Protecting the ‘Heart of the Earth’ from Ecocide

A groundbreaking documentary sheds light on the urgent need to make ecocide a crime and protect indigenous territories in the Brazilian Amazon

By Yasmin Dahnoun

Through the powerful firsthand accounts of five indigenous leaders spanning four generations, Amazônia: The Heart of Mother Earth paints a picture of the ongoing struggle to safeguard these vital lands.

Directed by Gert-Peeter Bruch and Princess Esmerelda of Belgium, the film features notable figures. Among them are chief Raoni Metuktire of the Kayapo people, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and Sydney Possuelo, the former president of the National Indian Foundation.

Their stories, along with others, serve as a rallying cry for global support in demarcating and preserving indigenous territories in Brazil and urging the establishment of an international law to criminalize ecocide.

Brazil is currently considering a law against ecocide, which the Brazilian political party Partido Socialismo e Liberdade (PSOL) submitted to congress on June 5. The proposed law seeks to criminalize “performing illegal or wanton acts with the knowledge that they generate a substantial probability of serious and widespread or long-term damage to the environment,” reflecting the international definition of ecocide.

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The proposal is supported by a collaboration of PSOL, Ecoe Brasil, Observatório do Clima, Stop Ecocide International, International Rivers, Climate Counsel and many others.

At present, ecocide is officially a crime in 10 countries, including France (Article 231-3), Ecuador (Article 98) and both Russia (Article 358) and Ukraine (Article 441), and is being actively discussed in another 27 countries, according to Ecocide International.

When Jair Bolsonaro took office as president of Brazil in 2019, he sent a clear message was that the region was “open for business,” leading to a 92% surge in deforestation in the first eight months of his leadership, according to data from the country’s INPE satellite service.

Founder of French NGO Planete Amazone, Gert-Peeter Bruch said: “In four years, Jair Bolsonaro destroyed or weakened several decades of international efforts to protect the Amazon rainforest and indigenous territories. Returning to power, President Lula has made the protection of both a policy priority.”

Protection of indigenous lands represents the most viable path to halt the ecocidal deforestation plaguing the Amazon.

New data has shown that Amazon deforestation rates dropped 34% in the first six months of Lula’s presidency. “However, the Brazilian congress remains outside of Lula’s control and has recently approved a proposal that strips the environment ministry’s oversight of the rural land registry and removes the power of the ministry of in-

Waging Peace in Viet Nam

Army Veteran returns to Viet Nam 53 years later

By Doug Rawlings

I was able to return to Viet Nam 53 years after I was first there as a soldier with the 7/15th artillery in the central highlands (July 1969 to August 1970). Was it strange? Yes. Was it enlightening? Yes. Was it more than just a tourist trip? Yes. Before I elaborate, though, let me first reach out to my brothers and sisters who fought in Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan and wish all of you the opportunity to return to the lands of your godforsaken wars for a chance to make some form of amends. I know, I know, I said the same thing years ago—"There's no way in hell I'm going back." But things change. Here's how they changed for me.

To begin with, the union activist, long-time anti-war activist and organizer Ron Carver reached out to me and asked if I wanted to join a panel at the 14th annual “Engaging With Vietnam Cultural Heritage” conference held in Hue this August. It was hosted by Hue University and attended by over 500 scholars and students. So, I was not returning as a tour-'Vietnamese Girl Statue' by Le Thanh Nhon.

Photo: Josh Rawling

continued on page 11 …
The Trail Ellsberg Blazed

I got tired of being packaged up and sold to the military industrial congressional complex. First I was a student, then a soldier, then a veteran, and now I am an aging retiree. They loved me as a young kid awash in their textbooks and delusional world vision. A Midwestern privileged white male being packaged for full delivery to some corporation. But then the military wing stepped in front of me and I began my struggle out of the box for full delivery to some corporation. But then the military was beginning to fall apart. No UPS drivers wanted to pick it up and drop it off at some doorstep (i.e., my family and friends). Certainly no corpora
tions wanted it in their mailrooms. -

Ah. It was at that moment in my life that I began my struggle out of the box that America wrapped around me and of the industrial lackeys—I was drafted and re-packaged to serve in their colonial war in Viet Nam. When that package returned to these shores as a soiled, mis-

We never imagined what a life of social activism could achieve. And that really is what Daniel Ellsberg was telling us through his words and his actions over these past 50 years.

and family, and in which to continue to pursue the urgent goal of working with others to avert nuclear war in Ukraine or Taiwan (or anywhere else).” He was very aware of the horror of war and especially concerned about the possibility of nuclear war. He wrote, “The current risk of nu-
clear war, over Ukraine, is as great as the world has ever seen.”

Along my own life’s trail I was blessed to join with others to form Veterans For Peace (VFP) in 1985. As one of five white males in the whitest state in the nation (Maine) contemplating how to use our veteran status to throw a monkey wrench into our government’s Central American wars, we never imagined that VFP would be a force in repatriating Hispanic veter-

Now, as a retiree, I am standing at the precipice and wondering what legacy I might leave behind me that could possibly defy the aforementioned complex. Even when Ellsberg was in his last months, we could turn to him for inspiration. “I feel lucky and grateful about having a few months more to enjoy life with my wife and family, and in which to continue to pursue the urgent goal of working with others to avert nuclear war in Ukraine or Taiwan (or anywhere else).” He was very aware of the horror of war and especially concerned about the possibility of nuclear war. He wrote, “The current risk of nu-
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Now, as the 38th national VFP conven-
tion comes to a close, we gather to honor Dan Ellsberg not just through words but through action. Please read the latest print issue of Peace & Planet News with that in mind—how can we best confront the looming and monstrous military indus-
trial congressional complex with the vigor, compassion, and street smarts that he employed? How to help turn our children’s and grandchildren’s lives into love letters and not into packages?

Our editor-in-chief, Tarak Kauff, wrote this about Dan: “He was a rare human be-
ing, truly a spiritual giant who loved and cared for others more than himself. Yet, he was always approachable, always one of us. He was a friend and a brother to everyone in Veterans For Peace. And he always signed his e-mails, ‘Love, Dan,’ as if you were family. He showed by example how to live, and as we all know, faced death with the same dignity, joy and love that he lived with.”

Dear brother Daniel Ellsberg, we are still listening. Your life looms large in our lives. And in the lives of generations to come. Thank you.

—Doug Rawlings

Veterans For Peace is an international organization made up of military veterans, military family members, and allies. We are dedicated to building a culture of peace, exposing the true causes and costs of war, and healing the wounds of war.

For more information or to join or support our work, scan the QR at left or visit veteransforpeace.org.

Peace & Planet News

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The Climate Crisis Will End When Capitalism and Militarism End

The climate emergency won’t end because of heartfelt pleas to the people and interests who created the crisis.

By Margaret Kimberley

No more drilling on federal lands.

—Joe Biden, February 9, 2020

The March to End Fossil Fuels will take place in New York City on Sept. 17, days before the U.N. Climate Ambition Summit. Considering that July 2023 was the hottest month ever recorded on earth, the role of fossil fuel production in the climate crisis surely needs public attention and action.

But there is something highly problematic about marches and meetings that don’t address two large elephants in the room: capitalism and militarism. The U.S. military is the world’s biggest emitter of fossil fuels, having emitted 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere since 2001. The huge number is no surprise, considering that the United States has more than 800 military facilities around the world and needs huge amounts of fossil fuels in order to operate them all.

Fossil fuel usage can only end with radical changes to life in industrialized nations and with very radical changes in politics.

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The Totalitarian Dystopia Is Already Here

I had a nightmare that I leaked some classified information and got arrested and waterboarded by New York Times reporters. The goal is to keep us fighting with as much hostility as possible over issues that inconvenience our rulers as little as possible. It’s really amazing how successful they are at this.

You couldn’t design a more effective totalitarian dystopia than the one we’re in right now. One where everyone’s brainwashed by propaganda without even knowing it, where everyone thinks, acts, votes, and shops exactly as their rulers want them to, all while thinking they are free.

The other day I saw a video of a guy angrily running over a case of Budweiser with a monster truck for reasons that made no sense to me, and everyone was excitedly yelling their opinions about it, and I was just like, oh my god we are so fucked. They’ve got us totally wrapped up.

You couldn’t design a more effective totalitarian dystopia than the one we’re in right now. One where everyone’s brainwashed by propaganda without even knowing it, where everyone thinks, acts, votes, and shops exactly as their rulers want them to, all while thinking they are free.

People worry about technocratic escalations like increasing surveillance, digital IDs, central bank digital currencies etc, and rightly so; those measures do give the powerful a greater degree of power over the populace. But many incorrectly imagine that a future technocratic dystopia created by those measures would look a lot different from the dystopia we’re in right now, and it simply would not. Those measures would be used to help keep this current system locked in place, not to create a new one.

People imagine totalitarian dystopia as some dark threat looming in the future because they don’t understand how profoundly unfree we already are right now. They think we’re free because we can choose what to buy at the supermarket and call the president “Brandon,” but we’re not. They imagine that our rulers have some grand conspiracy to create a dystopia where they can force us all to do as they wish, not realizing that we’re already in a dystopia where we are doing exactly as they wish. It really can’t be improved upon. They’re just locking it in.

Seriously, think about it: What could the rulers of Western society possibly extract from us that they’re not already getting? There’s no meaningful political opposition, no antiwar movement, no anti-capitalist movement, very little critical thought—they’ve got total control. Everything we do in this dystopia is designed to funnel profit into the coffers of the oligarchs and power into the hands of the imperialists, and all efforts to resist and change these funneling systems have been successfully quashed by mass-scale psychological manipulation.

This totalitarian dystopia looks like freedom because they let us more or less do what we want, while controlling what it is that we want to do using mass-scale manipulation. They further bolster this by creating systems where what we do has little or no meaningful effect. Even if we had actual software in our brains that gave our rulers total and complete control over our minds, they’d have the masses think and behave in more or less the same way they do right now.

The primary weapon of our totalitarian rulers is not surveillance, police robots, digital IDs or CBDCs—their primary weapon is propaganda. The system of mass-scale psychological conditioning they’ve created is unlike anything that has ever existed in history. The ability to detect and suppress an emerging revolution is vastly inferior to the ability to use psychological manipulation.

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The goal is to keep us fighting with as much hostility as possible over issues that inconvenience our rulers as little as possible. It’s really amazing how successful they are at this.

You couldn’t design a more effective totalitarian dystopia than the one we’re in right now. One where everyone’s brainwashed by propaganda without even knowing it, where everyone thinks, acts, votes, and shops exactly as their rulers want them to, all while thinking they are free.

The only way out of this giant matrix of psychological control is to show people how unfree we are, how they’re being deceived, how much better things could be. Awaken people to the lies, to the real nature of the political, educational, and media institutions designed to keep us enslaved, weaken public trust in the propaganda machine, and then we might have the beginnings of the possibility of real change.

Who you think of as an anti-authoritarian hero says a lot about you as a person. If I ask you to picture someone fighting the power and you think of Tank Man or Napoléon or some historical figure instead of the living people fighting the power structure you actually live under, it means you have swallowed the lie that your own government and its allies are good and virtuous in the here and now, and that “fighting the power” is something that could only continued on page 10 …
Silencing the Lambs: How Propaganda Works

By John Pilger

In the 1970s, I met one of Hitler’s lead- ing propagandists, Leni Riefenstahl, whose epic films glorified the Nazis. We happened to be staying at the same lodge in Kenya, where she was on a photo- graphy assignment, having escaped the fate of other friends of the Führer.

She told me that the “patriotic mes- sages” of her films were dependent not on “orders from above” but on what she called the “submissive void” of the German public.

Did that include the liberal, educated bourgeoisie? I asked. “Yes, especially them,” she said.

I think of this as I look around at the propaganda now consuming Western societies.

Do we live in a media society where brainwashing is insidious and relentless, and perception is filtered according to the needs and lies of state and corporate power?

The United States dominates the Western world’s media. All but one of the top 10 media companies is based in North America. The internet and social me- dia—Google, X, Facebook—are mostly American owned and controlled.

In my lifetime, the United States has overthrown or attempted to overthrow more than 50 governments, mostly demo- cracies. It has interfered in democratic elections in 30 countries. It has dropped bombs on the people of 30 countries, most of them poor and defenseless. It has at- tempted to murder the leaders of 50 coun- tries. It has fought to suppress liberation movements in 20 countries.

