A SHORT PRIMER ON MILITARISM AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

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War Resisters' International is a global network of grassroots pacifist and antimilitarist organisations, working together for a world without war.

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INTRODUCTION

For many, the past years have in various ways been defined by climate change and war. Our everyday lives carry signs of escalating climate and military crises; seemingly infinite stories of ecological collapse and of armed conflict. Whether we are living through such violences ourselves, or coping with news flashes and social media images of burning forests and buildings bombed to rubble, ours is a time of global war and global warming. Most often, however, we do not think of these processes as connected. The truth is, they very much are. But how so?

In this zine, we trace the paths, from industrial highways to muddy forest trails to desert ruts and tropical grooves, along which militarism and climate crises come together:

- Section 1 introduces some concepts and background for thinking about the relationships between war, militarism and climate breakdown.

- Section 2 offers a wide range of stories of impact, resistance and alternatives: where and how are the impacts of military and climate crises felt? What resistance is there to military power, armed violence, social injustices and ecological harm? What are the alternatives?

- Section 3 draws on these concepts and stories and suggests how to take action: against militarism, for social and climate justice.

Overall, we hope this zine serves as a toolbox, giving some initial direction and know-how as to where to search for signs of how militarism and armed conflict mix and mingle with environmental conditions, from global boiling and biodiversity loss to toxic pollution. Yet, amid such contexts of harm there are also an infinitude of stories of regrowth, of hope and mutual aid; of landscapes left for dead coming alive again, and of communities coming together to resist both armed and environmental violences and resow the social and ecological conditions for collective thrival (thrive/survival).

Importantly, this toolbox is not meant to be – couldn't possibly be – exhaustive. The examples explored with each concept represent but a limited selection of climate-military links. As will become clear from the stories of impact and resistance, these links are plenty more than we can fit in a zine – ranging from subtle to direct, overt to covert and reaching far and wide. Our aim is not to tell the whole story, but to equip and inspire you to go look on your own for the particular ways in which military power, ecological harm and social injustices might be coalescing around you – and what to do about it.

Today's climate action spaces are littered with false solutions: the over-emphasis on individual behaviours that distracts away from climate change's (colonial capitalist) systemic roots; racist and badly evidenced arguments around overpopulation and resource scarcity that ignores social and economic inequities; the reliance on science and technology to miraculously fix all our climate problems and allow our current economic system to go on unchanged. As peace organisers we are witnessing the emergence of yet another false solution in the

rise of militarised responses to both climate breakdown and social unrest. Our conclusion is clear: **there will be no just transition unless we also take on – and deconstruct – militarism and military power.** Effective action toward climate justice requires demilitarisation and the dismantling of the military-industrial complex.

Peace, climate and justice movements have only just begun to understand how deeply connected our causes are, both the harms that we address and the solutions we envision. We hope you will join us in weaving together these intersections and relationships, communicating within your organisations, movements and communities, and building strategies for imagining and enacting a demilitarised future rooted in climate justice principles – together.

KEY CONCEPTS

MILITARISM

Militarism can be understood as "the preparation for war, its normalisation and legitimation." How do societies prepare for war in times of peace? How do governments, bankers and arms companies justify huge investments in fighter jets and warships while funds for national healthcare, social housing and education echo hollow? Most simply, militarism refers to the processes by which war and armed conflict become possible. These are material processes, such as the allocation of defence budgets, the production and trade of weapons and the construction and maintenance of armed forces and international military alliances. But militarism and militarisation are also processes of the mind: the need for a national army, a military industry and a bloated defence budget must be argued for and justified somehow. As such, militarism also involves the attitudes and social norms, the cultural preferences and rhetorical tools that make war not only a political priority but a desirable social activity. Patriarchy, racism, capitalism and extractivism – the excessive extraction of the Earth's "resources", from natural goods to animals to people's labour – are all systems of power, harm and exploitation that inform the norms that make war desirable, even necessary.

CLIMATE CRISES

We use climate crises as an umbrella term for the broad range of environmental crises and conditions that we are faced with today. Though most visible in public debate and political policy, climate change and global warming from greenhouse gas emissions represent only one of these crises. Equally pressing are the ecological harms of species extinction, biodiversity loss and pollution (such as toxic and radioactive waste), all caused by human activities. Importantly, and as this zine will make clear, climate and ecological harms are always also social harms. The communities most exposed to climate shocks are often those with the least resources to respond and with the least responsibility for causing ecological breakdown. Similarly, climate actions that do not consider social inequities – such as the construction of industrial-scale wind farms on indigenous lands or large-scale mining of green transition minerals like lithium and copper devastating local ecosystems and communities – only perpetuate systems of social harm and injustice, and do as little for the planet as for most of its peoples. When discussing and thinking through these predicaments we often jump between different terminologies: climate, environment, ecology; change, breakdown, collapse, disaster, emergency, damage, crisis; action, adaptation, transition, justice… Whatever the terminology, our underlying message in this zine remains the same: to bring home the urgency, severity and lived realities of social and ecological harms not to justify more of the same economic, political and military solutions, but to generate just system-transformative change.

SECTION 1: MILITARISM AND THE CLIMATE CRISES

CONCEPTS AND BACKGROUND

Let's begin with some conceptual tools and background knowledge for understanding the relationship between militarism and the climate crisis. We are considering this relationship through three key areas:

1. **Spaces and technologies** - In what physical spaces do militarism and climate crises collide?

2. **Words and concepts** - How are language and ideas being used to frame the choices available to us?

3. **Strategies and visions** - How are militaries understanding climate issues? How are they incorporating the climate crisis into their future planning?

1. SPACES AND TECHNOLOGIES

In what physical spaces are climate crises intersecting with militarism? And how can we look to the technologies of war – such as arms and the materials required for their making – to grasp the material realities behind militarism, and their huge ecological impact?

An obvious first place to look for how military-climate links manifest in space – become material – is in the earth's systems: in our soils, air and waters.

THE CARBON COSTS OF WAR

Militaries are huge consumers of natural resources, from energy to minerals, metals and beyond. This grants them a significant influence over the relations and politics governing energy use and resource extraction globally. Given their immense appetite for fossil fuels, Western militaries in particular – from Washington to London to Brussels – have also played a crucial historical role in the development and maintenance of the global fossil fuel economy. Naturally, militaries are equally huge polluters.

The combined carbon emissions from the world's militaries – the military greenhouse gas "bootprint" – are estimated to be as high as 5.5% of total global emissions. If they were a country, this would make the world's militaries' the fourth largest emitter globally – with a national carbon footprint bigger than Russia's. To bring this point home: the United States (US) Department of Defence (DOD) is the single largest institutional consumer and emitter of fossil fuels in the world, while the British military-industrial sector has an annual carbon bootprint of more than 60 smaller-size countries. Relatedly, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) – spearheaded by the US and the United Kingdom (UK) – is responsible for more than 50% of global military spending. Given investments in new technologies and equipment or expanded military missions, military spending is a significant contributor to military greenhouse gas emissions.

This applies equally to non-Western militaries. The four biggest military spenders after the US are China, Russia, India and Saudi Arabia. Together they account for 23% of global military spending, and militarism is on the rise in all four nations. The first seven months of Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine caused about 100 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent – matching the total emissions over the same period from an industrialised country like the Netherlands. Even higher, the emissions from the first 120 days of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza exceeded the annual emissions of 26 individual countries.

Still, there is a huge gap in military emissions data as militaries remain exempt from reporting on – and therefore reducing – their emissions to international climate action bodies like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The magnitude of military emissions and the lack of mechanisms to report, regulate and hold states accountable for the carbon costs of their military activities makes this emissions category an essential aspect of climate injustice, exacerbating what resistance movements have labelled **CO2lonialism**.

THE ECOLOGICAL COSTS OF PRODUCING WEAPONS

Yet, the harmful environmental impacts from warfare and military practice go far beyond carbon emissions. Militaries are also key contributors to forms of environmental degradation associated with biodiversity loss. Across the extraction zones of steel and copper, to uranium mills and lithium refineries, military training grounds and weapons testing sites, the construction and maintenance of military force cause large scale deforestation, desertification, soil and freshwater erosion, wetland and habitat loss. A great way to trace military-environmental impacts – war's toxic tentacles – is to follow the weapons. From the mining of military minerals, metals and ores to a weapon's production, testing, use and disposal: the life cycle of weapons systems wreak havoc upon communities and ecosystems alike.

As is so often the truth about climate and military harms, those worst affected are already vulnerable communities across the Global North and South. For instance, the uranium needed for nuclear weapons (and energy) production is overwhelmingly mined in over-exploited low-income regions and by marginalised communities from the Sahel to Kazakhstan to occupied territories across Canada, the US and Australia. The martial mining cycle maintaining Western military power connects lithium miners in Chile with cobalt miners in the Democratic Republic of Congo and uranium miners in Niger, Namibia and Navajo (US) in an ecosystem of harm and environmental conflict. Evidencing the systemic links between war and climate crises, the major financial shareholders with high economic stakes in mining, fossil fuel and arms companies are often the same, connected via fund management companies like Blackrock.

