



## Choose Sanity Now for People and the Planet

**Our national leaders are making dangerous, lethal choices.**

**Ukraine:** In late 2021 and early 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin amassed troops on the border with Ukraine, and in February, launched a full-scale invasion, in defiance of both morality and international law. In response, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky mobilized for defensive war, risking his country's destruction, rather than vigorously pursuing a negotiated solution or relying on unarmed civilian defense and nonviolent resistance. U.S. President Joe Biden and other NATO leaders have rushed weapons and advisers to Ukraine in a bid to weaken Russia, prolonging the war and risking escalation into a conflict between the two nuclear-armed camps.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to widespread deaths, injuries, and destruction, the war has brought environmental harm, a spike in global prices for energy and commodities, and a worsening food crisis. Among the countries hardest hit by the resulting food shortages are Ethiopia, Yemen, Somalia, and South Sudan.<sup>2</sup>

**Climate change:** Ignoring the dire predictions of climate scientists, the Biden administration has taken major steps to increase fossil fuel production and consumption, including opening large areas of the Gulf of Mexico and public lands for oil and gas drilling and releasing millions of gallons of oil from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve to moderate price increases.<sup>3</sup>

While the new Inflation Reduction Act pledges \$370 billion over 10 years to address climate change, it also requires the administration to lease at least 2 million acres to oil and gas drilling onshore and at least 60 million acres to oil and gas drilling offshore.<sup>4</sup> It also comes with an agreement to streamline the permitting process for fossil fuel infrastructure.<sup>5</sup> These choices will have disastrous consequences for a warming planet.

**Military spending:** The Biden administration and Congress have also chosen unconscionable levels of military spending, with the House and Senate competing to see which can add more funding to the President's already record-breaking \$813 billion budget request.<sup>6</sup> That request

includes over \$50 billion in spending on nuclear weapons, much of it for the “modernization” of nuclear warheads and delivery systems.<sup>7</sup>

Rather than funding climate change mitigation and other essential human needs, our leaders are sending huge sums of money to weapons manufacturers, choices with grim consequences for all humanity. As Pope Francis said in Nagasaki, Japan, in 2019,

*The arms race wastes precious resources that could be better used to benefit the integral development of peoples and to protect the natural environment. In a world where millions of children and families live in inhumane conditions, the money that is squandered and the fortunes made through the manufacture, upgrading, maintenance and sale of ever more destructive weapons are an affront crying out to heaven.*<sup>8</sup>

**Write President Biden, your Senators, and your Representative, urging them to adopt saner choices.**

1. Stop flooding Ukraine and NATO countries with more and increasingly sophisticated weapons, and work urgently to promote a negotiated end to the war in Ukraine. See the April 19, 2022, [letter signed by Pax Christi USA and other national faith-based groups](#).<sup>9</sup>
2. Block efforts to facilitate the extraction and transportation of fossil fuels. Eliminate subsidies to oil and gas companies and fund additional major investments to drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions. See [this fact sheet from the Natural Resources Defense Council](#).
3. Cut military spending and redirect the funding to address the causes of conflict, injustice, inequity, and environmental catastrophe, as urged in Pax Christi USA’s [Bread Not Stones campaign](#).<sup>10</sup>
4. Cancel spending on new nuclear weapons and adopt policies to reduce the threat of nuclear war, as urged in the [Back from the Brink campaign](#) endorsed by Pax Christi USA and others.

*To write the President:* click [here](#) to send an email, or send a hard-copy letter to

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

*To write your Senators:* click [here](#) and choose your state from the drop-down list. On the results page, click on “Contact” under each Senator’s photo to send an email from his or her website.

*To write your Representative:* click [here](#), enter your ZIP code, and click on “FIND YOUR REP BY ZIP.” On the results page, click on the envelope icon to send an email from your Representative’s website.

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<sup>1</sup> Nathan J. Robinson, "[Is the U.S. Actually Trying to Help Ukraine?](#)," *Current Affairs*, May 9, 2022; Christopher Caldwell, "[The War in Ukraine May Be Impossible to Stop. And the U.S. Deserves Much of the Blame](#)," *The New York Times*, May 31, 2022; "[Nearly \\$3 Billion in Additional Security Assistance for Ukraine](#)," U.S. Dept. of Defense, Aug. 24, 2022. The DOD press release notes that the U.S. has committed more than \$13.5 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since January 2021."

<sup>2</sup> Julia Jacobo, "[Experts Predict Lasting Environmental Damage from Russia's Invasion of Ukraine](#)," *ABC News*, April 20, 2022; Missy Ryan, "[Diplomats Urge Action as Global Food Crisis Deepens](#)," *The Washington Post*, June 24, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Brad Plumer and Raymond Zhong, "[Stopping Climate Change Is Doable, but Time Is Short, U.N. Panel Warns](#)," *The New York Times*, April 4, 2022; Carol Davenport, "[Biden Plans to Open More Public Land to Drilling](#)," *The New York Times*, April 15, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Marianne Lavelle and Nicholas Kusnetz, "[Senate Democrats Produce a Far-Reaching Climate Bill, but the Price of Compromise with Joe Manchin is Years More Drilling for Oil and Gas](#)," *Inside Climate News*, Jul. 28, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Jeff Stein and Tony Room, "[Democrats' Side Deal with Manchin Would Speed Up Projects, West Virginia Gas](#)," *The Washington Post*, Aug. 1, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Catie Edmondson, "[House Passes \\$840 Billion Military Policy Bill](#)," *The New York Times*, July 14, 2022; Andrew Clevenger, "[Senate Armed Services Panel Goes Big with New Defense Budget](#)," *Roll Call*, June 16, 2022. Note that the \$370 billion in climate-related spending under the Inflation Reduction Act, averaging \$37 billion per year for 10 years, is only about 4 percent of the amount approved for the military.

<sup>7</sup> "[Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget Request Briefing Book](#)," Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, June 1, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> [Address of the Holy Father on Nuclear Weapons](#), Nov. 24, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> See also "[Reaching a Just and Lasting Peace in Ukraine](#)," Statement of the Science and Ethics of Happiness Study Group, June 16, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> See also the Feb. 2, 2022, [letter from 81 Christian scholars and leaders](#) urging reductions in military spending and investments in human flourishing.

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