The extent and scale of this carnage are largely unreported and unrecognized, and those responsible continue to domi- nate Anglo-American political life.

In the years before he died in 2008, the playwright Harold Pinter made two ex- traordinary speeches that broke a silence. “U.S. foreign policy,” he said, is “best de- fined as follows: kiss my arse or I’ll kick your head in. It is as simple and as crude as that. What is interesting about it is that it’s so incredibly successful. It possess- es the structures of disinformation, use of rhetoric, distortion of language, which are very persuasive, but are actu- ally a pack of lies. It is very successful programmed to swallow a pack of lies. If we don’t recognize propaganda, we may accept it as normal and believe it. That’s the submissive void.”

In systems of corporate democracy, war is an economic necessity, the perfect marriage of public subsidy and private profit: socialism for the rich, capitalism for the poor. The day after 9/11 the stock prices of the war industry soared. More bloodshed was coming, which is great for business.

Today, the most profitable wars have their own brand. They are called “forever wars”: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and now Ukraine. All are based on a pack of lies.

Iraq is the most infamous, with its weap- ons of mass destruction that didn’t exist. NATO’s destruction of Libya in 2011 was justified by a massacre in Benghazi that didn’t happen. Afghanistan was a conve- nient revenge war for 9/11, which had noth- ing to do with the people of Afghanistan.

Today, the news from Afghanistan is how evil the Taliban are—not that Presi- dent Joe Biden’s theft of $7-billion of the country’s bank reserves is causing wide- spread suffering. Recently, National Pub- lic Radio in Washington devoted two hours to Afghanistan—and 30 seconds to its starving people.

At its summit in Madrid in June, NATO, which is controlled by the United States, adopted a strategy document that militarizes the European continent and escalates the prospect of war with Russia and China. It proposes “multi-domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer- competitors.” In other words, nuclear war.

It says: “NATO’s enlargement has been a historic success.” I read that in disbelief.

A measure of this “historic success” is the war in Ukraine, news of which is mostly not news, but a one-sided litany of jingoism, distortion, and omission. I have reported a number of wars and have never known such blanket propaganda.

In February, Russia invaded Ukraine as a response to almost eight years of killing and criminal destruction in the Russian-speaking region of Donbass on their border.

In 2014, the United States sponsored a coup in Kyiv that got rid of Ukraine’s democratically elected, Russian-friendly president and installed a successor who the Americans made clear was their man.

In recent years, American “defender” missiles have been installed in Eastern Europe, Poland, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic, almost certainly aimed at Russia, accompanied by false assurances all the way back to James Baker’s “prom- ise” to Gorbachev in February 1990 that NATO would never expand eastward be- yond Germany.

Ukraine is the frontline. NATO has effectively reached the very borderland through which Hitler’s army stormed in 1941, leaving more than 33 million people dead in the Soviet Union.

Last December, Russia proposed a far- reaching security plan for Europe. This was dismissed, derided or suppressed in the Western media. Who reads its step-by- step proposals? On Feb. 24, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was dismiss- ed, derided or suppressed in the Western media. Who reads its step-by- step proposals?

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On April 25, U.S. Defense Secretary General Lloyd Austin flew into Kyiv and confirmed that America’s aim was to destroy the Russian Federation—the word he used was “weaken.” America had got the war it wanted, waged by an American-bankrolled and -armed proxy and expendable pawn.

Leni Riefenstahl told me that the ‘patriotic messages’ of her films were dependent not on ‘orders from above’ but on what she called the ‘submissive void’ of the German public.

Harold Pinter: U.S. crimes have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. . .

It’s a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis.’

I asked [Pinter] if the ‘hypnosis’ he referred to was the ‘submissive void’ described by Leni Riefenstahl. ‘It’s the same,’ he replied. ‘It means the brainwashing is so thorough we are programmed to swallow a pack of lies. If we don’t recognize propaganda, we may accept it as normal and believe it. That’s the submissive void.’

I continued on page 10...
By Brett Wilkins

In response to reports that the Biden administration may propose the highest level of military spending in U.S. history for fiscal year 2024, a broad range of nearly 60 advocacy groups urged the White House to divert “some of our supersized Pentagon budget to better meet the needs of the American people.”

Last week, Pentagon Comptroller Michael McCord told Politico that officials were “very close” to agreeing on a topline figure for what would likely be the largest-ever U.S. military budget, which the Biden administration will include in its overall 2024 budget request. “I don’t expect it will be a bigger number than Congress provided last year,” McCord said.

In a letter to President Joe Biden, 59 peace, national security, climate justice, racial justice, faith, and anti-poverty groups wrote that “we cannot and must not defend the status quo when it comes to the Pentagon budget.”

“This year’s military budget—$858 billion—is the second-highest since World War II. It is 10 times Russia’s military budget and more than 2.5 times that of China. It is greater than the next nine countries combined,” the groups noted.

The letter continues: “About $452 billion of it will go straight into the pockets of big corporate weapons contractors. Congress added $45 billion on top of what your administration requested—an amount greater than the entire climate investment portion of the Inflation Reduction Act. It will not take many more years for our military budget to hit the $1 trillion mark, an astonishing sum given the Pentagon has never been able to pass an audit or properly account for the billions it already receives.”

“This is why we urge you to request a lower military budget this year,” the groups explained. “We reject recent calls to roll back the entire federal budget because we can and should be spending more on meeting human needs and addressing the climate emergency through a just transition from fossil fuels and support to communities on the frontlines of climate crisis.”

“One of the many ways we can accomplish this is by spending less on the wasteful Pentagon budget,” the letter argues. “We reject pouring our dollars into outdated ships, malfunctioning planes, or record-breaking contractor CEO salaries that remain, unhoused, in need of adequate healthcare, or seeking a living wage.”

In a recent opinion piece, retired Air Force Lt. Col. William J. Astore—a self-described “card-carrying member of the military-industrial complex”—wrote in favor of slashing the Pentagon budget in half.

“Isn’t it time to force the Pentagon to pass an audit each year—it’s failed the last five!—or else cut its budget even more deeply?” asked Astore, whose piece invoked earlier military-industrial complex critics including former World War II Supreme Allied Commander and President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler.

“Isn’t it time to hold Congress truly responsible for enabling ever more war by voting out military sycophants?” As-tore added. “Isn’t it time to recognize, as America’s founders did, that sustaining a vast military establishment constitutes the slow and certain death of democracy?”

In an interview with CBS News’ The Takeout that aired last week, former U.S. Acting Defense Secretary Christopher C. Miller also said the military budget is “absolutely gigantic.”

“We have created an entire enterprise that focuses economically on creating crisis to justify outrageously high defense spending,” said the former U.S. Army Special Forces colonel—who served for 73 days during the final months of the Trump Administration, including during the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Brett Wilkins is a staff writer for Common Dreams.

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The Toxic Legacy of the U.S. Military

By Whitney Webb

Major outlets in 2017 gave minimal attention to news that the U.S. Navy station in Virginia Beach spilled an estimated 94,000 gallons of jet fuel into a nearby waterway, less than a mile from the Atlantic Ocean. While the incident was by no means as catastrophic as some other pipeline spills, it underscores an important yet little-known fact—that the U.S. Department of Defense is both the nation’s and the world’s largest polluter.

Producing more hazardous waste than the five largest U.S. chemical companies combined, the U.S. Department of Defense has left its toxic legacy throughout the world in the form of depleted uranium, oil, jet fuel, pesticides, defoliants like Agent Orange, and lead, among others.

In 2014, the former head of the Pentagon’s environmental program told Newsweek that her office has to contend with 39,000 contaminated areas spread across 19 million acres just in the United States alone.

One of the most recent testaments to the U.S. military’s horrendous environmental record is Iraq. U.S. military action there has resulted in the desertification of 90 percent of Iraqi territory, crippling the country’s agricultural industry and forcing it to import more than 80 percent of its food. U.S. use of depleted uranium in Iraq during the Gulf War also caused a massive environmental burden for Iraqis. In addition, the U.S. military’s policy of using open-air burn pits to dispose of waste from the 2003 invasion has caused a surge in cancer among U.S. servicemen and Iraqi civilians alike.

While the U.S. military’s past environmental record suggests that its current policies are not sustainable, this has by no means dissuaded the U.S. military from openly planning future contamination of the environment through misguided waste disposal efforts. In November, 2016 the U.S. Navy announced its plans continued on page 19 …
U.S. Military Pollution

The World’s Biggest Climate Change Enabler

By Jangira Lewis

The U.S. military recently released a report analyzing the Department of Defense’s climate risk. The Pentagon acknowledged that rising temperatures are “reshaping” the world with “more frequent, intense, and unpredictable extreme weather conditions caused by climate change” but failed to analyze the Defense Department’s own contributions to climate change.

In 2019, a report released by Durham and Lancaster University found the U.S. military to be “one of the largest climate polluters in history, consuming more liquid fuels and emitting more CO₂ (carbon-dioxide equivalent) than most countries.” It established that if the U.S. military were a nation state, it would be the 47th largest emitting nation. It established that if the U.S. military were a nation state, it would be the 47th largest emitting nation of greenhouse gases alone.

Dr Patrick Bigger of Lancaster University Environment and Consumption Research Centre said: “This research provides ample evidence to support the argument that the U.S. military as a major climate actor, you must understand that the logistical supply chain that makes its acquisitions and consumption of hydrocarbon-based fuels possible.”

By Jangira Lewis

The damage the U.S. military has inflicted is shocking, and they have shown complete negligence and disregard for human life.

The U.S. military has long been a major contributor to the global shift in sea levels and warming ocean temperatures. This is due to the astonishing amount of toxic chemicals, such as perchlorate and other components of jet fuel, found in the groundwater along the bases.

Additionally, a lot of the land is wasted by the U.S. military. Abandoned military sites are very common, with reports finding that almost 900 of the 1,200 Superfund sites in the United States alone are abandoned military sites. These military sites are also said to be contaminated, with special cleanup grants distributed to them from the government.

The U.S. military has claimed it is implementing positive changes to its policies, but these efforts have been so slight as to bring into serious doubt that the military takes seriously the need to reduce its carbon footprint. Additionally, the U.S. Navy Task Force Climate Change initiative that was attempting to prepare military bases for global shifts in sea levels and warming ocean temperatures was quietly shut down.

U.S. Military Air Pollution

The U.S. military is greatly enriching the carbon footprint suffered by our planet.

In 2017, the U.S. Air Force bought $4.9 billion worth of fuels, the Navy bought $2.8 billion, the Army $947 million and the Marines $36 million. The U.S. military was also found to have purchased 269,230 barrels of oil a day and emitted more than 25,000 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide.

These two examples are not exceptions. The Cost of Wars Project found that U.S. military pollution had accounted for 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, which amount to 257 million passenger cars annually. They noted that this astonishing output was higher than the emissions from whole countries like Sweden, Morocco, and Switzerland.

The report released by Durham and Lancaster University was an independent public assessment of the U.S. military’s greenhouse gas emissions and calculated U.S. military pollution through critical analysis of its logistical supply chains around the world. This study establishes the U.S. military as one of the world’s largest institutional consumers of hydrocarbons.

Dr Patrick Bigger of Lancaster University Environment and Consumption Research Centre said: “The U.S. military has long understood it is not immune from the potential consequences of climate change—recognizing it as a threat multiplier that can exacerbate other threats—nor has it ignored its own contribution to the problem.”

“Yet its climate policy is fundamentally contradictory—confronting the effects of climate change while remaining the largest single institutional consumer of hydrocarbons in the world, a situation it is locked into for years to come because of its dependence on existing aircraft and warships for open-ended operations around the globe,” Bigger added.

Dr Benjamin Neimark, associate director of the Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business at Lancaster, said: “This research provides ample evidence to support recent calls by activist networks to include the U.S. military in Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s Green New Deal and other international climate treaties.”

“Our research demonstrates that to account for the U.S. military as a major climate actor, you must understand the logistical supply chain that makes its acquisition and consumption of hydrocarbon-based fuels possible” added Dr Oliver Belcher, of Durham University’s Department of Geography.

Belcher continued, “How do we account for the most far-reaching, sophisticated supply chains, and the largest climate polluter in history? While incremental changes can amount to radical effects in the long-run, there is no shortage of evidence that the climate is at a tipping point and more is needed.”

