation. This fact has gone largely unnoticed until only a few years ago.

There are countless ways in which the Pentagon hobbles Earth’s inherent abilities to regenerate itself. Yet, it has been the decimation of populations of whales and dolphins over the last decade and a half—resulting from the year-round, full-spectrum military practices carried out in the oceans, that have fast-tracked us toward a cataclysmic environmental tipping point.

The other imminent danger that whales

and dolphins face is from the installation of space-war infrastructure. This new infrastructure includes development of the so-called “smart ocean,” rocket launch pads, missile tracking stations, and other components of satellite-based battle. If the billions of dollars being plowed into the 2025 military budget for space-war technology are any indication of what’s in store, the destruction to marine life

caused by these technologies will only accelerate in the future, hurtling Earth’s creatures to an even quicker demise than forecast.

The Most Effective Way to Sequester Carbon: Whale Health

It’s important to understand that whales are indispensable to mitigating climate

catastrophe, and why reviving their numbers is crucial to slowing down damage and even repairing the marine ecosystem. The importance of whales in fighting the climate crisis has also been highlighted in an article that appeared in the International Monetary Fund’s *Finance and Development* magazine, which calls for the restoration of global whale populations. “Protecting whales could add significantly to carbon capture,” states the article, showing how the global financial institution also recognizes whale health to be one of the most economical and effective solutions to the climate crisis.

Throughout their lives, whales contribute to oceans sequestering a whopping 2 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide per year. That astonishing amount in a single year is nearly double the 1.2 billion metric tons of carbon that was emitted by the U.S. military in the entire 16-year span between 2001 and 2017, according to an article in *Grist*, which relied on a paper from the Costs of War Project at Brown University’s Watson Institute.

The profound role of whales in keeping the world alive is generally unrecognized. Much of how whales sequester carbon is due to their symbiotic relationship with phytoplankton, the organisms that are the base of all marine food chains.

The way the sequestering of carbon by whales works is through the piston-like movements of the marine mammals as they dive to the depths to feed and then come up to the surface to breathe. This “whale pump” propels their own feces in giant plumes up to the surface of the

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Another Way: Fire Prevention and Firefighting

By Mike Ferner

Environmental horrors are on display big time in this issue of *Peace & Planet News*.

You will learn that militarism worsens the climate crisis and whales can mitigate it because a Blue Angels air show consumes 18,200 gallons of jet fuel per hour while a 1% annual increase in whale-generated phytoplankton productivity captures the same amount of CO₂ as 2 billion mature trees; you'll also learn that 20 million people were displaced annually between 2010 and 2020 due to natural disasters and climate change and which companies bankroll fossil fuel extraction and weapons manufacturing.

You will find reams of information on the environmental damage caused by militarism and wars. But real wisdom is found in the article by Christina Bagaglio Slentz, PhD.

Dr. Slentz calls on us to “reflect on the times we have made mistakes as well as the times we haven’t done what we are called to do ... to consider how well we are living up to our responsibility to care for creation, especially our most vulnerable brothers and sisters.”

Such reflection is helpful when considering choices we make as consumers and how our taxes are spent, but even more so when we reflect on the choices we make as activists and educators.

When writing and speaking about environmental destruction, how well do we

live up to our responsibilities to people and planet? After explaining devastations and genocides do we ask ourselves and others to really probe the fundamental question of what we do to prevent this from happening again and again.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will learn about many ongoing efforts to battle climate change, including:

- Collecting signatures on a petition calling on the secretaries of the Navy and Air Force to cancel climate-wrecking air shows
- Intersectional, cross-movement organizing to take on the forces that are fueling genocide, ecocide, and planetary destruction
- Supporting help for workers who would be impacted by a transition to a greener economy
- Opposing the use of police and military as the primary response to natural disasters.

But it’s hard to answer the fundamental question: How do we prevent militarism’s environmental horrors if we don’t first examine the question of who really governs us—because we know for sure we don’t govern ourselves. Corporations do.

They fund the think tanks that propose legislation that their lobbyists write for Congress. They buy votes or whole elections if needed. They subvert and pervert our culture and our values with ubiquitous advertising that insists the answer to our problems lies their products. They pay for fighter jets to fly over football games, and



job fairs for companies that manufacture death and misery. And they own the fossil fuel industries and military-industrial complex that makes sure the profits keep rolling in as they destroy the earth. I call them the madmen arsonists.

In response we are supposed to “vote with our dollars,” petition, call, boycott, picket, strike, resist and extinguish each new inferno they ignite—but we never make time to probe how we can take away corporations’ power to govern, how we can learn fire prevention while we’re firefighting. Or as Dr. Slentz puts it, “consider how well we are living up to our responsibility to care for creation.”

There is a national movement dedicated to addressing these fundamental questions and Veterans For Peace is partnering with them. Move to Amend (movetoamend.org/) proposes we do what’s been done 27 times in America and amend our constitution. Take away all rights from corporations that were meant for human beings and end the nonsense that money equals speech. It’s

called the *We the People Amendment*.

To change the culture of corporate dominance requires building a culture of democracy to replace the one of commercialism, militarism and profit now destroying peace and planet. A tall order, indeed, but one that inspires with a vision of a better world where corporations cannot use “personhood” to claim constitutional protection for ramming Walmarts and toxic waste dumps into our communities, and where they cannot use First Amendment rights to buy votes for genocide and war.

We can practice fire prevention and firefighting at the same time. When we do, we will have a good response to the question, “How well are we living up to our responsibility to care for creation?”

Mike Ferner was a Navy corpsman during the Vietnam War. He has served as both the national director and national board president of Veterans For Peace and is a former member of the Toledo City Council.



Photo: Ellen Davidson



Photo: Ellen Davidson



Peace & Planet News

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Oppose Militarism to Achieve Climate Justice

By Taylor Smith-Hams

In June, climate justice leader Greta Thunberg joined a group of courageous activists who sailed to Gaza in an attempt to deliver lifesaving aid to Palestinians and break the Israeli naval blockade of the besieged territory. Greta's participation in this act of solidarity drew questions from some members of the climate community, who did not understand how the fight for climate justice and the fight for a free Palestine are intrinsically linked.

Greta said in response: "It's so weird to me that people are separating caring about the environment and the climate to caring about humans—I care about the environment and the climate because I care about human and planetary wellbeing. Those are the same things in my view. There can be no climate justice without social justice." In addition, the May 2025 Fridays For Future called for ending militarism.

Climate Crisis Inseparable From War, Genocide, and Militarism

Purely from an emissions perspective, militarism and war are key drivers of the climate crisis. The U.S. military is the single largest institutional emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. The Pentagon's annual emissions exceed that of entire industrialized countries like Sweden and Denmark. Everything from fighter jets and warships to the U.S.'s massive network of bases around the world are enormous sources of emissions, as is the reconstruction of the damaged environment after conflict.

According to the Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS), global militaries account for roughly 5.5% of global emissions—more than civil aviation and shipping combined. Yet due to U.S. government pressure, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol excluded military emissions from counting toward national emissions figures. That means U.S. and other heavily militarized countries' emissions are significantly underreported in international climate negotiations and agreements. The exclusion of military emissions from global climate negotiations is particularly concerning going into COP30 as multiple wars rage around the globe and NATO members look to further increase mili-

tary spending.

When countries double down on military spending, they take resources away from the vital investments that we need for a livable future. For example, the U.S. directed over \$22 billion in taxpayer dollars to Israel alone between October 2023 and September 2024, according to conservative estimates from Brown University's Costs of War project.

The U.S.'s deadly spending priorities were made painfully clear in the budget reconciliation bill passed by Congress this summer, which slashes taxes for the wealthiest while cutting Medicaid and SNAP and funnels billions to detention and deportation partly by diverting crucial FEMA disaster relief funds for Florida concentration camps to hold migrants in caged tents, upending climate and social programs and threatening the lives and health of millions.

As they divert public dollars toward death and destruction, the U.S. and other historic polluters refuse to adequately contribute to international climate finance commitments. Countries in the Global South have for decades pointed out that cutting military budgets would enable the world to meet climate finance needs. At COP29, Panama criti-



Protest at the Blue Angels air show in Annapolis, MD, in May 2025.

Photo: Taylor Smith-Hams

Many of the corporations that profit from war and destruction also profit from the climate crisis ... BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street—all have significant holdings in both weapons manufacturers and fossil fuel companies.

cized rich countries' failure to agree to the new goal of a trillion dollars in climate finance, comparing it to the \$2.4 trillion spent on global militaries: "\$2.4 trillion to kill each other is not too much, but one trillion to save lives is unreasonable."

Who Profits, Who Pays?

All this spending on weapons and war is lining someone's pockets. Many of the corporations that profit from war and destruction also profit from the climate crisis. For example, three major asset managers—BlackRock, Vanguard, and State

Street—all have significant holdings in both weapons manufacturers and fossil fuel companies. And many of the same banks that finance fossil fuel infrastructure—Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Citigroup, and Chase—also fund the genocide in Gaza, underwriting billions

in Israeli "war bonds" since October 7, 2023. So when thinking about climate and militarism, we must remember that the money and power behind the bombs in Gaza and Ukraine is often the same money and power behind pipelines in Uganda and Appalachia.

Climate change and border militarization are also inextricably linked. As rich countries continue to entrench their militarized response to the climate crisis, they are perpetuating a fortress world dynamic where the wealthy few build walls and demonize people of the global majority who did the least to cause this crisis but bear the overwhelming burden of its impacts. The perverse dynamic goes like this: People around the world, particularly in the Global South, are forcibly displaced from their homes due to deep, structural inequalities often rooted in colonialism and imperialism and a slew of stressors including climate disasters and war. Then the border security industry profits from racist fearmongering spewed by fascist leaders (like Donald Trump) in order to increase spending on walls, borders, detention, and deportation.

And this militarization does not stop at the border. For decades, the Department of Defense and other federal agencies have transferred surplus military equip-

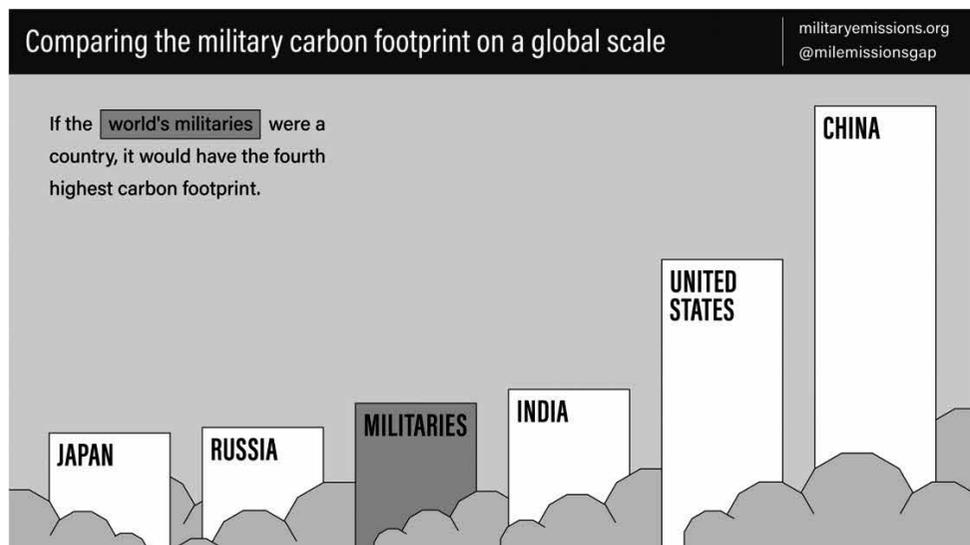
Protesting Military Air Shows Brings Climate and Peace Activists Together

Militarism is antithetical to building a just and collective transition away from fossil fuels and toward a sustainable future. Yet, militarism is too often left out of our conversations and organizing within the climate movement. That's why we at 350.org were excited when Veterans For Peace invited us to join their No Military Air Shows (No MAS!) campaign last year.

As a highly visible example of the military's pollution, air shows are a strategic target for protests that bring climate and peace activists together and help build deeper connections across our movements while educating the public about the often ignored connections between climate and militarism. And these are worthy targets—just one team of Blue Angels fighter jets burns 18,200 gallons of jet fuel per hour—about as much fuel as it takes to fly from New York City to Paris.

Military air shows have been important recruitment and propaganda tools of the U.S. military for decades. To this day, they continue to be billed as "free entertainment" (even though taxpayers foot the bill) and as a patriotic way to "support our

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Why We Say 'No MAS— No Military Air Shows'

By Gary Butterfield

It was 2015, and the San Diego chapter of Veterans For Peace had just successfully hosted the VFP National Convention. The theme was “Peace and Reconciliation in the Pacific,” and the gathering culminated with an event at the local Joan Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego.

Local scholars, dignitaries and VFP members exchanged views on how to further peace and then shared 1,000 origami Peace Cranes. Several of us gathered for a debriefing and a cold beer afterwards to discuss how the chapter could capitalize on this success and deepen member involvement, further the cause of peace, and, finally, spread our message of “Peace at Home, Peace Abroad” to more local San Diegans.

San Diego is home to the nation’s largest concentration of active-duty military personnel, as well as to a significant number of veterans. Both the Navy and Marines have a huge presence, which gives us many opportunities to focus our efforts. We had protested the various U.S. military foreign incursions, bannered against “Endless Wars,” picketed the Navy brig, supported local anti-recruiting efforts in high schools, marched in parades, and shared our message with just about anyone who would listen. How could we make a statement about the local military presence that would have a greater impact on the citizenry? How do you specifically protest against the Pacific Fleet? Or Marine Corps training at Camp Pendleton? Or the nearly \$875 billion then being spent on the Pentagon?

We decided to focus on the annual Miramar Air Show. The event was noisy, stinky, highly visible, and well attended. It glorified violence and war and shamelessly recruited teens and pre-teens. The chapter adopted the slogan, No MAS, No Miramar Air Show, for the event.

During the show, VFP members went on base and documented the casual attitudes toward violence and war, culminating in the short video, *Disneyland of War*, which can be found on YouTube.

Despite feeling good about our choice, direction and message, we still weren’t gaining much traction with the public. When none of the major billboard compa-

nies would rent us space, we resorted to hiring a mobile billboard to drive around downtown San Diego during the Air Show weekend. The driver reported quite a few peace signs, thumbs-up, and waves, but also some one-finger salutes and shaken fists. Even though we didn’t get the traction and participation we had hoped for,

While we private citizens are implored to reduce our carbon footprint, the number one emitter continues unchecked and unnoticed. How could this be?

by 2018 it was clear we had struck a nerve.