Yet the harmful life cycle of weapons production and use is not only true for extra-powerful weapons like nukes and white phosphorus, but also for

"conventional" weapons like tanks, fighter jets, warships, small arms and landmines. These are called "conventional" because of their common occurrence in warfare and their use of less destructive – note, still highly destructive – types of ammunition and explosives. Each point in the life cycle generates toxic legacies which coat the air that we breathe and contaminate ground waters, rivers and seabanks, soils and arable lands, with chemical, radioactive and other hazardous wastes that travel far from actual sites of conflict and remain for generations after a conflict ends. Even the production of "normal" explosive chemicals like TNT generates large amounts of exceptionally toxic – and potentially explosive – waste that poisons rivers and farmland around industrial sites like Nitro-Chem in Poland, altering genetic codes and spreading cancer, anaemia and foetal mal-development.

Despite the severity and spread of war's environmental impacts and their many consequences for civilian lives, there is still a prevalent tendency not to think about environmental and humanitarian harms as connected. By telling more stories about the links between military and climate crises our hope is to undo this fictional separation of social and ecological conditions, communities and ecosystems, environmental and human wellbeing. A separation that only serves to paint the use of armed force in a better light through omitting its eco-social costs.

The stories of impact we tell in Section 2 capture and expand on several of these examples of how war, militarism, extractive industries and ecological crises come together through space and matter.

THE SPACES THAT MAKE MILITARISM AND CLIMATE CRISES POSSIBLE

We now have a hunch of how military-climate links take shape in our physical environment. These traces lead us to many other types of spaces and technologies through which the weaving of militarism and climate crises can be spotted.

In Section 2 of this zine, we find several such spaces and technologies: local lands claimed and maintained by military force for mineral extraction, industrial production and renewable energy; the transportation routes enabling the global flows of minerals, fossil fuels, weapons and armed forces; the freighters, lorries and cargo planes carrying the resources, equipment and troops that make armed violence and its environmental harms possible; the transnational boardrooms of Big Business, like the mining, oil and arms giants of Glencore, Exxon and Lockheed Martin, whose decisions shape global relations and tear through local lives; and, finally, the conference halls hosting the UN Climate Change Conference (COP) negotiations.

As Daniel, Xander and Stephan make clear in Section 2, the corporate assault on community lands for industrial development – whether in the name of the fossil fuel economy or the green transition – is more often than not a militarised process. The dispossession of people from their means of subsistence and the landscapes that have held their communities for generations, requires the use of armed force. Meanwhile, as Nico demonstrates, the increased representation of military interests in spaces like COP is a clear indication that the acceptance of armed force as a means of control and a strategy to achieve "security" is steadily coming to corrupt the types of climate solutions that the world's decision makers are able to imagine. Nonetheless, what our stories of resistance and grassroots action capture is that there are plenty of other spaces available to us to formulate alternatives.

2. WORDS AND CONCEPTS

Another key way to understand the links between military and climate crises is to look at how militaries themselves have started talking about climate change, climate action and sustainability. How do they define the problem and what kinds of solutions are enabled by these definitions? By critically examining the choice of words in the increasingly militarised language around climate change and adaptation, we stand a better chance of challenging and resisting the militarised responses that follow.

CLIMATE SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHAOS

A defining feature of present-day policy making on climate change is captured by the term "climate security". Though there are innumerous interpretations of what "climate security" is – many of which focus on the social and human security implications of climate change, such as economic, food, health and water – the most dominant use of this framing is in relation to national security. (In very simple terms, national security refers to the security and defence of the state, including its territory, citizens, economy and institutions.) To justify climate change as a military issue it first has to be fixed as a national security threat: as a "threat multiplier" generating "cascade risks" that worsen geopolitical tensions and increase the likelihood of competition and conflict. This understanding of climate change leads to predictions of imminent climate chaos: a global future in which the world is ravaged by "mass climate migration" and surges in "climate conflict" and all out "climate wars" fought over access to ever "scarcer resources". As worded by the former British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson:

"Climate change is a grave threat to global peace and security. A warming planet is driving insecurity 'from the communities uprooted by extreme weather and hunger, to warlords capitalising on the scramble for resources.'"

This framing naturalises the military as a "climate warrior" defending Western nations and their allies in all the "battles" generated by climate change, including in the battle over natural resources and in the de facto war on climate change itself. Indeed, NATO is now looking to become one of the foremost international organisations "combating" climate change.

Two aspects in particular are cause for concern here. Firstly, there is no doubt that we should take seriously how increasing climate shocks can exacerbate dysfunctional systems of governance, put undue pressure on already fragile social and economic conditions, and lead to increased insecurity. Yet, the kind of security invoked in climate security discourses is not interested in solutions that generate actual safety and wellbeing for communities and ecosystems. Rather, it

is an idea of security that focuses solely on national security priorities such as defence, energy and macro-economic or market security, and that presents these in military terms. Such security frames are ultimately concerned with securing national and corporate access to and control over energy (e.g. oil, coal, natural gas) and other industry-critical natural resources (e.g. metals, stone, sand, "rare" earth minerals). As Nick Buxton puts it, this approach to climate action is aimed at "securing an unjust status quo" – the same unjust social order, built on generations of colonialism and capitalism, that is causing climate change to begin with.

Secondly, we put terms like "climate migration", "climate conflict" and "resource scarcity" in quotation marks for a reason. These concepts imply that climate and environmental conditions are somehow to blame for migration, conflict and competition – not the social, political and economic processes causing climate change and social tension. Processes that force people to migrate or that trigger community strife occur not because of a human proclivity for violence or a natural lack of water, but because of the unequal distribution of the means of life. As long emphasised by environmental scientists and climate movements, there are no "natural" disasters – only the disastrous consequences of our unequal preparedness to prevent, respond to and rebuild after extreme weather events.

The narratives around climate security, conflict and chaos are not neutral. They serve a particular, powerful political purpose. They are being used in an attempt to keep the military relevant in a climate changing world (a global "threat" that is impervious to guns and missiles and that heeds no military tactics) and to justify military strategic and industrial interests despite their role in perpetuating eco-social harm. As a narrative, climate security has indeed been the most successful in supporting political projects that call for "harder" responses to climate change impacts.

GREEN MILITARISM AND MILITARISED ADAPTATION

Since 2020, we have seen a rapid rise in military climate action strategies – or, what we prefer to call green forms of militarism. Empowered by the climate security narratives and climate chaos predictions explored above, military leaders in Brussels to London, Washington to Sydney, are presenting themselves as "drivers of climate action." "The time to address climate change is now" and "The Army will lead by example" promises the US Army Climate Strategy, while the British sustainability approach claims that the military will play a "leading role in supporting wider UK objectives for climate change." Across recently published climate adaptation plans for the US armed forces, the UK's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach, the European Union's Climate Change and Defense Roadmap and NATO's Climate Change and Security Action Plan, the message rings clear: warfare can be greened, and the military is indispensable to the green transition.

Ramping up decarbonisation efforts such as digitalisation and electrification, military sectors are stepping up to "play a pivotal role" in realising the West's net zero visions. The credibility of this proposition depends on the development of green military technologies and the weaponisation of green technologies for military use. Through the development of algae-powered warships, solar-powered drones, low-carbon directed energy weapons and lithium-ion battery tanks, the arms industry is now "protecting people and planet"; "passionate"about "charting a course toward a safer, more sustainable, and interconnected world." Besides decarbonisation, the military assigns itself other key climate action roles such as conservation and disaster relief. Militaries have a special knack, or so they argue, for natural conservation: protecting beehives on the defence estate and exporting military tactics to park rangers across the Global South. Similarly, because of their unique logistical capacity, militaries' mandate will have to be expanded to include ever-more humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions.

One could hope that this embedding of climate change in national security doctrines would mean that states are taking the need for climate action seriously, making governments more inclined to take urgent steps toward adaptation, mitigation, resilience and reparations. This is not the case. As with concepts like climate security, we are instead seeing the definitions of what constitutes viable forms of climate action transform in accordance with hard-nosed national security concerns and the military-strategic interests that underpin them. Rather than raise adaptation and mitigation efforts up the political agenda, these green militarist solutions are justifying the expansion of military power. In turn, this is reducing the possibilities for just forms of climate action – those that reckon with the historic roots behind climate change and conflict, and that address social and climate injustices together – even further.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ARMED SECURITY

Another dangerous development related to the militarisation of climate change and action are arms companies' attempts to redefine the definitions of sustainability and ethical investment to fit with their business-as-usual. Faced with increasing demands for companies to live up to environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria (which determine whether they be considered ethical investments), arms companies across Europe and North America are promoting a framing of arms production as essential to sustainability.

A straightforward story is being sold here: without a flourishing military-industrial base – meaning, lots of arms companies producing lots of arms and

Norwegian arms company Kongsberg with a climate message at DSEI, September 2023. Credit: Nico Edwards

selling them to militaries with bloated budgets – Western nations will not be able to ensure peace and security. Without peace and security, no democracy. Without democracy, no sustainable development. The conclusion: invest in arms in order to invest in the green transition. In one effective simplification, "peace" and "security" is equated with arms production (and trade) and arms companies are made indispensable to addressing climate breakdown. Recalling the exceptional ecological costs of weapons production and their use in armed conflict, one does not have to be a university scholar or a peace activist to grasp that this story relies on several false presumptions.