U.S. Military Land Pollution

Two of the most harrowing cases of U.S. military pollution activity were the nuclear weapons tests they performed in the Marshall Islands and the Navajo Indian Reservation.

From 1946 to 1958, the United States conducted 67 nuclear weapons tests that performed in the Marshall Islands and the Navajo Indian Reservation.

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From 1946 to 1958, the United States tested 67 nuclear weapons in what is now known as the Republic of the Marshall Islands. These weapons tests have been equated to being 1,000 times greater than the Hiroshima bomb, and the fallout from the tests had the largest impact on four northern atolls: Eniwetok, Bikini, Rongelap, and Utrok, each of which were evacuated due to radiation emitted from these tests. Radiation poisoning, birth defects, leukemia, thyroid and other cancers are just a few of the detrimental life-threatening consequences experienced by the residents of those islands more than 75 years later.

Between 1944 and 1977, the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington state released radioactive toxic gases and fluids, affecting the fish that provide food and economic subsistence to the residences. In addition to this, Uranium mining and aboveground nuclear weapons tests had been occurring for approximately 50 years on and around these reservations. These actions have caused dramatic increases in cancer rates among indigenous people that reside in this region.

U.S. military land pollution does not only take the form of nuclear testing; it can also take the form of military real estate. Reports have indicated that both domestic and foreign U.S. military bases rank among some of the most polluted sites in the world. This is due to the astonishing amount of toxic chemicals, such as perchlorate and other components of jet fuel, that are found to contaminate drinking water, aquifers, and the soil surrounding the bases.

Additionally, a lot of the land is wasted by the U.S. military. Abandoned military sites are very common, with reports finding that almost 900 of the 1,200 Superfund sites in the United States alone are abandoned military sites. These military sites are also said to be contaminated, with special cleanup grants distributed to them from the government.

The U.S. military has claimed it is implementing positive changes to its policies, but these efforts have been so slight as to bring into serious doubt that the military takes seriously the need to reduce its carbon footprint. Additionally, the U.S. Navy Task Force Climate Change initiative that was attempting to prepare military bases for global shifts in sea levels and warming ocean temperatures was quietly shut down.

U.S. Military Water Pollution

The damage the U.S. military has inflicted is shocking, and it has shown complete negligence and disregard for human life.

In 2017, the U.S. Naval Air Station Oceana in Norfolk, Virginia, was found to have spilled 84,000 gallons of jet fuel into a waterway. Similarly, in 2015, statistics arose showing that the Air Force contractor had been dumping industrial solvent Trichloroethylene (TCE) into the ground surrounding the Tucson International Airport for 29 years. It was found that over 1,350 residents suffered from cancer and other illnesses due to these negligent actions. Claims were filed against the Air Force by many South Tusconians, who claimed to be suffering from this day from the damage caused by drinking the polluted water.

This negligence and disregard for life is not new behavior from the U.S. military. From 1953 to 1986, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina was found to have been contaminating the groundwater with harmful chemicals that far exceeded safety standards. As a result of this negligence, a large number of service members contracted cancer and other illnesses.

U.S. military wars have had a devastating effect on the continued on page 9…
The Ways U.S. Militarism Fuels the Climate Crisis

By J.M. Rine

The U.S. military fuels the worsening climate crisis in numerous ways. One way is directly, as the largest institutional emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG). If the Pentagon were a country, in 2010 it would have ranked 53rd in GHG emissions. To ascertain the full impact of U.S. military emissions, however, you need to add the GHG produced by the war industry that supports it. Adding these, what are termed scope 3 emissions, the resulting GHG produced is at least three to four times that of the Pentagon alone, or about equivalent to the GHG emitted by the Netherlands. Not an amount to be ignored, but these direct emissions may not be the most impactful way the Pentagon fuels the climate crisis.

President Biden promotes the United States not only as a “force for good” but also as a leader on fighting climate change citing its rejoining the Paris Climate agreement (but not meeting the pledged targets of that agreement), hosting a climate leaders’ summit, participating in COP 26 and 27, and signing into law the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022. But can the United States be a credible leader in addressing the climate crisis when its prime mitigation tool, the IRA, receives less than 5% of the funding lavished on the U.S. military?

The United States justifies annual spending of tens of billions of dollars to maintain approximately 800 bases worldwide, many of which are heavy polluters but can manage only $1 billion in climate financing for developing countries. Amitav Ghosh highlighted this problem in an essay in Greta Thunberg’s The Climate Change Book, “… global leaders may speak a certain language during international negotiations, but when we examine what they are actually doing it would seem that their actions are indeed driven by a will to power. That perhaps is why affluent nations felt able to contribute only $10 billion to a fund to help countries which are exceptionally vulnerable but had no difficulty in increasing their defense spending by $1 trillion. This suggests that, contrary to what global leaders may say publicly, many of them are in fact preparing for a future of intensified conflict.”

Under the Biden administration’s direction, is the Pentagon taking serious steps to reduce its emissions? In January 2021, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin stated the Defense Department “will immediately take appropriate policy actions to prioritize climate change considerations zero” are absent in subsequent NDAAs for 2023 and 2024, despite the enormous size of these NDAAs. With federal deficits increasing, it is unlikely both political parties will agree to fund the additional expense of “greening” a military that maintains or increases its present size. What needs to be done was pointed out in a February 2022 Time Magazine article headlined “To Take Climate Change Seriously, The U.S. Military Needs to Shrink.”

An argument could be made that current security concerns warrant increased military spending. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the war in Ukraine has spawned an increase in global military spending to $2.2 trillion. The United States follows this trend even though it already spends almost three times more than China, over 10 times more than Russia, and more than the next 10 countries combined, according to 2021 estimates by SIPRI. Considering the gross disparity in spending by the United States on its military, combined with the fact that many of the numerous U.S. overseas bases border Russia, it is not unreasonable to think that President Putin’s fears of invasion are rational. After all, the United States almost went to war over the USSR placing missiles in a single country, Cuba. Consequently, it could be argued that the current insecurity and present war in Ukraine is partly if not largely the fault of the United States and its NATO allies.

Then there is the U.S. “conflict” with China. General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a House panel recently, “China’s actions are moving it down the path toward confrontation … .” This is gross hypocrisy from a country with hundreds of overseas bases, versus China, which currently has just one base in Djibouti, along the coast of the Horn of Africa. Based on the climate catastrophes confronting the world in 2023, shouldn’t the two largest emitters of GHG, China and the United States, be instead concentrating on how best to lower their emissions? Dr. Neta Crawford states in her book The Pentagon, Climate Change, and War, “Even in the coming century, military emissions and military power, and geopolitical disparities are fundamental to the dynamics that have repeatedly stymied efforts to reach a global agreement on rapid decarbonization … .”

Can an imperialist country with an overwhelming military whose quest is “full-spectrum dominance” be trusted to be a “force for good” during a worsening climate crisis? On Jan. 6, 2021, an insurrection was inspired if not directed by a president who is purported to have once asked about the use of nuclear weapons, “If we had them why can’t we use them?”

With Donald Trump bidding to regain the title of commander-in-chief of the world’s largest military, it would not be a stretch to conclude that most of the globe considers the United States a clear and present danger and not a force for good.

Amitav Ghosh writes, “Nationalism, militarism, combined with the fact that many of the numerous U.S. overseas bases border Russia, it is not unreasonable to think that national rivalries are fundamental drivers of climate change.” Resources are available from the Climate Crisis and Militarism Project within Veterans For Peace, including reference materials, presentations, and suggestions for actions. Visit veteranforpeace.org.

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James (Jim) M. Rine, after serving in the U.S. Army in West Germany (1969–1973), was a research geologist for 35 years. In 2020, he helped form the Veterans For Peace Climate Crisis and Militarism Project. Rine is also an adjunct Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Geology at Wayne State University in Detroit.
Air Pollution Cuts More Than Two Years Off Human Life Expectancy
Particulate pollution remains the world’s greatest external risk to human health
By Jake Johnson

High and rising levels of global particulate matter pollution—caused by wildfires, the combustion of fossil fuels, and other factors—are cutting 2.3 years off the average human’s life expectancy, according to research unveiled Tuesday.

The latest version of the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI), produced annually by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC), estimates that fine particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution’s impact on global human life expectancy is “comparable to that of smoking, more than three times that of alcohol use and unsafe water, more than five times that of transport injuries like car crashes, and more than seven times that of HIV/AIDS.”

Despite the terrible impact of air pollution on human health, governments around the world are doing little to address the crisis, according to EPIC’s research.

“While there is a large global fund for HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis that annually disburses $4 billion toward the issues, there is no equivalent set of coordinated resources for air pollution,” the new report states. “The entire continent of Africa receives under $300,000 in philanthropic funds toward air pollution. Just $1.4 million goes to Asia (outside of China and India). Europe, the United States, and Canada receive $34 million, according to the Clean Air Fund.”

Jake Johnson is a staff writer for Common Dreams.

Climate Enabler
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Economies and population of the countries they intervene in. Perhaps one of the most recent cases to their detrimental environmental record is the intervention of Iraq. The Iraqi economy is suffering tre mendously as they are now forced to import more than 80% of their food, due to the desertification of 90% of Iraqi territory. U.S. policies are negligent and disregard the safety of their servicemen as well as the Iraqi population.

A great deal of U.S. interventions occur as American corporations wish to protect their access to oil and other fossil fuels. We see this dependence on oil as one of the driving factors of why there is such a heavy U.S. military presence in many parts of the Middle East.

These interventions not only come with high cost to life, but to the environment too. The Cost of Wars Project found the total emissions from war-related activity in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria to be estimated at more than 400 million metric tons of carbon dioxide alone.

Former U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon stated in 2014, “The environment has long been a silent casualty of war and armed conflict. From the contamination of land and the destruction of forest to the plunder of natural resources and the collapse of management systems, the environmental consequences of war are often widespread and devastating.”

Jangira Lewis currently works as a Secondary School English Teacher in Hong Kong. Born and raised in Luton, she has a master’s degree in International Journalism from the University of Leeds. Her interests lie in geopolitics, health and nutrition, humanitarian issues, and animal welfare.

The Bitter Alchemy of War
Turning bullet lead into corporate gold
By William J. Astor

As the Ukrainian counteroffensive against Russia grinds on (or falt ers!), as U.S. disaster relief for Hawaii is tied to more military aid for Ukraine, as depleted uranium shells join cluster munitions as America’s latest gift to a blasted war zone, as calls for diplomacy continue to be muted when they’re not actively discouraged and dismissed, I was reminded of the alchemy of war.

Alchemists of the early modern period were sophisticated experimenters driven by an often quasi-religious quest for perfection. We tend to remember only the most craven part of their experiments: the attempt to transmute lead into gold. This transmutation could not be effected, but alchemy itself transmuted into chemistry as its practitioners, through trial and error, developed a better understanding of the nature of the elements, reflected in part by today’s Periodic Table.

Yet the business of war succeeded where alchemists failed. In their alchemy, the merchants of death turned bullet lead into corporate gold. And what gold! Yearly war budgets continue to soar in the United States toward the trillion dollar mark. Weapons shipments to Ukraine continue at a pace that promises more shattered and blasted bodies, Ukrainian and Russian.

In a sense, dead bodies are also being transmuted into corporate gold.

Transmutation, I was taught as a Catholic, is a miracle. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jesus Christ, the Son of God, of course). We have made the miraculous the mundane, and indeed the profane. We take lead and spill blood which becomes gold. And some even celebrate this as good for business in the United States.

All these weapons: they’re job-creators! So we crucify the Word and elevate the life-takers and widow-makers as gods.

We are far more deluded than the alchemists of the past.

William J. Astore served in the U.S. Air Force for 20 years, retiring in 2005. He was a professor of history, and has written extensively for TomDispatch.com, Truthout, History News Network (HNN), Alternet, Salon, Antiwar.com, and Huffington Post among other sites. He is the author or co-author of three books, most recently Soldiers’ Lives through History: The Early Modern World (2007, co-written with Dennis E. Showalter).

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Propaganda

Almost none of this was explained to Western audiences.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is wanton and inexcusable. It is a crime to invade a sovereign country. There are no “buts”—except for Russia.

When did the present war in Ukraine begin and who started it? According to the United Nations, between 2014 and this year, some 14,000 people have been killed in the Kyiv regime’s civil war on the Donbass. Many of the attacks were carried out by neo-Nazis.