As we debriefed after that year’s events it struck me, as a member of both Veterans For Peace and the San Diego chapter of 350.org (SD350) that our climate activist friends had an under-appreciation of the military’s role as a major contributor to the climate crisis. Folks knew that the military was reacting to the climate crisis as an existential threat or “threat multiplier”—increasing border security, preparing seaports to guard against the threat of rising seas, and hardening and protecting other military installations from more severe hurricanes and raging wildfires. To the military, the looming climate crisis was just another enemy to prepare for. So we started to investigate further, improving our own understanding of the military’s contribution to the climate crisis with an eye to expanding the pool of supporters.

The U.S. military is the world’s single largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels and emitter of greenhouse gases. While we private citizens are implored to reduce our carbon footprint, the No. 1 emitter continues unchecked and unnoticed. How could this be? Why wasn’t of every climate activist from 350.org to the Sunrise Movement demanding an accounting and reduction of such prolific and unabated pollution? How could an entire movement overlook the world’s greatest polluter?

In hindsight this ignorance of the military’s emissions and role in worsening the climate crisis was the result of a willful and sustained initiative by the U.S. government at the highest international lev-

els to cloud military emissions in secrecy based on “national security” and prevent accurate and transparent reporting of such emissions. As early as the 1997 Kyoto climate talks—Dating back to one of the first international meetings on limiting greenhouse gas emissions—the United States lobbied to exempt many military emissions from even being counted. The Kyoto Protocol was adopted internationally but ultimately the U.S. never ratified it. Subsequent international agreements still fail to fully require accurate and transparent reporting of military emis-

sions. So, no public noise, no public uproar, and no public acknowledgement of the problem.

If the Department of Defense were a country, it would rank 47th (out of 170) on the world’s ranking of carbon dioxide polluting countries. The U.S. Air Force holds the dubious distinction of being the world’s largest user of jet fuel. For example, each Thunderbird or Blue Angels team uses approximately 18,200 gallons of jet fuel per hour flying for our entertainment. A 40-minute show consumes about 82,500 pounds of jet fuel, releasing 118 metric tons of carbon dioxide, plus the smaller particulates that are emblem-



atic of fossil fuel combustion.

The Pentagon also maintains over 800 bases in foreign countries, creating extensive and wasteful supply lines. Each of the Army’s 60,000 Humvees gets between 4 to 8 miles per gallon of diesel fuel; the M1 Abrams tank gets about 0.6 mpg.

Add in toxic spills, Agent Orange, burn

pits, depleted uranium and unexploded ordnance and you have the profile of a very large, very irresponsible public organization. One that is contributing significantly to climate degradation while creating climate refugees in its wake. And more and more attention is now being paid to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), known as forever chemicals, which don’t break down in the environment and are tied to cancer and other health ailments. PFAS are used extensively in military firefighting foam. The very same foam used in dousing the air show’s celebratory wall of fire.

In response, dedicated members of Veterans For Peace formed the Climate Crisis and Militarism Project (CCMP). CCMP has since delivered over 130 presentations to local and national groups, including climate, peace, social justice, and community organizations. Along with educating, CCMP adopted agitating at air shows beyond San Diego with the No MAS (No Military Air Shows) campaign. We strive to get people out of their individual silos and unite with a common vision to demand accountability from the military for its emissions and its spending of \$1 trillion annually.

Wars rage in Ukraine and Gaza as the climate crisis roars unabated. Last year again set records for global warming and the U.N. reported that humanity is still failing in its efforts to appreciably address rising pollution levels. War activities serve to exacerbate an already intolerable situation. Addressing the war in Gaza, Queen Mary University of London’s Report on Gaza Carbon Emissions states, “We estimate the total carbon emissions due to direct war activities in the first 120 days to be between 420,265 and 652,552 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). This figure rises to 47,669,097 and 61,443,739 tCO₂e when we consider prewar and postwar construction activities. This is more than 135 individual nations’ annual emissions, highlighting the climate footprint of armed conflicts and the pressing need to account for carbon emissions during war.”

Added to this cauldron is the impact of increasing military budgets worldwide due to the widespread arms races in re-

sponse to ongoing conflicts and in preparation for the climate collapse. So we at CCMP are expanding our support to educate the public about military pollution and fiscal irresponsibility through our “No MAS/No Military Air Shows” campaign. We have partnered with 350.org,

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Do Some Evangelicals Want Us to Burn in a Pre-Hell on Earth?

By Jim Rine

Are Christian fanatics dictating the Trump Administration's policy on climate change? Climate policy expert Michael Mann says the Project 2025 energy plan was written by polluters, with front groups such as the Koch-funded Competitive Enterprise Institute and the Heartland Institute playing key roles. Greed is certainly a factor. But it takes more than greed to ignore mounting evidence that the climate crisis is real.

Influential members of the Trump administration have faith that they and their families will be spared from a climate catastrophe. A bonus of their belief in the end-of-the-world Rapture is relegating all progressives and related "woke-folk" to burning on Earth before burning



in a postmortem hell. After examining the text and various analyses of Project 2025 I arrived at that conclusion.

Project 2025, authored by the Heritage Foundation, "... is the conservative movement's unified effort to be ready for the next conservative administration (Trump 2.0) to govern." Although candidate Trump denied knowing the details of the project before his re-election, his administration is following its plans almost to the letter.

What Does Project 2025 Have to Do With the Climate Crisis?

Project 2025 was designed as an ongoing assault on all aspects of the government's efforts at mitigating the worsening climate crisis and adapting to it. Project 2025 asserts that "... the Biden Administration's climate fanaticism will need a whole-of-government unwinding." The characterization of Biden's approach as "climate fanaticism" is ironic, since it is the Republican Party that fanatically denies the threat from climate change. In using the term, Republican MAGA conservatives deploy Trump's tactic of attacking enemies on the very points where he most vulnerable. Project 2025's call for reversing "the Biden Administration's leveraging of the federal government's resources to further the woke agenda ... [and scrubbing it] from all policy manuals, guidance documents, and agendas" reads more like instructions from a Mao Zedong document during China's Cultural Revolution than a platform for a 21st-century U.S. political party.

The Trump Administration's attack on "climate fanaticism" has also resulted in collateral damage to USAID. Project 2025's view is that "the Biden Administration has deformed the agency by treating it as a global platform to pursue overseas a divisive political and cultural agenda that promotes abortion, climate extremism, gender radicalism, and interventions against perceived systemic racism." Consequently, cessation of USAID's aid to starving people is just the necessary side effect of

Trump 2.0's war on "woke."

Where does the Rapture come into play?

My theory is that if you believe you are going to be raptured up to "heavenly bliss" in the sky, why worry about Earth becoming too hot to live on? In fact, a hypothetical believer in both the climate crisis and the Rapture might want to hasten the end-times scenario so they can get off this planet as soon as possible. After all, most MAGA folks don't have the coins to build bunkered retreats like Jeff Bezos or Mark Zuckerberg—or blast off to Mars as Elon Musk hopes to do.

How would this supposedly work? Based on readings of *Catholic Answers* online magazine (Oct. 26, 2023) and other sources, Jesus Christ needs to come back to Earth for a second term (JC 2.0) to fulfill a bunch of biblical prophecies he didn't get around to as JC 1.0, just as Trump 2.0 came back to fulfill his Trump 1.0 wish list. And just as Trump 2.0 needs his MAGA faithful in Congress and elsewhere, JC 2.0 will need an army of "good Christians" who will be raptured up, body and soul, from our rapidly warming planet to be his soldiers when he returns to kick non-believer ass. According to the Evangelical historian Timothy Weber (1875–1925), however, this can only happen after Israel is "restored." Weber writes "the entire redemptive plan of God hinge[s] on the restoration of the Jews. Without a restored Jewish state in Palestine, God's cosmic program would not succeed." The plan continues after the Rapture, with the "left behinders" forming an "ill-fated pact with the Antichrist," who will eventually be slain by JC 2.0 and his army of previously raptured Christian soldiers. Then everyone will live happily ever after for 1000 years, whichever comes first.

Peter Thiel has mused that Greta Thunberg may be the Antichrist, according to Naomi Klein and Astra Taylor's essay "The Rise of End Time Fascism" in *The Guardian* (April 4, 2025). Who knew?

You might be thinking it is not realistic to believe there are that many batshit crazy people working in the Trump Administration. Naomi Klein and Astra Taylor, however, report that "Trump has handed critical posts to people who subscribe to that fiery orthodoxy, including several Christian Zionists who see Israel's use of annihilatory

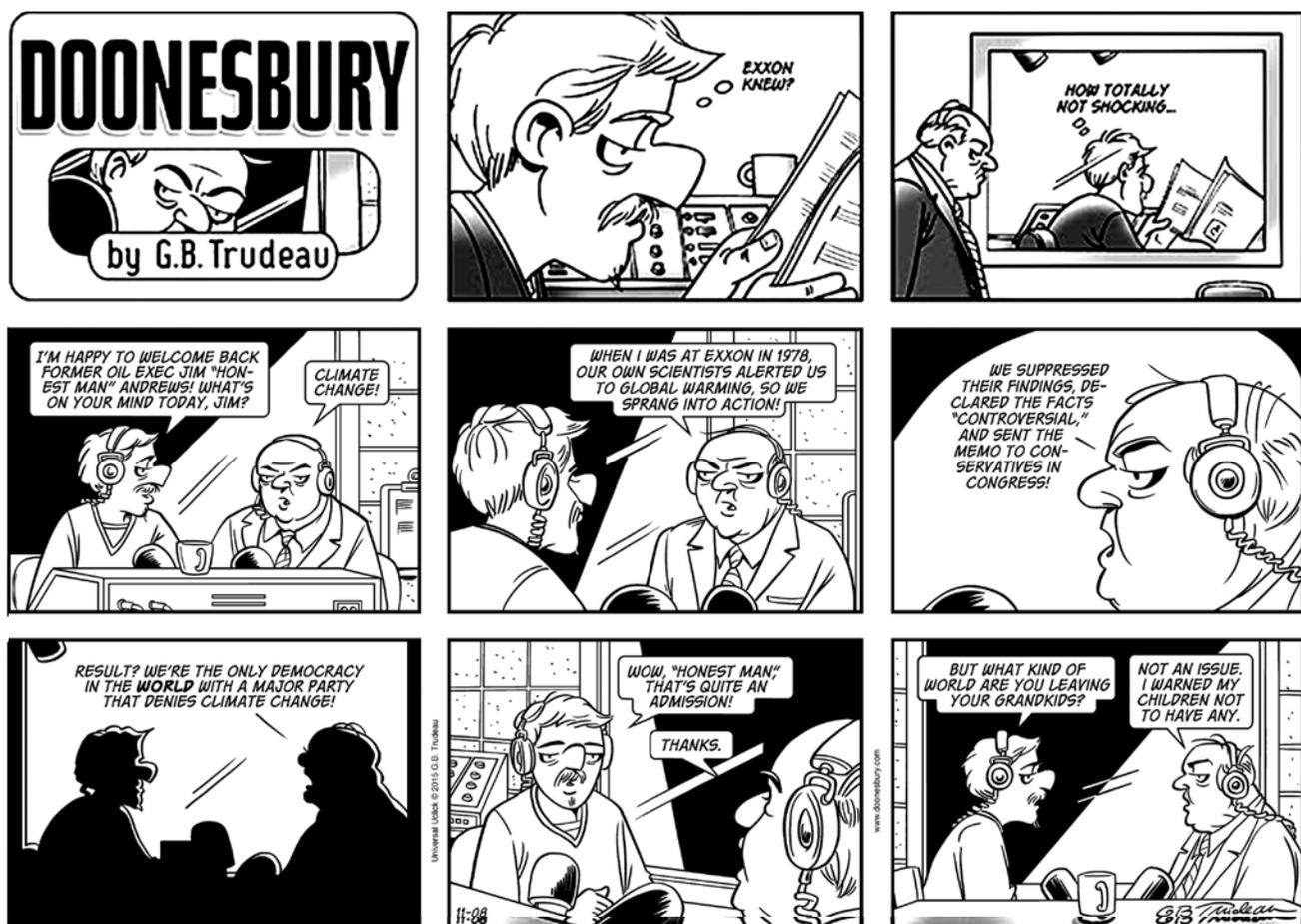
violence to expand its territorial footprint not as illegal atrocities but as felicitous evidence that the Holy Land is getting closer to the conditions under which the Messiah will return, and the faithful will get their celestial kingdom." Klein and Taylor add, "Mike Huckabee, Trump's newly confirmed ambassador to Israel, has strong ties to Christian Zionism, as does Pete Hegseth, his secretary of Defense. Kristi Noem, DHS Secretary, and Russell Vought, the Project 2025 architect, who now leads the Office of Management and Budget, are both staunch advocates for Christian nationalism." Back in 2020 during Trump 1.0, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Republican Sens. Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and Tom Cotton spoke at a major gathering of Christians United for Israel (CUFI). CUFI's website touts it as the "largest pro-Israel organization in the United States." During CUFI's July 2023 Summit, attendees included 2024 Republican presidential hopefuls former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, and former Vice President Mike Pence. The Critical Dictionary of Apocalyptic and Millenarian Movements asserts: "For them [CUFI], Israel represents the fulfilment of biblical prophecy that points to the imminent rapture of the church." In 2020, CUFI claimed a membership of 10 million, 2.5 million more than the estimated population of U.S. Jews.

In fact, a hypothetical believer in both the climate crisis and the Rapture might want to hasten the end-times scenario so they can get off this planet as soon as possible.

A 2022 Pew Research survey of how U.S. Christian beliefs intersect with attitudes on climate change found that 63% of evangelicals believe we are living in the end times. As Alfred E Neuman would say, "What, me worry?"