Arms companies' assault on "sustainability" and "ethical" investing is an important example of just how critical – and fragile – our use of different words and concepts are, and what incredible power our choice of words have in shaping political policies, directing global economic flows and cementing social norms.

Our movements are being presented with a choice: as the language around the climate crisis grows increasingly disconnected from visions and projects with just forms of climate adaptation or de facto system-transformative action in mind, how are we to respond? Do we labour to reclaim words and ideas like security, sustainability and climate action from their folding into military and extractive interests, or do we look to alternative concepts that do a better job at promoting theories and practices for change? These are key questions to keep in mind as we expose and address militarism, climate crises and their links.

3. STRATEGIES AND VISIONS

With the emergence of military climate action strategies, we find another critical manifestation of how militarism and climate crises link: in the policy frameworks that govern the world's responses to climate change and their continued prioritisation of false solutions over just, system-transformative change. Some of these false solutions stem from the disproportionate influence of big oil, mining giants and military industries in setting climate action agendas and designing the strategies for the world's transition from fossil fuels to "green" energy sources.

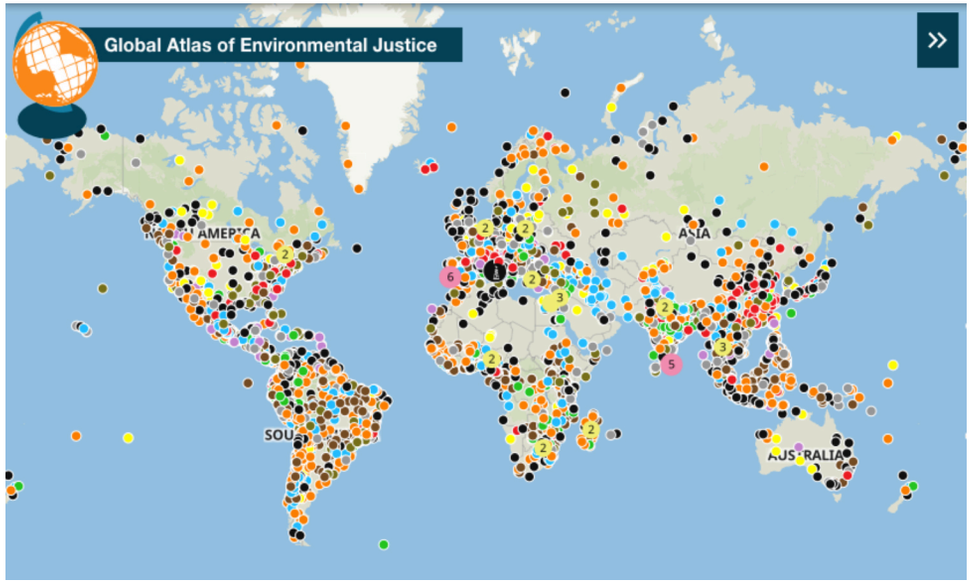
What would a military green transition look like? What would be some of the consequences for national and global politics if the militarised adaptation plans explored above gained more ground?

LESS FUEL MORE FIGHT

Behind the hype around "greening" warfare lies a barely concealed rationale: to cut Western militaries' fossil fuel dependencies not to reduce their carbon costs but to meet the battlefield demands of operating in a world powered by renewable energy sources. A military green transition would mean the decarbonisation of military practice to decrease emissions but not missions. In effect, a strategy of less oil but more war, or: less fuel, more fight.

BETTING THE PLANET ON TECH, PERPETUATING ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS

The prospects of greening military practice rely upon a zealous belief in (obsession with) tech-fixes – science and technology solutions – to make all the military's climate problems go away. This mirrors the tech-solutionism scarring green transition narratives in general, including false solutions like green growth (meaning, green capitalism), solar geo-engineering or even space colonies. A significant side-effect of this reliance on military-industrial technological advancements is how it increases militaries and states' appetite for minerals, metals and other industry-critical materials.



World map featuring the socio-environmental conflict cases reported by the Environmental Justice Atlas. Source: EJA website: https://ejatlas.org/

In other words, militarised adaptation strategies confirm and strengthen the extractivism and the primacy of industrial production sites already at the heart of climate breakdown, putting further pressure on the social and environmental conflicts that almost invariably accompany mining, mineral milling and chemical production projects. The Environmental Justice Atlas already features over 4000 cases of socio-environmental conflict active around the world. As a strategy, betting the planet on tech promises to perpetuate a vicious cycle of harm in which growing extractive demands (even in the name of climate action) lead to worsening environmental conflicts which lead to more militarised violence which require more military equipment, and on it goes.

MILITARISING NEW EXTRACTIVE FRONTIERS

What's more, because of the prevalence of arguments around climate chaos and resource scarcity, and the assumption that climate change will lead to volatile climate action regimes necessitating international competition and economic protectionism, states are currently scrambling to secure access to and control over the minerals and materials required to transition from non- to renewable energy systems. Rather than believe and invest in – and so make possible – collective and collaborative responses to global ecological emergencies and their social and economic roots, militarised adaptation strategies are encouraging the militarisation of new extractive frontiers. From the Arctic to the Pacific, the deep sea to terrestrial subsoils and all the way up in space, to lunar landscapes and asteroid crusts, the quest for new opportunities for mineral mining and resource control is in full swing. As state access to these minerals are increasingly equated with military strategic needs and built into national security doctrines, this quest is guaranteed to strengthen militarist actors, logics and relations, and bring increased militarisation and armed violence.

Thinking through militarism and climate strategies – the spaces, words, visions, technologies, actors and interests that come together to form the strategies available to us for addressing military conflicts and climate breakdown – our conclusion is: military climate strategies are false, and make the just strategies we really need impossible. Throughout the rest of this zine you will find counter-strategies for resisting the militarisation of climate action, and for reckoning with the role of military power in perpetuating climate breakdown. Even the simple act of taking time to write, reflect, read or listen to one of the following stories of impact, resistance and alternatives, constitutes such a strategy in its own right.

SECTION 2: STORIES OF IMPACT AND RESISTANCE

MARTIAL MINING: THE LINKS BETWEEN GLOBAL EXTRACTIVISM, THE ARMS TRADE, AND WARFARE

DANIEL SELWYN, LONDON MINING NETWORK

What happens to our anti-war movements when we broaden our understanding of conflict to the extractive zones that make war possible? Can we throw more grains of sand into the machines of the military-industrial complex by beginning our analysis with the struggles of the communities whose lands and resources are exploited to materialise war?

The communities we work with at the London Mining Network—from the survivors of the Marikana massacres on South Africa's platinum belt to the freedom fighters living under the Indonesian occupation of West Papua and its globally significant copper and gold Grasberg mine—know intimately that extractivism is a militarised process. It violently ruptures ecosystems, evicting then policing human communities who depend on the land for survival and

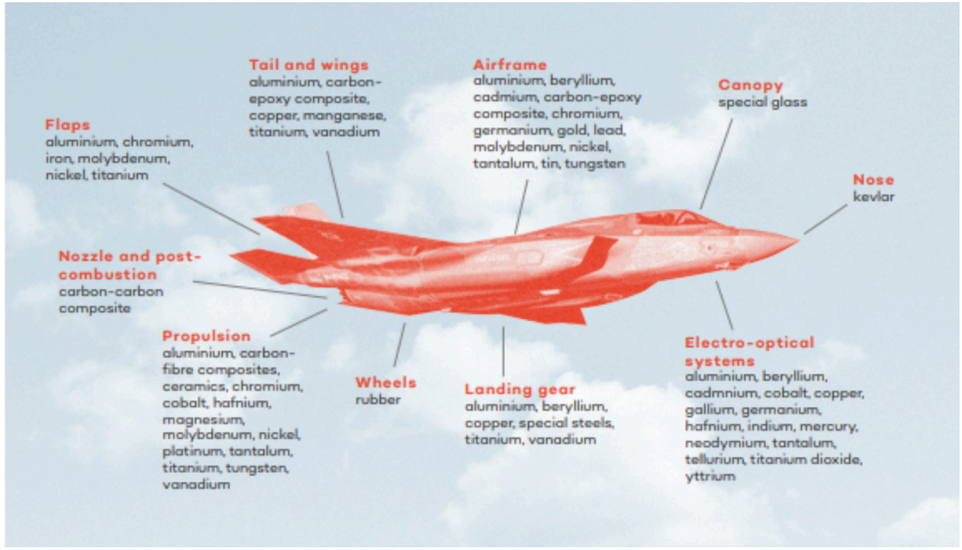
subsistence. No community passively accepts forced removals and exclusions, the destruction of habitats, the contamination of rivers, groundwaters, and soils. However, this resistance is often met with repression, from surveillance and harassment to invasions and assassinations. Moreover, mining companies also apply counterinsurgency tactics like sponsoring football teams and building local health clinics, or even increasingly using environmental initiatives, to divide and conquer local communities. The Environmental Justice Atlas maps London's mega-mining giants–including Glencore, Anglo American, Rio Tinto and BHP–as being involved in at least 83 conflicts surrounding their operations.

