



VETERANS FOR PEACE  
HUMBOLDT BAY  
CHAPTER 56

# THE FOGHORN

JUNE  
2016

*“Cutting Through the Fog of War”*

*When you think about the environment ... do you consider war?*

## **ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS OF WAR:**

The environment has long been a silent casualty of war and armed conflict. If we are going to win on climate, we must make the connections between the environment and militarism.



The environmental impact of war: In Kuwait in 1991, after the Gulf War ended, the retreating Iraqi forces torched hundreds of oil wells.  
Photograph: Per-Anders Petterson/Corbis



### What Are The Environmental Costs of War?

For centuries, war has not only involved the annihilation of human life, but also environmental destruction, in the forms of both ‘collateral damage’ and deliberate damage to environments. Modern day warfare and technological advances have increased the ecological disturbances associated with war, both in the manufacturing and development of weapons. The use of weapons, the destruction of oil fields, fires, military transport, and chemical spraying are all examples of the lasting impact war has on the environment.

### Oil Consumption and Carbon Emissions

The U.S. military is widely thought to be the world’s biggest institutional consumer of crude oil, although obtaining exact usage numbers is an ongoing challenge. Military emissions are not captured in the national greenhouse gas inventories that all industrialized nations, including the United States, report under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is a loophole big enough to drive a tank through.

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The Iraq war was responsible for 141 metric tons of carbon releases in its first four years, according to an Oil Change International report. On an annual basis, this was more than the emissions from 139 countries in this period, or about the same as putting an additional 25 million cars on U.S. roads for a full year. Around the world, climate activists are seeing the connections between militarism and the environment.

#### Depleted Uranium

During the 1991 Gulf War, the U.S. bombed Iraq with 340 tons of missiles containing depleted uranium, which has increased the cancer rates in Iraq. Depleted Uranium is almost twice as dense as lead, and researchers have suggested the radiation from these weapons has poisoned the soil and water of Iraq, making the environment carcinogenic. The U.S.-led bombing campaign during 1991 destroyed the infrastructure of Iraqi society, destroyed water and sewer systems, and contaminated the surrounding ecosystems.

*"If we're going to win on climate we have to make sure we are counting carbon completely, not exempting different things like military emissions because it is politically inconvenient to count them. **The atmosphere certainly counts the carbon from the military, therefore we must as well.**" — Stephen Kretzmann, Director of Oil Change International*

#### Nuclear Weapons

Besides the significant loss of human life and subsequent radiation sickness and birth defects, the environmental impact of nuclear weapons is profound. When the U.S. dropped bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the water supply was contaminated, the ecosystem was damaged, and the natural habitat was completely destroyed. The production, testing, and transport, and use of these weapons also has extreme negative effects on the environment. Despite a nuclear proliferation treaty that was signed in 1970 by 190 countries, many nuclear countries (including the U.S.) continue to invest in modernizing their nuclear weapon programs. The Arms Control Association reports that the United States currently has 1,597 deployed and 2,800 non-deployed strategic nuclear warheads, and 500 tactical nuclear warheads.

#### Agent Orange

Probably the most infamous of chemical weapons, Agent Orange has had long-lasting effects on Vietnam's water supply and ecosystem. The defoliant was used extensively during the U.S. conflict in Vietnam. Overall, at least 35 percent of South Vietnam's forests were sprayed with Agent Orange at least once over a nine-year period. A mid-1980s study by Vietnamese ecologists documented only 24 species of birds and 5 species of mammals present in sprayed forests and converted areas, compared to 145-170 bird species and 30-55 kinds of mammals in intact forest.

#### Opportunity Cost: What Else Could We Be Doing?

An obvious opportunity cost of waging war is that instead of working for a cleaner, cooler future, our tax dollars are being spent on human death and environmental destruction. Money spent on endless war is money not spent reducing our dependence on fossil fuels or supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy. The U.S. currently has a plan to spend \$1 trillion dollars modernizing the U.S. nuclear weapons program over the next 30 years, which could lead us into a new nuclear arms race. The military budget and growing deficit take taxpayer dollars away from the development of renewable energy technologies, and limit spending on programs to reduce the insecurity caused by climate change.

