

ENDING FOSSIL FUELS AND ABOLISHING WAR

A CROSSROADS REACHED



TIPPING POINT NORTH SOUTH
creative campaigning for global justice

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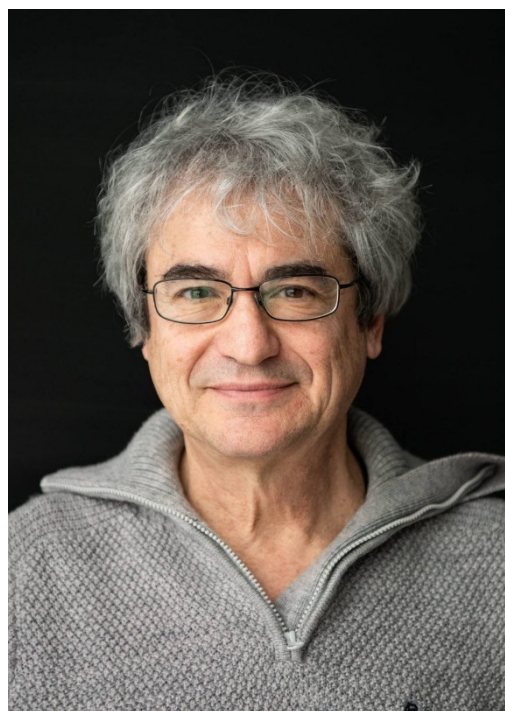
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This publication is dedicated to Bruce Kent, founder of Movement for the Abolition of War

Bruce Kent was ordained as a Catholic priest for the Diocese of Westminster in 1958. Later, Kent joined the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, a specialist section of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). From 1974 to 1976, he was chaplain to Pax Christi and chairman of the charity War on Want. He was CND's general secretary from 1980 to 1985 and its chair from 1987 to 1990, and later held the honorary title of vice-president. In the 1980s, he led resistance to the deployment of the BGM-109G Ground Launched Cruise Missile at RAF Greenham Common. From 1985 to 1992, Kent succeeded Seán MacBride as president of the International Peace Bureau. In 1997, he took part in the Musa Anter peace train to Diyarbakır, which aimed for a solution for the Kurdish-Turkish conflict. In a ceremony held on 19 October 2019, Kent was honoured with its MacBride Peace Prize. Bruce Kent was a patron of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Among his heroes was Franz Jägerstätter, the Austrian farmer who was executed in 1943 for refusing to fight in Hitler's army. As recently as 15 May 2022, Kent took part in the annual ceremony in Tavistock Square, London, to honour conscientious objectors throughout the world. Kent died at home on 8 June 2022, at the age of 92, after a short illness. A man of tremendous warmth, sincerity and generosity of spirit, he was at the time of his death, vice-president of CND, a vice-president of Pax Christi, and emeritus president of the Movement for the Abolition of War.

FOREWORD



Humankind is at a crossroad. The risk of sleepwalking into a self-destructive catastrophe — as we have done many times in the past — is very high. But this time, in addition, we face a major ecological disaster and nuclear holocaust. We need publications like this latest one from Tipping Point North South that do not hide the head under the sand, as the politicians we have elected are currently doing, but instead addresses the problem and discusses solutions.

Carlo Rovelli

Professor and Director of the Quantum Gravity Research Group at the Centre de Physique Théorique in Marseille, France. In 2019, he was included by Foreign Policy magazine in a list of 100 most influential global thinkers. He is the founder of the Global Peace Dividend proposal.

INTRODUCTION

The climate emergency has made this year, 2026, witness to horror upon horror: extreme heat, forests burning, farmland arid, deadly floods, oceans boiling, 7000 souls swept away in the catastrophic landslide cause by a glacial collapse in Nepal and China.

In truth, this is a World War, one that we have been incrementally led into thanks to the global fossil fuel industry with their climate change “defence, denial and disinformation” strategy ongoing since the 1950s.¹ A decades long literal slow-burn world-wide war on our home planet, escalating to events of 2026, where it is clear: the vast majority of humanity is nothing more than “human sacrifice” on the altar of “blood oil profit”.² Add into this climate inferno the trillions of life-forms that are also on the sacrificial table — farm animals, forest animals, sea animals, birds, and insects among others.

We are heading for 3 degrees or more of heating with current climate plans and policies and leaders are “fiddling while Rome burns”.³ Incomprehensibly, this world-wide war on our home planet is, right now, being shunted into second place on the international agenda. It has been superseded by a renewed appetite for more-of-the-same wars of aggression that humanity has suffered over centuries. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Israel’s genocide and ecocide of Palestinian people and their land, war on Iran by USA and Israel, and other media sanctioned “lower-profile” but no-less-damaging conflicts in countries such as Sudan and Congo are all happening concurrently.

Ever rising military spending is the enabler of this. Public expenditure which could otherwise be applied to climate finance for urgent and severely under-funded mitigation and adaptation are handed over to the arms industry. Currently the richest countries spend 30 times as much on their armed forces as they spend on providing climate finance for the world’s most vulnerable countries.⁴

As more conflicts lead inevitably to higher military spending, so we get further and further away from our ability to address — and fund — the over-arching immediate threat to our collective safety: climate breakdown. If we cannot learn to co-operate, we have no hope of resolving the climate emergency.

And if events of this past year do not — once and for all — make it clear that we need global agreement to abolish war, then it will never be clear.

¹ <https://commonhome.georgetown.edu/topics/climateenergy/defense-denial-and-disinformation-uncovering-the-oil-industrys-early-knowledge-of-climate-change/>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/business/ng-interactive/2026/aug/04/revealed-major-oil-firms-make-93bn-profits-amid-war-and-climate-crisis>

³ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/new-climate-pledges-only-slightly-lower-dangerous-global-warming>

⁴ <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/climate-collateral>

POLITICALLY SANCTIONED HUMAN SACRIFICE ON THE ALTAR OF FOSSIL FUEL PROFITS

ON THE HIGHWAY AND SPEEDING TOWARDS A 3 DEGREE HOTTER WORLD

The world is currently around 1.4°C warmer than pre-industrial levels and it is almost a certainty that this year (2026) *will be the coolest year of the rest of our lives*.⁵ With current national climate plans and policies we are on course to a 3°C hotter world by 2100.⁶ Not 1.5°C or 2°C but 3°C. The tiny 1°C difference in average temperature will translate into real-world impacts of biblical proportions.

Societies break down.

