

# The Military Is Destroying the Environment

It is time to wake up to that fact



I wonder how many meters they go per liter of fuel. Image by [Cianna Woods](#) from [Pixabay](#)

For five days now, firefighters have been busy fighting a forest fire in western Berlin. Forest fires are becoming common in the area, due to climate change. But that is not the full story. The truth is, that our forests aren't forests at all. They have no functional ecosystem. It is just monoculture pine trees, that we planted for profit.

There is another little-known fact that makes fighting these fires more difficult. The ground is littered with explosives. It's one of the many ways, the military is destroying the environment. Most of them from WW2. Firefighters can't get to the source of these fires. Because they are at high

risk to be blown up. Most of these munitions have been lying there for decades. They release toxic substances into the soil and groundwater.

Speaking of groundwater.

## The Military Is Destroying the Environment by Poisoning Our Groundwater

About 3 years ago, I first began researching the impact of military activities on our planet. A notable example I found was the poisoning of groundwater wells in California. The chemicals in question were PFAS chemicals. These are fluoride agents. They are often used in fire extinguishing foam. The evidence shows, that ingesting even small doses carries significant risks. Among these risks are cancer, reproductive health, and immune system harm.

So, these chemicals leak from military facilities into the groundwater. They also have another name, by the way. Forever chemicals. Because they do not break down. They stay in the environment for good. We have the technology to filter them from the groundwater. Most water suppliers don't. So it ends up in our livers and kidneys instead.

Europ seems to have this problem as well. Before I left Denmark, there was one case of known PFAS drinking water contamination. That was near one of the country's largest military bases. Since then, the cases have grown exponentially.



Image is taken from [Danske vandværker](https://www.danskevandvaerker.dk)

One thing I notice, when I look at the map is this. The most contaminated sites are all near major military bases.  
It is another way the military is destroying the environment.

## The Military Is Destroying Our Environment by Emitting Huge Amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>

We have not even talked about the obvious here. CO<sub>2</sub>. Do you know, who is the single largest user of fossil fuels on the planet? It is the U.S. military, of course. If it were a country, it would be the 55th largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Except, the military never shows up in any climate reports. Wanna know why? Because they are exempt from counting. And in most cases, they are also exempt from following environmental regulations. That is how the military can pump forever chemicals into the groundwater.

And guess who were the chief lobbyists for this to happen? That's right. The US of A.

U.S. negotiators pressed to exclude military emissions from the Kyoto Protocol.

To be fair, in the Paris Accord, the countries can at least "choose" to count these emissions. No one does.

Europe is not much better. The data we have is only from external investigators. What they show is bad enough.

These reports do not count the emissions from warfare itself, by the way. But we have a few estimates on that as well. For instance, The Iraq war emitted 114 million tonnes of Carbon in the first 4 years alone.

## The West Is the Biggest Investor in the Destruction of Our Planet

What these figures show is this. Any investment in the military is an investment in destruction. Both at home and abroad.

And boy do western countries invest. The U.S. now spends more than 800 billion US dollars on its military. It is on the top of the list. They spend more than the next 9 countries combined.



# U.S. MILITARY SPENDING COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE WORLD

The U.S. spends more on its military than the rest of the **top 10 highest spending countries combined**.

- North America
- Europe
- Asia



**United States**  
**\$778.0B**

Military spending in the top ten countries climbed to **\$1.48 trillion** in 2020—breaking historical records.

**Germany**  
**\$52.8B**



**Saudi Arabia**  
**\$57.5B**

**India**  
**\$72.9B**

**Japan**  
**\$49.1B**

**France**  
**\$52.7B**



**South Korea**  
**\$45.7B**

**Russia**  
**\$61.7B**

**China**  
**\$252.0B**

Combined military spending: **\$703.6B**



Source: SIPRI

• The U.S. alone made up more than half that amount.

Infographic from [Visual Capitalist](#)

And The German parliament just approved a massive spending bill for the military. 100 billion Euros. This happened with full backing from the so-called green party.

So, excuse me if I don't believe in the green party as a fighter for a better environment. Being ecological conscious and supporting warfare are not compatible values. It does not matter which advances we make. The military and warfare will only destroy it.

The effects linger for many generations. In the form of unexploded 75-year bombs. They now prevent firefighters from extinguishing forest fires. Or uninhabitable lands in France. Lands, that served as battlefields during WW1.

That was more than a hundred years ago, folks.

Meanwhile, our leaders dismantle and underfund vital civilian infrastructure. Germany no longer has a working rail system. Last year, people died in the floods because the warning systems failed miserably.

There is much more to write about this than a single article can cover. If you want more, you are welcome to invite me to hold my presentation on the topic. Or you can download the materials here. It is time to acknowledge, how destructive the military really is.