Revisiting the argument of what is driving Republican/MAGA climate denialism, is it greed or faith that their families will not be impacted? I have pondered the source of denialism for decades, having worked in the "oilpatch" and personally presented two climate-real-

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The Urgent Need to Demilitarize Federal Climate Response

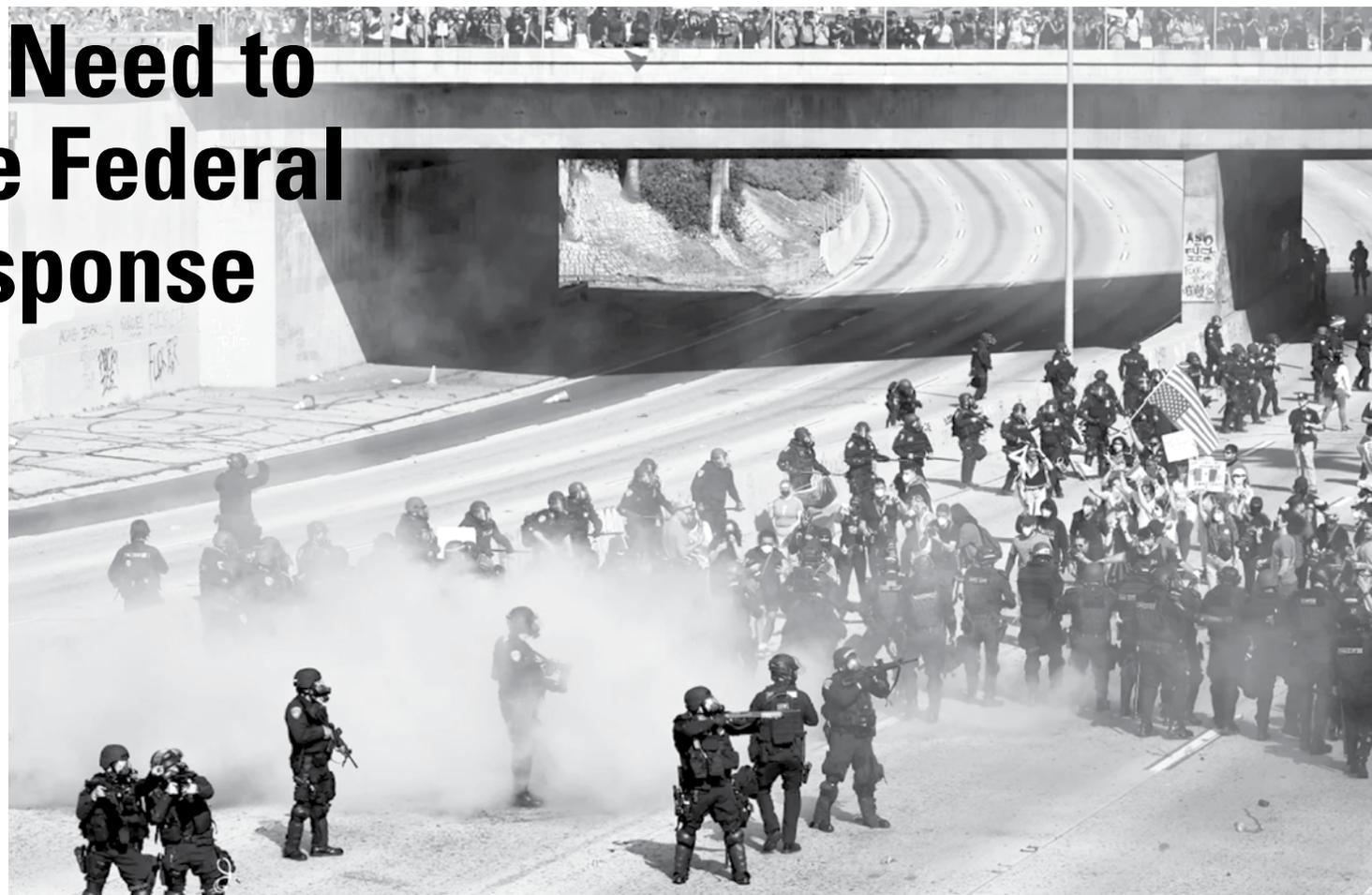
By Ian Mooney

As U.S. Marines are finally ordered to end their illegal, military occupation of Los Angeles, it is worth reflecting on the circumstances that led to this draconian use of state power. Especially significant is its connection with the increasingly dire state of climate catastrophe. These Marines were deployed to LA on June 9 of this year under orders to support the California National Guard mission to suppress civil demonstrations against the Trump Administration's oppressive immigration enforcement policies. One might wonder then how such an issue is related to climate change but the President himself has repeatedly drawn an explicit connection between the disastrous fires that struck LA earlier this year and his desire to mobilize federal forces to control the city directly.

On the day following the Marines' deployment, the President posted the following on his Truth Social media platform: "If there's an insurrection, I would certainly invoke it ... If we didn't get involved, right now Los Angeles would be burning just like it was burning a number of months ago ... We are not playing around ..."

The following day, June 11, he posted: "If our troops didn't go into Los Angeles, it would be burning to the ground right now, just like so much of their housing burned to the ground. The great people of Los Angeles are very lucky that I made the decision to go in and help!!!"

While it can be challenging to fix definite meaning to the President's words, especially when it comes to social media posts, considering his habit for using vague and evasive language—we should take seriously the connection he has repeatedly drawn. The Trump Administration used a record-breaking drought and the subsequently devastating wildfires as pretense to impose martial law on the people of Los Angeles. As extreme weather caused by climate change becomes more



California Highway Patrol officers clear protesters who were blocking the 101 Freeway in Los Angeles. Photo: Mario Tama

common, we must be staunchly opposed to the use of military power as the go-to response by the state, rather than organized and humane relief efforts.

A dangerous precedent is set when the state prioritizes using militarized force to control a population and quell dissent while at the same time dismantling the infrastructure capable of predicting inclement weather and providing rapid relief in emergency situations. The budget recently passed through Congress continues this administration's commitment to defunding federal agencies such as FEMA and redirecting those resources toward already bloated military and police sectors. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been granted a whopping \$170 billion from the recent reconciliation bill, a sum that by itself is more than twice what our closest allies spend on their entire defense budget. The Department of Defense received an addi-

ditional \$150 billion, pushing the total DoD budget past \$1 trillion for the first time. Meanwhile, federal disaster relief agencies are being cut in favor of block grants directly to states that they can manage, or mismanage, as they see fit.

These hostile budgetary measures, on top of the President's clear desire to use what he perceives as state-level disaster mismanagement as a reason for federal, military intervention signals a dangerous turn for our civil liberties. Over the past decade, U.S. Americans have seen a sharp uptick in dangerous weather events; if the state continues along the path it has

practices. Again, on June 9 as he was announcing his intent to send troops into LA he announced on Truth Social that "the Insurrectionists have a tendency to spit in the face of the National Guardsmen/women, and others. These Patriots are told to accept this, it's just the way life runs. But not in the Trump Administration. IF THEY SPIT, WE WILL HIT, and I promise you they will be hit harder than they have ever been hit before. Such disrespect will not be tolerated!"

This inflammatory rhetoric emboldens law enforcement to use brutal methods to subdue the populace. According to the Mapping Police Violence project, law enforcement killed more people in 2024 than any other year for the decade leading up to it and are currently on track to exceed that number this year. Considering that the active-duty military is not even trained in civil peacekeeping, for the sake of our civil dignity we should oppose the use of police and military as the primary response to natural disasters. Such events are times when public infrastructure is pushed to the limit, when people are vulnerable, confused, and desperate. Turning their safety over to an occupying force, emboldened by an executive as bloodthirsty and crass as Trump should motivate us to oppose further militarization of state capacity. The climate will continue changing and it will grow more extreme and less predictable as it does so; we should be lobbying Congress to reduce the DoD budget (and all budgets related to police and prisons as well) and turn those funds over to disaster management and public infrastructure. Those are the projects that will keep us safe.

Ian Mooney is a former president of Veterans For Peace Chapter 91, San Diego, as well as a PhD candidate at the University of Kentucky. Their research focuses on anarchist moral philosophy and new political ontologies. They served in the Afghanistan conflict.



Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump · June 9, 2025, 2:47 PM

Original Post

"If they spit, we will hit." This is a statement from the President of the United States concerning the catastrophic Gavin Newsom inspired Riots going on in Los Angeles. The Insurrectionists have a tendency to spit in the face of the National Guardsmen/women, and others. These Patriots are told to accept this, it's just the way life runs. But not in the Trump Administration. IF THEY SPIT, WE WILL HIT, and I promise you they will be hit harder than they have ever been hit before. Such disrespect will not be tolerated!



Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump · June 10, 2025, 12:39 PM

If there's an insurrection, I would certainly invoke it...If we didn't get involved, right now Los Angeles would be burning just like it was burning a number of months ago...We are not playing around...

common, we must be staunchly opposed to the use of military power as the go-to response by the state, rather than organized and humane relief efforts.

A dangerous precedent is set when the state prioritizes using militarized force to control a population and quell dissent while at the same time dismantling the infrastructure capable of predicting inclement weather and providing rapid re-

lief in emergency situations. The budget recently passed through Congress continues this administration's commitment to defunding federal agencies such as FEMA and redirecting those resources toward already bloated military and police sectors. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been granted a whopping \$170 billion from the recent reconciliation bill, a sum that by itself is more than twice what our closest allies spend on their entire defense budget. The Department of Defense received an addi-

ditional \$150 billion, pushing the total DoD budget past \$1 trillion for the first time. Meanwhile, federal disaster relief agencies are being cut in favor of block grants directly to states that they can manage, or mismanage, as they see fit.

Let's End This Fascist Coup

By Steve Morse

A klepto-oligarchic and fascist coup has occurred in the U.S. No sector of corporate power is exempt from responsibility for this coup; its main drivers, however, have been the petroleum, financial, tech, and military industries; it is buttressed by a fascist movement built on white resentment and nationalism. If we could end this coup tomorrow, it would have done lots of damage already. We can't end it tomorrow, but perhaps we will stop it before it is fully consolidated. The "perhaps" depends on us. Who are the "us"?

The "us" must include large numbers of working-class people and the main sections of organized workers which include official Labor. The "us" must include many other groupings.

Fascist regimes have not lasted forever. Eight-five years ago, many fascist governments existed, including those in Germany, Italy, Japan, Austria, Hungary, Spain, and Portugal—governments that did incredible damage while in power. The last two were defeated in the mid-'70s; the first five were defeated during World War II by anti-fascist popular sentiment, partisans, and armies.

Yet we face dangers beyond what existed in 1940: the planetary climate crisis, which the coup engineers defiantly ignore and aggravate; the worldwide nuclear program that our nation has been most responsible for; the trillion dollars per year of U.S. military expenses, not even counting the interest on debt attributable to wars. Unity to stop the fascist coup here might well be necessary for the survival of our species and so many others.

To do so, we need to do two things: 1) *build wide*—a big tent—to join the many issues and people promoting justice (environmental and climate, economic, racial, gender), peace, sustainability, and democracy, and 2) *build deep*—organize for radical change, to end rapacious capitalism and imperialism—going far beyond a return to what existed during the Biden or Obama presidencies. Working for fundamental change.

When any two of the three movements—climate, labor, and peace—have joined together, new ground has been broken:

Labor/Climate: Over the past decade, there has been headway among some labor unions in addressing the climate crisis. During the United Auto Workers' (UAW) successful Standup Strike in 2023, over 100 climate groups supported the union demands; the UAW in turn committed to not opposing the introduction of green technologies but rather to organizing electric car and battery plants.

Climate/Militarism: The Climate Crisis and Militarism Project of Veterans For Peace began in 2020 to publicize how militarism exacerbates the climate crisis; since then, climate activists have gradually and increasingly addressed militarism.

Labor/Militarism: Soon after October 7, 2023, national labor unions (most part of the National Labor Network for Ceasefire), representing the majority of unionized workers in the U.S., and over 200 local unions endorsed state-



ILWU contingent in San Francisco May Day march in 2008 in conjunction with West Coast port shutdown against war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan. Photo: Internationalist

ments for Ceasefire in Gaza and Israel that took a stand against Islamophobia and antisemitism. Veterans and Labor for Sensible Priorities has gained the endorsement of 64 unions and Labor groups for the People Over Pentagon campaign to cut \$100 billion from the Pentagon budget.

The climate movement has increasingly included Just Transition. This means that workers who are displaced or impacted by a transition from a fossil-fuel based economy to a greener economy would be helped with a switch to well-paying union jobs, living expenses while retraining, or early well-funded retirement, and that affected communities would be helped and compensated.

At least two more developments are needed for Just Transition: 1) The range of transition needs to be extended from fossil fuel workers to workers in the military industries and the communities where these industries are located; 2) the

concept of just transition needs to become so central to the movement away from the fossil fuel/militarized economy that workers can count on it actually happening.

The strongest initiative of workers for environmentalism and against militarism takes us back a half century and across an ocean. In 1976, the 18,000 workers in Lucas Industries in the UK developed the Lucas Plan as they faced cutbacks in the company's military contracts.

To draw up the plan, shop stewards consulted their members and built the plan from the knowledge, skills and experience of the workforce. The resulting plan, developed over a year, included over 150 designs for

alternative products, including wind turbines, hybrid cars, heat pumps, and energy efficient houses.

Mike Cooley, a member of the Lucas Combine Committee who was instrumental in forming the plan, wrote, "As we design technological systems, we are in fact designing sets of social relationships... Either we will have a future in which human beings are reduced to a sort of beelike behaviour, reacting to the systems and equipment specified for them, or we will have a future in which masses of people, conscious of their skills and abilities in both a political and technical sense, decide that they are going to be the architects of a new form of technological development, which will enhance human creativity."

The plan was widely inspirational, but never implemented due to opposition from the company, the British government, and official union leaders. It occurred in an era when military credibility was low following the Viet Nam War, when the environmental movement had taken off, and when rank-and-file workers' movements were active. It was the era when construction workers conducted over 40 strikes—the Green Ban movement—for environmentalism and preserving urban integrity in Sydney, Australia's largest city.

We're not there now. To build the needed unity, we must face the current reality and devaluation of workers' lives in this country.

I will refer to *labor* and *Labor*. By *labor*, I mean how most of us obtain our livelihood: our activity during the workday. In most cases, we don't live for our jobs or want to "bring our jobs home with us"; to the degree that we have time and energy left after our job(s) and the work of maintaining a household, we mostly seek other things: recreation, love life, relaxing with family and friends, sports and exercise, entertainment, study, rest. We may be active in building community and working for a better world. We may struggle with addictions that are common in a society where greed trumps social solidarity, and where war preparation and war cast a large shadow that is not widely acknowledged.

By *Labor*, I refer to workers organized in workplaces, industries or crafts. Labor includes established unions with

continued on page 17 ...



Pentagon

... continued from page 1

water. This helps bring essential nutrients from the ocean depths to the surface areas, where sunlight enables phytoplankton to flourish and reproduce, and where photosynthesis promotes the sequestration of carbon and the generation of oxygen. More than half the oxygen in the atmosphere comes from phytoplankton. Because of these infinitesimal marine organisms, our oceans truly are the lungs of the planet.

More whales mean more phytoplankton, which means more oxygen and more carbon capture. According to the authors of the article in the IMF's *Finance and Development* magazine—Ralph Chami and Sena Oztonun, from the IMF's Institute for Capacity Development, and two professors, Thomas Cosimano from the University of Notre Dame and Connel Fullenkamp from Duke University—if the world could increase phytoplankton productivity via whale activity by only 1%, it “would capture hundreds of millions of tons of additional CO₂ a year, equivalent to the sudden appearance of two billion mature trees.”



ultimately, when we're in a fight, we have to win that fight.”

This logic that “we have to destroy the village in order to save it” prevails at the Pentagon. For example, hundreds of naval exercises conducted year-round in the Indo-Pacific region damage and kill tens of thousands of whales annually. And every year, the number of war games, encouraged by the U.S. Department of Defense, increases.