Catastrophic climate natural disasters will happen exponentially more often. According to climate scientist Michael E Mann, “a global temperature increase of 5.4°F (3°C) or more could lead to a collapse of our societal infrastructure and massive unrest and conflict, which, in turn, could lead to a future that resembles some Hollywood dystopian films.”⁷

Ten years back, Lloyds of London’s report ‘Food System Shock’ predicted that there was over 0.5% per year, or more than an 18% chance over a 40-year period that a catastrophic scenario of extreme droughts and floods hitting multiple major grain-producing “breadbaskets” simultaneously would happen; global production of rice, wheat, maize and soybean fell by around 10%.⁸ In a 3- degree hotter world, such a disastrous global crop failure becomes almost certain to happen over a 40-year period and to a much greater extent, with an even more calamitous reduction in crop yield. And if we get anywhere near close to this, imagined scenarios such as these below become not so far-fetched:

Food riots break out in urban areas across Europe and the Middle East, North Africa and Latin America. Water wars, civil wars erupt; famine kills millions of people across the already climate impacted global south. As essential resources such as water and food become ever scarcer, and the general conditions of living become much, much worse, the threat of nuclear war becomes much higher.⁹ Even a ‘local’ nuclear conflict between just India and Pakistan could kill hundreds of millions of people and significantly affect global climate and environment, further threatening global food production.¹⁰

Oceans become ‘hot soup’ as we cook planet Earth

As the world gets ever hotter so the ocean would likewise become a hot soup’, effectively cooking marine wildlife alive. The ocean is absorbing the majority of the excess heat trapped in the atmosphere by greenhouse gases. The world can expect 16 times more marine heat waves each year at 1.5°C of warming, 23 times more at 2°C, and 41 times more at 3.5°C. All of these scenarios would devastate marine life. And it is not just marine life facing catastrophe as we

⁵ <https://crudata.uea.ac.uk/cru/data/t2025/>

⁶ <https://climateactiontracker.org/global/emissions-pathways/>

⁷ <https://www.livescience.com/amp/climate-change-humans-extinct.html>

⁸ http://www.eenews.net/assets/2015/06/19/document_cw_02.pdf

⁹ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-021-02957-w>

¹⁰ <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aay5478>

continue cooking the Earth; habitat loss for all species would double or triple if temperature increases went from 1.5°C to 2°C. If the planet warms beyond 4.5°C, the sixth mass extinction is complete and the majority of the planet would no longer be able to host life.¹¹

Sea levels rising – we are in deep-water. Literally.

A 3°C of heating would ‘lock in’ more than 6 metres of sea level rise.¹² Sea level rise, once set in motion, will be irreversible for hundreds to thousands of years (IPCC AR6); therefore, once 3°C is reached, the sea level rise of 6m will be reached, whether 200 years from now or 2000 years in the future. The complex cascading effects of climate change also means that 4°C becomes almost inevitable if we so carelessly heat up the world beyond 3°C, and at that point, a third of Antarctica’s ice shelf could become destabilized and at risk of collapse.¹³ We really do not want to see that happen. Antarctica contains 70% of Earth’s fresh water; the global mean sea level would rise by 58 metres – enough to submerge the Statue of Liberty.¹⁴

In the face of all this, we are incomprehensibly on a trajectory towards 3°C heating by 2100. On this highway to hell, where is the speeding ticket when we need one?



¹¹ <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/the-difference-in-global-warming-levels-explained/>

¹² <https://sealevel.climatecentral.org/uploads/research/Global-Mapping-Choices-Report.pdf>

¹³ <https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1029/2020GL091733>

¹⁴ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-019-0510-8>

THE MILITARY-FOSSIL FUEL COMPLEX ONLY ADDS MORE FUEL TO THE CLIMATE CAULDRON

GREENWASH, MILITARY EMISSIONS AND MILITARY SPENDING

So who is looking out for humanity in the midst of all this? The big military spending nations of the world would have you think the application of military assets in support of humanitarian emergencies is how we need to understand the value of the military in this climate emergency. That may well be the case – helicopters, ambulances, search-and-find of course must be deployed whenever and where-ever needed. Having said this, despite significant military spending increases coupled with unprecedented heatwaves and wildfires in recent years, the British Ministry of Defence does not possess any domestic aerial firefighting capability.¹⁵

To present the military's role in climate breakdown as humanitarian is cover for the far bigger role the fossil fuel reliant big militaries play in this climate breakdown. As we head to 2 degrees of warming, the big military spending governments of the 21st century continue with foreign and defence policy-making that is more or less a continuum of 19th and 20th century behaviour. War-fighting, arms dealing and raising ever more money for more fossil-fuelled hardware. We are in a new 21st century arms race – one that includes nuclear weapons, by the way.

Meantime, the big military spending nations have given a free pass to their militaries when it comes to reporting military and conflict-related emissions,¹⁶ with token measures directed to decarbonisation.¹⁷ They are token because bottom line is this: fighter jets, tanks, warships, bombs and missiles – and their production – are fossil fuel dependent and will remain so beyond 2050. This, when every sector of human economic activity supposed to reach net zero by 2050.¹⁸

The scale of this problem is significant. The global military carbon footprint is estimated to be 5.5% of total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.¹⁹ This is more than the combined annual emissions of the 54 nations of the African continent and is twice as much as emissions from civilian aviation. This estimate does not include conflict-related emissions (e.g. Gaza, Ukraine, post 9/11 wars).

The global top 20 military spenders alone are estimated to be responsible for at least 10 billion metric tonnes of CO2 equivalent (tCO2e) of military-related emissions during the first quarter of the 21st century.

This is the result of US\$40 trillion spent on their militaries since 2001.²⁰

More military expenditures mean more gas-guzzling big ticket military equipment, and more fossil-fuelled jets, tanks and warships make it all the more difficult to transition to zero-carbon alternatives to reduce emissions to zero. Indeed, the recent year-on-year increases on military

¹⁵ <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/uk-rules-out-a400m-firefighting-role/>

¹⁶ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/military-and-conflict-related-emissions-report/>

¹⁷ <https://thebulletin.org/2026/08/the-us-militarys-fatal-stance-on-climate-change/>

¹⁸ <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-roadmap-a-global-pathway-to-keep-the-15-c-goal-in-reach>

¹⁹ <https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/how-big-are-global-military-carbon-emissions>

²⁰ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/climate-reparations-for-military-emissions/>

spending have negated all the progress on net-zero by militaries in the world with very few exceptions.²¹

So, while it is possible to decarbonise the military, it remains a 'pipe-dream' if global military expenditure continues to rise at existing rates.

THE CLIMATE CAN WAIT: US\$3 TRILLION ANNUALLY AND RISING FOR BIG MILITARIES, WARS AND ARMS TRADE



A PALTRY \$300BN

A new climate finance goal was set at COP29 for developed countries to deliver at least \$300 billion annually for developing countries' climate action by 2035. The "new collective quantified goal (NCQG)" also included a much larger target: It called on all actors to work toward mobilizing \$1.3 trillion in international climate finance over the same timeframe; closer to the amount developing countries truly need.