Watch a ITV news report from May 2014 by the veteran reporter James Mates, who is shells, along with civilians in the city of Mariupol, by Ukraine’s Azov (neo-Nazi) battalion.

In the same month, dozens of Russian-speaking people were burned alive or suffocated in a trade union building in Odessa besieged by fascist thugs, the followers of the Nazi collaborator and anti-Semitic fanatic Stephen Bandera. The New York Times called the thugs “nationalists.”

“The historic mission of our nation in this critical moment,” said Andreiy Biletsky, founder of the Azov Battalion, “is to lead the white races of the world in a final crusade for their survival, a crusade against the Semite-led Untermenschen.”

Since February 2022, a campaign of self-appointed “news monitors” (mostly funded by the Americans and British with links to governments) have sought to maintain the absurdity that Ukraine’s neo-Nazis don’t exist.

Airbrushing, a term once associated with Stalin’s purges, has become a tool of mainstream journalism.

In less than a decade, a “good” China has been airbrushed and a “bad” China has replaced it: from the world’s work to a budding new Satan.

News about China in the West is almost entirely about the threat from Beijing. Airbrushing is the American media’s answer to the Chinese government’s success at silencing its critics. The facts have been airbrushed, or destroyed.

Palestine has been misreported for as long as I can remember. To the BBC, Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and other collaborators, as Vichy journalists. We know who they are. I think of them as collaborators, as Vichy journalists.

When will real journalists stand up? An inspirational samizdat already exists on the internet: Consortium News, founded by the great reporter Robert Parry, Max Blumenthal’s Grayzone, Mint Press News, Media Lens, Declassified UK, Alborada, Electronic Intifada, WSWS, ZNet, ICH, Counterpunch, Independent Australia, Globetrotter, the work of Chris Hedges, Patrick Lawrence, Jonathan Cook, Diana Johnstone, Caitlin Johnstone, and others will forgive me for not mentioning them here.

And when will writers stand up, as they did against the rise of fascism in the 1930s? When will filmmakers stand up, as they did against the Cold War in the 1940s? When will satirists stand up, as they did a generation ago? Having soaked for 82 years in a deep bath of righteousness that is the official version of the last world war, isn’t it time those who are meant to keep the record straight declared their independence and decoded the propaganda? The urgency is greater than ever.

Originally published by Information Clearing House. John Pilger is an award-winning Australian journalist, writer, scholar, and documentary filmmaker. He has mainly been based in Britain since 1962. He was also a visiting professor at Cornell University in New York.

Dystopia

…continued from page 4

In reality, the need to “fight the power” is greater under the U.S.-centralized empire that rules over anyone who’s likely to be reading these words, because the U.S.-centralized empire is the most murderous and tyrannical power structure in the world right now.

So when I ask you to picture an authoritarian figure who comes to mind, if you are lucid you won’t picture someone like Tank Man, Navalny, Gandhi, Mandela or MLK. You’ll picture someone like Julian Assange: someone who’s fighting the real power where it stands here now.

Caitlin Johnstone is a 100% crowd-funded rogue journalist, bogan social- ist, anarcho-psychoanalyst, guerrilla poet and utopia prepner living in Australia with her American husband and two kids. She writes about politics, economics, media, feminism, and the nature of consciousness. She is the author of the illustrated poetry book Wake: A Field Guide For Utopia Preppers. Her website is caitjohnstone.medium.com.

*Today, the most profitable wars have their own brand. They are called “forever wars”: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and now Ukraine. All are based on a pack of lies.*

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*Today, the most profitable wars have their own brand. They are called “forever wars”: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and now Ukraine. All are based on a pack of lies.*
In June 2023, the city council of Guajará-Mirim of the Amazon rainforest now stands on the precipice of an irreversible tipping point. Scientists have issued dire warnings of impending immediate action to halt the ongoing destruction.

In response, campaigners are pushing for the Brazilian Ecocide Bill to be enacted, which they argue will provide the legal protection of nature under constitutional law. While ecocide laws reflect a growing recognition of the intrinsic value of nature, the need to safeguard its well-being through legal means.

These efforts reflect a growing recognition of the intrinsic value of nature and the need to safeguard its well-being through legal means.

In Ecuador, the Rights of Nature law has already achieved historical milestones. The court ruling in favor of the Amazon and the “Quitmo without mining” campaign have translated the rights of landscapes into legal language, further strengthening environmental protection measures.

Amazônia: The Heart of Mother Earth spurs international debate on why ecocide laws need to be adopted not just in Brazil, but globally. The film’s message is clear: the permanent demarcation and protection of indigenous lands represents the most viable path to halt the deforestation of the Amazon.

First printed in The Ecologist.

Yasmin Dahnoun is assistant editor at The Ecologist.
Late in the morning on July 12, a helicopter landed in a field near the entrance to AhDiNa, a campground on the McCloud River in Northern California. Children ran ahead to greet the craft, and soon the road was lined with spectators waiting to witness the delivery of precious cargo: an insulated bucket containing 25,000 fertilized winter-run Chinook salmon eggs.

These eggs would not only bring the Winnemem Wintu Tribe one step closer to bringing salmon, or Nur, back to their ancestral waters, but could also help save the species from extinction.

Winter-run Chinook spawned in summer, but the spring-fed McCloud River runs cold all year round, buffering eggs and young salmon from even the worst summer drought. For 80 years the formidable Shasta Dam has blocked Chinook from the McCloud. Now fish are stuck in California's Central Valley, where sizzling temperatures and water withdrawals make the Sacramento River below Shasta Dam unlivable for Chinook.

Winter-run Chinook eggs were first brought to the McCloud River last summer, as part of an emergency plan spearheaded by NOAA Fisheries, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Winnemem Wintu to help the fish survive a third straight year of drought.

“We were flying by the seat of our pants,” says Cathy Marcinkevage, assistant regional administrator for NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region. “We had no idea what was going to happen last year. We had no idea if any of them would survive.”

The young salmon released into the McCloud River not only survived—they thrived, growing larger than those that reared in the Sacramento River below Shasta Dam.

Late last year the California Department of Fish and Wildlife captured and trucked 1,600 of the fry downstream so they could continue their journey to the ocean. This year—with a new juvenile collection system, a novel streamside incubation system designed by the Tribe, and agreements in place that recognize the Winnemem Wintu as co-equal decision-makers—the partners hoped to build on their success.

Together Marcinkevage and Marine Sisk, fisheries supervisor for the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, carried the bucket to the ceremony grounds, a caravan of children and adults in their wake. Later in the afternoon, the partners would deliver the eggs to incubators on the riverbank.

First, it was time to dance the salmon home.

AhDiNa is at the end of a bone-juddering road south of the town of McCloud. On that July day, the campground was full of Winnemem Wintu, agency folk and their families, and people with Run4Salmon, a movement and prayer journey started by Winnemem Wintu Chief Caleen Sisk in 2016 to call salmon home to the McCloud River.

The ceremony took place in a circular arbor made from wood poles and conifer boughs. A fire in the center burned throughout the day, and as the sun rose higher, the circle had to be sprayed with water before the barefoot dancers could enter.

Between dances Chief Sisk invited partners from the agencies and organizations to join her in the circle. While a tribal member blew sage on each person, Chief Sisk asked the partners to open their hearts and minds and pressed for her two most urgent goals: building a “fishway” around Shasta Dam and bringing salmon, or Nur, from New Zealand to California and bringing salmon to New Zealand and see the fish, who Chief Sisk believes are the true relatives of McCloud River Nur.

In their agreements NOAA Fisheries and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife have vowed to work with the Tribe to determine whether Nur can be safely imported from New Zealand to California and reintroduced in the McCloud River. Chinook eggs from the McCloud River were exported to New Zealand in the early 1900s, where runs formed in streams on the South Island. In 2010, Maori tribal members invited the Winnemem Wintu to come to New Zealand and see the fish, who Chief Sisk believes are the true relatives of McCloud River Nur.

“Bringing the fish back to the U.S. doesn’t necessarily fulfill the recovery objective that we have for winter-run because, to our understanding, [the New Zealand fish] are not genetically the same as the winter-run Chinook that we have now and are trying to recover,” says Marcinkevage. “But we understand the questions they will need to answer: Would the fish bring new pathogens to the McCloud? Would they compete with the other reintroduced Chinook for the same resources?"
they are culturally significant fish for the Tribe and there’s probably a feasible opportunity to have a dual reintroduction that would support both of these species.”

Chief Sisk says that if it weren’t for regulatory barriers, the Māori could deliver 20,000 fertilized eggs as early as next year.

“Some of the rules are wrong for salmon, and they need to be changed,” she says.

For now the eggs come from U.S. Fish and Wildlife’s Livingstone Stone hatchery on the Sacramento River. To the people gathered at AhDiNa, they were still worth celebrating.

The Salmon Dance was the last dance of the ceremony. While the women sang and men drummed, two dancers entered the circle, stepping lightly, un
clutter of anklets. A fifth dancer weaved in and out of the others.

The fifth dancer was the Salmon Spirit, dance captain Rick Wilson explained. First he dances with the salmon and thanks them for presenting themselves. Then he dances with the warriors in the same style.

“He makes sure they’re doing it for the right reason,” says Wilson. “He’s saying, ‘It’s okay; you’re good to go.’”

**Stronger, Faster, Larger**

Down by the river after the ceremony, a small crowd of adults and children pressed around a shade structure, where two vertical stacks of trays were set up. A pipe trickled water continuously through the stack. Each tray can accommodate thousands of salmon eggs. Used in virtually all hatcheries, the system is an efficient if unnatural way to grow fish.

Adjacent the shade structure was a second incubator system designed by Chief Sisk and built with the help of scientists from UC Davis.

Chief Sisk doesn’t like how the fry in the hatchery trays are stacked on top of each other; she wants them to have access to gravel and more agency. Her system, called the Nur Nature Base, has a much larger footprint than the hatchery trays and resembles a backyard water feature. Two deep square basins, lined with gravel, connect to a central pool that is planted with rocks and willow shoots. A sloping chute leads from the pool to a shallow, cobble-lined basin alongside the river.

Once the eggs hatch, the fish can swim over the lip of the basin into the pool, Chief Sisk explained to the crowd. “And when they’re ready, they’ll swim into this side channel, which the Winnemem Wintu have always built.”

Children crowded around Chief Sisk and her daughter, Marine, waiting for their turn to scoop cups of the orange, BB-sized eggs into the hatchery trays, then into one of the basins of the Nur Nature Base. By the time they completed the task, there were 11,000 eggs in the hatchery trays and 18,000 in the Nature Base.

Chief Sisk is confident that the Nur Nature Base will give the young fish a jump-start. “They’ll be stronger, faster, and larger,” she says.

In a few years, the team will know if she’s correct. Because the fertilized eggs come from the hatchery, the scientists know the identities of their parents and have segregated eggs from unique families between the hatchery trays and the Nur Nature Base. This way any fish that survive and return to the Sacramento River as spawning adults can be genetically traced back to one of the two rearing systems.

Eggs were delivered again in late July and early August, for a total of up to 80,000. Using two different systems and three simulated spawning dates will help the partners learn which strategies work best.

“We’ll know and learn better ways of setting up rearing and incubation,” says Rachel Johnson, salmon life history program lead for NOAA Fisheries Southwest Fisheries Science Center. “What I also love is we are braiding natural science with spiritual and culturally relevant practices.”

Later this summer, the state wildlife department and the Tribe will place a rotary screw sampling trap downstream so they can estimate the number of fry that make it downstream. The agency also hopes to test an experimental in-river fish-trapping station where the McCloud River fattens into an arm of Shasta Lake. Finally, the California Department of Water Resources will install its Juvenile Salmonid Collection System to catch any fish the other traps miss. The system, which the agency piloted last year, uses cold water to funnel young salmon to a collection point, where they can then be trapped and transported below the dam.

Though this is the first project to reintroduce salmon to historical habitat above a large dam in California, Marc Commandatore, environmental program manager at the Department of Water Resources, says the winemem project is “just the beginning.”

NOAA Fisheries has identified reintroducing fish to high-elevation tributaries as a key climate resilience strategy, especially for salmon languishing in the Central Valley.

“Fish are in the frying pan in the valley,” says Commandatore. “They want to be in this beautiful cold water.”

The partnership with the Winnemem Wintu is also a welcome sign of new respect and collaboration among Western scientists and the region’s original salmon stewards. “To bring tribal knowledge into decision-making … I’m humbled by it,” says Commandatore. “We wouldn’t be here if science and engineering and belief hadn’t all come together.”

