

**Peace and Justice Studies Association Statement:  
CONNECTING MILITARISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**ORGANIZATIONAL STATEMENT, PEACE & JUSTICE STUDIES ASSOCIATION**

Our unconditional organizational commitment to the inherent dignity of all forms of life applies evenly to the rejection of all forms of violence, including violence against the earth.

We acknowledge that at this moment there is no more immediate threat to life on the planet than the progressive distortion of the planetary climate by human (industrial) activity, and we recognize that the threat posed by the war system (which is largely in place to protect industrialization) is perhaps the chief contributor to climate change and that deconstructing it will require the outgrowing of violence at all levels of engagement.

We believe that the eternal human desire for peace can only succeed if it is attained both “on earth” and “with earth” as inherently interconnected ends. Today we are faced with crises including perpetual warfare and runaway climate change; in this critical time, we understand these as deeply related phenomena that cannot be managed separately but whose mutual resolution promises to usher in an era of genuine peace and prosperity.

**In furthering the aims of demilitarization and climate justice, we take notice of the following:\***

- The U.S. military and its allies comprise the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions on the planet, yet these emissions are exempt from reporting requirements.
- Access to more oil, the burning of which is a fundamental cause of climate change, is a primary underlying motive for current wars.
- Both warfare and climate change are rendering large areas uninhabitable, displacing millions of people as refugees and causing greater stresses on the environment.
- Militarism is built upon forms of domination around issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and more – and likewise, the disparate burdens of climate change skew toward vulnerable or marginalized communities along these lines as well.
- Climate change is likely to result in far more wars, being a “threat multiplier” and now recognized as the greatest looming threat to “security.” Access to resources – including land, food, water – is already becoming increasingly challenging, and scarcities will likely trigger conflict and further displacement in the future.
- According to rankings in the 2006 CIA World Factbook, only 35 countries (out of 210 in the world) consume more oil per day than the Pentagon.
- War and military spending dominates the federal budget, drains the lifeblood of our economy, and prevents meaningful climate action.
- The U.S. accounts for 48% of the world’s total military spending, and exceeds more than the next 45 highest spending countries in the world combined; not even including spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 87% of all U.S. security spending goes toward military forces.
- A 2008 report by the National Priorities Project, titled “The Military Cost of Securing Energy,” found that nearly one-third of U.S. military spending goes toward securing energy supplies around the world.
- Military emissions abroad are exempt from national reporting requirements, as they are classified under ‘international bunker fuel’, which is categorically exempt.
- Within the U.S., one out of every ten Americans lives within ten miles of a military site that has been listed as a Superfund priority cleanup site, with the burden of health impacts and environmental destruction falling disproportionately on poor communities, people of color, indigenous communities, women, and children.
- The U.S. Department of Defense is the largest polluter in the world, producing more hazardous waste than the five largest U.S. chemical companies combined.

**In recognition of these concerns, the PJSA recommends the following courses of action:**

- Confronting the shared root causes of militarism, global environmental destruction, and many of the other interconnected social injustices, namely a profit-driven system that disregards the value of human life and the very

nature that supports human life, and embracing the climate justice movement mantra “System Change, Not Climate Change!”

- Working for the eradication of sexism and cultivating a deep awareness of the exploitation of gender roles in the militarization of our planet.
- Bringing about an end to oil and resource wars, and the reinstatement of diplomacy and respect as preferred over the use of force in all foreign relations.
- Closing down and cleaning up military bases abroad, and seeing those on U.S. soil dramatically reduced and cleaned up.
- Redirecting the vast majority of military funding to fund human services, ensure decent quality of life, payment of ecological and climate debt, and compensation to countries and peoples damaged by militarism.
- Creating a U.N. Special Rapporteur for the effects of militarism on climate change.
- Rejecting so-called “market mechanisms” including ‘carbon offsets’ and ‘carbon trading’, which offer no real carbon reductions while furthering ecosystem and biodiversity degradation, creating greater economic disparities between nations in the process.
- Recognizing the true “security threats” posed by abrupt climate change – including an increased prospect of nuclear war, widespread famine, uprisings over food and water, and mass migration – and utilizing this challenge as an opportunity to redefine security.
- Shifting military spending toward combating desertification, soil loss, more massive carbon transfer from the biosphere to the atmosphere, and further disruption of the climate regulatory functions of natural ecosystems; and focusing the resources on ‘green’ jobs’, ecosystem restoration, healthcare, education, and poverty eradication.
- Rejecting the use of ‘anti-terrorist’ laws to justify spying on and preemptive prosecution of activists across a wide range of political strata, including climate activists.
- Raising awareness that we cannot permanently damage the earth and thus endanger the future of humanity in the pursuit of global empire.
- Establishing educational programs that link the pursuit of peace with climate justice.

*{Adopted unanimously by the PJSA Board of Directors on February 14, 2011.}*

[\*]The following resources have informed this list of items and recommendations: [Climate SOS resolution](#); [SOS Fact Sheet](#); [International Action Center](#); ["Military Pollution," by Lucinda Marshall](#); [Mobilization for Climate Justice](#); [Peace Action](#); [UN-High Commission for Refugees](#); [Norwegian Refugee Council](#); ["Causes and health consequences of environmental degradation," by Martin Donohoe](#); [UNEP, "Courses of action"](#).