Earth Day 2021

April 22nd of this year is significant in two important ways. That Thursday will mark the observance of the 51st annual “Earth Day” and people will again focus efforts to help save our planet. It will also be the 50th anniversary of John Kerry’s Congressional testimony about the Vietnam War. Kerry is now the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate.

John Kerry spoke the truth about US involvement in Vietnam and he asked, “How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?” Those words still ring true today, especially if viewed through the lens of the climate crisis.

You might ask, how are the US military and the climate crisis related? First, the Pentagon is the world’s single largest institutional user of fossil fuels AND the single largest institutional emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG). In fact, if the Department of Defense were a country it would rank #47 (out of 170) on the world’s ranking of polluting countries, between Peru and Portugal. Add in toxic spills, Agent Orange, depleted uranium and unexploded ordnance and you have the profile of a very large irresponsible public organization. One that, indeed, is contributing significantly to climate degradation and creating climate refugees in its wake.

Who holds the US military accountable for these damaging actions? And how is that military held accountable for the nearly $1 trillion it spends each year? Sadly, US politicians and negotiators have made sure that military emissions are NOT counted toward a country’s total emission levels (see the Kyoto Agreement). And the Pentagon has failed the only three audits that have ever been undertaken to examine whether it is spending responsibly.

How would YOU spend that trillion dollars?

We at Veterans For Peace are asking Special Climate Envoy John Kerry to hold the military accountable for its destructive climate practices. We also ask him to lead the initiative to redirect significant funding from the military to other beneficial social causes.

After all, can we continue to ask people to die for the mistake of **NOT** holding the military accountable?

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