

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: You Can't Green the War Machine

The Takeaway:

- Don't fall for the cheery Earth Day tweets and promises of solar-powered tanks: you can't green the war machine. You have to dismantle it.
- The Pentagon is the world's largest institutional emitter of greenhouse gases, and its very raison d'être is to violently enforce the status quo economic system that created the climate crisis. No amount of litter clean-up can make that climate-friendly.
- The climate crisis is an existential security threat. To confront it, we must end U.S. militarism and invest instead in diplomacy, cooperation, and global climate justice.

To Fight The Climate Crisis, End U.S. Militarism

Earlier this week, the Pentagon's official Twitter account made a [post](#) honoring Earth Day and celebrating one military base's efforts to clean their local environment. It sounds innocuous enough — good, even. But coming from the world's single largest emitter of greenhouse gases, this seemingly well-intentioned tweet is actually representative of something far more insidious.

This week, in honor of Earth Day, we bring to you a simple message: there is no greening endless war. To fight the climate crisis, we must dismantle the war machine altogether.

Greenwashing War

The Pentagon's Earth Day tweet is representative of a growing, dangerous trend in climate discourse. No longer content to deny the existence of climate change, corporations, conservatives, and other bad actors have begun to appropriate the rhetoric of environmentalism while undermining the actual transformative change needed to confront the scale of this crisis. The Pentagon has pushed full steam into this greenwashing trend: [promoting](#) the absurd idea that we can simply green the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases without fundamentally changing its behavior.

The War(ming) Machine

The simple fact is: you can't run a war machine on renewables. Maintaining a global system of over 800 military bases, occupying entire countries, flying drones around the world — these activities are incredibly energy intensive. The Pentagon currently [emits](#) more greenhouse gases

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than 140 entire countries. The idea that we can maintain the status quo and simply run a massive convert the global war machine to renewables is not just a laughable [impossibility](#) — it is a dangerous attempt to divert attention from the true roots of the problem, and the much-needed transformative solutions.

Climate Colonialism

Let's be clear: the climate crisis is the result of an entire system designed to maintain private profits for the few with no regard for the wellbeing of the many. U.S. militarism doesn't just contribute to climate change by polluting, it is also the global enforcer of this unjust system. From fighting [wars for oil](#) to instigating [coups](#) against governments that threaten the economic order, U.S. militarism is often the violent protector of the very system that must be overturned if we are to confront the climate crisis. There's no greening that.

Demilitarize, Decarbonize

Climate crisis is a security issue. It is a greater threat to the safety and wellbeing of everyday people than most any bogeyman that the Pentagon can concoct as the threat of the day, not the least because it will only exacerbate existing military conflicts. This crisis has *no military solution*. Quite the opposite: confronting the climate crisis requires that we dismantle the war machine. That means ending endless wars, rolling back the sprawling empire of bases, cutting off the flow of arms, providing for [transitional justice](#) for workers dependent on the military-industrial complex, and, of course, slashing the exorbitant three-quarters of a trillion dollar Pentagon budget and investing those resources instead in climate action.

Cooperation, Not Competition

Climate change is a global problem. So long as the U.S. posture on the world stage remains one of overt antagonism and military domination, it will be impossible to address it. That's why another key aspect of a climate-focused foreign policy must be a turn away from the growing [Cold War](#) approach to China and antagonistic relations with Russia and focus instead on cooperation for [climate solutions](#). Addressing the climate crisis requires a new approach to foreign policy that eschews knee-jerk militarism for the difficult but necessary long-term tasks of diplomacy, multilateralism, and cooperation.

Beyond the War Machine

Of course, while dismantling the U.S. war machine is key to climate action, it is hardly enough. The United States has [by far](#) the greatest historical responsibility of any country for carbon emissions. Meanwhile the burden of the crisis is most likely to fall on those least responsible. The United States therefore has an obligation not only to commit to slashing its own emissions (far beyond the Biden administration's current [unambitious](#) proposal) but to provide reparatory climate assistance to the Global South, protection for those who will inevitably be [displaced](#) by the crisis, and — and perhaps most challenging — fundamentally [rewrite](#) the rules of the global economy to enact a just, global, green transition.

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Of course, it's a bit outside the scope of one newsletter to comprehensively address the transformative change needed to provide meaningful solutions to the climate crisis. But for now, suffice it to say, the next time the Pentagon tries to claim climate credentials, we'll know better. There is no greening the war machine. Now, to deal with whatever type of greenwashing [this](#) is...

For more on the connection between U.S. militarism and the climate crisis, read our [Climate Issue Brief](#) or the report "[No Warming. No War](#)" by our friends at the Institute for Policy Studies.

BURIED LEDES

The guilty verdict for George Floyd's murderer provides a small measure of accountability. But true justice won't be served without the eradication of white supremacy and the violent systems that uphold it — including in the [federal budget](#).

President Biden will [reportedly](#) formally recognize the Armenian genocide this weekend. For the Armenian community, it is long overdue, but it is "[one step towards justice](#)."

As Iran battles a fourth wave of Covid-19, access to medical and humanitarian supplies remains constrained by U.S. sanctions. This week, **we joined over 40 organizations in [calling on the Biden administration to provide life-saving sanctions relief for the Iranian people](#).**

The administration may have changed, but the brutal deportations of those in need of refuge continues. **Here's a [guide](#) to Title 42 — the Trump era policy that Biden has made his own.**

Pressure is growing for the Biden administration to waive the patent monopolies that are blocking global vaccine production. **Today, activists [delivered](#) a petition signed by 2 MILLION people calling on the Biden administration to put people over profits.**

Time to play everyone's favorite game: dystopian sci-fi or reality? DHS is partnering with a private company with links to the far right that scrapes biometric data from across the web without permission — **we [joined](#) 50 orgs to urge DHS to drop its contract with Clearview AI.**

Since Biden announced the end of "support for offensive operations" in Yemen, all we've heard about the details is... crickets. What's changed? Why are we still selling arms to the UAE? **The**

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U.S. Special Envoy for Yemen [dodged](#) these questions [and more](#) at two hearings this week.

The White House [endorsed](#) the Endless Frontier Act this week, which would invest in the U.S. technology industry in order to “compete with China.” Our take: you can support wildly popular progressive programs without [packaging](#) it in poisonous Sinophobia.

The House has [passed](#) the D.C. statehood bill! That’s it, that’s the buried lede. #51
#DCStatehoodNow

And finally, sometimes your weird hobbies can turn out to be [life-saving](#).