For more info, see:
https://londonminingnetwork.org/

What we often overlook, however, is that militarism is also fundamentally an extractive process: it requires vast quantities of natural resources to innovate technologies of control, death and destruction. Travelling from mines to smelters before being assembled in factories, materials like aluminium, copper, platinum, and cobalt are transformed into solar panels and electric vehicles, as well as surveillance drones and nuclear weapons. Unsurprisingly, mining companies tend to emphasise their contributions to the former while concealing their indispensability to the latter. Arms companies, meanwhile, only admit limited knowledge of the volume of materials they consume. Yet the UK's Ministry of Defence's (MOD) next generation of hardware alone weighs at least 514,270 tonnes of raw materials. Scaling up the UK military's resource consumption (which represents 2.5% of global military spending) would suggest a minimum demand of 20.6 million tonnes of minerals to re-equip the world's armies this decade. Given the use of chemicals like cyanide and arsenic to separate metals from their ore, this inevitably creates billions of tonnes of toxic waste. When, in 2019, an iron-ore dam of mine tailings collapsed in Brumadinho in southeastern Brazil, submerging entire villages and killing 272 people, the description of mining operations as a warzone refused any sense of hyperbole.

Let's focus on a few examples of these material militarities. The extraction of uranium has had world-historical impacts: Congolese mines in Shinkolobwe, then under Belgian colonial occupation, materialised the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, while radioactive colonialism on Aboriginal lands in Australia provided the yellowcake for nuclear reactors in Fukushima. In fact, the UK's nuclear arsenal—120 weapons with a stockpile of 215, costing at least £205 billion—would not have been possible without the Rossing mine in Namibia, occupied by apartheid South Africa and operated by a Rio Tinto-led cartel. Today, a consortium of arms corporations are assembling the largest submarines ever built for the Royal Navy, totalling 68,800 tonnes of material, 170 kilometres of pipes, 52,000 electrical items, 1,500 kilometres of cables and carrying up to sixteen Trident missiles, which share 48 warheads. The manufacture of a single nuclear bomb is estimated to produce 2,000 metric tonnes of uranium mining waste.

Composed of 300,000 parts by over 1,900 suppliers, what about Lockheed Martin's F-35 fighter jet, the most expensive weapons system in history? The UK is responsible for building approximately 15% of the 3,000 jets planned for production. This includes BAE Systems, which is contributing 30 separate titanium parts for the aircraft's vertical tail fin. Familiar foe Rio Tinto operates one of the world's largest ilmenite mines—used in titanium and as a pigment—for



which more than 500 Malagasy villagers lost their land and livelihoods, while imperilling the drinking water of another 15,000 people with uranium and lead. Each F-35 is fitted for electronic warfare, accordingly requiring 417 kilograms of rare earth elements. As essential ingredients for automated technologies, rare earth deposits—named more so due to China's dominance in production rather than geological scarcity—are being courted by London-listed mining companies in coordination with the US Pentagon and British MOD. In June 2024, Israel bought another twenty-five F-35 fighter jets for $3 billion, bringing the fleet relentlessly dropping bombs on Gaza since October to seventy-five, and making it a critical weapon in the arsenal of a genocide.

The City of London is a global epicentre of organised violence that entangles mining with warfare across every continent. It is no accident that UK military bases—from Brunei to Belize, Oman to Kenya—trace the deposits being extracted by London's mining giants and their shipping routes to production. When these industries rely on each other for survival, our movements against them must be equally interconnected. Every new aircraft, nuclear submarine, military base, and war is already a climate catastrophe writ large in the sacrifice zones of global extraction. It is incumbent on us to resist them together.

NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE AGAINST MINING PROJECTS IN GUATEMALA

STEPHAN BRUEES

In May 2024, I participated in a delegation trip of the US-Canadian human rights organization Rights Action that visited four sites of resistance against mining projects in Guatemala.

All the mining projects that we visited, whether they extracted gold, silver or nickel, have led to water scarcity and contamination and little development for local people. In addition, the consultation of indigenous communities required by international law was either not complied with at all or manipulated.

Particularly impressive during the delegation trip was the detailed presentation of the gold mine in Cerro Blanco in the East of Guatemala, where the operating companies knowingly destroy the livelihoods of the inhabitants. For the people, all of this is a disregard for them as individuals, as an ethnic group and as part of Mother Earth.

In all four locations the implementation of mining extractivism was always accompanied by a militarization of the region. Military, police and private security firms were protecting the companies and repressing the protestors.

Extractive enterprises like INCA or EXIMBAL began their exploration during the massacres and genocide of the Guatemalan military. The massacre on 29th of May 1978 in Panzos, Alta Verapaz, was connected to the local conflict on lands,

The mine in Cerro Blanco. Photo credit: Stephan Bruees

but indirectly there are relations to mining, as the run for indigenous lands intensified given the prospects of profits of extractivism.

The demand for land rights was exactly the cause of the demonstration in Panzos that ended up with 53 dead and 47 severely hurt people.

The rich elite is built up by landowners, militaries and entrepreneurs. And they defend their privileges with violence – if necessary.

But let's go back to the present and to the four places that we visited:

The activists in La Puya, a curve on the street between the cities of San Pedro Apurimac and San José de Golfo, both in the department of Guatemala, northeast of the capital, Guatemala-City, became known for their long-standing blockade of the road to the mine. Part of the tactic is to put women in the front ranks of the blockades, as it is forbidden for male police officers to carry women off the road. Moreover, women are less afraid, said Feliza Moralles with a wink. "You have to enjoy resisting," says Feliza.

The connection between climate change and militarization is particularly visible in El Estor. There, on the way to the nickel mine, you see banana plantations sufficiently watered, while a hundred meters away a riverbed lacks water.

The icon of El Estor is Angelica Choc. Her husband was shot by the mine's security forces and her son was confined to a wheelchair as a result of the repression. During the eviction of a settlement, mine security forces not only burned down the huts and fields of the residents, but also raped the women. The

Joni Varela shows the mine of Cerro Blanco near Asuncion Mita. Photo credit: Stephan Bruees

Angelica Choc, head of protest in El Estor, Izabal. Photo credit: Stephan Bruees

victims we met were severely traumatized and militant at the same time. Similar incidents were reported in other places.

Activists in Casillas, Santa Rosa not only taught their youth to analyze water to document the environmental destruction, but also monitored, and partially blocked, the supply of gasoline and other goods to the mine, which has been closed since 2016, the result of a legal fight by the activists. They still fear that the companies are trying to somehow open up the mine again.

The fight is not over yet. It is documented in different articles on https://www.prensacomunitaria.org (in Spanish), https://www.rightsaction.org or https://www.peacebrigades.org/en/guatemala (in English).

Stephan Brües is co-chair of the Federation for Social Defense (BSV) and is representative in the Council of War Resisters International (WRI). Additionally he is editor of the Online-Portal ‚gewaltfreie aktion' (English: nonviolent action) and of the Swiss-German News Service on Guatemala, ¡Fijáte! .

"LEARNING FROM OUR PAIN": THE IMPACT OF NUCLEAR TESTING IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

INGRID SCHILSKY

“It began to snow in Rongelap. […] We kids were playing in the powder, having fun, but later everyone was sick.”

When the US military detonated the most powerful bomb they had ever tested over Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands - a hydrogen bomb code-named "Castle Bravo", with 1000 times the explosive power of the Hiroshima bomb - Lijon Eknilang and the inhabitants of Rongelap Atoll and neighbouring atolls could not have known the impact it would have.

The explosion tore a crater 76 metres deep and two kilometres wide into the Bikini Atoll, and hurled millions of tons of coral limestone and sand into the air, which later "snowed" onto many inhabited islands as radioactive ash.

Lijon Eknilang (* 1946, † 2012) from Rongelap in 2004 in Berlin Photo credit: Ingrid Schelsky

The inhabitants of four atolls suffered fatal doses of radiation. Despite burns, hair loss and diarrhoea they were only evacuated after two or three days, while other atolls were left totally on their own. There was one acute radiation fatality on a Japanese fishing boat, and around a thousand Japanese fishing boats had to destroy their contaminated catch.

Scientists of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) have calculated that the Marshall Islands tests were equivalent to exploding one Hiroshima size bomb every day for about 20 years.

In total, 315 nuclear bombs were detonated on Pacific islands for testing purposes. The 67 US nuclear explosions on the Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958 were all above ground and contributed significantly to the worldwide radioactive contamination of the earth's atmosphere. Alarmingly high levels of strontium found in milk and children's teeth contributed to the 1963 treaty to ban nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in space and under water that was agreed upon by USA, Soviet Union and Great Britain. Nonetheless, nuclear testing continued; over 2000 tests have taken place worldwide to date.

On the Marshall Islands the tests led to catastrophic health effects, most notably various cancers and deformities in children, of which the “jellyfish babies” were the worst for the mothers who carried children to full term. As Lijon Eknilang reported: **“These babies are born with no bones in their bodies and with transparent skin. We can see their brains and their hearts beating. There are no legs, no arms, no nothing.”**

The US Department of Energy (DOE) has been particularly cynical and inhumane in its treatment of the inhabitants of Rongelap Atoll. Documents that have since then been made public prove that the islanders were victims of planned human experiments. When the "Bravo" bomb was detonated, the heavy radiation of inhabited atolls was deliberately accepted, and their evacuation was initiated much too late. Two years after the evacuation, Merril Eisenbud, U.S. Atomic Energy Commissioner, wrote about Rongelap: **“That island is by far the most contaminated place on earth, and it will be very interesting to get a measure of human uptake when people live in a contaminated environment.”**

The following year, the Rongelap people were resettled. At first the people were extremely happy to return because a family's piece of land, alongside the spirits of their ancestors, is considered to be like a member of the family. But: **"What we ate gave us blisters on our lips and in our mouths and we suffered terrible stomach problems and nausea."**

Then more and more deformed children were born, and **“many people suffered from thyroid tumours, still births, eye problems, liver and stomach cancers and leukaemia”**.

