

TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS, WARMONGERING AND THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rising temperatures are fundamentally and radically changing climate patterns and disrupting the balance of nature. These changes, increasingly part of the daily lives of billions of people, have direct repercussions on the habitability of regions and on the preservation of decent, ecologically sustainable living conditions.

The primary driving force behind climate change is not natural but rather has been human driven since at least 1800, coinciding with the industrial revolution, the result specifically of burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas. World War II was the turning point for the "Great Acceleration" of these unsustainable trends in our era: **the Anthropocene, denoting a new geological epoch in which the ecological impact of human activity on the Earth alters its natural order**

Climate change is an increasingly powerful driver of migration and could force up to 216 million people in six global regions to move within their countries by 2050. The physical disruptions caused by climate change are expected to have a profound impact on the security of people and communities as a whole, particularly the most vulnerable in the Global South.

Climate change will play a direct role in **precipitating armed conflict in vulnerable countries in the Global South**, with weapons most likely to be purchased in the countries that bear the greatest responsibility for the climate emergency, resulting in a cycle of violence of markedly one-sided responsibilities from the countries in the Global North.

There is a **vast network of global interests and power** in the world, led by a handful of private supranational actors that hold undemocratic control over companies and governments. A network of global power **that includes and connects military and fossil fuel companies** and is also directly responsible for the environmental crisis that will severely affect the countries of the Global South in particular. A network that works, directly and indirectly, to **prevent measures that could defuse or halt both the global environmental crisis** and the suffering that millions of people will endure.

Military spending not only takes away resources that could be devoted to tackling climate change, investing in global justice and promoting peaceful conflict transformation and disarmament, but also heavily contributes to the climate crisis, due to the **substantial GHG emissions from the military and arms industry and other environmental damage for which it is responsible**.

War and war preparation are fossil fuel-intensive activities. Since 2001, the US Department of Defense (DoD) has continuously accounted for 77-80% of all US government energy consumption. Adding the CO₂ emissions associated with DoD activities (59 million tonnes of CO₂e) and those associated with weapons production (153 million tonnes of CO₂e), **US military activity was responsible for the emission of 212 million tonnes of CO₂e in 2017**.

Surprisingly, the global trend is for military spending to increase in the coming years. In the specific case of NATO, there is an agreement to increase military spending to 2% of the GDP of its members. **NATO or EU military operations outside Europe are drivers of increased emissions.** In our view, **military responses will never be the solution to any problem**, including the climate and environmental emergency. However, as long as the military-industrial complex exists, it is clear that it is **essential to incorporate the emissions generated by the military complex into the overall emissions calculation** if the European Green Pact's goal of zero net emissions by 2050 is to be met.

The Security Strategy documents of NATO, the EU and Spain illustrate that these organisations and states are adopting positions to prevent the scarcity of fossil fuels, which is cited in some of these documents as a threat to energy security. **NATO's Madrid 2022 strategic concept, for example, cites climate change as a trigger for conflicts, including migration**, as well as non-military threats to the economy, to which military responses will be inevitable. The document also mentions, for the first time, Russia as a direct threat and China as a destabiliser of global security.

These Security Strategies predict new conflicts between powers. The Western world is keen to safeguard its environmentally unsustainable way of life by strengthening its military capabilities to safeguard its resources, raw materials and fossil fuels.

This paper argues that the **threats are not the ones we are being told they are.** The threats come from the elites who continue to contribute to the destruction of the planet and promote both the arms race and armed conflict; elites that include large extractive corporations, the leaders of the world's major powers, arms manufacturers and NATO leaders. As we have seen, if we do not shift the course of their current policies and practices, the prognosis is the destruction of the lives of millions of people and irreversible damage to the biosphere.

Governments must **shift priorities.** The current emergency requires a united and coordinated global effort. What we now need is **new geopolitics to save the human species, the biosphere and the planet.** The priority is to preserve the natural world that we humans belong to, through rational consumption that prevents the overexploitation of the planet's resources, and by moving beyond militarism, and allocating resources from military spending to social and human development.

New policies are needed to shift the focus from profit and violence to people and their protection.

Hope lies in mobilising civil society, in ecofeminist solutions and in our collective actions. The climate emergency implies recognising our responsibility and the need to move past a civilisation based on weapons and fossil fuels.



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