Militarism and Environmental Destruction

They are more related, than you think

Military as a business sector

- Eisenhowers Warning
- Main figures
- Why profit and growth is not compatible with saving the planet

Military as a polluter and environmental risk factor

- CO_2 emissions
- Water pollution
- Ground pollution
- Bioweapons
- Nuclear armament

The missing link in the debate

- Absence of information
- Lobbyism and media manipulation

Final Thoughts and debate

Eisenhower’s Warning

Main figures

Some main figures:

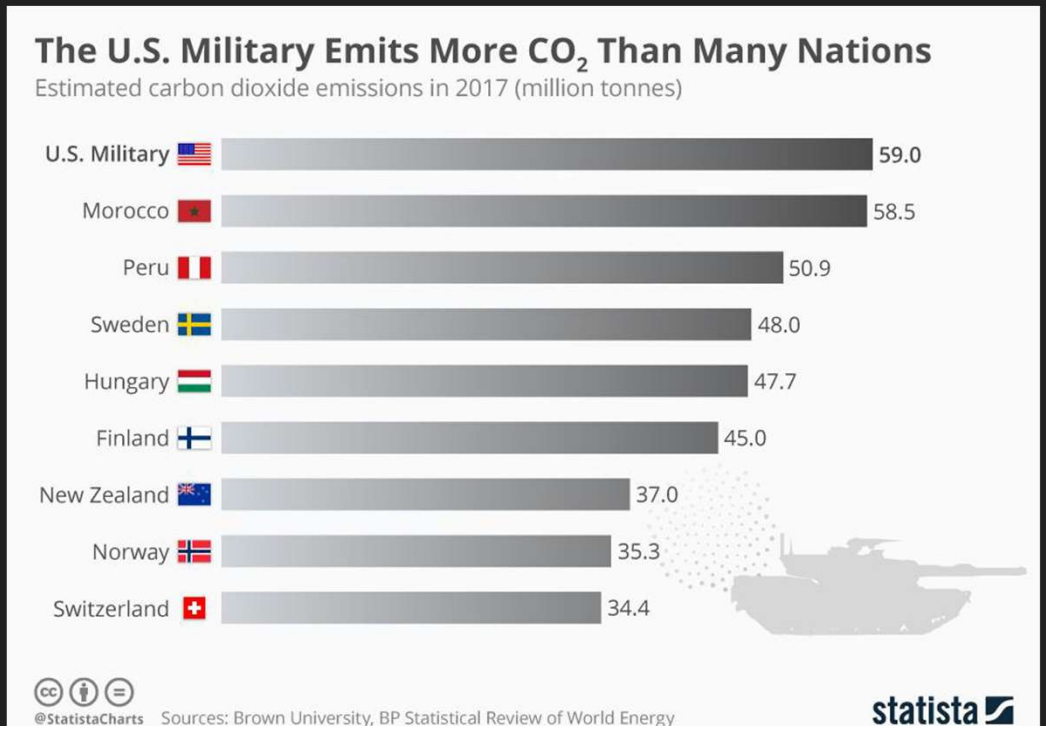
- World military expenditures in 2020 were estimated at 1.93 trillion US$
- The US has the highest military budget in the whole world, with $753 billion, which equals 12% of the entire federal Budget.
- The five biggest exporters are currently the United States, Russia, China, France and Germany
- The five biggest importers were India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab
- Emirates, China and Australia.
- Data on arms trade is very unreliable, but estimates assume that SIPRI estimates an amount equivalent of $420 billion in 2018

Military as a polluter and environmental risk factor


FASHION
SUPPLY CHAIN
GROWING FIBERS
HARVESTING FIBERS
GINNING & SPINNING
KNITTING OR WEAVING
PROCESSING
CUT-MAKE-TRIM
TRADING
RETAILING

CO^2 pollution

- In 2017, the US military bought about 269,230 barrels of oil a day and emitted approx. 59 million tons of carbon dioxide (equivalent to 12,831,315 cars driven for the whole year)



Water pollution

- A major pollutant that can directly linked to the military use is PFAS, a group toxic chemical commonly found in firefighting foam.
- Polluted water sites with PFAS near military installations are also being discovered in other countries, including Denmark
- PFAS never break down in the environment.
- Apart from firefighting foam, PFAS chemicals can also be found in everyday items, such as non-stick pans, rain repellent clothing, etc., however the military regularly discharges vast quantities e.g. during firefighting exercises, etc.
- Currently 678 military sites are are thought to be contaminated with PFAS, 328 of these have been confirmed.

Ground pollution

- The Pentagons own estimates are that there are about 39.000 sites across 19 million acres with environmental contamination in the U.S. alone
- At least 147 military installations are Superfund sites, meaning they are among the most contaminated areas in the country
- Counting also private sites, that serve military needs, the list grows to about 900 sites.
- There are currently about 1300 Superfund sites
- ⅓ of Libyas landmass is currently considered contaminated by landmines and unexploded munitions
- The Vietnam Red Cross estimates that Agent Orange has affected 3 million vietnamese people, including at least 150,000 children. Babies in Vietnam are still being born with birth defects due to Agent Orange.