### *When you think about war ... do you consider the environment?*

#### References:

- [1] The Costs of War, "The Environmental Costs," ["http://costsofwar.org/article/environmental-costs"](http://costsofwar.org/article/environmental-costs)
- [2] The Sierra Club of Canada, "The Environmental Consequences of War," <http://www.sierraclub.ca/national/postings/war-and-environment.html>
- [3] Associated Press, "Facts on Military Fuel Consumption," USA Today, 2 April 2008, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2008-04-02-2602932101\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2008-04-02-2602932101_x.htm).
- [4] SAE Technical Papers Series, 2004-01-1586, 2004 SAE World Congress, Detroit, Michigan, March 8-11, 2004. <http://delphi.com/pdf/techpapers/2004-01-1586.pdf>
- [5] Green Living. "Bombed: The Effects of War on the Environment" <http://greenliving.about.com/od/greenprograms/a/Effects-Of-War-And-The-Environment.htm>
- [6] JustPacifism.com, <http://justpacifism.com/?m=201007>

#### To All:::::

The Rule now has new paint. The bottom is blue, the sides are gloss white, above the white is satin blue, new varnish has been applied to the transom, toe rail and the chain plates are now matching white and blue.

Hardware on the whisker stays has been replaced with stainless steel, tightened and oiled. Ed Fracker has moved the running back stays (off of the main mast) from the deck to the top of the cabin on port and starboard sides. This removes a tripping hazard on deck and clears the guts (gates) for climbing on and off the boat while at the dock. This last is vital considering the number of visitors we expect this sailing season. Nearly 30 ports of call between Humboldt Bay and British Columbia.

Michael Gonzalez reshaped the rudder making it more streamlined to hopefully help with a vibration we get at high RPM's. Mike has also installed a Micro Wave oven under the galley sink and above the engine. It is accessible through a drop down door at the aft end of the engine box. He has also built and installed several beautiful shelves in the galley and one on the cabinets forward of the starboard bunk.

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*Golden Rule getting beautiful again to head North on her mission of peace*

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David Sangiovanni has partially rewired the galley so that it is easier to plug in appliances like coffee pots and hot plates. David is also installing several small fans around the inverter to eliminate over heating. I've redesigned the head by installing a hand pumped flush able toilet. Sea water is used to flush through a intake hose and waste goes into a holding tank. Waste water is disposed of either by gravity through the bottom of the boat or is pumped out from above through the deck.

It is now May 1st. so we've only got 3 more weeks to finalize changes or repairs. The life raft has been paid for and ordered. It should be here this week...

Respectfully submitted by Chuck DeWitt, Restoration Coordinator for The VFP Golden Rule Project.

**Next VFP56 meeting will be held on Thursday, June 2nd at 7:00 PM. Meeting will be held at 24 Unitarian Fellowship Way, Bayside, Jacoby Creek Road. Veterans and non-veterans are more than welcome to come and help us dialogue about what we together can do to bring about peace in this complex world.**



## The Military's Securitization of Climate Change

By Juduth Deutsch

Any effective response to the critical climate situation would need to include elimination of the military. This is often met with derision although it was the ostensible aim of the United Nations Charter. Sara Flounders' remarkable 2009 article on the Copenhagen climate meeting tied together the military and climate change, but delinking of the two persists. She wrote that "with more than 15,000 participants from 192 countries, including more than 100 heads of state, as well as 100,000 demonstrators in the streets – it is important to ask: How is it possible that the worst polluter of carbon dioxide and other toxic emissions on the planet is not a focus of any conference discussion or proposed restrictions? ...the Pentagon has a blanket exemption in all international climate agreements."

Overall, environmentalists pay little attention to the military, and the anti-war movement does not address the climate. Both squander precious time. At a slow pace, industrialized countries have been "transitioning" to clean energy since the 1960s, without any specified and enforceable time frame. Renewables remain a very small part of the energy mix and will not remedy the carbon-intensive military or industrial agriculture. Transition fuels like natural gas and biofuels have proven to be disastrous to human communities and to the climate. By contrast is the fast pace rapidly rising temperature, accelerating greenhouse gas concentration (due to amplifying feedbacks), increased military spending including nuclear weapons, and new weapons/surveillance/pacification technology.[1] At some point recently, the climate goal shifted from elimination of greenhouse gases to mitigation. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, mitigation means to render more gentle, milder, to appease, mollify, to lessen the stringency of an obligation. Naomi Oreskes identifies a strategy of distraction and delay. The option of enforceable regulation, of steep reduction or elimination of high-emitting economic sectors, remains off the table.