Juliet Grable is a freelance writer who lives in Southern Oregon. Her work has appeared in many national and regional magazines, including Popular Science, Audubon, Sierra, Washington Post, Green Builder, Home Power, Earth Island Journal, Oregon Humanities, Redwoods Magazine, Travel Oregon, and 1859. She has authored three books and helped produce a short documentary and is currently collaborating on a feature-length film with Synchronous Pictures.
Whales Could Save the World’s Climate, Unless the Military Destroys Them First

By Koohan Paik-Mander

The U.S. military is famous for being the single largest consumer of petroleum products in the world and the largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Its carbon emissions exceed those released by “more than 100 countries combined.”

Now, with the Biden administration’s mandate to slash carbon emissions “at least in half by the end of the decade,” the Pentagon has committed to using all-electric vehicles and transitioning to biofuels for all its trucks, ships and aircraft. But is only addressing emissions enough to mitigate the current climate crisis?

What does not figure into the climate calculus of the new emission-halving plan is that the Pentagon can still continue to destroy Earth’s natural systems that help sequester carbon and generate oxygen. For example, the plan ignores the Pentagon’s continuing role in the annihilation of whales, in spite of the miraculous role that large cetaceans have played in delaying climate catastrophe and “maintaining healthy marine ecosystems,” according to a report by Whale and Dolphin Conservation. The importance of whales in fighting the climate crisis has also been highlighted in an article that appeared in the International Monetary Fund’s Finance and Development magazine, which calls for the restoration of global whale populations. “Protecting whales could add significantly to carbon capture,” states the article, showing how the global financial institution also recognizes whale health to be one of the most economical and effective solutions to the climate crisis.

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

The profound role of whales in keeping the world alive is generally unrecognized.

There are countless ways in which the Pentagon hobbles Earth’s inherent abilities to regenerate itself.

Much of how whales sequester carbon is due to their symbiotic relationship with phytoplankton, the organisms that are the base of all marine food chains. The way the sequestering of carbon by whales works is through the piston-like movements of the marine mammals as they dive to the depths to feed and then come up to the surface to breathe. This “whale pump” propels their own feces in giant plumes up to the surface of the water. This helps bring essential nutrients from the ocean depths to the surface areas where sunlight enables phytoplankton to flourish and reproduce, and where photosynthesis promotes the sequestration of carbon and the generation of oxygen. More than half the oxygen in the atmosphere comes from phytoplankton. Because of these infinitesimal marine organisms, our oceans truly are the lungs of the planet.

More whales mean more phytoplankton, which means more oxygen and more carbon capture. According to the authors of the article in the IMF’s Finance and Development magazine—Ralph Chami and Sena Oztop, from the IMF’s Institute for Capacity Development, and two professors, Thomas Cosimano from the University of Notre Dame and Connel Fullenkamp from Duke University—if the world could increase “phytoplankton productivity” via “whale activity” by only 1 percent, it “would capture hundreds of millions of tons of additional CO2 a year, equivalent to the sudden appearance of 2 billion mature trees.”

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

Vacuuming CO₂ From the Sky?—a False Solution

Meanwhile, giant concrete-and-metal “direct air carbon capture” plants are being planned by the private sector for construction in natural landscapes all over the world. They began operation in 2021 in Iceland. The plant is named “Orca,” which not only happens to be a type of cetacean but is also derived from the Icelandic word for “energy” (orka). Orca captures a mere 10 metric tons of carbon dioxide from the air each day, far below the levels of carbon emissions worldwide. This plant, which was built on a budget of $300 million, is estimated to capture only 10,000 metric tons of carbon per year, equivalent to the emissions of 2,000 cars per year.
Don’t Laugh Off Rebellious Orcas and Sea Otters

By Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond

Memes galore centered on the “orca revolution,” a term coined in the online realm. They gleefully depict orcas launching attacks on boats in the Strait of Gibraltar and off the Shetland coast.

One particularly ingenious image showcases an orca posed as a sickle crossed with a hammer. The cheeky caption reads, “Eat the rich,” a nod to the orca’s penchant for sinking lavish yachts.

A surfboard-snatching sea otter in Santa Cruz, California, has also claimed the media spotlight. Headlines dub her an “adorable outlaw” “at large.”

Memes conjure her in a beret like the one donned by socialist revolutionary Ché Guevara. In one caption, she proclaims, “Accept our existence or expect resistance … an otter world is possible.”

My scholarship centers on animal-human relations through the prism of social justice. As I see it, public glee about wrecked surfboards and yachts hints at a certain ‘human-centered’ time marked by drastic socioeconomic disparities, white supremacy, and environmental degradation, casting these marine mammals as revolutionaries seems like a projection of desires for social justice and habitable ecosystems.

A glimpse into the work of some political scientists, philosophers, and animal behavior researchers injects weightiness into this jocular public dialogue. The field of critical animal studies analyzes structures of oppression and power and considers pathways to dismantling them. These scholars’ insights challenge the prevailing view of nonhuman animals as passive victims. They also oppose the widespread assumption that nonhuman animals can’t be political actors.

So while meme lovers project emotions and perspectives onto these particular wild animals, scholars of critical animal studies suggest that nonhuman animals do in fact engage in resistance.

Nonhuman Animal Protest Is Everywhere

Are nonhuman animals in a constant state of defiance? I’d say, undoubtedly, that the answer is yes. The entire architecture of animal agriculture attests to animals’ unyielding resistance against confinement and death. Cages, corrals, pens and tanks would not exist were it not for animals’ tireless revolt. Even when hung upside down on conveyor vans, chickens furiously flap their wings and bite, scratch and defeate on line workers at every stage of the process leading to their deaths.

Until the end, hooked tuna resist, gasping and writhing fiercely on ships’ decks. Hooks, nets, and snares would not be necessary if fish passively allowed themselves to be harvested.

If they consented to repeated impregnation, female pigs and cows wouldn’t need to be tethered to “rape racks” to prevent them from struggling to get away.

If they didn’t mind having their infants permanently taken from their sides, dairy cows wouldn’t need to be blinded with hoods so they don’t bite and kick as the calves are removed; they wouldn’t bellow for weeks after each instance. I contend that failure to recognize their bellowing as protest reflects “anthropodenial.”

One marine mammal behaviorist warns that “a life without connection to turf is impossible.”

The entire architecture of animal agriculture attests to animals’ unyielding resistance against unbearable conditions, a revolt of the nerves. Dolphins engage in self-harm like thrashing against the tank’s walls or cease to eat and retain their breath until death. Sows whose body-sized cages impede them from turning around to make contact with their piglets repeatedly ram themselves into the metal struts, sometimes succumbing to their injuries.

Critical animal studies scholars contend that all these actions arguably demonstrate ‘resistance’-a primary act of resistance, and the will to prefer life over death is a primary act of resistance.

As for the marine stars of summer 2023’s memes, fishing gear can entangle and harm orcas. Sea otters were hunted nearly to extinction for their fur. Marine habitats have been degraded by human overfishing, oil spills, plastic, chemical and sonic pollution, and climate change. It’s easy to imagine they might be responding to human actions, including bodily harm and interference with their turf.

What Is Solidarity with Nonhuman Animals?

Sharing memes that cheer on wild animal actions is one thing. But there are more substantive ways to demonstrate solidarity with animals.

Legal scholars support nonhuman animal rights by proposing that their current classification as property should be replaced with that of personhood or beingness.

Nonhuman animals including songbirds, dolphins, elephants, horses, chimpanzees and bears increasingly appear as plaintiffs alleging their subjection to extinction, abuse and other injustices.

Citizenship for nonhuman animals is another pathway to social and political inclusion. It would guarantee the right to appeal arbitrary restrictions of domesticated nonhuman animals’ autonomy. It would also mandate legal duties to protect them from harm.

 everyday deeds can likewise convey solidarity.

Creating roadside memorials for nonhuman animals killed by motor vehicles encourages people to see them as beings whose lives and deaths matter, rather than mere “roadkill.”

Political scientists recognize that human and nonhuman animals’ struggles against oppression are intertwined. At different moments, the same strategies sustained against nonhuman animals have cast segments of the human species as “less than human” in order to exploit them.

The category of the human is ever shifting and ominously exclusive. I argue that no one is safe as long as there is a classification of “animals” to confer susceptibility to extravagant forms of violence, legally and ethically conditioned.

I believe quips about the marine mammal rebellion reflect awareness that our human interests are entwined with those of nonhuman animals. The desire to achieve sustainable relationships with other species and the natural world feels palpable to me within the memes and media coverage. And it’s happening as human-caused activity makes our shared habitats increasingly uninhabitable.

Solidarity with nonhuman animals is consistent with democratic principles—for instance, defending the right to well-being and opposing the use of force against innocent subjects. Philosopher Amir recommends extending the idea that there can be no freedom as long as there is still unfreedom beyond the species divide: “While we may not yet fully be able to picture what this may mean, there is no reason we should not begin to imagine it.”

Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond is Associate Professor Emerita of Comparative Literature and Luso-Brazilian Studies at the University of California, San Diego. Her publications on Critical Animal Studies and the legacies of African enslavement include “Haunting Pigs, Swimming Jaguars: Mourning Animals and Ayahuasca,” “‘Abhar Stole My Heart: Coming Out as an Animalist,’” and White Negritude: Race, Writing and Brazilian Cultural Identity. Her current book project, Home Sick, blends theory with creative nonfiction to meditate on grief, end of life, the medical-industrial complex, Islamophobia, and the commodification of (human and nonhuman) animals.

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Environmental Apartheid in Palestine

How Zionist colonialism has destroyed the environment in Palestine

By Institute for Middle East Understanding

Environmental apartheid refers to Israel’s systematic exploitation of the environment in Palestine/Israel and the discriminatory system by which Palestinians are dispossessed of their land, water, and other natural resources while being disproportionately impacted by ecological damage caused by Israel.

Israel’s environmental apartheid is harmful to the climate and violates the human rights of Palestinians, and is part of Israel’s broader system of apartheid against Palestinians both inside Israel’s internationally recognized borders and in the territories it has militarily occupied since 1967 (the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza). To distract attention from its abuses of Palestinian human rights, Israel engages in “greenwashing,” promoting itself as an eco-friendly country even as its policies and actions cause tremendous harm to the environment and to Palestinians.

According to the U.N. Development Program, “So pervasive are the effects of the Israeli occupation on the climate vulnerability of Palestinian communities that the occupation—in and of itself—is considered here a ‘risk,’ alongside environmental risks such as sea-level rise and altered rainfall patterns.”

For countless generations, Palestinians have lived and worked sustainably and in harmony with the natural environment in Palestine, maintaining the indigenous landscape, sharing common resources, and growing a wide variety of crops, including watermelon, wheat, citrus, grapes, and olives, the latter of which form a central part of Palestinian culture and identity.

Since 1948, when the state of Israel was established on 78% of Palestine and three-quarters of all Palestinians were expelled from their homes, Israel has been damaging and destroying the environment in order to exploit its natural resources; to pressure Palestinians to leave their land, as part of its repeated military assaults and 15-year-old illegal siege and blockade of Gaza; and to erase evidence of Palestinian existence and connection to the land.

Under international law, it is illegal for Israel as the occupying power to exploit Palestinian natural resources in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza for its own purposes.

Theft of Palestinian Water

Israel systematically denies Palestinians in the occupied territories and parts of Israel access to clean and safe drinking water. Israel steals more than 80% of water in the occupied West Bank and expriates it for use in illegal settlements, denying Palestinians access to water while supplying Israeli settlers with enough water to fill swimming pools, irrigate crops, and wash vehicles.

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Israel’s theft of Palestinian water causes severe environmental damage. Since 1967, Israel has consolidated complete control over all Palestinian water sources in the occupied territories. Israel’s over-extraction of Palestinian water sources has caused a drop in the water table and a distortion in the natural flow of ground- water, increasing vulnerability to extreme weather events such as floods and droughts, which damage Palestinian agricultural and residential areas. Over time, Israel has also degraded the water quality of the single largest source of freshwater, the Sea of Galilee, by clearing 25,000 acres of native wetlands and draining Lake Hula to make room for farming settlements.

Theft of Palestinian Land

Inside Israel: During its establishment in 1948, the new state of Israel expropriated more than four million acres of land belonging to the approximately 750,000 Palestinians who were driven from their homes and made refugees, denying their internationally recognized legal right to return along with the thousands of others internally displaced inside Israel.

