

Sign-on letter organized by the Climate Crisis and Militarism Working Group, Veterans For Peace

Dear Honorable John Kerry:

On behalf of Veterans For Peace and other peace and climate champions, we congratulate you on your appointment as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, thank you for returning us to the Paris Agreement, and applaud your efforts to lead the Biden administration's clean energy revolution.

Let us put militarism at the center of this conversation on climate.

We are pleased that the Biden/Harris Administration has created this position, as a reflection of the seriousness of the climate crisis, and we are pleased that the person with that position is you. It is approaching 50 years since you, as an anti-war veteran, delivered to Congress a lengthy, articulate and devastating critique of the Viet Nam war. Some of us were already anti-war veterans or soldiers, and you spoke truth to power for us. You have had many positions of power since that time; in your present position, we ask that you summon the courage and clarity about war and militarism that you expressed to Congress in April 1971.

You posed the question, "How do we ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?"

Now the question we pose is, "How do we ask millions of people to die as a result of a climate catastrophe fueled by endless war and militarism?"

To thwart climate catastrophe, we present the following requests:

- 1) Please implement the inclusion of military emissions in all reporting and data on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. The US shamefully demanded, during the negotiations for the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, that military emissions be excluded from countries' total GHGs, and then did not even sign the Protocol.
- 2) We ask that you use your public platform to consistently point out the role that US militarism and the Pentagon play in exacerbating the climate crisis, and push to greatly reduce the military's reach around the world, to bring our troops home, end drone warfare, close hundreds of overseas bases, stop endless wars, reject nuclear modernization and defund the Space Force – to end the squandering of financial, material and human resources, and minimize the Pentagon's carbon footprint.
- 3) We ask that you promote bilateral accords between the US and Russia and the US and China to prohibit financial institutions from funding future fossil fuel investments, cease military exercises in the South China Sea, keep the Arctic safe from extractive exploration and weapons systems, and conduct people-to-people "climate protector" delegations to exchange knowledge, build friendships and undertake joint projects to promote biodiversity and renewable energy.
- 4) We ask that you use your public platform to advocate for the US to pay its fair share into the Green Climate Fund.

5) We ask that you be a strong advocate for a Just Transition so that both workers who have been and will be displaced by the shift from fossil fuel production, and working people who have been marginalized, are able to fully prosper.

6) We ask you to recognize that along with the efforts of many elected and appointed officials including yourself, the efforts of people's movements for climate justice are essential in overcoming the power of those forces that have led us into our present climate disaster. We therefore ask that you work with our groups as allies. We ask these sister groups also, as we are asking you, to challenge war and militarism that so far has been little addressed in the climate movement.

This is in spite of:

a) The Pentagon being the world's largest institutional user of fossil fuels and thus the largest emitter of greenhouse gasses (GHG emissions).

b) The huge additional environmental impacts from manufacturing, shipping and using weapons and equipment, and the intense bombing of infrastructure and natural environments of other countries.

c) The trillions of dollars of our money that have been spent on endless wars, nuclear weapons and some 800 overseas US bases – none of which defend us against climate disruption – which should be redirected to human needs and healing our planet.

d) The deep complicity between the military-industrial complex and the fossil fuel corporations. Our military enforces US corporations' plunder of the planet to steal resources and the fruits of human labor. Yet, when we listened to your speech of February 18, on the occasion of the welcome return of the US to the Paris Climate Agreement, we noted the lack of any reference to the military contribution to the climate crisis.

Similarly, the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Report, "Solving the Climate Crisis" <https://climatecrisis.house.gov/report> lays out changes needed in many areas. In the section on National Security, however, it only includes how climate change will affect the military on US bases, but nothing on how the military affects the climate crisis.

We cannot afford to ignore the elephant in the room or remain in denial.

As we witness extreme weather events, from flash floods to wildfires to freezing temperatures, we are reminded of the urgency of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. To ensure a carbon-free future in a sustainable world, we must redefine global security as climate security and recognize that war and war preparations will only make us less secure. Otherwise, we face an increasingly militarized and dystopian world, in which industrialized countries lock out climate refugees from the Global South, and in which indigenous peoples disproportionately suffer as a result of our addiction to fossil fuels and militarism.

We recognize that ending this existential threat to our survival requires transforming the organizing principle of our society from greed to sustainability, equity, community and regeneration. This will require the collaboration of many groups: frontline communities, racial and climate justice advocates, youth, labor, environmentalists, and religious groups, along with the crucial role that you and other concerned officials can play.

Working together to end war and militarism must be a central part of this effort.

We would like to schedule a showing of our slides on “Climate Disruption and US Militarism” and plan to be in touch with you on how best we can work together. Thank you for your time, consideration and leadership as Climate Envoy.

Sincerely,

Climate Crisis and Militarism Working Group, Veterans For Peace

<https://www.veteransforpeace.org/our-work/working-groups/climate-crisis>

(To endorse this letter, contact climate@veteransforpeace.org)

ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS

1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations

2degrees, Northampton, MA

350.Org, Oregon Central Coast

Alameda (CA) Interfaith Climate Action Network

Alameda County Interfaith Climate Action Network

Anti-Imperialist Action Committee

Campaign for Peace Disarmament and Common Security

Cape Downriders

Center for Conscious Change

Climate Action Now Western Mass

Climate Reality Project, Ventura County

CODEPINK

Comite Pro Uno

Communities for a Better Environment

Environmentalists Against War

Extinction Rebellion, Boston Extinction Rebellion Western Mass

Extinction Rebellion Portland, OR

Extinction Rebellion, XR Justice

Fellowship of Reconciliation Seattle

Florida Peace & Justice Alliance (Statewide FL)