Much reliable information about the direct tailpipe emissions of US/NATO wars is accessible in Barry Sanders' *The Green Zone: The Environmental Costs of Militarism* and here. A complete tally of military carbon dioxide emissions must also include the energy and material used in the manufacture of military equipment, high-emitting transport of military personnel and weapons systems, over one thousand of military bases, reconstruction of war-torn areas requiring the use of high-emitting cement and steel. Full accounting must also include externalities such as water depletion and

contamination, and the military's destruction of many carbon sinks: the defoliation of southeast Asia, the decimated boreal forest in sourcing tar sands bitumen destined for military use, the destruction of the soil carbon sink by war and by weapons testing.

Right now, the securitization of climate change merits urgent attention. NATO, the U.S. Navy, and the Pentagon have issued policy statements prioritizing climate change as a "threat multiplier." The race for global economic and military hegemony extends to the Arctic as warming opens up competition for sea lanes and resource extraction. In 2009, the U.S. Department of the Navy released a 36 page document called *Navy Arctic Roadmap*. "The United States has broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic region and is prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard these interests. ....What the practical implementation of this policy means is the expanded penetration of the Arctic Circle by the U.S. Navy's submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) third of the American nuclear triad..." The 2010 Pentagon Quadrennial Defense Review includes climate change as a military issue. In a memo made public on January 19th, 2016, the Pentagon affirmed that "climate change will be a constant consideration in how the Department of Defense goes about its war mission, acquisition programs, readiness plans, construction projects and security judgements...."

Assigning "security" to the military rests on two premises: that the military is the institution best prepared to handle disasters, and that climate instability and chaos will breed violence in an overpopulated, destitute world. Military/police shock doctrine interventions, justified by the terms Responsibility to Protect or humanitarian intervention, are well known to bring further disaster, even death: Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the Haiti earthquake, the current case in the Central African Republic. Certainly a First Responders Corps and a Civilian Conservation Corps could better protect life and environment and provide much employment and training.

The assumption that destitute, traumatized masses become violent is a-historical and does not distinguish between violence from above and from below. The expectation of inevitable violence "offers an excellent platform for states to exploit authoritarian populism in the name of scarcity." [2] It is often posited that climate-related impacts like water depletion will be the new *casus belli*. "However, a closer analysis of history suggests that water issues have more often than not been grounds for cooperation, rather than conflict," and in the 20th century 145 water-related treaties were signed. [3] Drought and famine in themselves do not cause violence from below.



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Syria is a case in point as the war is attributed to climate change-related drought. First, the cited figures of 1.5 million internal refugees is incorrect and at most 250,000 people left rural areas. The immediate cause of migration was not drought per se. Critical for Syria's rural population at the time was the withdrawal of state agriculture subsidies for diesel fuel and seeds. Prior to that the Syrian Ba'ath Party support for the agriculture sector and rural development had gradually given way to marketization, with changes to land ownership and agriculture subsidies. At the time of the Arab Spring, food prices had precipitously increased worldwide. A suppressed World Bank report estimated that 75% of the increase in food prices was due to biofuels, not drought. A further determinant of soaring food pricing was the speculative financialization of food on the Goldman Sachs Commodity Index.

The encroachment of the military into climate securitization is furthered by changes to climate adaptation funding. Countries are now able to count overseas development aid (ODA) towards the climate fund, and there are moves to allow ODA to also include peacekeeping and security funding. Thus is whittled down the commitment made at the Cancun COP meeting to raise \$100bn/year to provide adaptation funding for the periphery countries by 2020. There remains reticence, even silence, about the human catastrophe due to the military and climate change. In 2009, the same year as Sara Flounders' article, Oxfam and the Global Humanitarian Forum reported that climate change was already claiming 300,000 human lives/year. It was already predictable that sea-level rise would displace hundreds of millions of people and inundate rich agricultural land. Is there any justification at all for maintaining a military that so clearly threatens human existence?

Notes.