Palestinians who remained inside what became Israel were granted Israeli citi- zenship but stripped of most of their land and placed under martial law until 1966, their freedoms severely restricted. Despite lifting martial law in 1966, Israel has continued to strip Palestinian citizens of Israel, destroying their homes and entire communities, and taking their land. Palestinian citizens of Israel, who comprise more than 20% of Israel’s population, also face systematic discrimination when it comes to their ability to access state-owned lands—about 13% of all the land in Israel—for residential, agricultural, or commercial purposes.

In the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Since 1967, Israel has expropriated huge tracts of Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. More than 247,000 acres of Palestinian land have been appropriated by Israel over the past 55 years to build over 280 Jewish settlements and a massive wall that have both been condemned as illegal by the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, and human rights organizations, in addition to destroying over 50,000 Palestinian homes and other structures such as farm buildings and water tanks.

Israel severely limits Palestinians’ right to access land in the occupied West Bank. Under the terms of the supposedly temporary Oslo Accords signed in the 1990s, Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank has been fragmented into three areas: Areas A, B, and C. Over 60% of the land in the West Bank—encompassing the majority of residential and development reserves as well as key natural resources like water and oil—has been classified by Israel as Area C, making it subject to full Israeli civil and military control. Through a discriminatory zoning system, Israel prohibits Palestinians from using the land in Area C, refusing to approve requests for building permits and thus destroying hundreds of “unauthorized” Palestinian homes each year. Seventy percent of the land in Area C has been appropriated for the use of illegal settlements, leaving only 1% to Palestinian... continued on next page...
Palestine

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ians; in East Jerusalem, 35% of the land has been expropriated for the construction of illegal settlements, restricting Palestinians to only 13%.

Destruction of Palestinian Trees and Agricultural Land

Israel uproots trees and destroys natural habitats in order to erase Palestinian history and existence. In 1948 and following years, Israel uprooted native trees and agricultural crops—such as carobs, hawthorns, oaks, olives, figs, and almonds—and replaced them with over four million non-native European species as part of an effort to hide the ruins of hundreds of Palestinian communities that were systematically destroyed during the state’s establishment. These non-native trees have caused vast environmental damage, reducing biodiversity, increasing droughts, and worsening wildfires throughout the region.

Environmental Destruction Caused by Illegal Settlements

In the occupied territories, the Israeli government and its settlers target Palestinian olive groves as a way to force Palestinians off their land. Since 1967, Israel has uprooted at least 2.5 million trees in the occupied territories, including nearly one million olive trees, which are a primary source of food and income for many Palestinians. Israeli settlers backed by the army frequently attack Palestinian farmers and their supporters during the olive harvest; between August 2020 and August 2021, Israeli soldiers and settlers destroyed more than 9,000 Palestinian olive trees in the West Bank. The widespread destruction of olive trees is a key strategy in Israel’s efforts to push Palestinians off their land and expand illegal settlements, and has led to habitat fragmentation, desertification, land degradation, rapid urbanization, and soil erosion.

Once We Were Proud and Supportive

The State of Israel has betrayed the very essence of everything good and decent about being Jewish

By Tarak Kauff

I was born in 1942 to a Jewish family while WWIII was raging. My mother hated not only the Nazis but the German people for allowing that to happen. She never forgave them. Never would she buy or touch anything made in Germany. In 1948 the Jewish State of Israel was founded. My family were fiercely proud and supportive of what we felt was the heroic Zionist achievements in Israel. We knew nothing about Palestinians. All we knew was that Arabs hated Jews and did terrible things. At a young age I decided to join the U.S. Army and “become a man.” I spent three-and-a-half years, mostly in the 101st Airborne division as a paratrooper, and now I’m an 81-year-old veteran.

After my military discharge I became involved in efforts to stop the Vietnam War. I also started to hear negative stuff about Israeli treatment of Palestinians, which of course I was in denial about. The Arabs were the bad guys after all. Nonetheless, I began to do some research and soon saw that there might actually be something to the criticism. Eventually I went to the West Bank with a team of U.S. veterans along with a former IDF paratrooper to experience the reality for myself. Four of us on that team were Jewish. I made two trips a few years apart. What I saw and experienced directly confirmed much of what I had researched, and it wasn’t pretty.

I’ll cut to the chase. The Zionist State of Israel has betrayed the very essence of everything good and decent about being Jewish. Instead of being kind, compassionate and empathetic to the oppressed and dedicated to truth, Israel has become a most vicious oppressor. I saw Palestinian children brutalized. They are killed on almost a daily basis. Children! Many are languishing in Israeli prisons for throwing rocks at occupying soldiers or for just being suspected of that. Israeli soldiers often break into Palestinian houses in the dead of night, terrorize the family and arrest children. And there is no such thing as a fair trial. If you are arrested, you are guilty. Palestinians are considered vermin.

In the occupied territories, the Israeli government and its settlers target Palestinian olive groves as a way to force Palestinians off their land. Since 1967, Israel has uprooted at least 2.5 million trees in the occupied territories, including nearly one million olive trees, which are a primary source of food and income for many Palestinians. Israeli settlers backed by the army frequently attack Palestinian farmers and their supporters during the olive harvest; between August 2020 and August 2021, Israeli soldiers and settlers destroyed more than 9,000 Palestinian olive trees in the West Bank. The widespread destruction of olive trees is a key strategy in Israel’s efforts to push Palestinians off their land and expand illegal settlements, and has led to habitat fragmentation, desertification, land degradation, rapid urbanization, and soil erosion.

And the armed settlers with their hatred and biblical stupidity—“God gave us this land”—are the worst. Yes, their god is a real-estate agent in the sky. Idiocy. And there is no excuse for it—none. Just as there was no excuse for what the Nazis did and what they became—arrogant monsters. How ironic that I saw such a similar phenomenon in Israel, especially in my direct confrontations with the IDF and the rabid settlers. Now I understand my mother’s revulsion to everything German. I’m a Jew and I wanted to see the truth, to actually see the reality apart from the mythology and the hasbara. The reality is that Israel has become an anathema to the humanistic tradition of Judaism. Instead it is sadistically violent and ruthless, as were the Nazis, but it is the arrogance most of all that repels me.

Finally, I suggest that people who want to defend Israel first spend some time in the West Bank as an objective observer. As many have, you will then see the truth. It may shock and disturb you, but you will become a better, more honest person because of it.

Tarak Kauff is the editor-in-chief of Peace & Planet News. He was a paratrooper in the U.S. Army from 1959 to 1962 and is a lifetime member and former board member of Veterans For Peace. He is a long-time activist for peace, justice, and the environment.

Impact of Settlement Pollution on Palestinian Health and the Environment

Israeli settlements release dangerous pollutants into the environment and nearby Palestinian communities. Israeli settlers produce twice as much solid waste per capita than Palestinians, and Israel dumps approximately 90% of the wastewater generated by illegal settlements into the West Bank, discharging 52 million cubic yards of untreated sewage each year in addition to other hazardous materials such as infectious medical waste, metals, batteries, and electronic industry byproducts. Many settlements are strategically located on hilltops above Palestinian towns and villages so polluted settlement wastewater and other contaminants...
Viet Nam

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ist. I had a purpose. Many of the attendees were not aware of the vibrant resistance movement in our ranks on their behalf to end the war. We wanted to insert that narrative into their discussion of Viet Nam’s heritage. And it worked. We packed the room during our panel discussion.

The panel consisted of Ron, who provided a brilliant summary of the GI Resistance Movement (he was instrumental in setting up underground newspapers and GI coffeehouses during the war); Dr. Tran Nhu Thao, who spoke eloquently of her museum—the most visited museum in Vietnam and one of the world’s premier museums; Chuck Scarey, a veteran who has lived in Vietnam for the past 30 years and is a driving force behind the RENEW project and The Friendship Village; and myself, who was asked to read a couple of my poems that appear in Ron’s book Waging Peace in Vietnam, which was just translated into Vietnamese.

At this point, I must acknowledge the significance of having my son with me. He is 46 years old and an experienced international traveler. Not to mention that he’s an excellent photographer. As his old man wandered here and there chatting it up with various conference attendees, he roamed about the city of Hue and engaged with the people in his own inimitable fashion. His stories of those encounters greatly enhanced my own experiences.

Both Josh and I are advocates of “organic travelling,” we were able to change plans on the spur of the moment. That led to phase two of the trip. The conference was part of the game plan, but our encounter with Chuck Scarey opened up another possibility that we jumped on. Chuck suggested that we go with him to Dong Ha in the Quang Tri Province to visit the offices of Project RENEW. Sure, we said. The evening after our conference presentation we flew out to Dong Ha, where Chuck had arranged hotel reservations and lined up a driver. We were about to hit the road.

Both of us were glad to leave the urban settings of Hanoi and Hue and head out to the countryside. Much of this country suffered enormous environmental damage due to bombing and the massive spraying of Agent Orange. This was the experience I had of Viet Nam those many years ago. During our five days of travelling by car we went to Khe Sanh, the DMZ, Da Nang, and Dong Ha. We went through a tunnel system built by the Vietnamese to survive the bombings; went to prison museums and war education centers that offered the perspectives of those who suffered under our military occupation; and we got to engage with the people since Chuck speaks Vietnamese and our driver spoke English. As Chuck remarked, “We are now travelling down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.”

In the RENEW office in Dong Ha we met with the program’s director and four of his staff members. They told us of their work to remove unexploded ordnance from the villages in Quang Tri; they showed us their work on prosthetics to provide victims of our cluster bombs with a means to gain some semblance of “normal lives”; and they explained how they are refashioning village homes to accommodate those impacted by our Agent Orange spraying. Their commitment to those still suffering from our war was impressive. Their thanks to Veterans For Peace and others who are providing financial assistance was heartfelt and deep. Right now they have 125 agents who are called out to villages to remove the aforementioned ordnance and they have a radiological set-up to provide prosthetic arms and legs. They need more funding to reach out to the victims of our war. Their presentations convinced me that I have a role to play in their work. I was not a tourist any longer.

Then we went to the Friendship Village outside of Hanoi.

This village was first set up by VFP member George Mizo. It started as one building and has now expanded to a campus of classroom buildings, a playground, and office facilities. Who lives there? Children and grandchildren of Vietnamese exposed to Agent Orange. They all suffer from both mental and physical disabilities as they struggle to live meaningful lives. The campus also houses Vietnamese veterans from the war—from both sides. They are there to help out as much as they can. Again, more funding is needed.

Right now a lot of the financial support for Project RENEW and the Friendship Village come from private sources, including a Norwegian group and an Irish group. The U.S. State Department has provided some initial funding but not much of late. Both projects employ doctors and nurses as well as student interns, but they are strapped for funds as the need for their work expands throughout the country. I am going to start up an outreach program, and I would love to have some assistance. Not only do we owe it to the Vietnamese people to help them recover from that war, but we also need to show the American people the realities of using cluster bombs and chemical weapons and their impact on the land and on generations of war victims. This life-changing visit to Vietnam was not all about me. It’s about all of us.

Rawlings is a Vietnam veteran and the author of four collections of poems: Orion Rising, A G.I. Portrait, In the Shadow of the Annamese Mountains, and A Baker’s Dozen (children’s poems). He is a founding member and former poet laureate of Veterans For Peace. He can be reached at rawlings@maine.edu.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Fifty years later, survivors of the war in Viet Nam still need our help! Please visit renewvn.org to make a tax-deductible donation or a bequest in your name to Friends of Project RENEW.

Readers of Peace & Planet News are also eligible for a special 30% discount on copies of the companion book to the Waging Peace in Vietnam exhibit. Just remember to use the code PEACE30 at checkout when purchasing copies of Waging Peace in Vietnam: U.S. Soldiers and Veterans Who Opposed the War. Go to WagingPeaceInVietnam.com.

Vietnam Redux: Going Back

By Doug Rawlings

I went back to that land of my fifty-year-old dreams thinking I’d finally put some nightmares out to pasture hoping to quiet down those mama san betel-mouthed screams looking for that proverbial sense of closure

But who am I to expect more from this madly tortured land that once swallowed up my illusions of masculine grandeur and spat out a soldier boy who had tried to become a man only to become a tool of that mindless, endless slaughter?

for Josh

I look twice now where I used to look only once like where routes two and four merge with route 156 or when my imagination takes me to a little village just on the other side of the river Styx.