They're called “war games,” but for creatures of the sea, it's not a game at all.

Pentagon documents estimate that 13,744 whales and dolphins are legally allowed to be killed as “incidental takes”

them by triggering behavioral changes. According to an article in *Nature*, a 2006 UK military study used an array of hydrophones to listen for whale sounds during marine maneuvers. Over the period of the exercise, “the number of whale recordings dropped from over 200 to less than 50,” *Nature* reported.

“Beaked whale species ... appear to cease vocalising and foraging for food in the area around active sonar transmissions,” concluded a 2007 unpublished UK report that referred to the study.

The report further noted, “Since these animals feed at depth, this could have the effect of preventing a beaked whale from feeding over the course of the trial and could lead to second- or third-order effects on the animal and population as a whole.”

The report extrapolated that these second- and third-order effects could include starvation and then death.

The 'Smart Ocean' and the JADC2

Until now, sonar in the oceans has been exclusively used for military purposes. This is about to change. There is a “sub-sea data network” being developed that would use sonar as a component of undersea WiFi for mixed civilian and military use. Scientists from member nations of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), including Australia, China, the UK, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia, are creating what is called the “Internet of Underwater Things,” or IoUT. They are busy at the drawing board, designing data networks consist-

for whale wellness or the climate. And yet, promoters are calling this development the “smart ocean.”

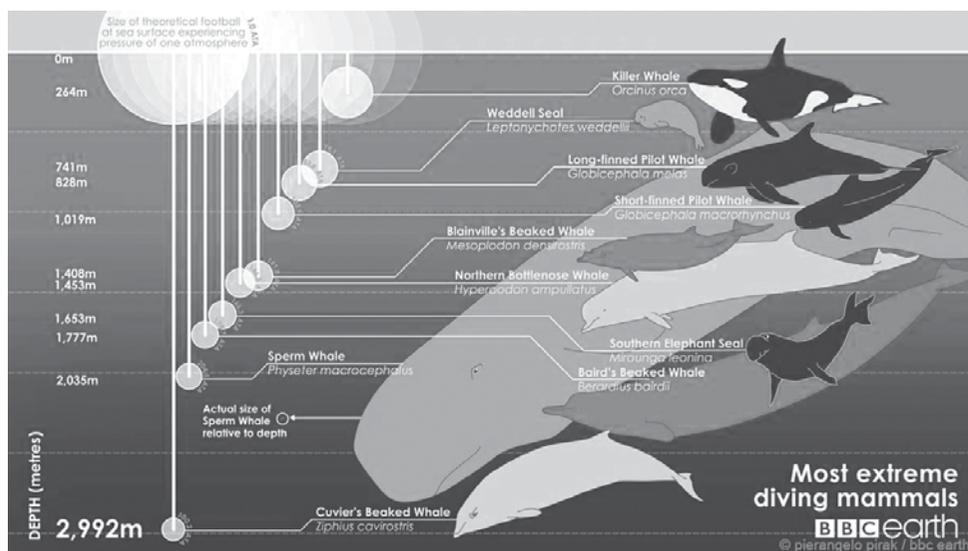
The military is orchestrating a similar overhaul on land and in space. Known as the Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2), it would interface with the subsea sonar data network. It would require a grid of satellites that could control every coordinate on the planet and in the atmosphere, rendering a real-life, 3D chessboard, ready for high-tech battle.

In service to the JADC2, thousands more satellites are being launched into space. Reefs are being dredged and forests are being razed throughout Asia and the Pacific as an ambitious system of “mini-bases” is being erected on as many islands as possible—missile deployment stations, satellite launch pads, radar tracking stations, aircraft carrier ports, live-fire training areas and other facilities—all for satellite-controlled war. The system of mini-bases, in communication with the satellites and with aircraft, ships and undersea submarines (via sonar), will be replacing the bulky brick-and-mortar bases of the 20th century.

Save the Whales, Save Ourselves

Viewed from a climate perspective, the Department of Defense is flagrantly barreling away from its stated mission, to “ensure our nation's security.” While the slogan “Save the Whales” has been banded about for decades, they're the ones actually saving us. In destroying them, we destroy ourselves.

Koohan Paik-Mander is a pan-Pacific



Even after death, whale carcasses function as carbon sinks. Every year, it is estimated that whale carcasses transport 190,000 tons of carbon, locked within their bodies, to the bottom of the sea. That's the same amount of carbon produced by 80,000 cars per year, according to Sri Lankan marine biologist Asha de Vos, who appeared on *TED Radio Hour* on NPR. On the seafloor, this carbon supports deep-sea ecosystems and is integrated into marine sediments.

'We Have to Destroy the Village in Order to Save It'

Unfortunately, U.S. budget priorities, regardless of who's in the Oval Office, never fail to put the Pentagon above all else—even a breathable atmosphere. At a December 2021 hearing on “How Operational Energy Can Help Us Address Logistics Challenges” by the Readiness Subcommittee of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA) said, “I know we're concerned about emissions and other things, and we should be. We can and should do a better job of taking care of the environment. But

during any given year due to military exercises in the Gulf of Alaska.

In waters surrounding the Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean alone, the violence is more dire. More than 400,000 cetaceans comprising 26 species were sacrificed as “takes” during military exercises between 2015 and 2020.

These are only two examples of myriad routine naval exercises. Needless to say, these ecocidal activities dramatically decrease the ocean's abilities to mitigate climate catastrophe.

The Perils of Sonar

The most lethal weapon to whales is sonar, used to detect submarines. Whales will go to great lengths to get away from the deadly rolls of sonar waves. They “will swim hundreds of miles ... and even beach themselves” in groups in order to escape sonar, according to an article in *Scientific American*. Necropsies have revealed bleeding from the eyes and ears, caused by too rapid changes in depths as whales try to flee the sonar, revealed the article.

Low levels of sonar that may not directly damage whales could still harm

ing of sonar and laser transmitters to be installed across vast undersea expanses. These transmitters would send sonar signals to a network of transponders on the ocean surface, which would then send 5G signals to satellites.

Utilized by both industry and military, the data network would saturate the ocean with sonar waves. This does not bode well

peace activist with intimate ties to Korea, the Mariana Islands and California. She co-authored the book *The Superferry Chronicles: Hawaii's Uprising Against Commercialism, Militarism and the Desecration of the Earth with her late husband Jerry Mander and has written for many publications about environment, technology and Asia-Pacific geopolitics.*

Climate Migration, Our Role and Responsibility

By Christina Bagaglio Slentz, PhD

A few months ago, I volunteered with the migrant ministry at Our Lady of Guadalupe in San Diego. I had served there before, but this time, Father Brad Mills, SJ invited the migrants to share their stories. One young man had arrived via the notoriously dangerous Darién Gap, 60 roadless miles of dense rain forest, steep mountains, and swamps along the only path connecting Central and South America. In the dim evening light, he vividly confirmed the horrific details of this stretch. Trauma still obviously weighed heavily upon his heart. He described the physical challenge and scenes of death. After some time, Father Brad gently tried to bring him to a close, but he persisted with several more glimpses of his harrowing journey. It seemed he impressed his story upon us out of a desperate need to share his emotional burden. We leaned in, listened, and tried to lift a little of this weight with our compassion, expressed with grave expressions and nods.

I contemplated the entanglement of factors that contribute to human movement, not the least of which is environmental impact. But what role do we, as individuals, play in these complex global dynamics, and what can we do about it?

The Complexity of Environmentally Related Migration

Because we live in a world that is globally connected, our actions at home carry global environmental implications, sometimes with life-threatening consequences. Therefore, we have a moral obligation to examine these dynamics and think about how our actions are affecting others. Although no one intended to create the conditions of climate change, we now know our overuse of fossil fuels has produced a powerful excess of carbon in the atmosphere, increasing the average global surface temperature of the planet and resulting in extreme climate variability. A secondary outcome is people who are forced to adapt to these new circumstances



Scan the QR code at left to access Catholic Relief Services information on climate displacement.



Silverio Mendez in Barrio El Cedro, Chiquimula, Guatemala, part of a region known as 'the dry corridor' due to extended droughts. Catholic Relief Services works with farmers there to use cover crops to improve the soil's ability to hold moisture. Photo: CRS/Julian Spath

through migration.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) reports over 100 million people are currently displaced from their homes, with climate change playing a key role in the form of increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather. Both sudden and slow-onset events, such as intense flooding, drought, and sea-level rise, have devastating impacts. These hazards threaten housing, livelihoods, and families' ability to grow food to supplement what they can afford to buy. Furthermore, governance is challenged by these chaotic disruptions and conditions of scarcity, opening the door to conflict and violence instigated by warlords, cartels, and other criminal elements.

Most people do not want to leave their homeland. In fact, only the strongest have the capacity to move, with the nearest big city being the most common destination. There, newcomers are typically relegated to the outer slums and find themselves at the whim of gray and black markets for employment. Crossing international boundaries requires even greater capacity in terms of wealth, professional skill, and/or social connections. For the weakest and most vulnerable, movement is not possible, condemning them to life-threatening conditions where they are.

Catholic international organization Caritas reports 20 million people displaced *per year* between 2010 and 2020 due to natural disasters and climate change. 1.2 billion could be displaced by 2050. While this may seem a

Catholic Relief Services reports over 100 million people are currently displaced from their homes with climate change playing a key role in the form of increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather.

wild projection, 3.3 billion *currently* live in countries assessed with high human vulnerability to climate change.

During the season of Lent, we are called to examine our consciences as we do during the Sacrament of Reconciliation and at the beginning of every Mass. We reflect on the times we have made mistakes as well as the times we haven't done what we are called to do. An ecological examination of conscience invites us to consider how well we are living up to our responsibility to care for creation, especially our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. Are we demonstrating love of these neighbors? The Ignatian Solidarity Network offers an ecological examen to guide us through such a reflection (ecologicalexamen.org). Six steps move through a spiritual process of gratitude, awareness, understanding, conversion, and reconciliation before concluding with a prayer giving thanks to God for the gift of creation.

Consider giving this examen a try within your own family this Lent. What might your closing prayer for the earth and all God's creatures look like, and what might you change to ease the suffering and restore the dignity of those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change?

An earlier version of this article was published by The Southern Cross in April 2025.

Christina Bagaglio Slentz, PhD, is the Catholic Diocese of San Diego Associate Director in the Office of Life, Peace & Justice for the Care of Creation.



Scan the QR code at left to access the Council on Foreign Relations feature on the Darién Gap.



Displaced residents of Tacloban City in the Philippines in the immediate aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, during which 6,000 people were killed and over 4 million were displaced. Photo: Alanah Torralba

A member of the Abu Suffiyeh family said of their Gaza farm now, “There is almost nothing to recognize there. It is now the same as it was before: desert. There is no single tree there. No traces of prior life.”

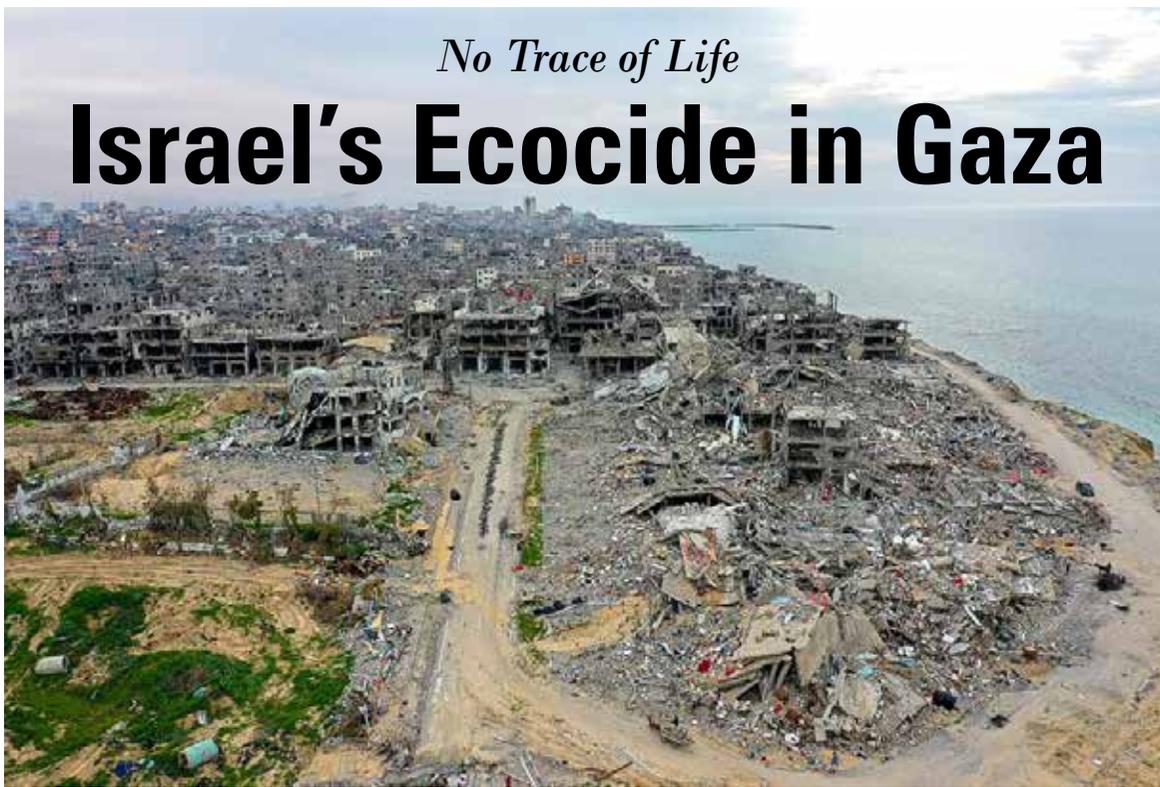
Building on Forensic Architecture’s previous investigation into herbicidal warfare and its effects on Palestinian farmers along the eastern perimeter of the occupied Gaza Strip, this investigation marks Land Day in Palestine by examining the systematic targeting of orchards and greenhouses by Israeli forces since October 2023. Our analysis reveals that this destruction is a widespread and deliberate act of ecocide that has exacerbated the ongoing catastrophic famine in Gaza and is part of a wider pattern of deliberately depriving Palestinians of critical resources for survival.

Since 2014, Palestinian farmers along Gaza’s perimeter have seen their crops sprayed by airborne herbicides and regularly bulldozed, and have themselves faced sniper fire by Israeli occupation forces. Along that engineered “border,” sophisticated systems of fences and surveillance reinforce a military buffer zone.

Since October 2023, Israel’s ground invasion has uprooted most of these orchards and systematically targeted agricultural farmlands and infrastructure throughout the besieged strip.