Fort Meyers for a World Beyond War (Fort Meyers, FL)

Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space

Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace
Iowa Unitarian Universalist Advocacy/Witness Network
Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice
Movement Rights
Naples for a World Beyond War (Naples, FL)
National Lawyers Guild
National Priorities Project; Institute for Policy Studies
New Internationalism Project
No Coal in Oakland (CA)
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Oregon Conservancy Foundation
Our Revolution
Peace Action
Peace Action-Maine
Peace Action-New Hampshire
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles
Progressive Democrats of America
Proposition 1 Campaign to Protect Rivers (CA)
Richmond (CA) Progressive Alliance
Roots Action
School of the Americas Watch
Seattle Anti-War Coalition
South Seattle Climate Action Network
Sunflower Alliance (East Bay, CA)
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
United Nations Association of Greater Milwaukee
Vermont National Resources Council
Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity
Veterans For Peace (VFP)
Washington Against Nuclear Weapons
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
Western Mass Latin American Solidarity Coalition
Women Against Military Madness
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (St. Louis)
World Beyond War
World Beyond War-Central Florida Chapter (The Villages, FL)
Zero Hour

INDIVIDUAL ENDORSERS

Adrienne Kinne, President VFP
Barry Ladendorf, former president VFP
Brian Willson, author
Chris Hedges, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist
Chris Lombardi, author I Ain't Marching Any More
Colonel Ann Wright (retired)
Dahr Jamail, journalist
Daniel Ellsberg, Pentagon Papers
David Korten, YES magazine
David Krieger, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
David Swanson, World Beyond War
David Vine, author United States of War
Dr. Omar Clay, Environmental Physicist
Dud Hendrick, author at Common Dreams
Eduardo Martinez, Richmond CA City Council
Ellen Barfield, Head VFP delegate to the UN
Garett Reppenhagen, Executive Director, VFP
Gayle McLaughlin, Richmond CA City Council
Gerry Condon, president VFP Golden Rule Committee
Helene Benedict, author The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq
Jim Janko, author Buffalo Boy and Geronimo
John Braxton, former Co-President AFT Local 2026
John Pilger, multi-award winning filmmaker
Kathy Kelly, Voices for Creative Nonviolence
Kim Scipes, Global Labor Scholar
Margaret Stevens, author Red International and Black Caribbean
Marjorie Cohn, National Lawyers' Guild
Matthew Hoh, Center for International Policy
Medea Benjamin, Co-founder, CODEPINK
Michael A. Messner, author Unconventional Combat
Michael Eisenscher, SolidarityINFOService/former Coordinator US Labor Against the War;
Michael McPhearson, former Executive Director VFP
Mike Ferner, former president VFP
Noam Chomsky, Professor Emeritus, MIT
Norman Solomon, author War Made Easy
Oliver Stone, filmmaker
Pennie Opal Plant, Movement Rights
Peter Kuznick, co-author The Untold History of the United States.
Peter Phillips, author Giants: The Global Elite
Phil Butler, former POW
Phyllis Bennis, Institute for Policy Studies

Rev. John Dear, former director Fellowship of Reconciliation
Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Hip Hop Caucus
Rev. Liz Theoharis, Poor People's Campaign
Richard Falk, diplomat, author, professor emeritus
Robert Jensen, Emeritus Professor, U Texas Austin
Robert Shetterly, artist "Americans Who Tell the Truth"
Sam Davis, Oakland CA School Board
Scott Camil, Gainesville Eight
Susan Schnall, Vietnam war resister
Tarak Kauff, editor Peace and Planet News
Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS) members:
Coleen Rowley
John Kiriakou
Ray McGovern
Todd Pierce
Winona LaDuke, Honor the Earth
Woody Powell, former Executive Director VFP

INTERNATIONAL GROUPS

Irish Anti-War Movement

INTERNATIONAL INDIVIDUALS

Brian Smyth, Maybe International Ireland
Clare Daly, member of European Parliament from Ireland
Dr. John Lannon, University of Limerick, Ireland
Gerry Carroll, member Legislative Assembly of Northern Ireland
Joe Murray. director of Action from Ireland
Mick Wallace, member of European Parliament from Ireland
Paul Murphy, People Before Profit TD
Richard Boyd Barrett, Member of Irish Parliament
Roger Cole, Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA)

ENDORSEMENTS FROM VFP CHAPTERS

VFP 1 (Maine)
VFP 9 (Eastern MASS)
VFP 13 (Tucson, AZ)
VFP 14 (Gainesville, FL)
VFP 23 (Rochester, NY)
VFP 27 (Minneapolis, MN)
VFP 34 (New York City)

VFP 35 (Spokane, WA)
VFP 46 (Monterey, CA)
VFP 57 (Vermont)
VFP 61 (St Louis, MO)
VFP 69 (San Francisco, CA)
VFP 72 (Portland, OR)
VFP 74 (SE Michigan)
VFP 91 (San Diego, CA)
VFP 92 (Seattle, WA)
VFP 101 (South Bay/Peninsula CA)
VFP 102 (Milwaukee, WI)
VFP 105 (Baltimore, MD)
VFP 111 (Bellingham, WA)
VFP 115 (Red Wing, MN)
VFP 122 (Auburn, CA)
VFP 132 (Corvallis, OR)
VFP 136 (The Villages, FL)
VFP 157 (Durham, NC)
VFP 169 (Cedar Rapids, IA)
VFP 1001 (UK)