People were regularly shipped to the USA for medical examinations, samples were taken from their blood, bone marrow and internal organs, but apart from thyr**oid operations they received little treatment. Lijon Eknilang “had seven miscarriages, thyroid surgery, lumps in her breast, kidney and stomach problems, her eyesight was blurred”**. She died in 2012.

"For the future of our kids", the Rongelap people finally wanted to leave their home atoll, but their requests to the US authorities went unanswered. Little did they know that they had become 'valuable' guinea pigs for the DOE. It was not until 1985 that they were relocated to another island by the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior.

THE NEXT GENERATION

The following generations, within which many young people also develop cancer, find it easier to draw attention to their fate, even if it is often still not customary to talk about illnesses, especially when they affect women. For centuries, it was said that giving birth to deformed children was a punishment for infidelity of the women. For decades, there was a lack of knowledge about nuclear tests and their consequences.

Meitaka Kendall-Lekka from Likiep-Atoll in 2022 in Hamburg Photo credit: Ingrid Schelsky

“No one told me anything”, complains Meitaka Kendall-Lekka, lecturer at the College of the Marshall Islands in Majuro, about her childhood and school days, when the curriculum was based on that of the USA. The nuclear topic has only been part of the curriculum since 2021.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands has been formally independent since 1986; before that, the islands were handed over to the USA as a UN trust territory with the intention **“that trust territories were administered in the best interests of their inhabitants and of international peace and security”**.

Meitaka Kendall-Lekka comes from Likiep Atoll, where children had also played with the radioactive ash fallout after the Bravo explosion, but which had never been evacuated. When she spoke about her abdominal cancer after a decade of concealment, she received a lot of feedback from other young members of the third generation of nuclear test survivors about their own previously concealed cancers.

"The new generation is more aware, they want to do something about it," says Meitaka Kendall-Lekka happily today. Young Marshallese appear at international conferences and report on their home islands (which are only two meters above sea level on average). On some islands, fishing is prohibited and coconuts are not to be eaten, making people dependent on imported food of poor quality.

They also report on the so-called Runit Dome. The Dome (also referred to locally as “The Tomb”) is 115m wide concrete structure built on an island in the inhabited (!) Enewetak Atoll. Here, a gigantic nuclear legacy of plutonium fragments from a failed nuclear test, and over 100,000 cubic metres of radioactively contaminated rubble and nuclear waste from Nevada has been dumped. The waste is just waiting to be washed away by rising sea levels caused by climate change in a holey bomb crater.

The hope for sufficient compensation from the USA and an apology for what was done to the people is probably in vain. But the third generation of nuclear test survivors is now hoping that as many countries as possible will sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

When Lijon Eknilang visited Germany in 2004, she told us that we should be "learning from our pain": We must do everything we can to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world.

Ingrid Schilsky from the Pacific Network interviewed survivors of nuclear tests on various Pacific islands as a freelance radio journalist between 1985 and 1990 and is still in contact with members of the following generations.

HOW WORLD WITHOUT WAR BUILDS SOLIDARITY WITH THE CLIMATE MOVEMENT

JUNGMIN CHOI

World Without War is a South Korean anti-militarist organisation that supports conscientious objectors and monitors South Korea's arms exports. The climate crisis is imminent and has repeatedly raised the need for internal campaigning, but we have done very little because we have had no space capacity. By late 2022, there was a consensus that we couldn't wait any longer. Given the organisation's capacity, we decided to develop a strategy to connect our existing work with climate issues rather than launch a new campaign.

One thing we did was to raise awareness of the military's huge role in accelerating the climate crisis. Our favourite place to do this is the World Without War blog. We try to publish stories that people don't see in the mainstream media, stories with a fresh perspective. The blog's four regular contributors are selected annually. In an effort to be in solidarity with the climate movement, we always include a climate activist or researcher or ask writers from other fields to contribute at least one piece related to the climate crisis from an intersectional perspective. The article on war and climate crisis, especially the war in Ukraine and its relationship with South Korean conglomerates such as KOGAS and SK, as well as the health damage and environmental pollution caused by the air ranges, resonated with many people.

One of our key initiatives, the conscientious objection campaign, has taken a proactive stance in supporting and organising individuals who refuse military service due to the climate crisis. While conscientious objection in South Korea has traditionally been declared for anti-war or nonkilling reasons, we are now seeing a new wave of objectors who cite the military's significant contribution to the climate crisis as their motivation. We have organised various activities, including counselling sessions and workshops, to support these individuals and raise awareness about climate change issues.

Another climate-related initiative involves the Arms Trade Watch campaign, which focuses on arms fairs. The largest of these is ADEX, organised by the Air Force, which began as an air show and has grown to its current size. The airshow has been protested over local noise issues, and recently, World Without War linked it to the climate crisis and called for it to be stopped. It has also shamed South Korea's significant arms companies with the slogan 'Main character is a death dealer, alternate character is a climate villain' and recently flew an air balloon over Hanwha, the largest arms company, to deliver this message.

World Without War organises a peace camp every summer, and this year, it is called Climate Action Camp. We will explore issues such as military spending, military carbon emissions, security, the arms trade, greenwashing, the defence industry, and just transitions, using a variety of tools to consider what to address on each issue and how to do it.

LARYSA: REFLECTING ON RESISTANCE

LARYSA FARBOOK

GETTING ARRESTED AT THE WEAPONS EXPO

I found an interesting career in going to the University of Queensland, where studying my Masters of Environmental Management allowed me access to a Weapons Expo in Melbourne. I was sick to the stomach at the thought of a Weapons Expo in my town, and it was a horrifying experience to see people salivating over weapons, and the normalising of the impacts and consequences of warfare. Just as horrifying was the complete lack of regard for these consequences on the environment, and no evidence that anyone had any agency to hold the industrial military complex to account for the environmental damage.

There was an opportunity to be involved in some industrial sabotage of the Expo. I participated in a demonstration where activists climbed on a tank, locked on, and chanted in solidarity with Syria and West Papua. Even after being arrested, and sentenced, I kept thinking, " is this the best use of my time, and my environmental management degree?". My prestigious university was State Captured by fossil fuels and arms companies. Even though Australian universities are training the brightest minds to take care of the environment, there are vested interests, weapons manufacturers, and the fossil fuel industry, making sure that these environmental policies are not as effective as they could be. **The PFAS Fiasco is just one example.**

PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a family of fire retardant chemicals, invented for use in fire extinguishers. This family of chemicals is a large chain polymer that does not break down in the environment. They were developed purposefully for their longevity, displaying a complete lack of regard for their toxic load on the environment. The military use these chemicals in their war games. The damage to the environment is greatest where the military do this.

PFAS is now known to be carcinogenic. Possibly because of this very ability to not be broken down naturally in the environment, the government thinks that this is too hard to fix this problem, and we need to be asking these difficult questions about who is going to do the research and who is going to pay for it. If we don't ask these questions, the problem of the environmental neglect goes into a void, and adds to the denial that the government has responsibility to care for human beings being a part of the environment. We need clean air, water, and food to live. The PFAS problem becomes part of the environmental neglect.

For an example of the use of PFAS, see: www.defensemirror.com/news/24561/China_s_Norinco_Develops_Artillery_Guns_to_Combat_Wild_Fires

Who is going to clean up the PFAS now? We know that the military does not answer to the government, . Sso we can infer that this PFAS is toxic load that is building up in the environment. Maybe the plankton will learn to break it down in the ocean. Nature is inventive, and in Australia, the crows and snakes have learned how to eat cane toads by flipping them over to avoid the poisonous glands.

A SHORT CASE STUDY ON PERMACULTURE IN CUBA

In the 1990s Cuba was heavily industrialised and dependent on imports for food. They turned to Permaculture, an "an approach to land management and settlement design that adopts arrangements observed in flourishing natural ecosystems". They realised that by using permaculture principles, they could use every piece of ground that they had to grow food. Brigades of Australian volunteer permaculture teachers arrived in Cuba in the mid 1990s, sharing the permaculture vision. The Antonio Nunez Jimenez Foundation for Nature and Humanity (FANJ) began teaching permaculture throughout the country using the model using a "campesino to campesino" (farmer to farmer) knowledge sharing strategy.

Cuba has become the poster country for permaculture. The Antonio Nunez Jimenez Foundation for Nature and Humanity (FANJ) offers opportunities for people to go to Cuba and do a Permaculture Design Certificate.