This investigation builds on our existing collaborations with local farmers’ associations and agricultural workers, to reveal the ongoing Israeli destruction of vegetation in Gaza and its effects on the food security and means of life for Palestinians.

For the past decade, the Abu Suffiyeh family has cultivated



No Trace of Life

Israel’s Ecocide in Gaza

one of the last olive, pomegranate, and citrus orchards along the eastern perimeter of Gaza, in a district called East Jabaliya.

Directly facing the Israeli-imposed buffer zone, these orchards and the lands cultivated by other farmers in this area were often threatened by bulldozing by the Israeli occupation forces, which declared that any vegetation higher than 1 meter in the vicinity of their military “no-go” area is a security threat, and must be flattened. In this way, the continued existence of the Abu Suffiyeh farm and its neighbours confronted the colonial imaginary of a flattened Gazan landscape.

Later, during the 2018 civilian protests known as the Great March of Return and the Breaking of the Siege, the areas surrounding the Abu Suffiyeh farm became a gathering place for protesters confronting the occupation.

Even as the decades-long Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip prevented access to clean water and vital farming materials, through careful and assiduous

tending, Abu Suffiyeh’s orchard nevertheless grew tall.

But the family’s efforts to preserve their land were unable to withstand the recent Israeli military incursions: Satellite imagery from January 2024 shows that the farm was destroyed by the Israeli ground invasion. Earth berms have been raised by bulldozers to create military bases, and a new road has been carved through the landscape. Together, these earthworks have transformed a previously productive Palestinian agricultural area into a colonial military outpost.

Using satellite and aerial images, we were able to trace the changing landscape of the Abu Suffiyeh farm and neighboring agricultural lands over decades. Historical aerial photography shows Palestinian fields and orchards in the area before the Israeli occupation in 1967. Despite the Israeli land expropriation and nearby settlement construction that followed, cultivation continued until the 2000s, when this agriculturally rich area was up-

rooted and flattened to build roads and infrastructure to support the illegal settlements. Following the removal of the Israeli-Jewish settlements in 2005, despite regular attacks and lack of access to key farming materials, Palestinian farmers like the Abu Suffiyeh family were able to successfully restore the land.



Abu Saffiyeh’s land before the war started in 2023 in East Jabballiah

Taken together, this analysis reveals persistent Palestinian cultivation of these farmlands in the face of forced changes to the landscape by the Israeli occupation.

Prior to 2023, Gaza contained 170 square kilometers of agricultural land, accounting for about 47% of its total area. These fields and orchards served as a local source of food security for besieged Palestinians.

Our analysis shows that Israel’s ground invasion has advanced over nearly 50% of Gazan farms and orchards. We used remote sensing to measure the scale of agricultural destruction resulting from this military activity, by comparing the region’s “vegetation index” (an indicator of the health and robustness of plant life, measured by analysing satellite imagery) before and after the invasion. This comparison reveals that as of March 2024, approximately 40% of the land

in Gaza previously used for food production has been destroyed.

The uprooting of agriculture along Gaza’s perimeter may also indicate that the Israeli army is expanding its “buffer zone,” further shrinking the liveable space for Palestinians.

Targeting Agricultural Infrastructure

Vital agricultural infrastructure such as greenhouses has also been systematically destroyed since the launch of the ground invasion.

In the early weeks of the Israeli ground invasion, satellite imagery shows extensive destruction of greenhouses where, between October 2023 and March 2024, nearly one-third of Gaza’s greenhouses have been destroyed.

In total, Forensic Architecture has identified more than 2,000 agricultural sites, including farms and greenhouses, that have been destroyed since October 2023, often to be replaced with Israeli military earthworks.

This destruction has been most intense in the northern part of Gaza, where 90% of greenhouses were destroyed in the early stages

of the ground invasion.

As the Israeli military advances south, destruction of agricultural land and infrastructure moves with it. We observe that 40% of the greenhouses in the areas around the southern city of Khan Younis, where many hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are now displaced, have been destroyed since January 2024.

Military support vehicles and tractors accompany the Israeli ground invasion, routinely building earthworks to reinforce military outposts. Once those vehicles depart, they leave behind a devastated and unliveable area.

The destruction of agricultural land and infrastructure in Gaza is a deliberate act of ecocide and a critical dimension of Israel’s genocidal campaign. The targeted farms and greenhouses are fundamental to local food production for a population already under a decades-long siege. The

continued on next page ...



Livestock Assistance Restores Hope of a Family in Al Dhale’e | International Medical Corps

Loss of Animal and Natural Life in Gaza

By M&S Research Hub

Photos and videos of dead animals, emaciated dogs, starving cats and flocks of birds in Gaza have been circulating on social media since the war began in early October. Many were killed, but others starved to death. The survivors are traumatized. Some also suffer physically in the absence of veterinary care.

The ongoing conflict in Gaza has drawn global attention to its devastating human toll, but often overlooked is the equally tragic loss of animal and natural life. The region, rich with biodiversity and unique ecosystems, faces severe destruction every time violence erupts. As the bombings and artillery strikes take their toll on cities, forests, and agricul-

tural lands, they also devastate the delicate balance of nature.

Gaza's environment is part of a broader coastal ecosystem that stretches along the eastern Mediterranean, hosting a wide range of flora and fauna. But years of war, blockades, and industrial overdevelopment have seriously degraded this natural landscape. War amplifies the damage tenfold.

Habitats such as coastal wetlands, forest patches, and agricultural lands are vital for the survival of countless species, from migratory birds to small mammals and reptiles. War devastates these landscapes, not only directly through bombings but also indirectly through the pollution of air, soil, and water resources.

One significant loss is seen in the destruction of Gaza's coastal



Volunteer with Gaza's sole animal charity, Sulala, tends to animals in besieged enclave. Photo: Sulala

areas. These zones were once critical nesting and feeding grounds for migratory birds like herons, storks, and flamingos. The coastal ecosystem, however, has been decimated by infrastructure damage and pollution from war activities.

Data collected by Palestinian environmental organizations and international researchers show that species populations in Gaza have suffered dramatic declines. Birds, such as the Eurasian hoopoe and turtle doves, once abundant in the area, are now considered endangered due to habitat destruction and environmental degradation. Moreover, small mammals like foxes and porcupines, already endangered due to human encroachment, have seen their numbers dwindle to critically low levels. A number of species in Gaza were already endangered due to human encroachment and environmental changes, but the war has pushed many closer to extinction. The endangered Palestine sunbird, a small but vibrant species native to the region, is now rarely sighted in its former habitat. Other species, such as the Arabian gazelle, have all but disappeared from the region.

Water resources, essential for both humans and animals, are often the first casualty in a war-torn region. Gaza has faced severe water crises due to the destruction of its water infrastructure during repeated bombardments. This has left not only people but also animals without access to clean drinking water.

According to UN reports, about 97% of Gaza's freshwater is undrinkable due to contamination by sewage, agricultural runoff, and seawater intrusion. War has exacerbated this problem, with bombings damaging water treatment plants and sewage infrastructure. This has led to the contamination of groundwater aquifers, rivers, and even the sea, further harming marine life.

Fish populations in the Medi-

terranean off the coast of Gaza have been severely affected by toxic run-off and increased chemical pollution. Local fishing communities report catching fish that are undersized or showing signs of disease, indicating that the war's impact reaches even beneath the water's surface.

Animals, particularly livestock, also suffer from water scarcity. Farmers in Gaza report the deaths of thousands of cattle, goats, and sheep due to lack of clean drinking water and food supplies. The destruction of farmlands during airstrikes and artillery bombardments makes it difficult to grow crops, leading to food shortages for both people and animals.

War doesn't just destroy physical structures; it alters the composition of air, soil, and water in ways that can cause long-term damage to life forms. The use of explosives, artillery shells, and incendiary devices

tillery and bombs also destroys the soil structure, rendering it infertile. This has lasting effects on plant life, as crops fail and wild plants lose their foothold. Many of Gaza's forests and agricultural lands have already suffered from desertification, and the ongoing war only accelerates this process.

Farmers who used to rely on olive trees—a symbol of Palestine and a crucial source of income—have seen their groves reduced to dust. This not only impacts their livelihoods but also eliminates an important food source for many animals.

Biodiversity is crucial for maintaining the health of an ecosystem. Each species plays a role in supporting the environment, from pollination to seed dispersal and pest control. The destruction of habitats, coupled with pollution, inevitably leads to a decline in biodiversity.



The endangered Palestine sunbird

Ecocide

... continued from previous page effects of this systematic agricultural destruction are exacerbated by other deliberate acts of deprivation of critical resources for Palestinian survival in Gaza. These acts include, the well-reported catastrophic and Israeli-made famine ongoing in Gaza, continued obstruction of humanitarian aid destined for Gaza, the destruction of medical infrastructure, the destruction beyond repair of other areas of civilian infrastructure, including bakeries, schools, mosques, churches and cultural heritage sites.

Since October 2023, we have documented the clearing of farms and orchards east of Gaza City belonging to the now-displaced Abu

Suffiyeh family. Between November 2023 and June 2024, satellite imagery shows that the majority of Palestinian homes and farmland within 1km of the eastern perimeter of Gaza had been cleared by Israeli forces, and a new road constructed providing direct military access to Gaza City.

Our analysis of satellite imagery from November 2023 through July 2024 reveals evidence of a new Israeli military corridor east of Gaza City. This new corridor constitutes the second Israeli-built east-west passage through Gaza, after the so-called 'Netzarim Corridor'. Together, these corridors are infrastructural indications of an intended permanent Israeli military presence in the northern parts of the occupied Gaza Strip.

Forensic Architecture is a British research group that investigates state violence.



Palestinian fox and mountain gazelle.

introduces a range of toxic chemicals into the environment.

One study conducted by the Palestinian Environmental Quality Authority found alarming levels of toxic substances such as lead, mercury, and depleted uranium in the air after prolonged fighting. These chemicals settle into the soil and water, affecting both wildlife and plant life.

Birds, in particular, are highly vulnerable to air pollution. Migratory species that pass through Gaza suffer from disrupted navigation patterns due to smoke and chemical-laden air. Additionally, long-term exposure to pollutants reduces their fertility and lifespan.

The repeated use of heavy ar-

A 2022 study by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel found that Gaza's biodiversity had declined by approximately 40% since the early 2000s, with a particularly sharp drop after periods of intense conflict. Experts attribute this to habitat destruction, pollution, and the introduction of invasive species, which thrive in war-damaged ecosystems.

M&S Research Hub is a research and academic institute that organize online and on-site live training in fields of advanced econometrics, statistics, data analysis, and programming for institutes and individuals.

War Dust and Collateral Inhalation: Israel Breathes in Gaza's Dust



By Dennis Kucinich

Gaza is suffering the most intense bombing, per capita, of anywhere on earth, ever.

Over 100,000 tons of bombs have been dropped on Gaza, an area slightly smaller than the city of Detroit, Michigan, resulting in the recorded deaths of at least 60,000 Gazans and injuries to hundreds of thousands.

It is impossible to overstate the effects of the abominable bombing war on Gazans, their lives, their families, their health, and their communities.

What has escaped attention up until now is the undeniable environmental and health effects of the bombing of Gazans on Israelis, as well as on citizens of neighboring states, and the potential harm to U.S. military personnel in the region.

A study of explosion physics based on declassified Department of Defense data, as well as blast temperature data and consequent emissions; a review of wind patterns, together with publicly available data of health effects from 9/11, as well as data gathered from U.S. veterans of the Persian Gulf War, yield a shocking conclusion.

Israel, in executing the unprecedented bombing attack on Gaza, is, in effect, bombing itself, with grave consequences for the public health of its people. What is being visited upon Gaza does not stay in Gaza.

The sustained bombing of Gaza pulverizes stone, heavy metals, and the human body. The vaporizing of human beings under extreme heat and pressure combines with dust, water vapor, and metallic particles the size of microns, all blasted upwards, aerosolized, wind-driven across borders, into Israel and surrounding countries.

The unlimited bombing of Gaza has created an unparalleled ecological and biomedical feedback loop. Israel exhales death in Gaza and inhales the Gaza it has vaporized.

Israel, in bombing neighboring Gaza,

is breathing in its own fallout, along with the vaporized remains of its declared enemies. The external consequences of violence becomes internalized. The substance of the oppressed communes with the oppressor.

On a clinical level, breathing in bioaerosols can compromise human immune systems. Breathing in ultrafine particles from non-biological war dust can cross the blood-brain barrier and contribute to

Israel, in bombing neighboring Gaza, is breathing in its own fallout, along with the vaporized remains of its declared enemies. The external consequences of violence becomes internalized. The substance of the oppressed communes with the oppressor.

neurodegenerative disease.

Israelis and Palestinians share a common atmosphere. They inhale the same war dust, from bomb materials, carbon soot, and the fine particle remains of vaporized Gazans.

Human cremation occurs at temperatures between 1,400°F and 1,800°F. The blast temperatures of the bombs identified as being dropped on Gaza—MK-84 bombs: 4,496°F; GBU-39s: 4,892°F; BLU-109s: 3,632°F—far exceed this range. In comparison, blast furnaces used to melt steel operate at 2,500°F to 2,800°F.

People at the epicenter of such bombings in Gaza are instantly turned into dust. This is a factor confounding the determination of exactly how many people have perished in Gaza since October 2023. How can an accurate body count be achieved if bodies have been turned to smoke and ash?

Let's look at 9/11. The total confirmed dead: 2,753. Almost 40% of the victims were never identified, as their bodies were

fragmented or vaporized, reduced to dust.

When a bomb hits its target—for example, a tent city—the high-temperature explosion can vaporize a person so thoroughly that microscopic particles of DNA and loose molecules are suspended in air, mingling with dust and smoke as bioaerosols.

These biologicals—DNA and fat in human tissue—turn to carbon, black dust, and smoke. The minerals contained in bones and teeth, skeletal dust, go airborne. Frag-

ments of cells can float in the air, bubbles holding fat, bone, and broken DNA strands travel with the wind and are breathed in dozens of miles from the blast site.

It is not only the superheat that destroys the human body. The explosive force of a bomb, in terms of pounds per square

When a bomb hits its target—for example, a tent city—the high-temperature explosion can vaporize a person so thoroughly that microscopic particles of DNA and loose molecules are suspended in air, mingling with dust and smoke as bioaerosols.

inch (psi), can produce vaporization at the blast site, an impact equivalent to a plane plunging into the earth at high speed.

As 100,000 tons of bombs have been dropped in Gaza, the matter destroyed takes a different form, as toxic pollut-

ants carried aloft in gas, dust, vapor, and particulates.

Specifically, toxic quantities of cadmium, nickel, lead, mercury, and arsenic are released into the air, together with dioxins, furans, PCBs, (polychlorinated biphenyls); PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) and VOCs (volatile organic compounds).