Where there truly was hell to pay those many years ago across that river and up and down those swirling tides where Beelzebub got to play with his gift box of GI Joes as we desperately hung on for his Satanic little ride

War Is Not Green!

“10 Ways the War in Ukraine Threatens Our Environment. War is NOT Green!” is an excellent short video available on YouTube. Produced by CODEPINK Women for Peace, the 8-minute film explains why a ceasefire and negotiations are urgently needed to prevent further destruction of the environment.

End the war in Ukraine before it ends us! Join in the Global Days of Action for Peace in Ukraine, Sept. 30–Oct. 8. For more information, visit peaceinukraine.org.
The most lethal component to whales is CO₂ per day—compared to about 5.5 million metric tons per day of that currently sequestered by our oceans, due, in large part, to whales. And yet, the minuscule comparative success by Orca is being celebrated, while the effectiveness of whales goes largely unnoticed. In fact, President Joe Biden’s $1 trillion infrastructure bill contains $3.5 billion for building four gigantic direct air capture facilities around the country. Nothing was allocated to protect and regenerate the real orcas of the sea. “If we continue to do nothing,” who could save us from the climate crisis, they would be the whales and the phytoplankton, not the direct air capture plants, and certainly not the U.S. military. Clearly, a key path forward toward a livable planet is to make whale and ocean conservation a top priority.

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

This means we have to destroy the village in order to save it” prevails at the Pentagon. For example, hundreds of naval exercises conducted year-round in the Indo-Pacific region damage and kill tens of thousands of whales annually. And every year, the number of war games, encouraged by the U.S. Department of Defense, increases. They’re called “war games,” but for creatures of the sea, it’s not a game at all.

Pentagon documents estimate that 13,744 whales and dolphins are legally allowed to be killed as “incidental takes” during any given year due to military exercises in the Gulf of California.

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

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

The most lethal component to whales is sonar, used to detect submarines. Whales will go to great lengths to get away from the deadly rolls of sonar waves. They “will swim hundreds of miles… and even beach themselves” in groups in order to escape sonar, according to an article in Scientific American. Necropsies have revealed bleeding from the eyes and ears, caused by too much noise. “Whales try to flee the sonar, revealed the article. Low levels of sonar that may not directly damage whales could still harm them by triggering behavioral changes. According to an article in Nature, a 2006 UK military study used an array of hydrophones to listen for whale sounds during marine maneuvers. Over the period of the exercise, “the number of whale recordings dropped from over 200 to less than 50,” Nature reported.

“Beaked whale species… appear to cease vocalising and foraging for food in the area around active sonar transmissions,” concluded a 2007 unpublished UK report, which referred to the study. The report further noted, “Since these animals feed at depth, this could have the effect of preventing a beaked whale from feeding over the course of the trial and could lead to second or third order effects on the animal and population as a whole.”

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

The ‘Smart Ocean’

Until now, sonar in the oceans has been exclusively used for military purposes. This is about to change. There is a “subsea data network” being developed that would use sonar as a component of undersea and third-order effects could include starvation and then death.

The ‘Smart Ocean’

Until now, sonar in the oceans has been exclusively used for military purposes. This is about to change. There is a “subsea data network” being developed that would use sonar as a component of undersea use. Scientists from member nations of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), including, but not limited to Australia, China, the UK, South Korea and Saudi Arabia, are creating what is called the “Internet of Underwater Things,” or IoUT. They are busy at the drawing board, designing data networks consisting of sonar and laser transmitters to be installed across vast underwater expanses. These transmitters would send sonar signals to a network of transponders on the ocean surface, which would then send 5G signals to satellites.

Utilized by both industry and military, the data network would saturate the ocean with sonar waves. This does not bode well for whale wellness or the climate. And yet, promoters are calling this development the “smart ocean.”

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

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

Its data-storage cloud, called JEDI (Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure), will be co-developed at a cost of tens of billions of dollars. The Pentagon has requested bids on the herculean project from companies like Microsoft, Amazon, Oracle and Google.

Save the Whales, Save Ourselves

Viewed from a climate perspective, the Department of Defense is flagrantly barring away from its stated mission, to “ensure our nation’s security.” The ongoing atrocities of the U.S. military against whales and marine ecosystems make a mockery of any of its climate initiatives.

While the slogan “Save the Whales” has been bandied about for decades, they’re the ones actually saving us. In destroying them, we destroy ourselves.

Originally published for Local Peace Economy/Independent Media Institute at CounterPunch.

Kooshan Pak-Mander, who grew up in postwar Korea and in the U.S. colony of Guam, serves on the boards of World BEYOND War and the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space and on the advisory committee of the Global Just Transition project at Foreign Policy in Focus. She is co-author of The Superferry Chronicles: Hawaii’s Uprising Against Militarism, Commercialism and the Desecration of the Earth. She has written on the environment and militarism in the Asia-Pacific for The Nation, The Progressive, Foreign Policy in Focus, and other publications. She can be reached at kooshanpak@gmail.com

Abandoned Air Force Base in Greenland. Photo: Ken Bower

Toxic Legacy

The 20,000 tons of “stressors” mentioned in the EIS do not account for the additional 4.7 to 14 tons of “metals with potential toxicity” that the Navy plans to release into inland waters along the Puget Sound in Washington state.

In response to concerns about these plans, a Navy spokesman said that heavy metals and even depleted uranium are no more dangerous than any other metal, a statement that represents a clear rejection of scientific fact. It seems that the very U.S. military operations meant to “keep Americans safe” come at a higher cost than most people realize—a cost that will be felt for generations to come both within the United States and abroad.

This article was first published on May 15, 2017, in Mint News.

Whitney Webb is a MintPress News journalist based in Chile. She has contributed to several independent media outlets including Global Research, EcoWatch, the Ron Paul Institute and 21st Century Wire, among others. She has made several radio and television appearances and is the 2019 winner of the Serena Shim Award for Uncompromised Integrity in Journalism.
The Case Against Digital Technology

By Koohan Paik-Mander

The cell phone, with its GPS, texts, voice recognition, and kaleidoscope of other apps, has become an indis- pensable appendage to modern humans. In fact, we are awash in such technolo- gies, merged with them—our culture, institutions, ways of thinking, even our DNA. Meanwhile, the systemic embrace of algorithm technology has resulted in staggering economic inequity and envi- ronmental collapse, alienation and disconnection from Nature. Something feels wrong about it, yet we are still accustomed to ordering from Amazon or attending a Zoom meeting. It seldom crosses our minds that we have become one with a construction, the dis- rect genealogy of which is militarism.

Indeed, all the technologies we take for granted as part of modern life were actu- ally first developed as weapons at the Pen- tagon. The plethora of applications that were subsequently spun off for consumer use and corporate profit are the ones we interface with every day. Meanwhile, the development of more advanced military technologies has never abated hurtling forward, unnoticed, toward a horrifying new reality of 21st-century warfare. And now, with multiple generations of artif- icial intelligence (AI) teed up for develop- ment, everything is about to get even more insidious.

A glimpse of what’s to come can be gleaned from the Lockheed Martin web- site. It states that the primary weapon of war in the 21st century is “information.” In the very near future, data transmis- sions through networks of satellites and WiFi are to be met at once by unman- nered robot weapons to rain terror down on any spot in the world—a swarm of drones, hypersonic missiles, subma- rine torpedoes, and bombers—and all with the ease of an Uber.

The technologies for the latest trend in satellite-robot warfare found their begin- nings in the military research that took place under the Strategic Defense Ini- tiative (SDI) to develop missiles—often dubbed “Star Wars”—during the Rea- gan Administration. This research fast- tracked robotics and digital-tech devel- opment and gave birth to early AI. These technologies have been integrated into civilian “dual use” applications over the past two-and-a-half decades, enabling ex- plosive growth of companies like Google, Apple and Microsoft.

A new generation of highly sophisti- cated AI is triggering another tsunami of research funding. For example, the U.S. has mandated, in its National AI Initiative Act of 2020, to plow tens of billions of dollars specifically into AI, and not into Pentagon research. Other agen- cies will also be researching and inte- grating AI into the workflow, including DARPA, the National Security Council, Homeland Security, the National Science Foundation, NASA, the National Institute of Health, USAID, NOAA, and even the departments of Agriculture, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, State, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, and more.

The groundwork is being laid for artifi- cial intelligence, not human beings, to make determinations on how people will be governed, how Nature will be ravaged, and how war will be waged. In order to resist, it is crucial to deconstruct the mili- tary worldview and the epistemologies that drive all the existential crises we are all working so hard to revert.

Algorithm Technologies

The French philosopher and technol- ogy critic Jacques Ellul coined the term La Technique to describe how a society’s technol- ogies are part of a seamless fabric inseparable from political and economic structures, behavior, and thought. Technol- ogy is not just a cell phone or a drone or an algorithm or a nuclear bomb. It is a whole way of thinking, a way of organizing so- ciety, a way of being. It is systemic. Algo- rithm technologies, specifically, acceler- ate, amplify and perpetuate the values of the Pentagon, which gave them birth.

Our society’s prevailing ideologies include militarism, capitalism, neo-liberal- ism, globalization, and imperialism. All these “isms” share the same values with the technologies that now pervade our world. Those values include: 1) the profit impera- tive, 2) the growth imperative, 3) the ef- ficiency imperative, 4) competition and aggression, 5) amorality, 6) hierarchy, 7) quantification, linearity and seg- mentation, 8) homogenization, 9) dehuman- ization, 10) exploitation, and last, but not least, 11) the destruction of Nature to achieve these values and objectives.

These values have been dominant in Western culture ever since the barbarism of the so-called “Age of Discovery.” Con- sequently, these values have been inher- ent to the algorithm technologies devel- oped during the last 25 years. But the new technologies also possess an additional trait that amplifies their capacity for de- structive power. That trait is its ephemerality, which is its ability to function outside the boundaries of time and space—the very language of Nature. It’s also a trait that is highly prized by military strategists.

Although not readily apparent, the abil- ity to operate unboundedly by time or geo- graphy is a potentially grave existential threat. Geographies and cycles comprise the operating system for the intricate web of life. The seasons, the ebb and flow of tides, sunrise and sunset, systole and di- astole, and countless other rhythms. We ignore them at our peril. Sacred cycles and places have been scripture since time immemorial for Indigenous societies, in- structing when and how to plant, to fish, to harvest, to give birth, to bury one’s dead. But the new technologies erase, in A lot of people believe that technology is only “a tool” that can produce either good or bad results, depending on who its user is and how it’s being used. Actually, all technologies have inherent properties that are unique to that particular technol- ogy. Technology is not value neutral.

Jerry Mander gives a great example of a technology’s inherent properties by com- paring solar power to nuclear power:

“The existence of nuclear energy, and nuclear weaponry, in turn requires the ex- istence of what Ralph Nader has called a new ‘priesthood’—a technical and mili- tary elite capable of guarding nuclear waste products for the approximately 250,000 years that they remain danger- ous. So if some future society, tiring of the present path, should determine to move away from a centralized technol- ogy and toward, say, an agrar- ian society, it would be impossible. The technical elite would need to remain, if only to deal with the various wastes left behind. So it is fair to say that nuclear energy inherently steers society toward greater political and financial centraliza- tion, and greater militarization.

“Solar energy, on the other hand, is intrinsically biased toward democratic use. It is buildable and operable by small groups, even by families. It does not re- quire centralized control. … And solar energy requires no thousand-year com- mitment from society.”

In other words, every technology is imbued with its own inherent characteris- tics. Consequently, technology that is de- rived from values of war and domination will inevitably proliferate those values.

Inequity Accelerator

Reagan’s so-called “Star Wars plan” gave birth to the algorithm tech upon continued on next page…
As machine decision-making accelerates warfare, it is plain to see how conflict could easily escalate. Compressed time and space creates the incentive for each side to strike first and strike fast in a perceived crisis. This is a recipe for instability. Even if neither party initially planned to strike first, the accelerated dynamic inherent in an AI-driven scenario forces the likelihood of Mutually Assured Destruction. Diplomacy is not part of the algorithm. The justification for Mutually Assured Destruction is predicated on the belief that leaders of superpower nations were too rational to allow escalation of war that would end with the destruction of both nations. But you see, back then, no one ever factored into the equation what we have now—that one day, AI algorithms would be programmed and positioned to press the button. And algorithms couldn’t care less about Mutually Assured Destruction, or whether the whole planet is blown to smithereens. This isn’t an arms race. It’s a suicide race.

