

THE U.S. MILITARY AND CLIMATE CHANGE BIG OIL & THE PENTAGON USE MOST FOSSIL FUELS, WORST POLLUTERS

Without a doubt, the greatest threat to the planet Earth at this moment in history is worldwide environmental degradation and destruction. The environment is threatened by not just climate change, but also pollution of the air, land and water, habitat loss, mass extinction of literally millions of species of plants and animals, and loss of topsoil. And the U.S. military, and the military-industrial-banking complex, plays a major in destroying the planet's ability to sustain life.

The U.S. military is the world's largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels and the world's worst producer of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and many other toxic pollutants. The U.S. military accounts for almost 80% of the federal government's fossil fuel consumption. If the Pentagon were a country, it would rank 47th in annual fossil fuel consumption, ahead of 140 countries. Not included in this GHG emissions total are those produced by the Pentagon's massive use of concrete, electricity consumption, and other resources that also produce GHGs. The production of concrete is one the major sources of GHGs and other forms of pollution.

Since the onset of the so-called "Global War on Terror" in 2001, which is better characterized as the U.S. Global War of Terror, the Pentagon has created more than 1.2 billion metric tons of GHGs from fossil fuel consumption, with 400 million metric tons produced directly from war-related use of fuel. The Pentagon's GHG emissions are generally overlooked in climate change studies because it is difficult to get consistent data.

in an effort to get U.S. buy-in, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol exempted the U.S. military and UN/U.S. sanctioned military activities from the GHG totals, as a concession to U.S. imperialism. Despite this concession, the U.S. refused to sign the 1997 Kyoto Protocol which was signed by 191 countries while the U.S. Congress passed a law exempting the Pentagon from GHG limits. The U.S. military exemptions were eliminated in the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, which the U.S. initially agreed to but has since announced its with-

drawal from the Agreement.

The U.S. has more than 800 bases in more than 130 countries, imposing its neocolonial agenda on the peoples of the world. In addition, there are 6,000 military facilities within the U.S. Using its network of military installations, the Pentagon steals the world's resources, particularly fossil fuels, on behalf of Wall Street and the capitalist class and insures that such resources remain the private property of the billionaire class.

Pentagon pollutes the world

In August 1945, the U.S. military shocked the world by dropping atomic bombs on the civilian populations Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. The U.S. is the only country to use nuclear weapons in war. To obtain uranium for manufacture of atomic bombs, hundreds of mines were opened and the radioactive uranium tailings were dumped on Navajo land, resulting in extensive radioactive contamination of the Navajo people, their land and their water. Today, about a third of the Navajos have no access to clean water with the water table 600 feet underground contaminated with radioactivity. The Navajo Nation deserves reparations beyond the pittance allocated by the federal government to address the irreversible damage that they have experienced.

During the Vietnam War the Pentagon engaged in chemical warfare when it sprayed Agent Orange and other chemical defoliants on people and vegetation from airplanes, trucks, and hand-held sprayers, in an attempt to destroy the jungle and food crops. Agent Orange contained dioxin, which Dow Chemical Company described as "one of the most toxic materials known ...". Dow Chemical knew that dioxin could be eliminated by slowing down the manufacturing process and lowering the production temperature, but would delay production and reduce company profits.

The Pentagon also demanded rapid, high-quantity manufacture of Agent Orange and was not concerned because the poison was to be used on Vietnamese people, "the enemy." Up to four million Vietnamese were exposed, and forests, rubber plantations, mangroves, wildlife, crops and freshwater fish were destroyed. Today, Agent Orange continues to wreak havoc in Vietnam. The Vietnamese

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government says as many as 3 million people have suffered illnesses because of Agent Orange, while the Red Cross of Vietnam estimates that up to 1 million people are disabled - or have health problems. Birth deformities continue today with a half a million children born with birth defects, almost 50 years since Agent Orange was last sprayed in Vietnam.

Another poison used by the Pentagon is depleted uranium (DU), which is a radioactive metal and is chemically toxic. According to Leuren Moret, a nuclear weapons researcher:

"The fact is that the United States and its military partners have staged five nuclear wars slipping nukes under the wire" by using dirty bombs and dirty weapons in countries the US needs to control. "Depleted uranium aerosols will permanently contaminate vast regions and slowly destroy the genetic future of populations living in those regions, where there are resources which the US must control, in order to establish and maintain American primacy."

Beginning in 1991, the Pentagon is known to have deployed DU weapons in the 1991 Iraq war, the 1999 war against Yugoslavia, in Afghanistan beginning in 2001, in Iraq again beginning in 2003, and in Libya in 2011. The U.S. also provided DU weapons to Israel during the 1973 Israeli/U.S. war against Arab states, but it is not known if the weapons were used. It is suspected that Israel has used DU weapons in attacks on Gaza in the 21st century.

And finally, there is the huge amount of toxic waste produced by the Pentagon. It has spread PFAS (per- and

polyfluoroalkyl substances) throughout the environment, contaminating water supplies. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists,

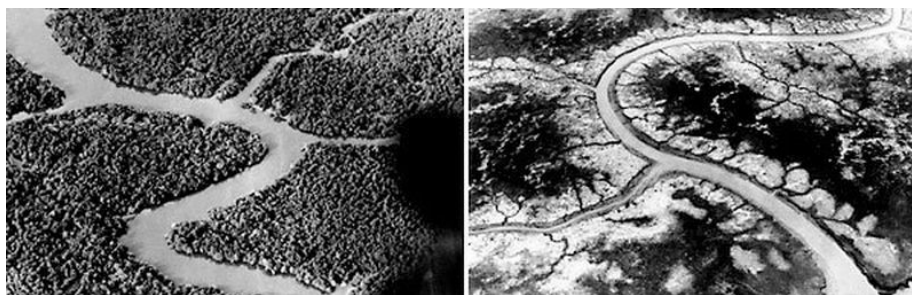
"PFAS exposure is associated with a host of health impacts, including various cancers and reproductive and immune system problems."

The Pentagon generates 750 million tons of toxic waste per year, exceeding the waste produced by the top three international chemical companies. The Pentagon has created over 20,000 hazardous sites in the U.S. alone.

Pentagon must be dismantled

The Pentagon budget, more than \$650 billion annually and overwhelmingly supported by Democrats and Republicans, exceeds the total spent by the next seven largest military budgets combined (China, Saudi Arabia, India, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and Germany). This is more than 50% of the discretionary federal spending. The Pentagon budget does not include nuclear weapons, veterans, and CIA/NSA/Homeland Security/national security state expenditures.

Waging war is obviously catastrophic for the Earth's environment and peoples. The Pentagon's budget must be redirected to fund programs such as Green New Deal and to provide reparations to the Global South and victims of U.S. /NATO imperialist wars. Furthermore, the private property rights of Wall Street banks and corporation to the world's resources must be overturned as we struggle against climate change and environmental destruction and build a movement to save Mother Earth. ###



Before-and-after air views show the effects herbicides such as Agent Orange had when sprayed during the Vietnam war.

Above left is an unsprayed mangrove forest, date unknown, and the image on the right is of the same area in 1970. It was sprayed in 1965. | Photo: Chicago Tribune/AP

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