One calculation indicates that 100,000 tons of bombs, exploded in a densely populated area of Gaza, can generate between 800,000 and 1.2 million tons of pollution.

Add to this the dust of human remains and you have extreme airborne consequences carried by the wind, directly into Israel, particularly the central and northern regions, and far beyond.

There are relevant comparisons for the health effects of a tremendous explosion in an urban area. A month after 9/11, people in Manhattan began to develop chronic coughs.

A longitudinal study of members of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) revealed that after six months, firemen began to suffer from chronic bronchitis; others saw the onset of pulmonary fibrosis.

Two years after 9/11, a higher incidence of thyroid, prostate, breast, and other cancers arose among those exposed to 9/11 contaminants. Early-onset neurodegenerative, Alzheimer's-type symptoms presented after five years or longer.

Based on epidemiological data from studies of those near the people and buildings destroyed on 9/11, certain health effects can be anticipated in Israel.

The people of Sderot, Netivot, Be'er Sheva—all within a short distance of Gaza—are at high risk of long-term health effects of the bombing. Ashkelon and Tel Aviv have been exposed to environmental consequences, as has northern Israel and even Jordan.

While Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection operates air-monitoring stations at sites proximate to Gaza, it would be instructive, given the intensity of the bombing, to see if the effects of war-related pollution are being fully disclosed to the Israeli public.

Given the unprecedented levels of bombing in Gaza, the types of bombs used, their explosive power, the extent of physical destruction, the extraordinary number of casualties, the creation of large plumes of black smoke containing the genetic material of burned and vaporized Gazans, the people of Israel—on the

other side of the Gaza boundary—will likely experience increased levels of respiratory illness, asthma-like and other pulmonary diseases, and a sharp increase in cancer as a direct result of being exposed to war-related pollution.

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Why Is Black Rain Falling on Iran and How Dangerous Is It?



Black smoke rises after fires broke out following U.S.-Israeli attacks targeting oil storage facilities in Tehran March 8. Photo: Fatemeh Bahrami/Anadolu.

US-Israeli strikes on oil facilities have caused black rain to fall on Tehran, but the black smoke filling the air is likely to be a bigger health risk

By Alec Luhn

The skies in northern Iran were dark with smoke on March 8 as the U.S. and Israeli bombing campaign against the country continued, and black rain even fell on the capital Tehran.

The catastrophic scenes have raised concerns about threats to civilian health in Iran and other countries.

What happened?

Overnight on March 7 and 8, U.S.-Israeli strikes hit Iran's oil facilities for the first time since the war started Feb. 28, igniting large fires in four oil storage facilities and an oil transfer centre in Tehran and the nearby Alborz province.

Flames loomed over Tehran in the night, and black smoke billowed over the city during the day. Soot covered the streets and cars and filled up people's balconies. Most alarmingly, thick black raindrops fell onto roofs and streets in the capital, which until recently was experiencing a long drought.

The authorities warned of acid rain, and

local people complained of their throats aching and their eyes burning.

The black rain was probably caused by the smoke from the oil facility fires. When precipitation falls through such polluted air, it can wash soot and other particles out of the smoke and carry them to the ground in the form of black raindrops.

That could have serious environmental and health impacts, but scientists are missing key details, starting with the chemical composition of the smoke, says Anna Hansell at the University of Leicester in the UK.

What's in the black rain?

Unlike burning petrol in your car, much of the oil would probably have been thicker and less refined, and the combustion process would have been much less thorough. As a result, smoke from the fires could have carried aloft a hugely varied mix of burnt and unburnt particles, most of which would be harmful to humans if ingested in large enough amounts.

"It's going to be quite a nasty toxic moisture," says Hansell.

First of all, the smoke would have contained partially and fully burnt carbon, or soot, as well as polyaromatic hydrocarbons. Oil also contains sulphur and nitrogen, which, when combusted, forms sulphur and nitrogen oxides. Those can react with moisture in the air to form acid rain.

These substances are probably creating a smog that's even thicker than the smog that blanketed London in much of the 20th century, most infamously in 1952.

"This is potentially several orders of magnitude larger than the London smog," says Hansell.

Because missiles were hitting buildings, the smoke is probably carrying tiny particles of materials like concrete, glass and plastics as well. Finally, the explosions may be throwing droplets of oil into the air that are then raining out.

"I'm not clear if the blackness is solely caused by burning diesel, where you get this sort of greasy black smoke that's being carried in the raindrops, or whether you've actually got some very small droplets of oil as well," says Hansell.

Will it be harmful to people?

If black rain gets into the water supply and people drink it, it could cause gastrointestinal symptoms, depending on its quantity and chemical make-up. People could experience stomachaches, heartburn or diarrhea.

More worryingly, if nitrogen and sulphur dioxide are forming acid rain, that could irritate the eyes and throat, similar to what some residents have already reported.

But the biggest threat may be the smoke rather than the black rain. Simply inhaling large amounts of small particles can severely impact health, while the specific chemical composition is often a secondary concern.

"If you get raindrops on your skin, yes, there will be some potentially carcinogenic compounds on your skin, but you can wash that off," says Hansell. "If they get into your nose and mouth, they might

persist for longer, but very fine smoke particles in the air can penetrate deep into the lungs and potentially get into the bloodstream."

High levels of particles in the lungs can raise all-cause mortality and cause a variety of conditions such as cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, chronic lung disease and diabetes.

The bioaccumulation of toxins in the environment could also contaminate fish, farm animals and crops, potentially causing long-term health problems.

Could it threaten other countries?

Oil droplets and larger particles tend to fall out of the atmosphere relatively quickly. But small particles can travel hundreds or even thousands of kilometres on the wind, such as dust particles from the Sahara that are currently reaching the UK. Particles lofted by the Iran strikes could even potentially reach Washington, DC, although they would probably be in very low concentrations at that point.

But smoke from the fires is more likely to reach other parts of Iran and countries in the Middle East, depending on the wind and atmospheric conditions.

"Any large-scale environmental damage that you do like this, doesn't recognize borders, so what's going into the water system, what's going into the air, it's going to be carried elsewhere," says Hansell.

Alec Luhn is a climate journalist who has reported for The Atlantic, The Guardian, National Geographic, Scientific American, TIME, and VICE News.

Monstrous Nothing

By C. Douglas Lummis

Fool: Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear: No, boy. Nothing can be made of nothing.

So far as we know, in the vast space of the universe this planet is the only place supporting life. The only place where plants transform light into life.

The only place where there is an atmosphere just the right weight to support a butterfly in flight.

The only place where there is water just right for a fish both to swim in, and to get oxygen from.

It is a great pity that we are killing it.

Not, “If we’re not careful we might kill it”. The killing has begun. A big part of our world has been pronounced dead; a bigger part is known to be dying. .

We can’t say we hadn’t been warned. This has been public knowledge for decades. In 1972 the Club of Rome published *The Limits to Growth*. The title, at that time, was startling. In an age in which “growth”, “development”, “economic expansion”, “technological progress” seemed to have taken control of the historic process itself, carrying us automatically to a prosperous future. It took courage to announce that this journey is coming to an end. But that is what, in a quiet voice, the authors announced.

The book asserted that if the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years.

The planet has a limit: this was the part that so many found unbelievable. The planet we lived in felt infinite. And anyway, many of us thought, they gave us a hundred years; a lot can happen in a hundred years. Now, about half of those hundred years have gone by, and, yes, a lot has happened. We have recycling now, and are separating garbage, and using some alternative energy; some of the worst polluted cities and waterways have become cleaner; the language of ecology is familiar to most everybody. But the main trends pointed out in *The Limits to Growth* are continuing. And we have crises that the Club of Rome authors could not at that time foresee: global warming, climate change, polar ice melting, oceans rising, increasing super-typhoons, hurricanes and tornados, Brazil, Australia and California burning, and three major nuclear power plant meltdowns, among other wonders. The crisis remains what it was, “resulting,” as the authors put it pithily, “from exponential growth in a finite space”.

From the human perspective, planet earth is vast, but the space on it that supports life is far smaller. Called the biosphere, it includes the earth beneath our feet as far down as plant roots, burrowing critters, insects, bacteria and mold can be found and extends over our heads to the point where there is not enough oxygen, and the temperature is too cold, to support any birds or insects who might venture to go there.

It is this biosphere that is, so far as we know, the only place where life is possible, and it is this biosphere that is steadily shrinking. Every patch of ground paved over with concrete or asphalt is subtracted from the biosphere. Every lake, waterway, or section of the ocean declared dead has also been subtracted from the biosphere. It is not only individual lives, or even species, that are endangered, but the immensely complex system that supports those forms of life.

This is danger different from the dangers earlier conservationists sought to warn us of. What John Muir wanted to preserve was “wilderness”, nature hitherto untouched, as was believed, by human civilization. Gazing at this wilderness, Muir believed he was witnessing God’s glory. Yosemite, Yellowstone, Hetch Hetchy, these were God’s masterpieces. We should treat them as cathedrals, protect them from desecration, and more urgently, from destruction. That God’s creation as a whole, the infinitely complex set of interrelationships, interdependencies, wildly improbable coincidences, cause- and-effect relationships and just-in-time

rescues that together operate to produce our living “world” – that this might go haywire and start to shake itself apart was surely beyond the imaginations of people of that generation.

And so it remains with most of us today. We recycle, we do our best to buy eco-friendly products, we turn down the air conditioner and turn off the lights when we leave the room, but we also raise children and don’t cry out in fear when they give us grandchildren. We cooperate in long- term projects, we join institutions on the assumption that they will still exist when our grandchildren are old. From our actions, it’s clear that we really don’t believe that the catastrophe predicted by the environmentalists is going to happen.

But there is another endpoint hinted at, though not often spelled out. If what our civilization is destroying is the mind-boggling, impossible-yet-actually-occurring set of interactions on the planet among chemicals, elements in solid, liquid and gaseous states, and rays entering from outer space that taken together make life possible – then the logical endpoint is a situation where there



is no longer any life at all.

I am not here predicting that this is the most likely outcome; I have no idea what is most likely. It is, however, the natural “if left to itself” endpoint to the processes we see going on around us. Looking at that endpoint, or at least attempting to do so, can help us to understand what exactly it is that we are doing now.

We can imagine an earth with a surface something like the moon’s, about which astronaut Buzz Aldrin, at the moment he became the second person to set foot on it, gave us the honest words, “magnificent desolation.” But anyway (we can think) even if planet Earth comes to look like that it will still be flooded with light in the daytime, and at night the sky will be brilliant with the moon and the stars. Sunrises and sunsets will continue as always, even if there will be no one there to see them.

We can imagine that, because we have life. But for there to be what we understand as a sunrise requires a living being in a position to see it. Viewed from outer space, there are no sunrises. The earth revolves, and the sun’s rays strike the surface that faces it. What we call a sunrise is something experienced by a living organism with the sense of sight, standing on the surface of the planet at the moment the earth’s rotation brings that patch of ground around to where the sun’s rays will fall on it.

No life, no sunrise.

The same is true of light generally. For Muir, light was sacred. Especially when it shone on his beloved mountains and forests, it was a gift of God. It is no refutation

of that view to point out that what we call “light” comes into existence only when what we call “light rays” encounter a living being equipped with eyes complete with lenses, retina, optical nerve and a brain to decode the signals sent it by these gadgets (or some other set of gadgets equally capable of sensing those rays).

Without living organisms with eyesight, it would not be accurate to say that the universe had descended into darkness (to judge it as “darkness” would require eyesight, and a knowledge of “light”). It would be more accurate to say that the universe had become invisible, but even that isn’t quite right. It is the existence of living beings that produces the phenomenon of visibility. With no life, nothing is “invisible”; rather, there is no such experience as visibility.

The same is true of the other senses: sound, touch, smell, taste, and any sixth sense you might wish to believe in.

Still, we would want to respond, the universe would continue to exist as always. Surely it would be wildly anthropocentric to claim that without the form of life that exists on planet Earth, there would be nothing. Even without us, the planets and stars will continue to move, the universe to expand, myriads of permutations and

combinations would continue to form and dissolve until eventually somewhere, somehow, perhaps life would reappear. Things would happen. Time would go on.

Maybe. But we need to remember, as St. Augustine brilliantly analyzed long ago, that what we understand as “time” (and, a fortiori, “motion”) also takes its form by the way we grasp it as sentient beings.

We, of course, can still have a Stephen Hawking image of the great expanding universe packed with wondrous objects and producing colossal events, even in the areas where there is (so far as we know) no life. But again, yes, we can think those things: because we have life.

It’s natural that we don’t think about a world with no life in it. Such a situation is unthinkable. Unthinkable not only in the sense that, like a nuclear holocaust, the idea is unbearably frightening. It is that, but it is unthinkable also in the sense that it simply cannot be thought. There is nothing there to think, nor is there anything there to do the thinking. It is, as Edna St. Vincent Millay put it in her meditation on possible doomsdays, to be “lost in whistling space without a mind/to monstrous Nothing yield your little breath”, except that without a living ear to hear it, there will be no whistling.

C. Douglas Lummis was an officer in the Marines for three years, the last in Okinawa. His writings include the books Radical Democracy, A New Look at The Chrysanthemum and The Sword and Japan’s Radical Constitution. He is a member of Veterans For Peace and helped found the Okinawa chapter of VFP, of which he is president.

By Brian Ashley

COP 30: Entrenching the Crisis of Climate Politics

As the dust settles after COP30 in Belém, the scale of the failure becomes impossible to ignore. The world is on a path toward catastrophic warming, ecological systems are collapsing, and millions across the Global South face annihilation, not in the distant future, but today. The world's political and economic elites arrived in the Amazon to negotiate when the 1.5°C target had already slipped out of reach, and they left with little more than symbolic gestures. No binding emissions cuts. No serious plan to phase out fossil fuels. No meaningful climate finance for adaptation. No accountability for the destruction already unleashed.

The gap between official international climate policy and the lived reality of a warming world has never been wider. In Belém, that gap became a chasm.

The world is heading towards roughly 2.8°C of warming by the end of the century. This is not a scenario compatible with human dignity—or even, for many, with life itself. Rising seas, extreme heat, drought, and flooding are eroding food security, displacing communities, and driving inequality to historic heights. The economic costs of climate disasters are skyrocketing, but the social and human costs are immeasurable: lives lost, livelihoods shattered, ecosystems irreversibly damaged.



"Our land is not for sale." Indigenous protestors gather outside COP30 in Belém, Brazil

cial spending, privatize public goods, and surrender sovereignty to creditors. Governments continue pouring billions into militaries, fossil fuel subsidies, and the enrichment of corporate elites. The cur-

pathways to keep warming below 1.5°C. Nor did it include a fossil-fuel phase-out; oil-producing nations blocked binding language, and the final deal focused on voluntary road maps instead. What it did offer was an expanded space for corporate actors, carbon traders, and mining interests seeking to greenwash extractivist projects.