The High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance (IHLEG) estimated that developing countries (excluding China) need to spend \$2.7 trillion annually by 2030 to meet climate and nature-related goals. \$1.4 trillion of this would come from domestic sources and \$1.3 trillion from abroad. \$1.3 trillion is therefore a more accurate reflection of developing countries' needs by 2035, and so the more meaningful target.²²

Meantime, global military spending is running at just short of \$3 trillion annually with 85% of that accruing to the top 20 military spenders.²³ More than half of that \$3 trillion – 1.58 trillion – accrued to NATO countries. The USA alone accounted for 33% the global total, one-third. Russia and Germany have both doubled their spending on a decade ago and China does not want to be left behind and has increased its spending – it is now around one-third that of the U.S.A (ie 12% of world spending).

While rich nations quibble about \$300bn in climate finance for our sisters and brothers in climate vulnerable nations – nations like recently devastated Nepal that have done nothing to cause the climate emergency – military spending has risen by almost \$1 trillion in the past decade. The

²¹ <https://www.sgr.org.uk/publications/military-climate-strategies-are-they-just-greenwash>

²² <https://www.wri.org/insights/ncqg-climate-finance-goals-explained>

²³ <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2026/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2025>

richest countries annually spent 30 times as much on their armed forces as they spent on providing climate finance for the world's most vulnerable countries.²⁴

If this trend continues, between 2026 and 2030, we can expect to see *at least* \$15 trillion spent on the global military, more than half will be spent by rich developed countries on their own militaries. The current choices being made in European and North American countries to redirect public funds from climate and development support to military budgets in the push to, primarily, counter Russia and secondarily China, is inexcusable and immoral.

And make matters much worse, the NATO plan is for all 32 members to go all out to reach a 5% of GDP target for military expenditure. Currently, NATO collectively outspends Russia by more than 8 to 1 and China by nearly 5 to 1. One could ask – is this not already sufficient to address all hypothetical or indeed real security threats?

NATO's new 3.5% of GDP military spending goal will lead to \$2.6 trillion increase in total above current expenditure by 2030.²⁵ This figure could cover nearly three year's worth of climate finance needs of developing countries at \$1 trillion a year or pay outright for the world's global electricity grid to be made Net Zero compatible by 2030. These increases in military expenditure are of the order which should be allocated to tackle the actual existential threat of climate change – it is precious public money effectively taken from climate finance for urgent and severely under-funded mitigation and adaptation against climate emergency.

ECONOMIC GROWTH, THE ARMS INDUSTRY & WORLD WAR 3

In Europe and USA arms production is being seen as the new economic growth driver. This is as a result of the Ukraine war, genocide in Palestine and war on Iran and runs parallel with regular media stories across the continent about Europe needing to be prepared for conflict with Russia.²⁶ It's a misguided, immoral short term 'fix' and it won't deliver what it is expected to – but it will surely boost even more the profits of military contractors.

The latest research by SIPRI showed that the global top 100 arms companies made \$679 billion in revenue in 2024, a 6% yearly increase and the highest level recorded, cashing in on death and destruction in wars and conflicts around the world, such as in Ukraine, Palestine, Sudan and Congo.²⁷ The US-Israel war against Iran in 2026 has massively boosted profits for oil and arms companies: share prices of military contractors shot up since the war started and eight of the biggest oil companies (Aramco, BP, Shell, Equinor, TotalEnergies, Eni, Chevron and ExxonMobil) made more than \$90 billion in profit in just first 3 months of the war.²⁸

²⁴ <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/climate-collateral>

²⁵ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/natos-3-5-spending-goal/>

²⁶ <https://www.politico.eu/article/world-war-iii-defense-spending-europe-poll/>

²⁷ <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2025/sipri-fact-sheets/sipri-top-100-arms-producing-and-military-services-companies-2024>

²⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/ng-interactive/2026/aug/04/revealed-major-oil-firms-make-93bn-profits-amid-war-and-climate-crisis>

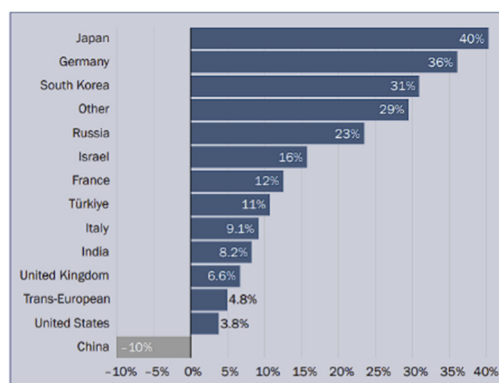


Figure Percentage change in the arms revenues of companies in the SIPRI Top 100, by country, 2023–24

Note: The change refers to the companies in the Top 100 for 2024. Figures are based on arms revenues in constant (2024) US dollars. The category 'Other' consists of companies headquartered in Canada, Czechia, Indonesia, Norway, Poland, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan and Ukraine. The respective aggregate arms revenues of these companies comprise less than 1.0% of the Top 100 total. The United Arab Emirates is excluded from this category owing to a lack of consistent data.

Source: SIPRI Arms Industry Database, Dec. 2025.

This arms production investment will also impact on GHG emissions. The carbon footprint (not including conflict-related emissions) of the military and its associated supply chain is estimated to account for 5.5% of global GHG emissions, at least half of which can be attributed to the supply chain, including arms production companies, private military and security companies and AI data centres.²⁹

THE TRADITIONAL AUTOMATIVE INDUSTRY IS SEEMINGLY KEY TO THIS STRATEGY

Volkswagen signed a deal with Israeli defence firm Rafael Advanced Defense Systems to repurpose its Osnabrück plant in Germany to manufacture military equipment.³⁰ While VW has ruled out producing weapons themselves, the factory could manufacture heavy-duty military trucks, launchers, and generators for systems like the Iron Dome. German arms maker Rheinmetall has looked into using the Volkswagen factory in Osnabrück to make armoured vehicles. The Audi production facility in Brussels could undergo a similar transformation.

