

The Global Environmental **Impact** of the United States in Peace and War

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In the twentieth century a major driving force for global environmental deterioration was the vast reach of the American economy, in its worldwide

search for natural resources. Throughout history, empires (whether political/military or economic) have captured distant natural resources, domesticating distant ecosystems. The American empire has been no exception, but it has been the most momentous of them all (though China's new global surge may soon surpass it). In the peacetime economy, American investors and their local collaborators have transformed ecosystems throughout Latin America and across the Pacific into Southeast Asia, to produce agricultural crops, timber products and minerals for export. American consumers have provided the largest market for these products. We are only beginning to recognize the global ecological consequences of corporate enterprise and consumer culture. We have paid even less attention to the international impact of the United States military's demands for resources (timber, minerals, and petroleum) for use in wartime and for maintaining the world's most far-flung military establishment in peacetime, especially during the Cold War.