Demystifying AI

In the past few months, the topic of artificial intelligence has dominated the media with false promises, hyped-up worries, genuine concerns, and last but certainly not least, stock-market excitement.

The first warning in recent months came from Geoffrey Hinton, often called “the godfather of AI.” A kind of elder statesman of computing, he left his job at Google in order to speak freely, he has explained, with no corporate attachments, so that he could warn of the dangers of AI subjugating humanity—or eliminating it altogether.

And then there’s the letter signed by 1,800 corporate signatories, including Elon Musk, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak and engineers from Amazon, DeepMind, Google, Meta, and Microsoft. The letter called for a six-month pause on the development of systems that are capable of that of the large-language AI model GPT-4. The ostensibly “fear” is that robots will become smarter than humans and take over.

Timnit Gebru, has received much less media coverage than Hinton or Elon Musk about her objections to AI. Gebru is an Ethiopian-American AI developer who was notoriously fired from Google for calling out the race bias in the company’s algorithms. Gebru believes that the biggest threat from AI is taking place right now, not off in the distant future. One of her concerns is about how AI drew from the internet for its existing database, as a result, it amplifies the race and gender biases that are already rampant online.

Gebru finds the letter calling for a pause on AI research to be disingenuous. “Why does Elon Musk ... someone that will take over humanity all on its own. Like anything else, AI gets its power from the money that is invested into its development—in this case, on the order of hundreds of billions. A 2023 KPMG report estimates that investment in AI, along with machine learning and robotics, is set to reach $232 billion by 2025. It’s enough to re-make the world, several times over. Which is exactly the disruption plan.

Dan McQuillan, who teaches Creative and Social Computing at Goldsmiths, University of London, supports Gebru’s concerns in his book, Resisting AI. He believes that AI is a tool of political theology, implemented expressly to impact the distribution of power.

“AI is a form of computation that inherits concepts developed under colonialism and reproduces them as a form of race science,” he writes. “AI is sold as a solution to social problems, when what it is really doing is applying algorithmic morality judgements to target groups while obscuring the structural drivers of the very problems it is supposedly solving.”

The current reductionist paradigm has produced technologies that flout the parameters by which the earth flourishes and a just civilization thrives. New tech has accelerated inequity, destabilized global economy...
The Christian Radical
Who Believed Creation Care Meant Sabotaging a Pipeline

By Matt Bernico

On the night of the 2016 presidential election, Jessica Reznicek, a Catholic Worker and water defender, began her “peaceful direct action campaign” against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Along with activist Ruby Montoya, she burned five pieces of heavy machinery in Buena Vista County, Iowa. From there, armed with an oxy-acetylene cutting torch, Reznicek went on to other pipeline construction sites and pierced through the empty steel valves, sabotaged electrical units, and burned other heavy equipment. In a 2017 statement, Reznicek wrote, “We acted for our children and the world that they are inheriting is unfit.”

Following her actions, Reznicek was arrested. She pled guilty to one count of “conspiracy to damage an energy facility,” but in the months following her court date, prosecutors persuaded the judge to add additional charges labeling her a “domestic terrorist.” Despite the fact that she did not harm a person and explicitly took action against a corporation and not the government, these new charges drastically increased her sentence. She was sentenced to eight years in prison with three months probation; she also must pay over $3 million in restitution to Energy Transfer, the company that controls the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Reznicek has never pled guilty to the terrorism charge. August 11 marked two years since Reznicek’s incarceration, but the scandal of it all remains fresh. The U.S. would rather incarcerate someone trying to slow the death march toward extinction than apply new legislative standards that would reduce emissions, mitigate mounting temperatures, and protect creation.

Labeling Reznicek a domestic terrorist creates a dangerous precedent for future movements attempting to protect the environment from corporate degradation. Reznicek found the courage for her direct action from her spirituality and faith. Christians should tap into that tradition of civil disobedience embodied by the Catholic Worker movement. Her direct action aligns with people like Daniel and Phillip Berrigan, Catholic priests who burned draft cards to protest the Viet Nam War.

Rounding out the chain of causality, wildfires in Maui as well as droughts and storms all stem from a rising global temperature created, in large part, by companies like Energy Transfer. The oil passing through the Dakota Access Pipeline contributes to more carbon emissions and a rising global average temperature. The most recent assessment from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change demonstrates that limiting the rising global average temperature will require significant reductions in carbon dioxide emissions, in which fossil fuels play a huge role.

It’s unclear exactly what sparked the fires in Maui. But what is clear is that the prolonged drought and strong winds from Hurricane Dora amplified the wildfire, making it an absolute disaster. Yet it would be a misstep to leave the chain of causality there. Droughts and storm intensity are both amplified by a rising global average temperature. Higher temperatures mean that water evaporates quicker, ramping up the intensity of droughts. Similarly, higher temperatures also mean more intense storms. The increased evaporation of water means more intense rainfall and storm surges.

For Christians who find Reznicek’s activism “too radical” or “out of line with Christian teaching,” it’s important to understand that Reznicek places herself in the long tradition of civil disobedience embodied by the Catholic Worker movement. Her direct action aligns with people like Daniel and Phillip Berrigan, Catholic priests who burned draft cards to protest the Viet Nam War.

Reznicek, like the Berrigans, put her body on the line to draw attention to the reality of the situation: The planet is warming and big corporations like Energy Transfer are responsible. As Alleen Brown reported for The Intercept back in 2018, “The Dakota Access pipeline leaked at least five times in 2017.” These leaks all occurred within the first six months of its operation. By continuing to use and produce fossil fuels, we are hurting both our local and global environments.

For example, on Aug. 8, the deadliest wildfires of the 21st century swept across Lahaina on the island of Maui, Hawaii. With winds gusting up to 81 miles per hour, the fire spread a mile every minute, consuming everything in its path. The wildfire burned right up to the shoreline, scattering toxic materials and debris into the water. Not even the coral was safe from the fires.

What do the Dakota Access Pipeline and Maui wildfires have to do with each other? The oil passed through the pipeline contributes directly to increased carbon emissions, exacerbating and worsening the drought and winds, which caused the fires in Maui to burn out of control. Maui is no stranger to wildfires, but the intensity and destruction of these fires were not some causeless natural disaster or “act of God,” but directly correlated to the continued production and use of fossil fuels.

It’s clear that in the case of Jessica Reznicek, things are upside down. A person trying to protect the environment from continued degradation and exploitation was arrested and incarcerated, while fossil fuel companies continue to tap new sources of production and make record-breaking profits. It’s nothing short of climate denial to allow carbon emitters to continue their operations. More Christians should recognize what Reznicek so perfectly articulated: The world is unfit, and we must act now.

Originally published by Sojourner Magazine.

Matt Bernico is a labor activist and writes on topics pertaining to religion, social justice, and worker activism. You can hear more from Matt on his weekly podcast, The Magnificent.
 dẫn in Gaza—and more than 25% of all diseases—are linked to poor water quality. Palestinians in Gaza have also seen a dramatic increase in kidney problems in recent years due to contaminated water, and high cancer rates are likely the result of Israeli Blockade's negative impact on the quality of air and soil.

Gaza's coastal waters and natural aquifer are shrinking because of Israel's blockade. The Wadi Gaza is considered one of the most important coastal water bodies in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin, providing the main source of water for Palestinians in Gaza. But Israel's blockade, has led to extensive pollution and overuse, harming the natural ecosystem and causing a continuous decline in the water supply. As extreme weather events brought on by global warming threaten the long-term availability of groundwater globally, Israel's blockade exacerbates matters by degrading Gaza's only natural aquifer.

Greenwashing Apartheid

Promoting itself as an eco-friendly country, Israel uses false and misleading claims about its environmental impact to distract attention from and avoid accountability for its human rights violations against Palestinians. Israeli apartheid is not eco-friendly; Israeli's violent oppression of Palestinians is making climate change worse, and its sustained damage to the natural environment is a war crime. Israeli apartheid is accelerating global warming with a disproportionate impact on Palestinians. Israel has a significant per capita ecological footprint that is 6.9 times larger than that of Palestinians. Israel's ecological footprint far exceeds the biocapacity of the land, ranking third in the world for its biocapacity deficit. Approximately 96.4% of Israel's electricity production comes from fossil fuels, including natural gas extracted from stolen Palestinian land. The consequences of global warming—rising temperatures, scarcity of water resources, desertification, and drought—are being exacerbated by Israel at a higher cost for Palestinians, who are more vulnerable to climate hazards due to Israel's oppression.

Israel's military-industrial complex is a major contributor to global pollution. Arms manufacturing and trade, a major pillar of Israel's economy, is one of the world's most pollutive industries. Israel is the world's largest weapons exporter, contributing significantly to global air pollution and widespread ecological damage. The violence of the Israeli military is also bad for the environment: Israel's devastating 2014 attack on Gaza killed more than 2,000 Palestinians in addition to the environmental damage.

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Who Was Daniel Ellsberg, the ‘Most Dangerous Man in America’

The following remarks were delivered on August 25, 2023, at the Veterans For Peace National Convention.

By Marjorie Cohn

We dedicate this convention to Daniel Ellsberg, a beloved member of our Veterans For Peace Advisory Board. Dan died on June 16 at the age of 92.

Dan displayed uncommon courage in 1971 when he publicized the 7,000-page top-secret Pentagon Papers, which he had helped write. As a consultant to the Department of Defense, Dan also drafted Defense Secretary Robert McNamara’s plans for nuclear war, which Dan later spent his life trying to prevent.

Dan joined the Marines in 1954 and served in the Middle East but saw no action. He was very pro-miliitary. But in 1968, while working for RAND, his views began to change. In 1969, Dan attended a War Resisters League meeting in Pennsylvania. It was there he heard Randy Kehler voice his intention to refuse the draft. Dan was deeply moved. He later recommended to President Lyndon Johnson that U.S. forces hit targets up to the Chinese border. Dan thought their real aim was to provoke China into responding and then the U.S. would cross into China and demolish the communists with nuclear weapons.

In 2014, Dan gave a keynote speech at the 45th reunion of the Stanford Anti-Vietnam War movement. He explained how the United States came dangerously close to using nuclear weapons during the Vietnam War. In 1965, the Joint Chiefs recommended to President Lyndon Johnson that U.S. forces hit targets up to the Chinese border. Dan thought their real aim was to provoke China into responding and then the U.S. would cross into China and demolish the communists with nuclear weapons.

Dan wrote in an email, “When I copied the Pentagon Papers in 1969, I had every reason to think I would be spending the rest of my life behind bars. It was a fate I would gladly have accepted if it meant hastening the end of the Vietnam War, unlikely as that seemed (and was).”

Dan’s courageous actions did help end the anti-nuclear movement. For more than five decades, he spent nearly every waking hour working for peace and trying to prevent nuclear war.

After his diagnosis, Dan continued the struggle to avoid a nuclear holocaust. “I will continue, as long as I’m able, to help these efforts,” he wrote in an email to family and friends three and a half months before he died.

“I feel lucky and grateful about having a few months more to enjoy life with my wife and family, and in which to continue to pursue the urgent goal of working with others to avert nuclear war on Ukraine or Taiwan (or anywhere else).”

Until he died, Dan spoke out wherever he could—in the media and on webinars—imploring us to prevent nuclear war.

Those who make the nuclear weapons and the investment banks that finance them “have never been interested in limiting them. Their only interest is to have better ones,” Dan told me when I interviewed him in mid-March for Truthout. Those same people “have never been interested in keeping Russia from having H-bombs [hydrogen bombs], ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles] or MWHs [multiple warheads] at the cost of giving up ours.”

Dan wrote in his book, The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner, “Contrary to public understanding, [the] strategy has not been a matter of deterrence of nuclear attack on the United States, but rather the illusionary one of improving first-strike capability.”

To reduce the risks of nuclear war, Dan told me, “it is essential that members of NATO press the U.S. and others to renounce the atrocious NATO backing of the first-use of nuclear weapons.”

“The current risk of nuclear war, over Ukraine, is as great as the world has ever seen,” Dan wrote. He warned that nuclear war between the U.S. and Russia would result in “nuclear winter.” That means that “more than a hundred million tons of smoke and soot from firestorms in cities set ablaze by either side, striking everywhere.”

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