Italy's Industry Minister has proposed converting car factories to defence production due to the auto industry crisis.³¹

In the USA, General Motor is in talks with Lockheed Martin about making parts for the defence contractor's weapons, and would manufacture commonly used parts that could help Lockheed bolster munitions production.³²

²⁹ <https://www.sgr.org.uk/publications/military-spending-rises-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions-what-does-research-say>

³⁰ <https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/europe/2026/09/07/volkswagen-signs-deal-to-turn-factory-into-israeli-defence-hub/>

³¹ <https://cleantechnica.com/2025/03/20/european-automakers-see-opportunities-in-the-defense-industry/>

³² <https://breakingdefense.com/2026/06/lockheed-gm-announce-partnership-to-bolster-production-for-munitions-and-more/>

Meantime, REARM Europe Readiness 2030 (formerly known as the ReArm Europe plan) is a strategic European Union initiative proposed in March 2025 to mobilize up to €800 billion for regional defence infrastructure, joint procurement, and military readiness.³³ And Canada, along with Albania, Belgium, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, Turkey, and Ukraine, has expressed support for a new global defence bank called the Defence, Security and Resilience Bank (DSRB), which aims to help allied countries rearm. The bank is looking to raise around €100 billion (\$116 billion) to provide low-cost loans to governments and defence contractors for military projects.³⁴

GOVERNMENTS' SHARED MESSAGING IN THE PUSH FOR INCREASING MILITARY SPENDING BUDGETS

In 2025, the French government made plans to send a “survival manual” to every household in the country with instructions on how to prepare for an “imminent threat” including armed conflict, a health crisis or a natural disaster after Macron urged France and Europe to prepare to confront the “Russian threat”.³⁵ The UK government is preparing to send all homes information on stocking up on food in the event of conflict or climate emergency.

German military leadership considers war with Russia likely. Lieutenant General Christian Freuding, head of the German army, warned “2029 is not a German timeline. It’s NATO-agreed intelligence. All 32 NATO partners agree that Russia might have the capability to invade a NATO partner country in 2029”.³⁶ Richard Shirreff, formerly deputy supreme allied commander of NATO in Europe, warned that future historians will look back on the US-Israel conflict with Iran as “the final catalyst for a third world war”. This kind of warmongering rhetoric has made for example 53% of Britons think World War 3 is likely within 5-10 years.³⁷

Either we are all being gas-lit or they know something. Where-ever the truth lies we citizens cannot let this rhetoric become reality. The war declared on our planet by rich and powerful forces — big oil, big finance, corporate captured governments, corporate media, now joined by the big tech oligarchs — is the war they are sidelining, for as long as they can kick the climate can down the road, they will.

FROM DEPARTMENT(S) OF DEFENCE TO DEPARTMENT OF WAR(S)

In all this, the USA leads the way, as it has done since the end of WW2, setting the “terms of reference” for global military spending. In truth, “defence” has never really accurately described the activities of the Department of Defence and the Pentagon — Department of War is indeed more accurate.

³³

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2025/769566/EPRS_BRI\(2025\)769566_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2025/769566/EPRS_BRI(2025)769566_EN.pdf)

³⁴ <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2026/08/30/canada-backs-116-billion-global-defence-bank-to-finance-allied-rearmament/>

³⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/mar/18/france-preparing-survival-manual-for-every-household-report-says>

³⁶ <https://www.politico.eu/article/we-must-be-ready-to-fight-germany-army-chief-christian-freuding-warns-of-rising-russia-threat/>

³⁷ <https://yougov.com/en-gb/articles/54310-most-britons-now-believe-world-war-3-is-likely-in-the-next-few-years>

But unfortunately, where the USA leads, others tend to follow; military spending trends combined with US foreign policy decisions has led the way for others to do the same — NATO members, Canada and allies in Asia Pacific (Japan, South Korea and Australia).³⁸ For the climate emergency this is catastrophic on many levels. For Palestine it has been at the heart of enabling Israel's genocide and the sanctioning of wars of aggression.

Since the start of his second term, US President Trump has demonstrated a psychopathic³⁹ willingness to threaten and use military force against any other country, friend or foe.⁴⁰ The Trump administration requested \$1.5 trillion defence budget for FY 2027, a massive \$500 billion increase from FY2026. At the time of Israel's genocides in both Gaza and south Lebanon and Israeli officials making no secret of the "Greater Israel" project,⁴¹ the U.S. House passed "United States-Israel Defense Technology Cooperation Initiative" in July 2026, which would "arguably do more to intertwine the U.S. military with the Israeli military than the more than \$200 billion (inflation adjusted) in military assistance Israel has received from the U.S. since its founding in 1948".⁴²



"Department of Defense" has always been something of a misnomer in the United States; after all, the U.S. has *not* been involved in wars, military attacks and military occupations for only five of the years since its founding,⁴³ including the entirety of Jimmy Carter's presidency, who died in 2024. The U.S. Department of Defense was renamed the Department of War in 2025 and came as Trump threatened to annex Greenland and Canada; and U.S. Special Forces kidnapped Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. The U.S. then signed the deal with Venezuela's interim government to control more than 65 billion barrels of its proven oil reserves, worth US\$ 5.5 trillion at current market value. January 2026 saw the U.S. imposed a complete fuel blockade on Cuba, causing a deliberate economic and humanitarian crisis, followed by the U.S., Israel and allies' unprovoked attack on Iran in February 2026, killing more than 100 elementary school kids by "double-tap" Tomahawk missile strikes on the very first day.⁴⁴ Thousands of Iranians have been killed since. Both President Donald Trump and War Secretary Pete Hegseth had threatened to bomb Iran "back to the Stone Age" but Iran remained resolute. Meantime, Trump resisted the

³⁸ <https://www.uwa.edu.au/news/article/2026/may/european-countries-catching-up-to-us-on-military-spend>

³⁹ <https://www.henley.ac.uk/news/2024/henleys-dr-holly-andrews-analyses-psychopathic-traits-of-donald-trump>

⁴⁰ <https://www.cfr.org/articles/guide-trumps-second-term-military-strikes-and-actions>

⁴¹ <https://progressive.international/wire/2026-08-06-the-genocide-of-south-lebanon/en/>;
<https://novaramedia.com/2026/04/10/israeli-minister-announces-border-expansion-in-palestine-lebanon-and-syria/>

⁴² <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/israel-us-military/>

⁴³ <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2019/04/18/jimmy-carter-us-most-warlike-nation-history-world>

⁴⁴ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/exclusive-iranian-girls-killed-double-tap-strikes-minab-school>

reasonable expectation to concede, but the U.S. military now faces the fact that it has expended nearly all of its stockpiled, long-range precision missiles with restock at least 3 years away.⁴⁵ There has been a constant, albeit infrequent, stream of “nothing off the table” threats, including the use of tactical nuclear weapons from anonymous White House officials.⁴⁶

END ALL WAR

WARS CONSISTENTLY INFLICT A TERRIBLE HUMAN & ENVIRONMENTAL TOLL

In the midst of the existential climate threat to humanity, there are more wars ongoing now than at any time since WW2. The media coverage of a limited nuclear war in Europe is being taken seriously. The world has watched in real time the genocide of the Palestinian people and it is still not over. The civil war in Sudan has seen 150,000 deaths and 14 million people displaced. In 2025, the UN reported that 600m women and girls lived within 50km of conflicts.⁴⁷

It has been estimated that 187 million people died as a result of war from 1900 to the present. The actual number is likely far higher.⁴⁸ And wars take a terrible toll on the planet.