What is staring society in the face—and what too few scientists are willing to acknowledge—is that the climate-crisis regime cannot be separated from the logic of capitalism. So-called "green transitions" simply open new arenas for profit while remaining embedded in the same global system of accumulation. Renewable energy may be expanding, but it does not replace fossil fuels; it merely adds to an energy expansion rather than driving a real transition.

Climate summits have become a "safety valve" for capital. They offer the illusion of action, while allowing the core exploit-

ative relations to continue. For workers and communities already suffering climate breakdown, it is indisputable that the COP has failed them.

COP 30 adopted the Belem Action Mechanism for a Global Just Transition (BAM)—a proposed new institutional arrangement under the UNFCCC designed to address the current fragmentation and inadequacy of global just transition efforts. Trade unionists and workers should have no illusions about this mechanism. It has no finances or concrete plans to protect workers and communities affected by energy and other decarbonizing initiatives. There are no resources for a re-industrialization in harmony with the protection of nature. So workers and other vulnerable sectors will simply be left behind. Words and policies in COP statements are a dime a dozen. Reality is harsher.

If COP30 cannot deliver the mechanisms for decarbonization or social protection, then the hope must lie in movements of people: workers, peasants, indigenous people, women, youth, and the urban poor. Outside of a global mass movement rooted in national realities, the necessary steps to confront the climate crisis will not occur. Yet such a movement cannot be built if it fails to address the immediate needs of the working classes and the poor. The fight for climate protection and ecological justice must therefore begin with the fight for life itself—for clean water, decent housing, jobs, food, and security against the elements.

Right-wing climate denialists exploit the desperation of the poor to drive a wedge between ordinary people and climate action. They present environmentalism as a threat to livelihoods rather than the path to survival. To win the majority, our movement must link ecological transformation with social justice. We must demand the redistribution of wealth and power away from the billionaire class, big tech, and ruling elites who plunder the planet for profit.

Brian Ashley is a member of Zabalaza for Socialism and serves on the Amandla! editorial collective in South Africa.

COP30 offered no mechanisms for enforcement, no firm deadlines, and no clear pathways to keep warming below 1.5°C. What it did offer was an expanded space for corporate actors, carbon traders, and mining interests seeking to greenwash extractivist projects.

These worsening crises play out in a world shaped by neoliberal austerity and debt dependency. Countries battling climate shocks are forced to cut so-

rent political economy accelerates both warming and war.

COP30 offered no mechanisms for enforcement, no firm deadlines, and no clear

Schoolgirls

By Bill Ehrhart

The students are all girls ages 7 to 12. The first attack comes about 10:00 a.m. The second comes shortly thereafter as first responders, those who've survived, and others nearby rush to try to help—a deliberate tactic called "double tap" designed to inflict maximum carnage. One graphic photo shows a child's severed arm, another a bloody backpack.

This is what passes for foreign policy. This is how we defend our nation. This is what our taxes are buying. This is what Congress refuses to stop.

This is what the world sees of us. Take a good look. This is what we are.



Pentagon Budget Drives Military Emissions to All-Time Highs

Expanding NATO Spending Will Be Even Worse



By Patrick Bigger and Lorah Steichen,
Climate and Community Institute

Military budgets are rising globally even faster than global temperatures. Research from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute shows that in 2024 global military spending hit more than \$2.7 trillion up by almost exactly \$1 trillion in the last 10 years. This is, of course, a catastrophe for anyone who truly wants a more peaceful world.

There is no greater shared challenge than the climate crisis. Average global temperatures have surpassed the 1.5 degree of warming target that was agreed upon in the Paris Accords of 2015, and total global emissions are going up and continue to set all-time highs. Militaries and military manufacturing are responsible for around 5.5% of global emissions—but as some countries, particularly in Europe and China, start to more rapidly decarbonize their economies, that proportion could grow considerably as military spending continues to rise. These emissions are fueled by activities like flying fighter jets and building resource-intensive weapons systems that have no immediate pathway to decarbonization. In the summer of 2025, two new massive infusions of money into militaries worldwide were announced—in the US, Trump’s One Big Beautiful Bill Act sends Pentagon funding over \$1 Trillion for the first time, meanwhile in Europe, NATO member states agreed to increase military spending to 5% of GDP by 2035, representing a massive increase for most member states. These new funding infusions will have dire consequences for the climate.

The U.S. military is the world’s largest institutional emitter of greenhouse gases. Its vast global operations—from jet fuel consumption and overseas deployments to domestic base maintenance—produce

immense carbon pollution, as does the manufacturing of all the weapons, ships, and planes that it operates. In 2023 the Pentagon spent approximately \$860 billion, with carbon emissions estimated at nearly 152 megatons, including not just the Pentagon’s operations, but the full supply chain emissions from the U.S.’s vast Military Industrial Complex.

The human cost of this funding increase will be immense, not just in terms of what that money might have been used for, but in as far as direct harms. Using calculations from the 2023 EPA social cost of carbon, 2026 Pentagon emissions will cause \$47 billion in economic dam-

There is no plausible path to ‘greening’ the military; military operations, particularly flights and military industrial manufacturing, are highly polluting. The best and only pathway to reducing military emissions is through cutting budgets.

ages (adjusted to 2025 dollars). Bloomberg news recently showed that U.S. is already spending nearly \$1 trillion per year on disaster recovery, much less the untold damage and misery that each additional 0.1 degree of warming will heap on the Global South who have done little to cause the climate crisis.

Total emissions of a staggering 178 megatons would make the US military and its industrial apparatus the 38th largest emitter in the world if it were its own nation, more than Ethiopia, a country of more than 135 million people.

Meanwhile, in late June NATO countries capitulated to the Trump Administration demands that all member states

dramatically scale up military spending. Member states agreed to ramp up military spending to 3.5% of “resource core defense requirements” and spend an additional 1.5% of GDP to, “protect critical infrastructure, defend networks, ensure civil preparedness and resilience, innovate, and strengthen the defense industrial base.” These new figures represent a dizzying increase in the absolute and relative spending on militaries and associated industries across Europe.

Another briefing led by the Transnational Institute published in June 2025 did the math on the spending and climate consequences of the new spending targets.

In 2024 only Poland was spending 3.5% of GDP on its military; if the 5% of GDP target was met across NATO this year and continued until 2030, total spending would eclipse \$19 Trillion. The emissions associated with that ramp up in military spending are equally astonishing. At 5% of GDP across NATO members starting in 2025, emissions from 2025 to 2030 could hit 2.7 gigatons—that is, 2,760,000,000 tons of CO₂. That is a sum on par with the annual emissions of India, the third largest national polluter in the world.

Beyond the direct climate costs of out-of-control military spending-driven emissions, there are also untold costs of pumping public money into the war machine

instead of climate action, social welfare, healthcare, or international development, or any of the other untold number of public priorities that have been starved by decades of austerity.

The United States is the largest historical contributor to the climate crisis, and Europe (including the EU, most of which are NATO members) are the second largest historical emitter. Rapid decarbonization is the only plausible way to stave off increasingly severe impacts of the climate crisis.

Policy Implications

Increased military spending is a disaster for working people in general and it will continue to accelerate the climate crisis at precisely the time the U.S. and Europe need to take the opposite approach by investing in renewable energy, winding down fossil fuels, and supporting communities that will be impacted by the transition to a zero carbon economy, as well as supporting climate transitions across the Global South, where countries that are least responsible for the crisis are bearing its most intense impacts.

There is no plausible path to ‘greening’ the military; military operations, particularly flights and military industrial manufacturing, are highly polluting. The best and only pathway to reducing military emissions is through cutting budgets.

Investing in Demilitarized Climate Resilience

The \$150 billion increase in Pentagon spending just between 2023 and the Big Beautiful Bill could fund vast civilian adaptation and decarbonization—public transit, renewable energy, or climate-safe housing—each with far lower emissions and greater social return. The \$47 billion a year in economic damages resulting from new Pentagon emissions alone could kickstart a social housing authority that would create new green social housing in perpetuity, including nearly 2 million units in its first decade—an investment in genuine human security. Europe is a bit further along on these priorities, but has collectively dragged their feet in the name of ‘fiscal responsibility’—increases in European military spending even at the cost of rising budget deficits show that these concerns were always surmountable, and if policy makers were taking the climate crisis seriously, money could be allocated to meet the moment.

Dr. Patrick Bigger is the Research Director of the Climate and Community Institute, the Co-Executive Director of the Transition Security Project, and a Research Policy Fellow at the University of California-Berkeley. His work on the US Military’s role in the climate crisis won the Virginia Mamadouh Outstanding Research Award in Political Geography.

Lorah Steichen is the Global Systems and Policy Manager at the Climate and Community Institute. Previously she worked at the National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies and holds an MA in Geography from the University of British Columbia where she focused on the relationship between militarism and environmental conservation.

War Dust

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posed to toxic airborne substances present at a microscopic level.

Added to this direct hazard is the ongoing recirculation of wind across the vast hellscape to which Gaza has been reduced. That, too, will sweep up and redistribute the contaminants from the over 50 million tons of debris from the land of Gaza to the land of Israel.

At this point, the calamity which has befallen Gaza as a result of incessant bombing will visit, in various forms and degrees of harm, southern and central Israel, western Jordan, the northeast Sinai Peninsula, northern Egypt (Delta and Cairo), Lebanon, Cyprus, southwestern Syria, northwestern Saudi Arabia, southeastern Turkey, Crete, Greece, Sicily, and Malta. Additionally, sea spray can carry aerosolized particles clear across the Mediterranean Sea.

The United States has a substantial number of naval forces in the eastern Mediterranean, including two aircraft carriers, the *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* and the *USS Gerald R. Ford*, as well as numerous other assault ships.

U.S. military installations are present at Incirlik, Turkey, Naples, Italy, Cyprus, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. All face “war dust” pollution hazards as a re-



2000-pound GBU-31 Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) are transported to the flight deck of the USS Harry S. Truman March 21, 2003 in the Mediterranean Sea. The bombs were used in Iraq. U.S. Navy via Getty Images

sult of the bombing of Gaza.

I know well the adverse health consequences suffered by U.S. servicemen and women who served in the Persian Gulf War, 1990–1991.

Veterans of that war came to my congressional office complaining of constant pain, neurological, musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal and respiratory symptoms, all of which were ignored or covered up by the Department of Defense.

As a member of Congress, over the objections of the Department of Defense, I took up the cause of veterans who suf-

fered what came to be known as Gulf War Illness, a multi-symptom condition still affecting, to this very day, nearly 245,000 veterans of the Persian Gulf War.

Bernie Sanders and I worked together in Congress to obtain funding for research into GWI, which is now a medically recognized, war-related condition.

When you see the measurable, catastrophic effect that war environments can have on those who serve, and the measurable catastrophic effect of those proximate to the 9/11 attacks, and the indefensible obliteration bombing of Gaza and its

people, you may come to an understanding of the wholly fallacious notion of the containment of war and why I assert Israel is bombing itself.

The bombing of Gaza has created a human health crisis that cannot be ignored any longer.

There must be an immediate cease-fire on humanitarian and ecological bases.

- The U.N. must urgently address the collapse of the Palestinian public health system, including the implications of the war for respiratory diseases and cancers among survivors.

- The U.N. must lead a Transboundary Environmental and Human Health Assessment of the Immediate and Long-Term Implications of War Dust, which will include transboundary assessments of the toxic environmental effects of the war.

- Monitoring stations must be set up. The people of the world have a right to know what is in the air they breathe.

International humanitarian and environmental law must, at last, be enforced.

U.N. representatives must determine a path forward.

Israel and the United States must consider the far-reaching consequences of the decision to attack and bomb the people of another country.

The tortured mindset that licenses the extinction of Gazans is now a spectre haunting the entire world, with its ghoulish designs on Iran.

Human rights and compassion are not considerations in bombing Gaza residents. Perhaps enlightened self-preservation can be introduced as a means to stop the bombing, once and for all.

The war against Gaza must end, and perhaps through the suffering of Palestinians, and understanding the regional and global health impact of bombing, we may understand why it is time to call an end to all wars.

*Dennis Kucinich is an American politician who served as mayor of Cleveland (1977–79) and as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1997–2013) and who sought the Democratic nomination for president in 2004 and 2008. He has written a number of books including *The Division of Light and Power*, *The Courage to Survive* and *A Prayer for America*.*

Fascist Coup

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collective bargaining contracts; it includes workers who have self-organized in companies such as Starbucks, Trader Joe’s and Amazon, but who are unable to obtain a contract due to intransigence of employers and to U.S. labor law, which makes successful organizing very difficult.

The devaluation of both labor and Labor in the U.S. are rampant. Working-class women often work two shifts: one for wages and one in maintaining a family and home. Their sense of solidarity for human values may be strong, yet their contributions to both labor and Labor are undervalued. While this attitude comes as no surprise from billionaire oligarchs, it also unfortunately exists among many of the “us” who need to be united in reclaiming justice, sustainability, peace, and democracy. The devaluation of labor dovetails with how racism and sexism function with their disregard of the lives and contributions of women and people of color.

While white workers have often been spared the worst effects of class war in the U.S., all workers have been sold a bill of goods. Labor has not always acted in a progressive manner, but it can be a bulwark against racism and sexism: the 2023 UAW strike would not have been successful had there not been a functional unity of workers across racial and gender lines. Moreover, Labor fights for all its members to have a living wage and social benefits; when a

strike is successful, the whole working class gets a boost.

Leaders of Labor are increasingly women and people of color. One such leader is Dolores Huerta. Co-founder and a long-time leader of the first farmworkers’ union since the 1930s, she has organized for the last 70 years on many fronts to oppose the war on the working class. She evolved over time to offer strong leadership on immigration and women’s issues. She has worked to bring the labor and climate movements together.

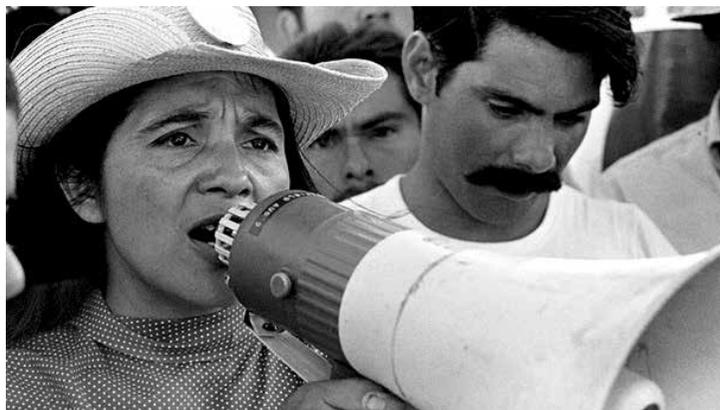
The current regime is attacking every part of the federal government that serves people, including climate crisis mitigation, solar and wind energy, science, and workers’ safety and health. Following this path, climate disaster will worsen.