[1] Halper, Jeff (2016). *War against the people: Israel, the Palestinians and global pacification*. Pluto Press.

[2] p. 55. Hayes, Ben. "Colonising the future: climate change and international security strategies." In Buxton, Nick and Hayes, Ben. (2016) *The Secure and the Dispossessed: How the military and corporations are shaping a climate-changed world*. Pluto Press.

**Submitted by Helen Jaccard**

## The 'Empire Chaplain': This Army clergyman quit over the US drone program

PRI's The World

May 19, 2016 · 6:45 PM EDT

By Stephen Snyder (follow)

A chaplain has quit the US Army in a very public way, with a letter of resignation to President Obama. "I refuse to support US armed drone policy," he writes. "I refuse to support this policy of unaccountable killing."

Chris Antal was a seminary student and a pacifist when he first felt a call — to military service — following the 9-11 attacks. "I wanted to carry my fair share" says Antal. "And I thought I could do that well as a chaplain."

While Chris was studying, the United States was launching its first weaponized drone program, with CIA airstrikes against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. By the time he joined the New York National Guard as a chaplain candidate, drone war was expanding into 24/7 search-and-kill missions against a growing list of militant groups operating in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, and later in Syria, Iraq and Libya. These programs, conducted mostly in secret, target people identified as terrorists. But they kill local civilians, too.

Antal became aware of the extent of drone warfare when he was deployed to Afghanistan, serving as chaplain for the signal corps at Kandahar Air Base.

"I was doing my duty as a chaplain to honor the dead at a Dignified Transfer ceremony," he recalls. "We would gather on the flight line whenever a service member was killed. As the casket was transferred onto a C-17 cargo plane, there is 'Taps,' there's prayer, and we salute as the casket is carried up the ramp. It was while I was standing on the flight line in those ceremonies that I saw the drones — surveillance and also armed drones — on the flight line."

Antal says these solemn ceremonies bring up emotions. "And my heart was opened to the pain of the loss of these American lives," he remembers. "But to hold that with the drones... to stand there wondering who we were killing, who their families were, and how they were grieving... it just created a break in my *soul*."

Antal knew that many of his fellow soldiers shared those feelings. And as Army Chaplain, he felt compelled to put

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them into words. His Veterans' Day Confession for America, delivered in Kandahar, and shared around the world, explored the depths of a soldier's moral quandary. Here's part of the message:

Most Merciful God  
we confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed  
by what we have done, and what we have left undone...

We have made war entertainment  
enjoying box seats in the carnival of death  
consuming violence, turning tragedy into games  
raising our children to kill without remorse.

We have morally disengaged,  
outsourcing our killing to the one percent,  
forgetting they follow our orders  
the blood they shed is on our hands too...

We have sanitized killing and condoned extrajudicial assassinations:

death by remote control,  
war made easy without due process,  
protecting ourselves from the human cost of war.

We have deceived ourselves,  
saying, "Americans do not kill civilians, terrorists do,"  
denying the colossal misery our wars inflict on the innocent.

The national closet bursts with skeletons...

The sermon did not go down well with Antal's superiors.

In 2013 the Army sent the chaplain back to the US and separated him from active duty. He returned to his state-side job as a Unitarian/Universalist minister in a small upstate New York town.

#### Back at Rock Tavern

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Rock Tavern, NY has fewer than 100 members. When they first hired Antal to lead them in 2011, they knew their new minister was also a chaplain in the New York National Guard — he'd joined in 2008 — and that he might be called up for active service at any time.

They also knew him as a man on a mission — to promote

peace.

"He was the best preacher I had heard in the pulpit. We could see he was really a social activist, and would push us in that direction of being a more activist congregation," says Mike McGinn, current president of the UUCRT. "He awakened a lot of people," McGinn adds, "and he brought the celebration of spirituality back into the congregation."

Reverend Antal had been leading the Rock Tavern Unitarians for less than a year when the Army called him up.

"We had a special service before he deployed," says McGinn. "We were very concerned. Kandahar is not a good place to be. But Chris reminded us that those who fight for us deserve our religious services."

The Rock Tavern Unitarians had kept in touch, sent him supplies, and learned about his controversial Veteran's Day sermon delivered in Kandahar. They were not surprised to learn he was being sent back from Afghanistan.

