

# Greenwashing? The Green Marches Are Mute on the “War Factor”

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*On March 15, the Day of the Popular March for Climate, tens of thousands of young people from several countries, followers of the Swedish student **Greta Thunberg**, showed their indignation at the indifference of world leaders towards climate change. Since last August, 16-year-old Greta demonstrates every Friday before the Swedish Parliament calling for greater commitment in the fight against the alarming deterioration of the oceans and glaciers.*

Surprising (or not) that while environmental activists of the stature of the Honduran Berta Cáceres or the Iranian professor Kavous Emami who have been killed for their struggle against the powers that benefit from the destruction of the environment, the Swedish teenager is presented as leader of the fight to save the planet.

According to Global Witness, in 2017, at least 207 environmental activists were murdered in 22 countries. A year earlier, there were another 200, eight more than in 2015. It is unknown why she, a native of one of the world’s top arms sellers, and her fans concerned about the CO2 that seeps into her lungs, **have not included the “No to war” and the businesses that revolve around the arms industry in its claims to save the battered planet.** It is incomprehensible that they are more afraid of breathing contaminated air, but not of the very real threat of a nuclear war that would kill billions of living beings, and cause long and hard suffering for the survivors. A year ago Trump [broke the nuclear agreement with Iran](#), and last month he did the same with the agreement with Russia, **while he ordered to invest 1.2 billion dollars to make new atomic bombs in order to “make [the world safer](#)”.**



February 23, 2019: "French president Macron received Swedish climate girl Greta Thunberg (right to Macron) and a delegation from Youth for Climate, including Anuna De Wever (second from the right) and Kyra Gantois (first from the left)." [[Source](#)]

In the slogans the "March" **did not see any mention of the consequences of the open wars in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Libya (which have destroyed the lives of nearly 150 million people), nor those that imperialism can start against Venezuela and Iran, or the deadly contamination of the Palestinians' habitat,** which besides being bombed almost daily by Israel, they live an ecological catastrophe: millions of their olive trees have been uprooted by the occupiers, the fields of Fruit trees and farms in Gaza have disappeared; its people breathe the asbestos of demolished houses, and untreated sewage pollutes the Mediterranean because of the destruction of infrastructure.

The same "amnesia" happens with television ads, which invite us to recycle to protect the land, but silence the degree of responsibility of large companies always protected by the states, which commit 80% of the aggressions against the environment .

The lack of policies on the part of the capitalist governments to avoid a greater ecological disaster is simply a policy.

### **Other false environmental heroes**



**Greta Thunberg**  
@GretaThunberg

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Greenwashing “greenwashing” or pseudoecologism is the term created to denounce makeup on the face of a system that continuously generates and reproduces the foundations of the destruction of nature.

Former US Vice President **Al Gore** received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 “for his efforts to build and disseminate on climate change”, despite the fact that the Clinton-Gore administration bombed Yugoslavia, Albania, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Zaire, and Liberia, using all kinds of destructive munitions including projectiles that contained depleted uranium, causing the death of tens of thousands of civilians and causing irreparable damage to their lands, airs, and waters. He was also one of the promoters of the campaign to expand raw material for biofuel, trying to convert the pancakes of the poorest Mexicans into ethanol from the cars of the well off. It was the fear of the rebellion of millions of hungry people who fled away, in part, this occurrence.

Years later, in September 2014 and on the eve of the UN Climate Summit, Wall Street

bankers paid about \$ 220,000 to announce the march organized by companies like Avaaz and 300 other organizations against the New York subway. The pollution of the planet. The participation of the World Bank or the Clinton Global Initiative in these initiatives, rather than being due to the “mainstreaming” of the environmental movement, is to take control of it, as well as a marketing operation to “whitewash” the most predatory elites without scruples of the world, the same that presents, for example, [to NATO as the sister of charity](#): if you download tons of bombs on defenseless nations it is because the arms industry goes out of its way for the well-being of the Sudanese lord, [the Afghan lady](#) .

The movement for “climate justice” is a very profitable capitalist business line that turns the sensible struggle of people worried about the agony of our planet into a commodity, creating the illusion that the manufacturers of cluster bombs or white phosphorus are going to give up their benefits, at the stroke of “signatures” or demonstrations with music and dance.

One of the examples of the trickery of capitalism is, for example, that 1) the stock markets lower the price of carbon in order to sell the largest amount, 2) the banks do not exclude the most polluting companies from their offers of credits, and 3) governments give incentives to this sector to reduce their polluting emissions. The business of “Saving the Earth” is very all-encompassing.

