April 2, 2021

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 join you in promoting a transition from fossil fuels to safe, renewable forms of energy such as solar, wind, geothermal, and small hydropower.

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 ratify 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 Project, Veterans For Peace
ENDORSEMENTS

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
350.org
1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations
Alliance for Democracy
American Federation of Teachers, Local 2026
(Philadelphia PA)
American Friends Service Committee
Campaign for Peace Disarmament and Common
Security
CODEPINK
Communities for a Better Environment
Courage to Resist
Environmentalists Against War
Extinction Rebellion, XR Justice
International Action Center
Jewish Voice for Peace Action
Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social
Justice
Living Economies Forum
Manhattan Project for a Nuclear-Free World
Movement Rights
Muslim Delegates and Allies
National Lawyers Guild (NLG)
National Priorities Project: Institute for Policy Studies
Native American Veterans Association
New Internationalism Project: Institute for Policy
Studies
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Our Revolution
Peace Action
Project Censored
Progressive Democrats of America
Rise Up Times
Roots Action
School of the Americas Watch
September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic
Community
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of
America (UE)
United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ)
US Peace Council
Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity
Veterans For Peace (VFP)
Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW)
War Resisters League (WRL)
Western States Legal Foundation
Women's International League for Peace and
Freedom (WILPF)
World Beyond War
Zero Hour

INDIVIDUAL ENDORSERS
Adrienne Kinne, President, VFP
Alan Minsky, Executive Director, Progressive
Democrats of America
Andrés Soto, Communities for a Better Environment,
Richmond CA
Andrew Bacevich, President, Quincy Institute for
Responsible Statecraft
Ann Wright, retired colonel; resigned State Dept due
to Iraq war
Mimi Kennedy, Actress; Board member, Progressive
Democrats of America
Barry Ladendorf, former president VFP
Brian Willson, author
Bruce Gagnon, Global Network Against Weapons &
Nuclear Power in Space
Chris Hedges, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist
Chris Lombardi, author "I Ain't Marching Anymore."
Christine Anh, Women Cross DMZ
Cindy Piester, US War Crimes documentarian
Dahr Jamail, journalist
Daniel Ellsberg, Pentagon Papers
Daniel Kovalik, Adjunct Professor, U of Pittsburgh
School of Law
Danny Sjursen, author Ghost Riders of Baghdad
Darien De Lu, National President WILPF
David Bond, Associate Director, Center for the
Advancement of Public Action
David Korten, YES magazine
David Krieger, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
David Swanson, World Beyond War
David Vine, author United States of War
Dud Hendrick, author at Common Dreams
Eduardo Martinez, Richmond CA City Council
Ellen Barfield, Head VFP delegate to the UN
Frank Dorrell, activist, publisher "Addicted to War"
Garett Reppenhagen, Executive Director, VFP
Gayle McLaughlin, Richmond CA City Council
Gerry Condon, president VFP Golden Rule
Committee
Hanieh Jodat Barnes, President, Muslim Delegates
and Allies
Helene Benedict, author The Private War of Women
Serving in Iraq
James Hines, Environmentalist, Organizer
Jessica Girard, Iraq War veteran, director Fairbanks
Climate Action Coalition
Jim Janko, author Buffalo Boy and Geronimo
Joanna Macy, Ph.D., Author and Activist
Jodie Evans, co-founder CODEPINK
Joe Uehlein, President, Labor Network for
Sustainability
John Pilger, multi-award-winning filmmaker
Kathy Kelly, Voices for Creative Nonviolence
Kim Scipes, Global Labor Scholar
Marcy Winograd, Coordinator CODEPINK Congress
Margaret Stevens, author Red International and Black Caribbean
Mari Inoue, co-founder Manhattan Project for a Nuclear-Free World
Marjorie Cohn, former president National Lawyers’ Guild (NLG)
Matthew Hoh, Center for International Policy
Medea Benjamin, co-founder, CODEPINK
Michael A. Messner, author Unconventional Combat
Michael Eisenscher, director SolidarityINFOService
Michael McPhearson, former Executive Director VFP
Mickey Huff, Project Censored
Mike Ferner, former president VFP
Mimi Kennedy, actress
Nadia Ahmad, Professor, Environmental Law
Nancy Price, Alliance for Democracy (US)
Noam Chomsky, Professor Emeritus, MIT
Norma Field, Professor Emeritus East Asian Studies, U of Chicago
Norman Solomon, author War Made Easy
Oliver Stone, filmmaker
Omar Clay, Environmental Physicist
Pat Elder, Investigative Journalist of Military Poisons
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
Rachel Clark, Interpreter, Global Coordinator
Regina Birchem, WILPF/ Pax Christi
Rev. John Dear, former director Fellowship of Reconciliation
Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Hip Hop Caucus
Rev. Liz Theoharis, Poor People’s Campaign
Rev. Robert Moore, director Coalition for Peace Action
Rich Peacock, Co-Chair Peace Action MI
Richard Falk, diplomat, author, professor emeritus
Robert Dodge, ICAN Nobel Peace Prize winner
Robert Greenwald, Filmmaker
Robert Jensen, Emeritus Professor, U Texas Austin
Robert Shetterly, artist "Americans Who Tell the Truth"
Ron Kovic, author, “Born on the Fourth of July”
Sam Davis, Oakland CA School Board
Scott Camil, Gainesville Eight
Sharon Kufeldt, Former Vice-President VFP
Sharon Tennison, citizen diplomat to Russia
Steve Skrovan, Co-Host, Ralph Nader Radio Hour
Susan Schnall, Vietnam war resister
Tarak Kauff, editor Peace and Planet News
Thom Hartmann, commentator
Todd Fernandez, Executive & Legislative Director, ClimateCrisisPolicy.org
Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS) members:
  Coleen Rowley
  John Kiriakou
  Ray McGovern
  Todd Pierce
  William Rivers Pitt, activist, editor, best-selling author
Winona LaDuke, Honor the Earth
Woody LaDuke, former Executive Director VFP