The Vietnam War lasted 20 years from 1954-1975 and the death toll is estimated to be up to 3.4 million Vietnamese killed on both sides.⁴⁹ It was a war that forever would link the human with the environmental devastation wrought upon the country. The destruction of Vietnam’s tropical forest and mangroves alone generated around 300 million tCO₂e (MtCO₂e), in addition to the war’s long lasting direct and indirect environmental and climate damages.⁵⁰ The health impacts of US military’s spraying of Agent Orange persist to this very day.⁵¹

Modern-day conflicts are often fought in and around cities, with expensive gas-guzzling weaponry enabled by massive fossil-fuelled logistics operations and is therefore inevitable there will *always* be a large number of civilian casualties. This is alongside environmental destruction and the release of significant amounts of greenhouse gases.

We can expect to see around 10 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (MtCO₂e) per burning city, nearly 10 MtCO₂e per reconstruction of 50,000 buildings, and several MtCO₂e arising from military operations (e.g. aerial bombing and logistics) as well as other indirect emissions (e.g. restructuring of energy systems and movement and resettlement of refugees). To rebuild from scratch a megacity like Beijing would potentially generate up to 520 million tCO₂e.⁵²

The GHG emissions burden of the Russian invasion of Ukraine is currently estimated to be 311 million tCO₂e.⁵³ Latest research on Israel’s war on Gaza estimated the emission burden of 33

⁴⁵ <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rebuilding-us-missile-inventory-multiyear-project>

⁴⁶ <https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-considering-tactical-nukes-against-iran-what-we-know-2088461>

⁴⁷ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/facts-and-figures/facts-and-figures-women-peace-and-security>

⁴⁸ <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/first-world-war/timeline-of-conflict-since-1914>

⁴⁹ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War/Tet-brings-the-war-home>

⁵⁰ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/military-and-conflict-related-emissions-report/>

⁵¹ <https://truthout.org/articles/the-toxic-effects-of-agent-orange-persist-51-years-after-the-vietnam-war/>

⁵² <https://transformdefence.org/publication/military-and-conflict-related-emissions-report/>

⁵³ <https://en.ecoaction.org.ua/climate-damage-4-years-numbers.html>

million tCO₂e.⁵⁴ Despite being highly densely populated and only one-quarter the size of London, Israel has dropped more bombs on Gaza in less than a year than were dropped on Dresden, Hamburg and London combined during WW2.⁵⁵

On top of all these, let's be reminded again, there will be comparable amounts of GHG emissions accruing to the military supply chain – the arms companies which count the profits while people and planet suffers and the climate crisis emergency deepens.⁵⁶

THE SCAR OF GENOCIDE ON THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE

Following the Jewish Holocaust of WW2, The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the UN in 1948 and came into force in 1951.

The twentieth century has been regarded by many scholars as “the century of genocide”. The Herero and Nama genocide, widely considered to be the first genocide of the 20th century, was the mass extermination of indigenous people in Namibia by the German Empire between 1904 and 1908. The 20th century ended with the genocide in Rwanda of 800,000 Tutsi by Hutu forces in 1994 and 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys by Serbian forces.

PALESTINE, GENOCIDE AND ECOCIDE⁵⁷

For nearly three years, Israel's genocide in Gaza has had devastating consequences: at least 73,000 people have been killed, hundreds of thousands more injured, wounded, or buried under rubble. The civilian casualty rate of this genocide far outstripped all other modern wars. In the West Bank, Israel has escalated its illegal settlement expansion, killing and displacing countless more Palestinian people. Environmental obliteration also unfolds in many forms: the flattening of infrastructure and toxic debris, scorched croplands, poisoned soils and aquifers, and the sea turned into sewage. The systematic destruction of ecosystems and life-supporting systems is not collateral damage, but a deliberate policy that makes lives unliveable. It is an act of ecocide that works in tandem with genocide to erase both a people, their culture, and their land.

At the COP28 climate summit, held in Dubai in December 2023, Colombian President Gustavo Petro declared: "Genocide and barbaric acts unleashed against the Palestinian people is what awaits those who are fleeing the South because of the Climate Crisis... What we see in Gaza is the rehearsal of the future." As Petro's words make clear, the genocide in Gaza is a warning of what's to come if we don't organize and resist. The empire and its ruling classes are prepared to sacrifice millions—Black, Brown, and White working-class people alike—to preserve capital accumulation and domination. Their refusal to commit to climate action at COP29 in Baku, while continuing to fund the genocide in Gaza, makes this clear, as did the vaccine apartheid that was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gaza also reveals how war and the military-industrial complex drive the climate crisis. As a matter of fact, the US Army is the world's largest institutional emitter. When it comes to the genocidal war in Gaza, in just two months, Israel's emissions surpassed the annual carbon output of over 20 of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries—largely from emissions related to US military cargo flights and

⁵⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332226000497>

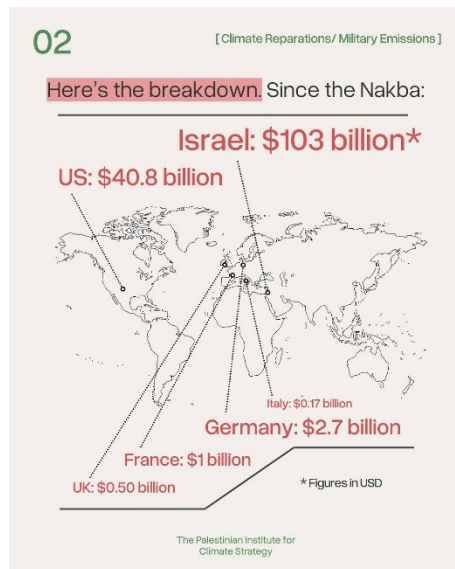
⁵⁵ <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/far-more-bombs-dropped-on-gaza-than-london--dresden--hamburg>

⁵⁶ <https://thebulletin.org/2026/08/mission-impossible-quantifying-military-emissions/>

⁵⁷ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/climatereparationsforpalestine/>

weapons manufacturing. The US is not just enabling genocide; it is actively contributing to ecocide in Palestine. But the connection runs deeper. The struggle for Palestinian liberation is inseparable from the fight against fossil capitalism and US imperialism. Palestine is located in the heart of the Middle East, which remains central to the global capitalist economy, not only through trade and finance but also as the core of the world's fossil fuel regime, producing around 35 per cent of global oil. Meanwhile, Israel is seeking to become a regional energy hub, especially through Mediterranean gas fields like Tamar and Leviathan, for which it granted new gas exploration licenses just weeks into its genocidal war in Gaza.