As we look toward unity to end the oligarchic, fascist coup, the Federal Unionist Network (FUN) shows a way forward. This new movement has brought together federal workers from different unions; FUN has built unity between workers facing their jobs being axed and the people who benefit from the programs cut or threatened. The 83,000 VA workers whose jobs were slated to be cut (now listed as 30,000), and the veterans who use VA services have a common interest; FUN has helped bring them together at protests at VA hospitals and Tesla dealerships.

In Argentina on April 10, the unions held a one-day general strike against the austerity program of the fascist Milei government. In Italy, where the fascist Giorgia Meloni heads the national government, workers shut things down on June 20, and included anti-militarism and anti-war demands. These one-day strikes did not end fascist control of their governments but are important steps.

What about the United States? The UAW, backed by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and other unions, has called for a coordinated ending of contracts for May Day 2028. This was a groundbreaking step; however, the speed of both the climate crisis and the move toward fascism warrant united action sooner than 2028. What will it take to build the massive movement needed to change course, to be on the path toward a sustainable, equitable, and peaceful society? We will hone the answers while building that struggle.

Steve Morse is a retired union tradesperson and Viet Nam veteran. He is active with the Labor Working Group and Climate Crisis and Militarism Project of Veterans For Peace.



Dolores Huerta

No MAS

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CODEPINK Women Against War, World BEYOND War, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the National Priorities Project, and others to educate people into action.

We are expanding the No MAS campaign by supporting local efforts through the "Wake Up to Climate Crisis & No MAS Tour" beginning in September 2025 in San Diego, then crisscrossing the state to protest at air shows, participate in panel discussions and host showings of the feature film *Earth's Greatest Enemy*. These events will be held in conjunction with local universities and will include local experts as well as VFP representatives. The inaugu-

ral tour will end in the Santa Barbara area after three air shows and 10 campus visits. Tours of the Midwest and Atlantic Coast are planned for 2026, with actions at 10 air shows and visits to additional colleges.

Military air shows may be only a small part of the problem, but they are representative of the military's huge contribution to the climate crisis and to our collective ignorance of it. Military air shows are dramatic, noisy, smelly, dangerous, and highly visible but offer an excellent opportunity to open broader discussions about military pollution and fiscal irresponsibility with our neighbors. Curtailing military air shows would be a small, yet symbolic, step to acknowledge the significant threat of the climate crisis.

Gary Butterfield was drafted into the U.S. Army during the American war in



Vietnam; he became a conscientious objector and opposed the war while on active duty. He is also a member of San Diego 350.org and is dedicated to exposing the U.S. military's role in worsening the climate crisis.



Photo: Ellen Davidson

Evangelicals

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ity talks to mostly skeptical Houston Geological Society audiences. I know the blowback from folks who covet their large paychecks. But these people are not stupid. A few diehards try to argue "the science" until they are handed their heads when they present at a university seminar. In a short conversation af-



ter one of my climate talks, a retired HGS officer said he wasn't worried about the increasing heat because he had AC. When I asked about the power going off, he said, "I have a generator." I followed up with a query about running out of fuel. "I have an underground storage tank." I often wonder if that former HGS officer, who is now probably deceased, had his AC, his generator, and his storage tank flooded during Hurricane Harvey. I also wonder if he had grandchildren.

It is not necessary to read the numerous IPCC reports or attend the U.N. climate meetings to recognize that the climate is changing. All one has to do is read or watch the news of wildfires, heat domes, and floods to see that the climate is changing drastically. On the other hand, Texas Gov. Gregg Abbott dismissed climate change as a factor after Hurricane Harvey's death and destruction in Houston back in 2017. I am sure Abbott will again dismiss climate change as a factor in the July 4 drownings of dozens of children and over a hundred others in Kerrville, TX, during a "freak" storm and flood event.

"You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows," voiced Bob Dylan in 1965. If you have lived on this planet for the last 20 years, you should recognize that the climate is changing. Those who don't or insist on ignoring it must have faith that they and their families will not be impacted by the worsening climate. Meanwhile, MAGA members have faith that the billionaire con man Trump will make their lives better.

"And so it goes."—Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five*
Jim Rine is a Steering Committee member of VFP-Climate Crisis and Militarism Project. He served in the U.S. Army 1969–1973 in West Germany. He is a retired research geologist and currently an adjunct professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Geology, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

Militarism

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troops." The No MAS! campaign works to expose military air shows for what they are: polluting displays that glorify militarism and machines of war while emitting shocking amounts of emissions.

Since joining the campaign, 350.org has worked with VFP to co-host a virtual training about why and how to protest military air shows and create a guide for activists to support them in organizing their own protests. In 2024, we protested nine military air shows across the country with other climate and peace groups including Extinction Rebellion, CODEPINK, and World BEYOND War. We also collected and delivered over 5,600 petitions signatures to the Secretaries of the Navy and Air Force calling on them to cancel climate-wrecking air shows that glorify death and destruction. Our organizations attempted to deliver these petitions to the Pentagon in December but were turned away.

We've continued to oppose military air shows in 2025 with our protest of the

We need more intersectional cross-movement organizing like this to take on the forces that are fueling genocide, ecocide, and planetary destruction.

Blue Angels in Annapolis, MD, in May. We encourage more climate and peace activists to work together to protest military air shows across the country—there are over 60 Blue Angels and Thunderbirds air shows every year.

While military air shows are just one component of the massive military industrial complex, protesting them shines a light on the connection between militarism and the climate crisis, creates opportunities for climate and peace activists to work together, and sets the stage for more joint campaigns between our movements. We need more intersectional cross-movement organizing like this to take on the forces that are fueling genocide, ecocide, and planetary destruction.

Taylor Smith-Hams is a U.S. senior organizer with 350.org, a global climate justice organization. She has worked to advance environmental and social justice through advocacy, art, and movement building for over a decade.



If you are interested in organizing a protest at an air show near you, use the QR code at left to see our handy guide to help you get started. VFP and 350.org organizers are happy to coach you and provide support to make sure your protests are successful.



A Ukrainian tank opens fire on targets

Ukraine-Russia

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cles burning fuel in massive quantities. Wildfires produce about one-fifth of the total, also generating local air pollution. Damage to energy infrastructure such as power plants and electric grids also causes greenhouse gas emissions as well as radioactive and toxic releases.

Sulfur hexafluoride, 24,000 times stronger as a greenhouse gas than CO₂, has been released in the Russian attacks on the Ukrainian electricity grid and power stations. Methane, 86 times stronger as a greenhouse gas than CO₂, escaped in vast amounts in the sabotage of Russia's undersea Nord Stream pipelines. Award-winning journalist Seymour Hersh has speculated, based on insider sources, that the pipelines were destroyed in a U.S. covert operation. Fracked liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the United States has partially replaced the Russian gas that flowed through Nord Stream I and II.

Lesser although still significant contributors of carbon/methane emissions include travel by refugees fleeing the war, rerouting of civil aviation due to closed air space over Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus, and the limited reconstruction of buildings and infrastructure during the war.

The eventual reconstruction of destroyed housing, infrastructure, and industry will also generate many more metric tons of CO₂e—none of which would have been necessary if this war had been prevented.

All this is happening as global temperatures have risen 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels breaching the upper limitis agreed upon at the 2015 Paris Climate Accord. The level of CO₂ in

the global atmosphere has risen to nearly 430 parts per million, well above the safe ceiling of 350ppm, last experienced in 1986. The Earth has had its hottest surface temperature in the last decade, and global heating shows no signs of slowing, let alone stopping or reversing, according to NASA and other scientific organizations.

Environmental Impacts

For those who love forests, war brings a special horror. Ukraine's woodlands are a mix of oak, elm, birch, hornbeam, ash, maple, pine, linden, alder, poplar, willow, and beech. Forests absorb carbon dioxide,

these dolphins. Other marine mammals and species of fish are killed by explosions, naval mines, pollution from military vessels, and other warfare impacts.

The destruction of the Nova Kakhovka Dam has created long-term environmental damage to the region. The dam's demise sent 18 cubic kilometers of reservoir water down the Dnipro River, contaminating drinking water and overwhelming wetlands.

An even more serious long-term climate/environmental impact is the breakdown of transnational cooperation on these regional environmental issues, and on the global climate crisis as a whole. Increased NATO countries' spending on

the likely harms which extend far after the bombing and shooting stop. Maybe humanity should demand an EIS before a threatened war breaks out. The leaders of nations at war talk about protecting their countries even as they make the decisions which will ruin the wellbeing of people and lands—this is an ancient truth. What is newly true in the 21st century is that their decisions are sending, into our shared, irreplaceable atmosphere, the gasses that worsen an already accelerating global climate crisis.

The words of Irish author and World Beyond War member Caroline Hurley should reverberate in every discussion of this war. "Since every aspect of military activity is by definition destructive, war is never harmless, particularly at a time when millions are dying because of climate disruptions."

Postscript

"Promoting a Sustainable and Peaceful World," as the VFP tagline on our website says, includes advocating strongly for negotiations, ceasefire and a peace agreement, with international support for regional rebuilding and climate/environmental mitigation. Veterans For Peace is a member of, and supports the work of, the Peace in Ukraine Coalition. May peace prevail in Eastern Europe!

Janet Weil is a military family member who serves on Veterans For Peace's Climate Crisis and Militarism Project. She is also active in the Extinction Rebellion movement and her local chapter of CODE-PINK in the Coachella Valley, Southern California. She is the originator of the slogan "militarism fuels climate crisis."

Dr. James Rine of Veterans For Peace and Marcy Winograd of CODEPINK contributed to this article.

The destruction of Nova Kakhovka Dam has created long-term environmental damage to the region. The dam's demise sent 18 cubic kilometers of reservoir water down the Dnipro River, contaminating drinking water and overwhelming wetlands.

produce oxygen, stabilize soil, and provide habitat for wildlife from black bears to rare orchids. In 2024, wildfires in the climate-changed, dryer-than-usual summer consumed 227,584 acres of forest in Ukraine, at or near war-fighting zones (not including other forest fires far from battles).

The Black Sea borders on six nations—Ukraine, Russia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Turkey, Romania—and is a source of fishing, recreation and trade for the region. One of the cruelest environmental impacts has been the massive suffering and killing of three species of dolphin, as a result of naval warfare that may lead to extinction of

their militaries, at Trump's insistence, could increase greenhouse gas emissions annually by almost 200 metric tons, according to a Conflict and Environment Observatory in-depth study.

Conclusion

A Ukrainian proverb reminds us: "The truth doesn't drown in water and doesn't burn in fire." But human beings and other living beings do drown and burn, both from wars and from the breakdown of a stable climate. No war starts with an Environmental Impact Statement predicting

The Insanity of the Russia-Ukraine War in the Global Climate Crisis



Firefighters work to extinguish fire following shelling at an oil storage in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in the town of Shakhtarsk (Shakhtyorsk) near Donetsk, Russian-controlled Ukraine.

By Janet Weil

During the burning summer of 2025, as heat domes in the Northern Hemisphere crank up the daily temperatures to sometimes lethal highs and war's flames in Eastern Europe continue to roar, a Russian proverb is particularly apt: "War is a fire that consumes everything in its path."

The Russia-Ukraine War is an unanticipated obstruction in the world's desperate race against time to stabilize CO₂ and other greenhouse gases (aka CO₂ equivalent, or CO₂e) emissions and to mitigate and/or adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis. As recently seen in the flash floods in Texas and New York City, these impacts include formerly unknown magnitudes of rainfall. The extreme weather events are caused by increased CO₂e levels in the atmosphere caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Russian and Ukrainian militaries, like all militaries, run on petroleum products—jet fuel, bunker fuel, kerosene, gasoline (petrol). Military jets, warships, tanks, and missile launchers are the ultimate gas-guzzlers.

In "The Environmental Impact of Russia's War in Ukraine," published by the Harriman Institute at Columbia University, author Taylor Zajicek describes damage from a Russian missile that went astray, striking near the Danube River in Romania: "... the charred ground it left behind also reminded me, an environ-

mental historian, of the conflict's ecological spillovers. That black stain near the Danube's bank is just one speck in a landscape that is being beaten, poisoned, and torn every day."

That "speck" is just a tiny example of the many far-reaching environmental/climate impacts of the Russia-Ukraine War.

Beginning in 2014 with Russia's annexation of Crimea, the two nations became entrenched in a low-level territorial struggle over control of the eastern Ukrainian Donbass region. An all-out hot war exploded when Russia (with help from Belarus) invaded Ukraine in February 2022, after the Biden Administration refused to

listen to, let alone give Putin assurances that Ukraine would not join NATO. The Russian government had long considered this extension of NATO to its borders a red line. While the appalling human carnage—hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded on both sides—has received massive U.S. and worldwide media

coverage, the climate and environmental impacts of an entrenched war in Eastern Europe have gone largely unreported by mainstream, non-scientific media.

However, experts are investigating climate and environmental impacts on Ukraine as the war burns. Their findings on conflict-generated carbon emissions, destruction of agricultural lands, destruction of fauna, the knowledge gap on military emissions, and other issues are finally being reported and discussed at the annual United Nations climate summits. The UK-based Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS), an allied organization of Veterans For Peace's Climate

referred to as "Europe's Amazon."

Poisoning and burning all that it touches, the Russia-Ukraine War grinds on in its fourth year. In a speech to the 50-nation Ukraine Defense Contact Group in February, Secretary of Defense Hegseth declared, "The bloodshed must stop. And this war must end. President Trump has been clear with the American people—and with many of your leaders—that stopping the fighting and reaching an enduring peace is a top priority." That now-ignored "priority" has slid out of sight, as the U.S. still supplies Ukraine with weapon systems including Patriot missiles, and Putin insists on acceptance of Russia's territorial gains in any peace deal.

As a member of the climate-crisis-denying (and exacerbating) Trump Administration, Hegseth predictably did not mention reducing the harms caused by the war's CO₂ emissions as one of the urgent reasons to "reach an enduring peace."

Others, however, are paying attention to climate impacts of the conflict. According to a study by The Initiative on Greenhouse Gas Accounting of War, 230 metric tons of CO₂e have been added to the global atmosphere since the war began in February 2022. This is equal to the annual emissions of Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia combined. The sources of these 230 metric tons of emissions are varied. The largest source of CO₂e results from tanks, jets and other military vehi-

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For those who love forests, war brings a special horror. Ukraine's forests absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, stabilize soil, and provide habitat for wildlife from black bears to rare orchids.