Marina Bistrin, says, "Finally, what I would particularly like to highlight and commend Cubans for is that I believe that preserving our farms (and especially farms near cities and towns) is vital and needs to be enshrined in law. Also, that access to nutritious (preferably organic) food is a basic human right (this does not mean access to the junk food and food that has pesticides in it that many people subsist on). I am also impressed that the people who produce the food in Cuba get paid well. Food is the most important thing we have and I feel that people who provide us with essentials should be adequately paid. It's a matter of respect and showing what we value highly by paying the people well who provide those services. "

For more information, see: www.theurbanfarmer.ca/cuba-pdc

Permaculture Is a movement centred around food that extends outwards holistically, becoming a whole way of life. It encourages practitioners of the craft to slow down to the speed of trust. Practitioners have learned to learn slowly at the speed of nature growing, the speed of trust, the speed of degrowth. Slowing everything down like the slow food movement can slow down, degrow, the economy.

For Marina's full article, see: https://localfoodconnect.org.au/community-gardening/permaculture-in-cuba/

Trust is something that builds up slowly over time. Trust is something that can be fostered and nurtured like plants in a garden, as we learn to nurture each other. Trust is something that is also broken very easily and erodes away slowly over time from oppression.

SOIL ADVOCACY AS RESISTANCE

Soil advocacy promotes giving agency to people to care, transform and regenerate soil. All people deserve this right to take care of soil, but some are deprived of it. When people are deprived of their right to be in right relationship to soil, and access to nature, they can get sick. In practical terms, soil advocacy is giving people agency and tools to care for soil. One tool is the strategy of retaining water in the soil profile with composting. Composting adds this all important structure to soil so that soil can be porous, allowing air and water to flow through it. This restructuring transforms the soil, and regenerates it. Learning about Permaculture is a good way to learn about compost.

Soil needs to eat and breathe, and poop. Healthy soil is full of creatures, microbes, insects and other invertebrates, eggs, water, air, dead things and fungi that eat the dead things. These dead creature bodies get "glued" together with other substances like glomalins, or sugars, and fungi and when these substances are all kept hydrated, moist, the soil can function as a living, breathing, healthy entity. Soil is literally the skin of the earth.

Soil advocacy is one way to support people to embrace their place in the environment. When people live in places like Cuba, where political embargoes have been enforced internationally, the people have to become more self-sustaining. They have turned to the soil and to growing their own food, and decreased their reliance on international support since it has been taken away. Their desire to become self-sustaining becomes their resistance.

MILITARIES AND CLIMATE ACTION, A REFLECTION FROM COP26 AND BEYOND

NICO EDWARDS

In the late fall of 2021, inner-city Glasgow was overrun with tens of thousands of visitors coming to pull their weight for global climate governance. This was Glasgow's, and the United Kingdom's, first ever turn to host the UN Climate Change Conference, COP26. In the German Pavilion inside the Blue Zone – that is, where the policymaking happens – a rather odd mix of government delegations, senior practitioners and industry leaders were huddled together for a panel organised by the Munich Security Conference (MSC). I say odd, as the sight of foreign affair secretaries, defence ministers and the very head of a globally spanning military alliance is not an everyday occurance in climate negotiations. MSC, after all, is the self-ascribed "world's leading forum for debating international security policy" and COP has hardly proven itself as a space for discussing war and peace. But there they were, 13 high-level speakers engaged in a hybrid discussion on Climate, Peace and Stability: Weathering Risk Through COP and Beyond, most notable among them British Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, and Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Jens Stoltenberg. In his opening remarks, Wallace, declared:

> **"We have a strong obligation to make sure that our forces deliver a sustainable deployment … but we will [also] have to deal with the consequences of a failed climate change policy … of migrant flows, of breaking down of communities, of fights over rare resources, of border frictions which will no doubt grow as climate change increases."**

Wallace's words capture perfectly the strategic fictions that are currently propelling Western militaries' attempts to militarise climate action – or, to green militarism. In a nutshell, Wallace defines climate change as a threat-multiplier, promising to bring about imminent climate chaos. To secure Western interests and defend Western nations and their allies against these climate threats, we must expand and repurpose Western military forces. Yet, to maintain operational dominance – that is, to fight and win, anywhere, anytime – in a climate changing world, we need to make warfighting environmentally "sustainable". If you're ever in need of a recipe for how to justify the expansion of military power amid climate breakdown, there you go!

What the MSC side-event represents is a sharp turning point in the presence of military leaders in climate negotiation spaces like COP – and the growing acceptance of the kind of militarised narrative around climate change and climate action crystallised in Wallace's statement. The 2021 summit saw an increase in the participation of military actors – most notably NATO and key members, like the US, UK and Germany – in setting climate action agendas and promoting their respective military visions for tackling a climate changing world.

This increase in military representation mirrored 2021 as a year of bustling activity connecting military sectors across Europe and North America through several military climate action initiatives. In the run-up to COP26, the US Department of Defence (DOD) released a comprehensive military climate action plan outlining "a bold vision for climate adaptation [that] aligns adaptation and resilience efforts with the department's warfighting mission." NATO mobilised its member states to endorse an Allied Climate Change and Security Action Plan, in a bid to make the Alliance "the leading international organisation when it comes to understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change on security"; while the European Union gathered 30 member states just a few days after COP26 to make progress on the EU Climate Change and Defence Roadmap, bringing the Union's ministries of defence into a closer collaboration on solutions for a sustainable military energy transition.

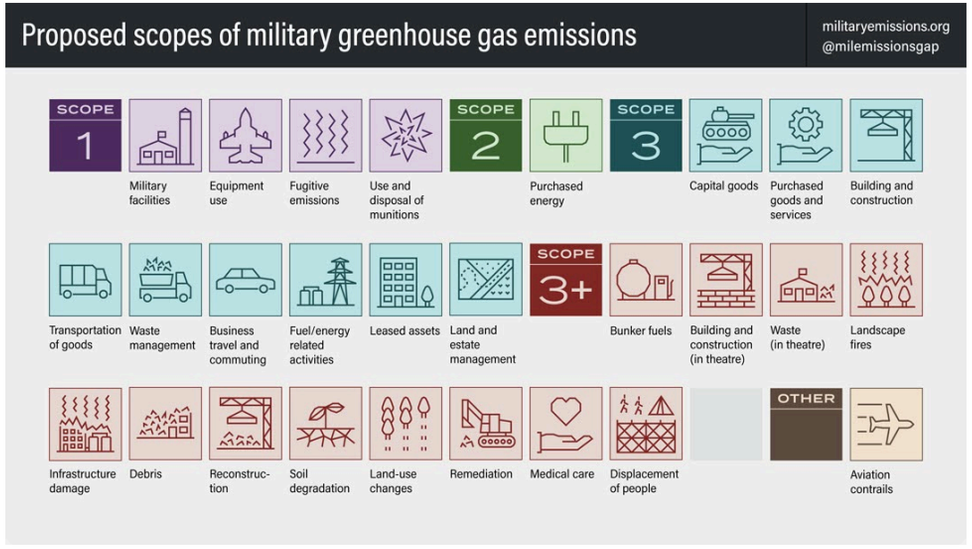
Rather than signal a genuine concern with protecting people and planet however, these military climate action plans represent transparent attempts at making Western nations better at war amid climate disruption, while seizing the opportunity to generate more profits from a "greener" war machine. As noted by the former President of Rolls Royce Defence, "decarbonisation is a warfighting opportunity for industry and its customers."

Arms fair in the Netherlands, November 2023, on the theme "sustainable security". Photo credit: Nico Edwards

Since COP26, this military representation at climate negotiations has only grown. COP28 - held in Dubai in 2023 - featured several events with a hard-line climate security focus, framing the green energy transition as an immediate source of geopolitical competition and inter- and intrastate rivalry (what military actors like calling "climate geopolitics".) The US boasted with a large defence delegation seizing the opportunity, as delegates put it, for the Defence Department (DOD) to "continue to lead as the international community gathered to address climate change." Continue to lead what, one might wonder? The continued destruction of the planet? "The DOD was excited to lend its voice to the conversations at COP28" said a delegate, "it was clear that people were excited to see DOD at COP28 and to explore opportunities to partner with us on shared climate and energy priorities."

That the Pentagon, the world's single largest institutional consumer of petroleum, has suddenly decided to show the world how it is "leading" on climate – just as the effects of climate change are no longer ignorable even to the imperial power centres of the West and the world is already set for a temperature increase beyond accepted levels for human well-being – should have us roll our eyes. This is an irony that will not be lost on peace and climate organisers well versed in the historical fact of the US' successful lobby efforts to exempt military emissions

from carbon reporting and reduction requirements at the Kyoto climate summit in 1997.



These are the proposed categories that need to be taken into account to understand the full extent of militaries' greenhouse gas emissions. Source: the Military Emissions Gap project.

Fast forward a couple of decades and much has changed, but not perhaps for the better. At the summit in Dubai, the United Arab Emirate COP presidency invited the NATO chief to give his two cents on climate change as a global security threat and why militaries are indispensable to the green transition, at a high-level event with Blue Zone delegates. To the probable outrage of the peace and climate campaigners present – that is, if there were any – Stoltenberg took this chance to define NATO as a peace organisation deeply committed to "combating" climate change. Beyond the Blue Zone, there were also reports of arms companies pushing defence decarbonisation and promoting their role in sustainable development – not to mention, of course, the myriad global tech, fossil fuel industry and finance representatives populating the Green Zone, all with direct, though well-concealed, ties to armed conflicts globally.