Hamza Hamouchene⁵⁸



It is estimated that US\$148 billion in military emissions related climate reparations is owed by Israel and its allies since the Nakba.⁵⁹ Yet this is only a measurable entry point. A complete account of climate reparations must also reckon with the broader violences of ecocide and occupation, including but not limited to the theft of water, the obliteration of seed banks, the uprooting of native flora, and the enclosure and weaponisation of nature which sustains life, such as land, water, forests, and seeds. Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and crimes against humanity will be made accountable. Accountability must also extend beyond Israel to those states that enable its crimes through arms transfers, technological provisions, financing, and diplomatic cover.

DOUBLE TOLL OF CONFLICT AND CLIMATE⁶⁰

Instability can create an additional and compounding layer of vulnerability to the existing climate vulnerability of countries and communities affected by prolonged conflict. The combination of climate change, war and conflict-related climate damage — ecocide — is hitting hard the civilian populations of Congo, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Ukraine and many more communities around the world.

Conflict significantly weakens a country's capacity to prepare for and respond to the climate crisis and the resulting impacts. Public institutions and essential services are disrupted; infrastructure, water and food systems damaged; communities displaced; and already limited public resources redirected towards immediate humanitarian and security needs. Under these conditions, governments and communities have extremely limited capacity to implement mitigation and adaptation measures, even as climate risks continue to intensify.

This can dramatically increase the consequences of climate-related disasters. Limited capacity to invest in adaptation before a disaster translates into greater loss and damage. In addition, conflict-affected countries face significant practical and institutional barriers to developing

⁵⁸ <https://www.tni.org/en/article/ecocide-imperialism-and-palestine-liberation>

⁵⁹ <https://palclimateinitiative.org/publications/military-conflict-related-emissions-climate-reparations-for-palestine>

projects, producing climate data, maintaining national planning processes and accessing multilateral climate funds.

Geopolitical tensions further complicate international cooperation and the delivery of climate finance, technology and capacity-building. Communities experiencing some of the most acute combinations of climate vulnerability and institutional fragility therefore find themselves among those least able to access the international support needed to respond.

Between 2010 and 2022, conflicts have almost doubled, from 30 in 2010 to 56 in 2022. In total, 65 state-based conflicts were recorded across 35 countries in 2025 – also the highest number since records began in 1946.⁶¹

73% of arms sales are made by the P5 members of the security council plus Germany and the majority of their arms sales go to the global south.⁶²

Conflicts drive 80% of all humanitarian needs.⁶³

By 2030, at least half of the world's poor people will be living in fragile and conflict-affected countries.⁶⁴

600m women and girls live 50km from conflict.

(These numbers do not take the contemporary and future impact of the climate emergency.)

WE HAVE GUIDED MISSILES AND MISGUIDED MEN

"Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men."

Martin Luther King

The war machines and lucrative arms industries are at the heart of our climate crisis. They are rooted largely in the big economies and are the manifestation of decade upon decade of colonial, neo-colonial, imperialist policy-making largely implemented in defence of economic interests.⁶⁵ It has resulted in a century and more of perpetual war waged on innocent civilians and our home planet.

"We must rapidly begin the shift from a 'thing-oriented' society to a 'person-oriented' society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

⁶¹ <https://www.sipriyearbook.org/view/9780198890720/sipri-9780198890720-chapter-001.xml>;
<https://www.prio.org/publications/14802>

⁶² <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2026/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-international-arms-transfers-2025>

⁶³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/people-peace-prosperity>

⁶⁴ <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/844591582815510521/world-bank-group-strategy-for-fragility-conflict-and-violence-2020-2025v>

⁶⁵ <https://direct.mit.edu/books/book/5413/The-Pentagon-Climate-Change-and-WarCharting-the>

These words of Dr. King speak to our polycrises of this 21st century. It is at this very time, when the drive to massively increase military spending at the expense of both public services and climate commitments is underway, that everything is to be gained by countering talk of world war with the call for the abolition of war. As this publication makes clear, *we are in WW3 already* – climate breakdown is the war on our living planet.

DEEPENING THE DEBATE ON MILITARY SPENDING

This leads to the inevitable conclusion – we have to find routes by which to universally and equitably cut annual military expenditures to a level proportionate to the need.

Military budgets are considered sacrosanct. To be questioning scale or efficacy is all too often considered at best naïve or at worst ‘unpatriotic’. But ever rising military budgets are not the only game in town when considering how best to ‘protect’. Just when we need it the most, the erosion of the many tools essential to conflict prevention, not least meaningful diplomacy along with confidence building measures, is clear for all to see. Studies show the more you invest in these measures, including peacekeeping, the greater the impact. For example, in a 2018 study, it is estimated that if the UN had invested \$200 billion in peacekeeping operations with strong mandates during the period 2001-2013, major armed conflict would have been reduced by up to two-thirds (relative to a scenario with no peacekeeping operation) and 150,000 lives would have been saved.⁶⁶ The actual budget over these 13 years was \$59 billion. Conversely, the more you spend on weaponry, the more likely states are to put those weapons to use. Global military spending has been increasing year-on-year for 11 consecutive years, rising by 41% over the past decade (2016-25), and in 2025 we saw the highest number of state-based conflict since WWII.⁶⁷

We need frameworks within which discussion can take place about how universal, equitable and ambitious cuts to military spending can be advanced. TPNS work on this includes its ‘Five Percent Formula’⁶⁸ (a route to universally and equitably cut annual military expenditures to a level proportionate to the need) and its Santa Marta call for a High-Level Working Group to explore routes by which to start on this path to reduced military spending.⁶⁹

Moreover, since military spending correlates with military emissions, cuts to military spending delivers a win-win for both climate and climate finance. To be underway with these two indivisible issues is to be underway with the wider debate about the long-overdue redefinition of ‘defence’. It cannot happen soon enough.

Consider universal, equitable routes to reducing and redirecting military expenditure.

The Peace Dividend Campaign. The Global Peace Dividend Initiative was started in 2021 by physicist Carlo Rovelli and draws inspiration from the Pugwash Conference, a society of scientists which played a role in convincing the Soviet and US governments to collaborate at the height of the cold war, by agreeing to destroy some 80-90% of their nuclear warheads.

⁶⁶ <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/700203>

⁶⁷ <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2026/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2025;>
<https://www.prio.org/news/3719>

⁶⁸ <https://transformdefence.org/the-five-percent-proposal/>

⁶⁹ <https://transformdefence.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/tpns-submission-to-1st-conf-on-transitioning-away-from-fossil-fuels.pdf>

Supported by over 50 Nobel Prize Laureates its aim is to catalyse an international agreement to jointly reduce military spending and redirect the huge savings to a global fund to fight planetary emergencies. It proposes to reduce military spending by 2 per cent per year, in all countries. The 2 per cent cuts over five years, starting in 2025, would liberate an estimated \$1.3 trillion and could be redirected to a global fund to tackle the climate crisis and other challenges such as pandemics.⁷⁰

The Five Percent Proposal. is a two-part formula to sustainably cut and redirect military spending that:⁷¹ 1) almost halves global military spending via absolute annual cuts of 5% over 10 years (compounded to 40%), with those savings (\$960bn in total) redirected to urgent human and planetary needs, including climate finance, green transition, poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation and habitat preservations among others; and 2) thereafter implements a 5 percent threshold formula, designed to rein back annual military spending increases— no country allows annual increase in military spending to outstrip economic growth. Most economies grow less than 3% annually; this effectively translates to 2% annual reduction to their military spending. This is, in effect, a *degrowth measure*.