Bioweapon research

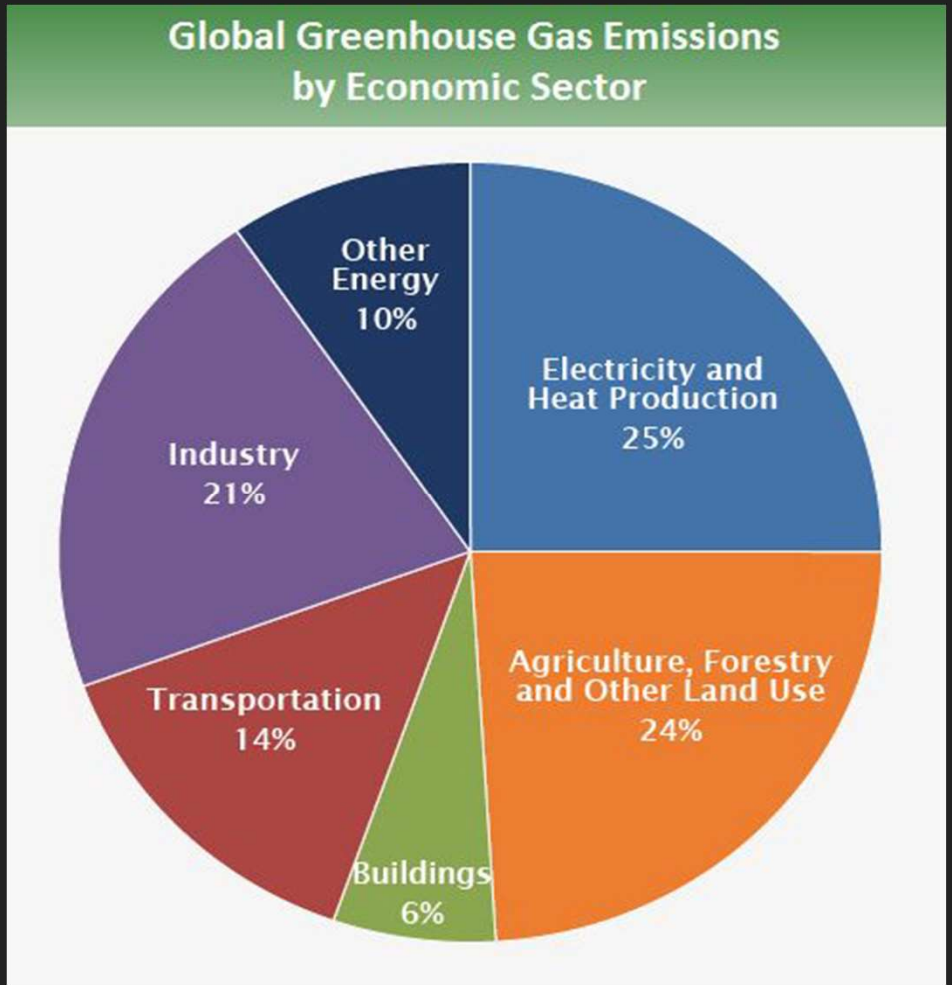
- Though banned by international treaties, bioweapon research programs exist in nearly every country, also because existing treaties have no verification regimes.
- The aim is to breed or modify viruses and bacteria to be utilized as weapons, by enhancing their ability for transmissions and/or cause serious harm
- Research is often carried out in secret laboratories with high security measures, but unintentional outbreaks are not out of the norm
- Agents released into ecosystems can seriously disrupt the integrity of these ecosystems - we know these effects from other invasive species

Nuclear technology as ecological risk factor

- Even a “small”, localized war, using just 0,5% of the world's nuclear arsenal could put as many as as 2 billion people at risk, due to disruption of climate and ecosystems
- The United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea — possess approximately 13,860 nuclear weapons in total.
- The biggest known nuclear bomb ever built is the the Tsar Bomba, with a yield of 50 megatonnes (equivalent to the power of 3,800 Hiroshima bombs)
- Short chain of command = high risk of unintentional warfare
- Sites of nuclear testing are still suffering from the impacts, even many years after.


NUCLEAR WINTER?

The missing link



Absence in the debate

- The U.S. military requested the original Kyoto exemption on national security grounds. he agreement was, that the military was automatically exempt from emission counting.
- In most countries, figures are hard to obtain, both because National Security is used as an argument to not disclose them, but also because the military in most countries is exempt from environmental regulations
- The Paris 2015 agreement states, that nations can freely choose whether or not the military sector should reduce its emissions, but their emissions are no longer exempt from counting.

Lobbyism and media manipulation

- Given the size of the arms industry, there is a very present and powerful lobby that influence political decision-making
- “National Security” is often used as an argument to block information requests
- Especially since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, there has been a rise in ‘Embedded journalism’, where the journalists and all their works have to be ‘accredited’ by the military
- There are also powerful U.S. interest lobby groups, that have direct influence on the media. An example of this is the Atlantic Council, which was initially founded and receives major funding from the U.S. Foreign Ministry. In Germany for example, most chief editors at German mainstream newspapers are also members of the Atlantic Council

Final thoughts and debate

- Can you be an environmental activist if you are not a peace activist at the same time?
- Given the scope of this issue, what are immediate actions that we can take for ourselves and in our communities to address this issue?
- Can spreading information and educating about matters like this be considered activism?
- Decide on some products to bring out the message