Fortunately, we don't have to look further than this zine, and its many stories of impact, resistance and alternatives, to grasp just how harmful the premises of the strategic fictions around climate chaos and sustainable militaries are, and that militarised solutions to climate breakdown are false. There is no such thing as green warfare, the world is not destined for violent conflict and endless competition, climate change itself is not to blame for social and economic upheaval and military-industrial actors are part of the problem, not the solution to eco-social crises. True, without the participation of armed forces and military industries there will be no green transition. But just climate adaptation requires these actors' aid with downsizing and dismantling military force – not with expanding it in a greener form.

Yet, COP26 does not only represent a turning point in military assaults on climate action spaces and narratives. It also marked a shift in the visibility of grassroots campaigns connecting the climate crisis with war and militarism.

A few days after the 2021 MSC event on Weathering Risk, grassroots organisers mobilised the global climate justice movement, online and offline, for an alternative People's Summit for Climate Justice. Refusing world leaders' economically motivated geopolitical bickering and the climate governance inaction and inertia that followed, the public counter summit assembled to build power for system change from the ground up. One theme stood out among the key messages: the need for exposing the links between war, militarism and climate injustices. Connecting the counter summit with the official conference zones was a relatively nascent but steadily growing feature in climate negotiations: attention to the military's role in climate change. After decades of sustained advocacy against militaries' carbon free-card, COP26 saw a clear turning point in public, media and state delegate interest in military emissions. Yet, the links between war, militarisation and ecological emergencies – forming a complex military-ecological nexus – stretch way beyond the omission of emissions. This complexity was explored across myriad panels, rallies and calls to action organised through the People's Summit, for which organisations, movements and communities from across the globe came together under banners such as "war is not green", "militarism fuels climate crisis" and "no climate justice without demilitarisation."

Luckily, while militaries' voice in climate negotiations keep growing, so does that of peace and climate justice organisers.

A protest organised by WILPF at COP28 that called out militarism as the elephant in the room at the climate talks. Photo credit: Ellie Kinney

SUSTAINABLE VIOLENCE IS SOCIAL WAR: AGAINST GREEN MILITARISM

XANDER DUNLAP

It's actually a really funny joke. Unfortunately, the seriousness of this joke makes it impossible to laugh at. The greatest destroyers and toxic contaminators of all life – people, animals, water, forests, mountains, deserts, you name it – are rebranding themselves to save the planet! The level of ecocidal destruction resulting from war – the burning of villages and oil wells, napalming forests, 'de-modernizing' and 'shock and awing' countries into oblivion – is unfathomable. With these references to the Vietnam, Gulf and Iraq Wars, I must ask, do you remember in 1986 when the International Court of Justice upheld a verdict of the US violation for funding the Contra Death Squad and mining Nicaraguan harbours? This is worth remembering. Not to mention the Iran Contra Affair, or the numerous other death squads funded, governments overthrown and technologies of terror spread across the world by Military schools. There are, we must also remember, severe socioecological repercussions to these operations which are enthusiastic contributors to extreme weather and the climate altering conditions of the planet.

Do you remember when the US military first tested their Apache helicopters (AH-64)? It was during the 1989/1990 invasion of Panama, the country between Costa Rica and Colombia. The prime justification of which was to take the CIA's ex-drug dealer and dictator, General Manuel Noriega, out of power. The result, as the CSPAN-13 footage shows, was people fleeing burning cities and forests; crushed cars and infrastructure ruined as piped water was flooding out of fire hydrants. An enormous number of bombs were dropped – some say between 200-400 within the first hour of the invasion – leading to massacre and economic and socioecological devastation. All done, of course, unilaterally and a month after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This scorched-earth invasion set the tone for the invasions to come in the Middle East.

Besides these references to standard state terrorism, two years before the invasion of Panama, the idea of 'Sustainable Development' hit the international stage with the Brundtland Report. Two years later, US President George Bush Senior – the same president that authorised the invasion of Panama – declared at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit:

> **Twenty-years ago some spoke of the limits to growth. And today we realise that growth is the engine of change, and the friend of the environment.**

Yes, this country – and so many others – while committing massacre, ecocide and war and celebrating an economy built on mass consumption, mineral and hydrocarbon extraction, chemical and plastic manufacturing, has the psychotic nerve to declare that economic growth is "the friend of the environment." Nobody is safe from these governments, their solutions are traps and we must organise – develop a collective capacity – to protect ourselves and stop this madness by any means necessary; 'in' and 'outside' the so-called 'system.'

While the focus has been on the US, the hegemon of the last 100 years, one should not cling to any empire and their imperial games of ecocide. There is, however, something peculiar about Western Militaries in their efforts – contrary to Russia – to take the 'high-road' by developing a whole discourse and apparatus to promoting 'sustainability,' 'energy transition,' 'renewability' and 'clean energy.' While the US resisted and embraced this trend, stalling strategically, we must remember there is no such thing as socioecological sustainability or renewable energy as we know it! Any economy – capitalist or socialist – unreflectively designed to expand, accumulate and grow will always fail the planet. We might recognize economic growth and unrestrained infrastructural expansion – culturally or militarily – as the true imperialism. This greening apparatus, and climate change mitigation imperative, has now led to the idea of "greening the military."

The Southeast Wind Energy Project in Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico. Photo credit: Presidencia de la República Mexicana

The greening of the military is done in two principle ways. First, by 'protecting nature'! Sadly, this often takes the form of protecting nature from Indigenous people – often embedded in and enriching that nature. This is done by calling them poachers because of their subsistence patterns. This, of course, ignores the 'techno/urban-military/consumer-complex'. Likewise, policing Indigenous peoples serves as an excuse to displace people into the circuits of urban and

capitalist life – meaning, the techno/urban-military/consumer-complex. There are, however, real commercial poachers with helicopters and assault rifles that justify enclosure and the militarization of lands often in the Global South. Those under attack, however, are typically the more vulnerable local actors who are displaced and cleared to allow easier poaching by commercial operations.

Second, the military attempts to 'green' itself! This is done by powering military facilities, weapons and, together, operations on lower-carbon infrastructures, such as solar panels, wind turbines, hydroelectric power and biofuels. This has been recognized as an attempt at powering "sustainable violence," to operate domestic and overseas military operations on supposedly lower-carbon energy sources than fossil fuels. Lower-carbon power sources, however, as documented in Oaxaca, Mexico, also end with grabbing Zapotec and Ikoot lands to build wind turbines and solar farms to power US military operations overseas, such as in the Middle East. What's more, sustainable violence has another layer to it: the use of military and police forces across countless rural lands and habitats to extract hydrocarbons and to mine the iron, copper, zinc, rare earth elements and other specialty metals to produce solar panels, wind turbines and digital technologies for 'decarbonizing' the military and consumer society. A de facto process of enforcing ecocide.

While the laboratories of terror and insanity are surely thinking up other projects, we should be prepared to resist the myths of 'greening' in general, but greening the military in particular. We should be ready to counter invasion in the name of grabbing minerals in the name of 'saving the environment' or 'protecting the world from climate change.' This is not all that different from the European Union's Critical Raw Material Act (CRMA), organising the acquisition of 'strategic' minerals for the green transition, but which will in reality be used for expanding militarism and war technologies. The same could be said for emerging 'ecocide law' once it passes: we should be ready for the invasion of lands and peoples to be justified in the name of stopping ecocide. But you cannot stop ecocide by making more ecocide, nor can growing more extractivism, more consumerism and more military invasions ever be considered socioecologically friendly. Ending war, genocide and the funding and production of killing machines remains among the top ecological and climate priorities to date.

ECO-SUMUD AND THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE FOR ECO-SOCIAL JUSTICE

MANAL SHQAIR

The creation of Israel on 78% of the land of Historical Palestine has marked a violent disruption of the sustainable relationship that Palestinians have maintained with their land for generations. The ongoing Israeli colonization of the rest of Palestine – culminating in the unfolding genocide and ecocide in the Gaza Strip and the silent ethnic cleansing in the West Bank – poses further threat to the indigenous Palestinian lifestyle in relation to land. Despite more than seven decades of colonial dispossession and violence, Palestinians have been able to steadfastly face Israeli attempts at obliterating the knowledge and skills that Palestinians draw on to maintain a sustainable attachment to the land. I call this the act of eco-sumud, meaning eco-steadfastness.

The anti-colonial praxis of eco-sumud refers to the Palestinian persistence to stay on the land using environmentally friendly ways of maintaining a strong attachment to it. This includes the use of indigenous land-based knowledge, cultural values, tactics and tools to fight back against Israeli dispossession and the unsustainable management of land and its resources that comes with dispossession. Palestinian women have been key environmental and anti-colonial warriors in reinforcing eco-sumud. Eco-sumud is premised on the understanding that the fight for climate justice and the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination are inextricably linked. As a concept and practise it thus acknowledges the mutual constitution of social and ecological crises. It recognises the pursuit of a just agricultural and energy transition in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as inseparable from the pursuit of Palestinian self-determination and social justice – and vice versa. As such, eco-sumud constitutes a powerful counter-practice to Israeli ecological colonialism while also informing a counter-narrative to Israel's efforts at greenwashing so as to cover its ongoing crimes against the Palestinian people and their environment with a green garb.