"I'd say his conscience was getting in the way of the Army," observes McGinn, who expresses his own doubts about the US role in the Middle East. "I speak as a man who lost a brother on 9/11, in the North Tower. And I think now that instead of going to war, we have gone on a war of revenge."

Reverend Antal's antiwar activism has widespread support among the Rock Tavern Unitarians. "I'd say that he is a humble man but also someone who recognizes the importance of his actions," says Rock Tavern UUCRT member Keith Jordan, who was on the search committee that hired Antal. "He gives a lot of deliberation to what he's going to do," observes Jordan, "and he realizes that some things that he does could have a major impact on other people, and on the way things are done."

Antal hopes his actions can encourage a change in US military policy. His high-profile exit from the Army is just one expression of his ambition, and of his impatience with the Obama Administration for its continued reliance on drones.

"I'm pretty outraged with the lack of progress," Antal says, "and before I took this step I personally advocated through my elected officials, engaged the members of my congregation in Rock Tavern in legislative advocacy, and even tried shareholder advocacy. I became a stockholder of Honeywell, just so I could confront the CEO, David Cote, on their profiting from armed drones."

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In his letter to President Obama, Antal lists three major reasons why he can no longer serve his country in good conscience: the secretive drone program, America's continued development of nuclear weapons, and its policy of what he calls 'preventive war, permanent military supremacy and global power projection.'

"I resign because I refuse to serve as an empire chaplain," Antal says in his letter to the Commander-in-Chief.

Antal's resignation is still waiting for approval. "I cannot speak for Chaplain Antal and his reasons for wanting to resign his commission," writes US Army Captain Eric Connor from Fort Bragg, where Antal's resignation is under review. "What I can tell you is that is a part of the ongoing review process into his particular matter. The U.S. Army Reserve is a volunteer force. It is a personal choice to serve."

The fallout

Chris Antal, by resigning in this fashion, forfeits benefits that otherwise would have accrued to him through his eight years of service in the US Army Reserve.

Antal's story has made the rounds of the military press, with articles in Military.com and Army Times. Reader comments online have been pretty brutal.

"I've been called a heaping pile of sh--, a traitor who should be put in prison. And I think somebody said I should be executed," he says. "But most of the responses I have seen have been very supportive."

News of Reverend Antal's resignation resonates beyond the military community.

"He is doing something remarkable," says former Maryknoll priest Roy Bourgeois. "People like Chris ... they struggle with conscience and they realize that they have to make a decision." Bourgeois was himself called to the priesthood and became an influential peace activist after serving in the Vietnam War.

"Chris Antal's resignation takes a lot of courage because there are always consequences," says Bourgeois, who knows about consequences. He has spent over four years in federal prisons for non-violent protests. His vocal support for the ordination of women priests led to his dismissal by the Vatican, after his more than 40 years in the priesthood.

"You're gonna lose something," Bourgeois says. "Friends, a job, you're gonna get fired, you're gonna lose your pension, but people like Chris, they live on in the lives of others. They really challenge us and stretch us, and we just need more people like that."

Antal says the Army, as it deliberates his exit, is treating him with fairness and respect. "I'm not angry or upset with the Army. This is an issue that I have with our Administration, and I hope that as a citizen I can do more for our armed forces and for the Army than I am able to do at this point as an officer."

Antal looks to the people he serves, and draws comfort from their support. "I could never speak up and stand out without the community around me. My congregation in Rock Tavern has been a critical support, as has the community of Veterans for Peace. The members of my congregation have rallied around me and stood beside me, speaking up about these issues, and without their support I couldn't do this."

*Submitted by Chuck DeWitt*

## **VETERANS FOR PEACE 31ST**

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**MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2016**

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# LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read which might interest the members of VFP-56, please e-mail it to [turtldncer@aol.com](mailto:turtldncer@aol.com), in word format, or mail to Jim Sorter at 1762 Buttermilk Lane, Arcata, CA 95521. Submissions will be included on a first come basis until the newsletter is full. Late arriving submissions will be archived for future issues.

**AMERICA HAS BEEN AT WAR 222 OUT OF  
239 YEARS SINCE 1776. LET THAT SINK  
IN FOR A MOMENT**



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