Degrow the military economy. A 40% reduction in military spending would also significantly reduce military carbon footprint by up to 40%. To degrow the military economy is one of the most effective ways to drive whole-of-society economic “degrowth”.⁷² Degrowth must not be confused with recessions, which are unplanned economic downturns that generally increase inequality.⁷³ Rather, degrowth is a planned, coherent set of policies to reduce our society’s material throughput while improving people’s quality of life. The policy options include introducing the 4-day workweek, green jobs guarantee, redistribute taxation such as wealth tax; improving and expanding public services; scaling down wasteful and destructive economic sectors such as fossil fuels, fast fashion and arms production. Similarly, degrowing the military economy should not be confused with austerity, which radically reengineers society in the interests of profit, consumerism, speculative finance and the super-rich.⁷⁴ Rather, degrowing the military economy is a planned route to reduce and redirect excessive military-related expenditure to fund urgent human safety needs.

FOSSIL FUELLED 20TH CENTURY DEFENCE OR 21ST CENTURY SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SAFETY?

A reduction in military expenditure is just the beginning. The underlying and outdated 19th and 20th century thinking on foreign and defence policy and military economy needs replacing with ideas fit for this climate emergency.

Reducing annual military spending means we must think harder and more imaginatively about how we can ‘transform defence’ to emphasise ‘sustainable human safety’. It means to prioritise quality (sustainable human safety) over quantity (spending). This holistic approach is not reflected in national defence budget-setting but it is the current national security framework that

⁷⁰ <https://www.global-peace-dividend.org/about/>

⁷¹ <https://transformdefence.org/the-five-percent-proposal/>

⁷² <https://www.degrowthjournal.org/publications/2023-08-21-placing-the-military-in-the-degrowth-narrative/>

⁷³ <https://www.jasonhickel.org/less-is-more>

⁷⁴ <https://www.plutobooks.com/product/against-austerity/>

focuses on “quantity” that gets us the ever-increasing military expenditure without making us safer or slowing down climate change.

At this dangerous moment, the dominant political narrative is that in order to counter threats from “insert as appropriate” — be it Russia, Iran, North Korea or China — we must increase military expenditure at any cost, diverting from public spending as much as possible, whether that be education, health, social security, or climate commitments and international aid. This is an irrational way to conduct our foreign and defence policy at the best of times, but during the climate emergency when international cooperation is essential, this approach is self-destructive.

Instead of blank cheques to the military vested interests, we should reconsider our “defence” priority:⁷⁵ what needs to be increased to meet the interests of sustainable human safety in the climate changed world? The concerns that need prioritising and therefore significantly increased funding would include climate mitigation and adaptation and biosecurity against pandemic. How about investing in “non-offensive defence” capability and cost-effective defensive-only armoury? From there we could ask what items are the least necessary to meet our needs? Or ones that need to be radically reduced? How about fossil-fuelled big ticket military weaponry and equipment for power projection, or the privatisation and outsourcing of national security?

Is the climate emergency now driving civil society and progressive decision-makers alike to an inevitable conclusion: that to reassess current ‘defence’ policy-making and thus conventional annual military expenditures is to enable full and proportionate funding to meet all human safety needs? This may be the only way to survive.



⁷⁵ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/how-to-transform-defence-10-talking-points-for-a-difficult-conversation/>

“Sustainable human safety”⁷⁶ builds on the concept of ‘human security’ (introduced by UNDP in 1994)⁷⁷ and differs from the traditional notion of defence in that it does not put ‘national security’ over all other concerns of human safety. In other words, we want our governments to help us feel *secure* but not to the extent that our *safety* would be endangered. This means that sustainable human safety should be at the heart of any government in place of “defence”.

- A nation pursuing ‘sustainable human safety’ will not erode environmental, economic, community or political security of its citizens (and immigrants) in the name of ‘national security.’
- A nation pursuing ‘sustainable human safety’ to ensure ‘national security’ will not sacrifice economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security of people of other nationalities.

Sustainable human safety focuses on the interconnected, long-term threats to *collective* human safety:

- ❖ **An economy for all.** *Inequality is a threat to collective human safety:* Unequal and unfair distribution of (increasingly scarce) resources, including wealth, land, food, water and energy. *Neoliberalism* and the commodification of ever more aspects of ordinary life. Tax evasion, monopolies and rent seeking. *Economic growth beyond planetary limits* — “anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist”.⁷⁸ An end to the “*Imperial Mode of Living*” — the lifestyle of the Global North that is based on the extraction and exploitation of energy and resources from the Global South.⁷⁹
- ❖ **The living planet / climate change.** *The climate emergency is the greatest collective threat to humanity.* Mass loss of life, habitat destruction and species extinction, mass pollution. Loss of infrastructure, resource scarcity and the mass displacement of peoples, leading to civil unrest, inter-communal violence and international instability. Absence of well-funded disaster risk reduction. *Mother Nature is not our enemy to be defeated so we can subdue and exploit*, rather human society is embedded within nature and the breaching of nearly all planetary boundaries means that we can no longer afford to treat nature just as a backdrop for our activities that is fundamentally external to our concerns.
- ❖ **Health / pandemic.** *The COVID-19 pandemic closed down the entire world economy, emptied streets and towns, and will not be the last pandemic.* The SARS-CoV-2 virus has caused dozens of millions of deaths directly, and more than 400 million survivors worldwide have had long COVID since the first human infection.⁸⁰ We didn’t manage to eliminate SARS viruses and there are as many as 1.7 million unidentified viruses of the type known to infect people in mammals and water birds.⁸¹ *Future pandemics and all bio-hazards must be fully*

⁷⁶ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/how-to-transform-defence-10-talking-points-for-a-difficult-conversation/>

⁷⁷ *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security*, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-1994>

⁷⁸ U.S. Congress, *Energy Reorganization Act of 1973: Hearings, Ninety-third Congress, First Session, on H.R. 11510* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 248.

⁷⁹ <https://www.versobooks.com/en-gb/products/916-the-imperial-mode-of-living>

⁸⁰ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(22\)00845-5/fulltext;](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)00845-5/fulltext;)
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03173-6>

⁸¹ <https://www.ipbes.net/covid19stimulus>

prepared for. We need 'health in all policies' – social, environmental and economic that also reverses the global trend of privatisation and monopolisation of medicine and healthcare leading to ever greater health inequities.