Rainfed agricultural practice among Palestinian villagers in Dayr Ballut, the West Bank, offers an empirical example of eco-sumud. Ba'li, as the practice is known in vernacular Arabic, has facilitated the local preservation of agricultural land across a century of colonial occupation, water apartheid and land grabbing. It involves the preparation, planting, cultivation and protection of plants and soil without irrigation, utilising instead natural soil moisture and the capture and preservation of water during rain seasons. In Dayr Ballut, villagers, predominantly women, have combined this traditional farming method with diversifying the types of crops grown to reduce their vulnerability to water scarcity, climate shocks, and soil degradation.

85 year old Labiba Abdullah working her farmland in Dayr Ballut, March 16 2021. Photo credit: Nidal Eshtayeh/Xinhua Net

Embodying at once a social, spiritual, cultural and material relation to the local ecology, facilitating both social justice and sustainable uses of the land, ba'li crystallises the power and potential of eco-sumud to inform a just decolonial transition in Palestine. Such a transition is premised on five pillars: First, it disrupts the internalisation of the social construction of Palestinian knowledge and culture as inferior to their colonisers. Second, it foregrounds relationships with the land and its natural resources based on reciprocity and interdependence. Third, it promotes the collective sharing of land, water and knowledge rather than their monopolisation and luxury commodification for the few. Fourth, it affirms that women are primary actors in the anti-colonial struggle for self-determination and ecological justice. Finally, it refuses the notion that Israeli settler colonialism is undefeatable, cementing instead the invincibility of the burning desire of the colonised to determine their own destiny.

SECTION 3: MOVEMENT BUILDING

In the first part of this publication we explored the relationship between militarism and the climate crisis, and in the second part we shared stories from a wide-range of different people and groups with lived experience of these issues. The question we want to ask now is: what can we do about it?

In this section we want to offer some advice and prompts on how we can counter militarised approaches to the climate crisis. We have outlined ten different elements that you might want to consider, and focused on how we can support our groups, organisations or wider movements to engage. For each we have given some general advice, followed by some questions or prompts to consider.

1. EDUCATE OURSELVES AND OUR MOVEMENTS

We need to understand the issues ourselves, and we need to raise awareness and understanding within our movements. There is a whole range of ways to do this (sharing this resource is a good start!) and regularly sharing other resources and information is important. The landscape around these issues is constantly changing - with new organisations sharing new information and research, and communities on the front line of the climate crisis are experiencing new challenges – so we need to be ready to learn and share more.

As well as sharing research and reports, consider the spaces you can hold workshops, information sessions, or other similar events. These issues effect everyone, and intersect with many other issues or concerns, across different movements. There may well be conferences, protest camps, university occupations, or similar events that would appreciate the offer of space to discuss these important issues.

Consider:

- How you can present key information and action points clearly and accessibly
- Organising a self-study group that reads and discusses books and other resources together
- Developing a workshop that you can deliver in different spaces and events locally

2. START WITH STORIES

Numbers and facts are important, but they rarely get the point across in the same way stories do. As you begin to communicate the relationship between militarism and the climate crisis, you might want to:

- Focus on front line defenders and indigenous communities (where a lot of climate-militarism is experienced)
- Go to other spaces and learn about the experiences of others (don't expect others to come to you)
- Consider creative ways of illustrating numbers or facts

3. BUILD AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM THAT'S RELEVANT TO YOU

This climate-militarism thing is a multi-headed monster! Some elements of the militarism/climate nexus that we have explored will be more relevant to you than other parts – we are not arguing that every individual and organisation can or should take action on everything. Instead, we hope you will consider incorporating the elements that feel most important for your own framing and campaigning. This will inevitably look different in different contexts, and we should be welcoming and supportive of the vibrancy and complexity this approach offers.

Consider:

- What parts of your work intersect with issues around the climate crisis, or militarism? In what ways are they impacted?
- Does your understanding of the issues you take action on already change when you look at them through the lens militarism or the climate crisis?
- How can you communicate your understanding of the militarised impacts of the climate crisis to others?

4. REMEMBER WE DON'T HAVE TO GO "HEAD ON"...

No single group, action, or campaign is going to stop the militarised aspects of the climate crisis: we are talking about a systemic relationship that goes deep into our politics, economies, and cultures. No one is going to transform these systems on their own. building a demilitarised world centred on climate justice is going to take everyone – and everything - changing.

This might be feel paralysing and overwhelming (its OK to feel this way if you do). As we understand the connections, we will begin to see the impact on the lives of the most marginalised, how our current systems and structures are sustaining injustice. From this point, we can find opportunities to intervene and take action. Sometimes this might be in quite direct ways (e.g. pushing COP to incorporate military emissions into their reporting), but others might feel less

direct but no less important (e.g. involving ourselves in a local migrant rights campaign).

You might first it helpful to consider:

- Which organisations are already doing related work in your context (see "build relationships" below)?
- Who do you know locally that is or has been impacted by the climate crisis or militarism? Are they involved in organising or activism? How can you support them if so?
- What policies or procedures does your government pursue that is sustained by militarism? What policies could they pursue that would further the goals of climate justice?

5. DECOLONISE AND DEMILITARISE OURSELVES

The work starts now. We have all grown and matured in societies where militarism is valued and militarised attitudes are the norm, and where colonialism and colonialist attitudes persist. So while we start the long work to demilitarise and decolonise our world, we also can look at how our own minds and bodies as spaces that need to be demilitarised and decolonised.

Ask yourself:

- What cultures or assumptions are you surrounded by that are rooted in militarised mentalities?
- How can you educate yourself and others about the unjust impact of the climate crisis, and the systemic changes needed?

6. HELP TO WEAVE A NEW NARRATIVE

The militarised aspects of the climate crisis have not been given anywhere near the level of scrutiny as they deserve. Most people won't be aware of a systematic relationship between the two, and a key role in our movements is to challenge and change this. We need to build a sense that everyone has a stake in how the climate crisis is being militarised, that it isn't just an issue for the peace movement.

There are lots of ways we can do this. For example:

- Raise awareness of the environmental impacts of militarism (and vice versa) in press releases or campaign communications
- Highlight media stories and events that illustrate the links (even if the piece itself doesn't reference them), explicitly drawing out the elements that point to militarised responses to the climate crisis
- Develop clear, consistent, digestible wording and phrases that people can relate to
- Combine the stories of lived experiences with data and analysis
- Consider using – or generating your own - simple, clear analogies and metaphors (such as the "armed lifeboat" illustration) that help to communicate the systemic, structural issues we are trying to raise awareness and understanding of

7. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

As we've seen, the relationship between militarism and the climate crisis is a tangled web, incorporating a wide-range of different issues: the mining industry, migrant rights, pollution, feminism and gender, democracy and decision-making, the arms trade, conscription, animal rights... You are likely to find groups in your locality already working on one or more of these issues, and this means there might be opportunities to build alliances or work together. We need to build long-lasting, deeply trusting relationships: this is the essence of what movement building is.

You are likely to find that many people involved in these organisations already share some of your analysis or understanding, but there may be concerns about spreading energy too thinly, managing expectations, or setting out on projects or campaigns that distract from other work.

Consider:

- What would working with them more closely look like? Could you offer them a platform to speak at an event, or offer to give a talk at one of their meetings?
- How could you build trust and understanding between your groups?
- What would you need out of a long term relationship with another organisation? What could you offer?

8. CHALLENGE DECISION-MAKERS

Militarism is deeply embedded, and the climate crisis is continuing to escalate. We need to hold politicians and other decision-makers to account, pushing them to begin to make changes that reflect the sort of world we want and need. The "overton window" (the fairly narrow window of what is considered acceptable within mainstream political discourse) needs to shift significantly, with what is currently considered "radical" – cutting military spending, massive investment in transition, centring climate justice - becoming the accepted norm.

Consider:

- Lobbying decision-makers or politicians on specific initiatives or concerns, or in solidarity with others
- If you are involved in a political party, look to educate or raise awareness of issues related to militarism or the climate crisis within your local branch, or at a national conference

9. HELP TO BUILD RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

While the "big decisions" around militarism and the climate crisis are made in national and international decision-making spaces, there is still a lot we can be doing on our doorsteps. Strong communities who are able to cooperate, communicate, and share resources will be much more resilient when shocks hit. Working to build these sorts of communities is antimilitarism in action.

Consider:

- In what ways is your community vulnerable to climate-induced shocks? Is anyone in your community particularly impacted by militarism?
- What resources and opportunities are there for building stronger relationships between members of your community?
- Do you – or members of your community - have a relationship with others further afield, or abroad? Are there projects or initiatives you can support with fundraising or in other ways (like fairtrade or direct trade initiatives)?

10. SUSTAIN YOURSELF AND THOSE AROUND YOU

Finally, remember that the health, strength and sanity of the individuals in our movements is probably our biggest commodity and most important resource. Each and every one of us is important, and being able and ready to sustain our work and activism over a long period of time is critical. Burnout, overwhelm and exhaustion are very real risks, that everyone is susceptible to, and can have a devastating impact on organisations and movements. Building our personal resilience is essential.

Consider:

- Do you and members of your group regularly make time to rest, play, relax, and recuperate?
- Do you consider how much capacity you have before taking on new work? Do you feel able to say "no" to requests?
- Does your group or organisation create space for people to share how they feel, how much capacity they have, and their personal or emotional challenges?

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It is available online at **www.wri-irg.org/climate-justice-zine-2024**, where you can also find out how to order print copies.