### **Devastate the environment with war**

Consider this:

- By the late 1980s, public data revealed that the Pentagon was generating a ton of toxic waste per minute<sup>3</sup>, more toxic waste than the five largest U.S. chemical companies together, making it the largest polluter in the United States. According to the 2008-2009 President’s Cancer Panel Report<sup>4</sup>, *nearly 900 of EPA’s approximately 1300 Superfund sites are abandoned military bases/ facilities or manufacturing and testing sites that produced conventional weapons and other military-related products and services. (And what of the nearly 1000 U.S. bases worldwide where the military is not held to current U.S. standards of environmental protection?)*



It is said that the army of ancient Rome, to ensure the present and future capitulation of its enemies, covered the surface of its arable land of salt; Centuries later, we have witnessed how US aviation sprayed the forests and crops of Vietnam with 20 million gallons of Agent Naranja herbicide (produced by Monsanto). Today, 44 years later, there are 500,000 blind children, without limbs and with other serious malformations. A few years before, Harry Truman's atomic bombs turned Hiroshima, Nagasaki and 240,000 of his neighbors into ashes.

The wars, in addition, produce massive displacements of the population, erode the soil, desert the forests. Among the scant data on the environmental stress caused by the military aggression of the US and its allies to Iraq, started in the [Persian Gulf War of 1991](#) and continues [to this day](#) , news like this is showing:

- In "response" to the fire of 736 Kuwaiti oil wells by Iraqi troops, Anglo-American forces bombed Iraq's refineries and oil fields that burned for months, producing millions of tons of carbon dioxide, sulfur, mercury, which produced rain Acid on a large surface removed vegetation and animals.
- The use of 320 tons of depleted uranium by the US, which killed thousands of people, produced strange diseases and malformations in babies born later, in addition to polluting hectares of cultivated land.
- Tens of thousands of birds died, some by drowning in oil spilled in the waters of the Persian Gulf, and others by falling water temperature, creating a toxic micro-layer on its surface.
- In 2015, Iraq experienced the highest temperature in the world, because of the destruction in the vegetation cover and the reduction of the water surface. The severe dust storms that are born in this country and spread throughout the area, cause conditions that kill hundreds of people each year.
- Fishermen and Iraqi kids who bathe in the Tigris River still find bodies in their waters.

# The Silent Casualty of War: The Global Environment

H. Patricia Hynes

The brunt of war in the 20th and early 21st centuries has shifted from combatant soldiers to civilians due to more powerful war weapons, war intensity, and war tactics. By the 1990s, 90 % of those who died in war were civilians, and the majority were women<sup>1</sup> and children. For the same reasons, the impact of war and militarism on nature and the lived environment follows a similar pattern. One Vietnam veteran described the rain of death in the Vietnam War – bombs, mortars, napalm, and chemical warfare – as a war against the environment, creating 20 million bomb craters and “reducing the Earth to ashes.” According to Barry Sanders in his eye-opening book on military pollution *The Green Zone*, the first three weeks of the 2003 war in Iraq used the amount of fuel that

80,000 Americans would use for a year’s worth of driving, or 40 million gallons.

The military enterprise as a whole is hyper-privileged, secretive, and un-touchable when it comes to budget, international law, and environmental protection. By contrast, environmental health policy on toxics has moved from targeting one toxic substance at a time to toxics reduction, healthcare without harm, clean technology, green housing, pollution prevention, and the Precautionary Principle<sup>2</sup>. We need a comparable leap in policy that addresses heightened defense spending, arms trafficking, and global military power projection. Why? Given the scale of the American military-industrial complex and the nearly 1,000 military bases colonizing the world, the U.S. military is the largest single polluter on the planet.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/Academic/wps-vaw\\_battlefieldwomensbodiesharmofwar\\_womenstudiesintlforum\\_2004.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/Academic/wps-vaw_battlefieldwomensbodiesharmofwar_womenstudiesintlforum_2004.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precautionary\\_principle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precautionary_principle)

3

In Yemen, [the “non-televised” bombing of the](#) US-Saudi-led [coalition](#) and the planned destruction of crops, farms, and their infrastructure, including wastewater treatment plants and hospitals, has caused [the most brutal humanitarian crisis of the world](#), and an epidemic of cholera that has killed thousands of people, leaving half a million more seriously ill.

In Myanmar, the army uses the “scorched earth” tactic [against the Rohingya](#), burning their homes and crops, in order to make it impossible for the victims to return to their homes.

In [Sudan, the war](#) has caused the elimination of thousands of animals, hunted to feed the armed men. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the population of white rhinos, an endangered species, was reduced to 31 in 1996 because of the conflict; 5,000 elephants disappeared, as well as half of the hippos.

With a few open wars in the Middle East, and the US threat to provoke others to seize the natural resources of other peoples, the environmental movement must strengthen [the weak movement for peace](#) , and include the reduction of military spending in one of its main demands.

We need you to support critical voices.

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*Featured image: February 23, 2019: “French president Macron received Swedish climate girl Greta Thunberg (right to Macron) and a delegation from Youth for Climate, including Anuna De Wever (second from the right) and Kyra Gantois (first from the left).”* [\[Source\]](#)

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