

NO WARMING, NO WAR



Climate and Militarism Intersections



U.S. Militarism brings violence to communities across the United States and around the world, while degrading our environment and contributing directly to climate change. Climate change and militarism intersect in a variety of alarming ways.

The Pentagon is a Major Polluter

Warfare is an extremely carbon-intensive aspect of the United States' militarized economy. With extensive infrastructure and operations both domestically and abroad, the largest industrial military in the history of the world is also among the biggest polluters:

- The US Military is the single largest institutional consumer of oil. One of the military's jets, the B-52 Stratocruiser, consumes [about as much fuel in an hour](#) as the average car driver uses in seven years.
- While only a portion of the United State's total emissions, the Pentagon's annual greenhouse gas emissions are greater than the greenhouse gas emissions of entire industrialized countries, [such as Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal](#).

The United States has a Well-Known History of Fighting War for Oil

The fossil fuel industry also relies on militarized state violence to uphold its operations around the globe. Those who fight to protect their lands from extractive industries are often met with state and paramilitary violence:

- Oil is the [leading cause of war](#); an [estimated one-quarter to one-half](#) of all interstate wars since 1973 have been linked to oil. By far the greatest militarization has been in the Middle East, where more than half of the world's oil reserves are located. The U.S. military [spends an estimated \\$81 billion](#) a year to protect the world's oil supplies—and that's even before accounting for the Iraq war.
- Those who fight to protect their lands from extractive industries and the infrastructure are often branded as “eco-terrorists” and met with militarized violence. More than three people were murdered on average each week in 2018—and even more criminalized—[for defending their land and the environment](#).
- The Department of Defense and other federal agencies [transfer surplus equipment to local police departments](#). United States law enforcement agencies have received 452,335 items worth \$1 billion in surplus military equipment from the Department of Defense, such as rifles, armored vehicles, and military aircraft.

Climate Change and Border Militarization are Inextricably Linked

Climate change compounds existing conflicts, causes more political instability, and dislocates unprecedented quantities of people. Immigrant justice is climate justice, and challenging militarism is critical to upholding both:

- Between 2008 and 2015 an average of [21.5 million people were displaced annually](#) from the impact and threat of climate-related hazards. At least 200 million people are [estimated to be displaced](#) by the middle of the century due to climate change.
- The relationship between climate change and migration has been [well-documented by the Departments of Defense](#) and Homeland Security, who have long been preparing for global instabilities and associated migration by building walls, hiring armed guards, and militarizing borders to keep migrants out.

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- According to a 2003 Pentagon-commissioned [report](#), “Borders will be strengthened around the country to hold back unwanted starving immigrants from the Caribbean islands (an especially severe problem), Mexico, and South America.”
- The U.S. is [responsible for more greenhouse gas pollution](#) than any other country since the Industrial Revolution. By turning climate change into a security issue, those who have [contributed the least](#) to the climate crisis not only [suffer the most from its consequences](#), but are also [targeted with security responses](#) to those climate impacts.

Over-Investment in the Military Comes at the High Cost of Under-Investing in Other Needs, Including Climate

Proposals to meaningfully address the climate crisis are often characterized as unrealistic pipe dreams. The same scrutiny is seldom applied to military spending. The reality is that there’s no shortage of funds for a just transition to a green economy:

- [An estimated](#) \$6.4 trillion has been spent on the U.S. War on Terror since 2001. To put that in perspective, the cost to shift the US power grid to 100% renewable energy over the next ten years is an estimated \$4.5 trillion. Instead of funding endless wars, we could have transformed our fossil-fueled energy system, with money to spare.
- The Pentagon monopolizes the funding we need to meaningfully address the climate crisis. For instance, just 11% of the Pentagon’s 2019 budget—about \$80 billion—[could produce enough wind and solar energy](#) to power every one of the almost 128 million households in the United States for one year. That’s just shy of the [estimated \\$81 billion](#) a year to protect the world’s oil supplies.

Workers Need a Way Out

Solutions to the climate crisis must also address the absence of an adequate number of well-paying jobs, poverty, inequality, and other prevalent socioeconomic concerns of our time. Communities depend on employment in the military and various sectors of the military industrial complex. Like in the fossil fuel industry will need to transition into new jobs, there must be alternative pathways to good employment for individuals and communities whose livelihoods are tied to the military. We must convert a major share of US manufacturing and engineering from building weapons of war to building a 100% clean energy economy:

- The Department of Defense [calls itself](#) America’s largest employer. [Over 1,300,000 Americans](#) are on active military duty and over 800,000 more are in the military reserves. Another 1,600,000 Americans work for companies contracted by the US military.
- Across the board, funding the green economy instead of a bloated military budget would be a net job creator. [If we shift \\$125 billion](#) from defense spending to green manufacturing, an additional 250,000 jobs would be created

Racism and racial oppression form the foundation for both the fossil fuel economy and the militarized economy.

Neither could exist without the presumption that some human lives are worth less than others, and racial justice would undermine the foundations of both.

- Militarized policing in the United States disproportionately targets Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. Both Black Lives Matter and Indigenous-led Standing Rock protesters, for example, faced [militarized state violence in response to resistance](#). There are also [documented links](#) between police violence and environmental injustice in the United States.
- Violent land dispossession and resource extraction have posed major threats to Indigenous sovereignty and survival. Indigenous peoples are also disproportionately targeted by militarized violence when fighting to protect their lands from extractive industries. While Indigenous people make up about 5% of the world’s population, they [account for about a quarter](#) of those murdered for defending land and the environment.