

# Grawemeyer Awards

## Scholar who measures Pentagon's carbon footprint wins 2024 world order prize

By Denise Fitzpatrick

The U.S. military must reduce its dependence on fossil fuels so the world can effectively address climate change, says the winner of the 2024 University of Louisville Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order.

Neta Crawford, an international relations professor at the University of Oxford in England, received the prize for the ideas in her [book](#) "The Pentagon, Climate Change and War: Charting the Rise and Fall of Military Emissions" published by MIT Press in 2022.

The U.S. military is the world's largest single institutional producer of greenhouse gases, Crawford found. Between 1975 and 2022, its emissions averaged 81 million metric tons of greenhouse hydrocarbons a year—more than most countries. After it reduced operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, its emissions dropped to an annual average of 51 million metric tons, a level that still poses more risk to human existence than most military conflicts, she found.

"The Pentagon looks at the world in terms of threats but doesn't see its own emissions as part of the problem," she said. "If it's going to successfully switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy, it must stop defending oil-rich countries and develop a different approach to national security."

[Crawford](#) is the first scholar to thoroughly assess the U.S. military's global emissions profile and weigh its implications, said Charles Ziegler, who directs the world order award.

"She convincingly explains how the military's dependence on fossil fuels and consequent need to defend the sources of those fuels leads to a cycle of demand, consumption, militarization and conflict," Ziegler said. "She also explains how the Pentagon can do more to make life on our planet sustainable."

Crawford, Montague Burton Professor of International Relations at Oxford since 2021, also codirects the Costs of War Project, a non-partisan effort at Brown University assessing the human and financial costs of U.S. wars. She was inducted into the British Academy and American Academy of Arts and Sciences earlier this year and won an International Studies Association distinguished scholar award in 2018.