INTERNATIONAL GROUPS
Biointensive for Russia
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, UK
Code Pink, Osaka, Japan
Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
International Peace Bureau, Germany
Irish Anti-War Movement
Movement for the Abolition of War, UK
Nagasaki Citizen’s Group, Japan
Peace Philosophy Centre, Japan
Re-Thinking Security, UK
Scientists for Global Responsibility, UK
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
WILPF, Afghanistan
WILPF, Nigeria
World Future Council, based in Hamburg, Germany

INTERNATIONAL INDIVIDUALS
Alyn Ware, Peace and Disarmament Coordinator, World Future Council
Angelo Cardona, president Alianza Iberoamericana por la Paz, Colombia
Brian Smyth, Maybe International Ireland
Clare Daly, member of European Parliament from Ireland
David Suzuki, PhD, Professor Emeritus, University of BC, Canada.
Elliot Gabriel, Journalist Truthout, Ecuador
Gerry Carroll, member Legislative Assembly of Northern Ireland
Harumi Yamamoto, Singer-songwriter, Japan
Jamila Afghani, WILPF Afghanistan
Joe Murray, director of Action from Ireland
John Lannon, University of Limerick, Ireland
John Pilger, Australian journalist
Joseph Essertier, Representative of World Beyond War, Japan
Joy Ada Onyesoh Ph.D WILPF, Nigeria
Madeleine Rees, Secretary General of WILPF International
Maude Barlow, Author Blue Covenant, also Blue
Future, Canada
Masaki Hirata, Associate Prof, Nagoya City University, Japan
Mick Wallace, member of European Parliament from Ireland
Paul Murphy, People Before Profit TD, Ireland
Reiner Braun, Executive Director, International Peace Bureau
Richard Boyd Barrett, Member of Irish Parliament
Roger Cole, Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA), Ireland
Ryoko Yamaguchi, Code Pink Osaka, Japan
Satoko Oka Norimatsu, editor Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus
Stephen Lewis, former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations
Stuart Parkinson, E.D. Scientists for Global Responsibility
Sviatoslav Zabelin, Publisher, Goldman prize winner for Russia
Yoshiko Tanigawa, English Guide at Kyoto Museum for World Peace, Japan

VETERANS FOR PEACE CHAPTERS
VFP 1 (Maine)
VFP 9 (Eastern MA)
VFP 13 (Tucson, AZ)
VFP 14 (Gainesville, FL)
VFP 23 (Rochester, NY)
VFP 25 (Madison, WI)
VFP 26 (Chicago, IL)
VFP 27 (Minneapolis, MN)
VFP 34 (New York City)
VFP 35 (Spokane, WA)
VFP 43 (Columbia, MO)
VFP 46 (Monterey, CA)
VFP 50 (Northern MI)
VFP 51 (Syracuse, NY)
VFP 55 (Santa Fe, NM)
VFP 57 (Vermont)
VFP 61 (St Louis, MO)
VFP 62 (New Hampshire)
VFP 63, (Albuquerque, NM)
VFP 69 (San Francisco, CA)
VFP 71 (Sonoma County, CA)
VFP 72 (Portland, OR)
VFP 74 (SE Michigan)
VFP 80 (Duluth/Superior, MN)
VFP 89 (Nashville, TN)
VFP 91 (San Diego, CA)
VFP 92 (Seattle, WA)
VFP 93 (South Central MI)
VFP 97 (Kansas City, MO)
VFP 99 (Asheville, NC)
VFP 100 (Juneau, AK)
VFP 101 (South Bay/Peninsula CA)
VFP 102 (Milwaukee, WI)
VFP 105 (Baltimore, MD)
VFP 111 (Bellingham, WA)
VFP 112 (Ventura County, CA)
VFP 115 (Red Wing, MN)
VFP 122 (Auburn, CA)
VFP 132 (Corvallis, OR)
VFP 134 (Tacoma, WA)
VFP 136 (The Villages, FL)
VFP 154 Fargo, ND)
VFP 157 (Durham, NC)
VFP 160 (Viet Nam)
VFP 161 (Iowa City, IA)
VFP 162 (East Bay, CA)
VFP 168 (Louisville, KY)
VFP 169 (Cedar Rapids, IA)
VFP 174 (Jacksonville, FL)
VFP 181 (Douglas County, OR)
VFP 182 (Tijuana/Baja, Mexico)
VFP 1001 (UK)
VFP 1002 (Ireland)
VFP 1004 (Japan)

STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

ALABAMA
North Alabama Peace Network

ARIZONA
Green Party of Pima County

CALIFORNIA
350.org Conejo/San Fernando Valley
350.org Ventura County Climate Hub
Alameda County Interfaith Climate Action Network
Bay Area Military Law Project (NLG chapter)
Better World Associates, San Francisco
Brave New Films, Culver City
Climate Justice Team, First UU Church of San Diego
Climate Reality Project, Ventura County
Comité Pro Uno
Environmental Action Team, UU Church of Ventura
Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace, Los Angeles
No Coal in Oakland
No Coal in Richmond
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles
Proposition 1 Campaign to Protect Rivers
Richmond Progressive Alliance
Santa Barbara County Action Network
Sunflower Alliance, East Bay
Truth in Recruitment, Santa Barbara
West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs
WILPF, East Bay Branch
WILPF, Fresno Branch
WILPF, Humboldt Branch
WILPF, Palo Alto Branch
WILPF, Sacramento Branch
WILPF, San Francisco Branch
WILPF, San Jose Branch

FLORIDA
Florida Peace & Justice Alliance (Statewide FL)
Fort Meyers for a World Beyond War Naples for a World Beyond War
World Beyond War, Central Florida Chapter

IDaho
Environmental Defense Institute

Iowa
Iowa Unitarian Universalist Advocacy/Witness Network

LOUISIANA
350.org, New Orleans

MAINE
Greater Brunswick PeaceWorks
Maine Voices for Palestinian Rights
Peace Action
WILPF

MASSACHUSETTS
350.org MASS for a Better Future
2degrees, Northampton
Anti-Imperialist Action Committee, Northampton
Cape Downwinders
Channing and Popai Liem Education Foundation
Climate Action Now Western Mass
Extinction Rebellion, Boston
Extinction Rebellion Western Mass
Peace Action
Western Mass Latin American Solidarity Coalition

MICHIGAN
WILPF, Detroit Branch

MINNESOTA
Women Against Military Madness, Minneapolis
WILPF, MN-Metro Branch

MISSOURI
WILPF, St. Louis, MO Branch

NEW JERSEY
Peace Action

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Peace Action

NEW MEXICO
Peaceful Skies Coalition

NEW YORK
Brooklyn For Peace
Extinction Rebellion, NYC
New Masses Media
Syracuse Peace Council

NORTH CAROLINA
Peace Action
WILPF, The Triangle Branch

OHIO
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie

OREGON
350.org, Oregon Central Coast
Albany Peace Seekers
Sunrise (Corvallis)
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Extinction Rebellion Portland
Oregon Conservancy Foundation
Oregon Interfaith Power & Light
Oregon PeaceWorks
Oregon Progressive Party
Planet VS Pentagon, Eugene
Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group, Portland
Unitarian Universalists of Corvallis

PENNSYLVANIA
Brandywine Peace Community
LPOCO Peace Center (Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern)
WILPF, greater Philadelphia branch

TEXAS
Peace Farm, Amarillo
Nuclear Free World Committee, Dallas Peace and Justice Center

VERMONT
350.org
Peace and Justice Center
Vermont Natural Resources Council
Vermont Public Interest Research Group
WILPF, Burlington Branch

VIRGINIA
350.org Fairfax
Climate Reality Project, NOVA Chapter
WILPF, Jane Addams Branch, Fairfax

WASHINGTON
Fellowship of Reconciliation Seattle
Ground Zero Center for Non-Violent Action
Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
Pass the Federal Green New Deal Washington Coalition
Seattle Anti-War Coalition
Seattle Fellowship of Reconciliation
South Seattle Climate Action Network
Washington Against Nuclear Weapons
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
West Seattle Neighbors for Peace and Justice

WISCONSIN
United Nations Association of Greater Milwaukee

OTHER GROUPS
Center for Conscious Change
Climbers for Peace
Earth Rise Indivisible
Peace and Solidarity Committee, CCDS
Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW!
Peacehome Campaigns