- ❖ **Peace & non-offensive defence*.** *The military-oil -industrial complex.* Our species has been led into *a state of perpetual war*. It draws on a colonial/imperial mindset to deliver geopolitical *hypermuscular power projection*. The 21st century arms race includes *nuclear weaponry*. It considers *space as a future theatre of war*. Technology abounds with *remote warfare and killer robots*. And the *militarisation of civilian agencies* (ie police) is normalising. Military force is increasingly considered as a security measure to address the movements of conflict and climate refugees.

*The concept of *non-offensive defence* emerged at the height of the Cold War and is one that meets our needs in this climate emergency. Non-Offensive Defence is a defence strategy that aims to have a minimum of offensive strength while maximising defensive capability. Fundamentally, non-offensive defence focuses on defensive equipment, structure, deployment and tactics, while offensive and force projection capabilities are minimised. Non-offensive defence focuses on territorial defence and a contribution to an international peacekeeping and reconstruction force that can carry out UN endorsed humanitarian interventions. Critically, the principle of non-offensive defence is firmly embedded in the sustainable human safety framework.⁸²

Emphasising the interwoven linkages between economy, the living planet, health and peace leads nations and citizens alike to take a modern, comprehensive and systemic approach to 'defence' policies that are fit for purpose in this climate-changed 21st century. These four core issues — 'four quarters' together — make a circle. Sustainable human safety ensures defence policies take care of all areas of human safety and not just looking at 'national security' in isolation (the 20th century way).

THE MILITARY DECARBONISATION CONUNDRUM

"As the latest IPCC Assessment Report shows, all our attention should be directed towards achieving the 1.5° target. If we fail in this endeavour, the repercussions will be more deadly than all conflicts we have witnessed in the last decades."

Axel Michaelowa, Perspectives Climate Group, COP27

All models show that radical and aggressive reductions of emissions are required to prevent the worst of climate catastrophe: current best estimates are decarbonisation at a rate of 7% emissions reduction per year to stay under 2°C or 14% per year to stay under 1.5°C.⁸³ Even the most ardent optimists would recognise these are extremely difficult to achieve in practise.

Rubbing salt into the wound is the fact that the military economy is one of the most carbon-intensive and hardest to decarbonise sectors, which means even faster emission reduction is required and makes the job nearly impossible in a short timeframe. Therefore, when every other

⁸² <https://transformdefence.org/publication/overturning-the-economics-of-war/>

⁸³ <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/441772/less-is-more-by-jason-hickel/9781786091215>

sector of our society is decarbonising, the military needs to be hugely more ambitious in their decarbonisation efforts than others.

We have discussed *what* constitutes the modern-day military and the state we are in (the climate emergency) driving the need to reduce and redirect military spending (which would also lead to reduction of military emissions). We also explored *why* – the purpose of the military in this polycrises and hence the rationale in replacing “defence” with “sustainable human safety”. Finally, to *how* – how we shape the role (and actions) of the military of the future. Civil society around the world is demanding system change – financial, economic and social. This demand includes ever growing militarisation. The big question is this: are the big militaries of the world capable of formulating strategy and doctrines that take a different path to the current outdated (imperialistic, colonial and confrontational) defence policy-making?

We have seen wars to dominate others, to control resources, to settle an international dispute and so on. As we face 2 degrees or more of global heating, it seems obvious that this perpetual-war-making and war-profiteering model must come to an end.

And in this context, we may also have discovered the fastest route to the complete decarbonisation of the military (as well as its supply chain - the arms industry). The abolition of war.

GOING ALL THE WAY: THE ABOLITION OF WAR

A BRIEF HISTORY⁸⁴



US President Woodrow Wilson in his famous “Fourteen Points” speech made “Adequate guarantee given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety” his fourth point. Later, the League of Nations was established and its Covenant stated that “the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.”

⁸⁴ <https://scrapweapons.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GCD-chapter-2.pdf>

In 1927, the Soviet delegation formally presented to the fourth session of the Preparatory Commission for the League's World Conference on Disarmament a detailed proposal for "general and complete disarmament", including a call for the abolition of all land, naval, and air forces; the ending of all military training and military service; the destruction of all fortresses and naval and air bases; the scrapping of all military plants and factories; the discontinuance of all military budgets; and even the "legislative prohibition of military propaganda."

In 1952, the United States presented its own "essential principles for a disarmament programme", following an earlier draft Soviet resolution calling for the immediate prohibition of atomic weapons and the simultaneous establishment of "strict international control" over its enforcement. The US proposal stated that "the goal of disarmament is not to regulate but to prevent war by relaxing the tensions and fears created by armaments and by making war inherently, as it is constitutionally under the Charter, impossible as a means of settling disputes between nations." To achieve this goal, the United States stated that armed forces and armaments must be reduced to such a point that no state will be in "a condition of armed preparedness to start a war." The proposal also included the "elimination of all instruments adaptable to mass destruction."

In 1959 the UN General Assembly adopted unanimously Resolution 1378 (XIV), the first ever to be co-sponsored and supported by all UN member states. This resolution put **"general and complete disarmament (GCD)" on the General Assembly's agenda**, where it has been ever since. Its preamble stated that "the question of general and complete disarmament is the most important one facing the world today."⁸⁵

In 1961, the U.S. and Soviet Union jointly sent the President of the General Assembly the "Joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations" (now known as the McCloy-Zorin statement), in it are the 8 principles for disarmament negotiations:

1. Agreement on the goal of GCD, "reliable procedures" for the peaceful resolution of disputes, and effective arrangements for maintaining peace under the UN Charter.
2. The goal of ensuring that States will have only "non-nuclear armaments, forces, facilities and establishments," and only as agreed "to maintain internal order and protect the personal security of citizens," and to support a UN peace force.
3. The goal of eliminating: armed forces, military establishments, bases, stocks of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and military training and expenditures.
4. Timed stages, with agreement on verification at each stage.
5. Equitable balance, to ensure no advantage to anyone and security for all.
6. Strict and effective international control "from beginning to end."
7. A UN Peace Force and strengthened measures to maintain the peace.
8. Efforts should continue on more limited steps, without prejudicing GCD.

In 1961, U.S. President John Kennedy's address to the United Nations affirmed that both the United States and Soviet Union "now accept" GCD as a goal. The term "must no longer be a slogan," he said, "it is now a realistic plan". "To destroy arms, however, is not enough. We must create even as we destroy — creating worldwide law and law enforcement as we outlaw worldwide war and weapons."

⁸⁵ <http://www.un-documents.net/a14r1378.htm>

GCD has not been in recent years a subject of active negotiations yet it remains the ultimate goal of the combined activities in the UN disarmament machinery. It has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since 1959. In his proposal in 2007 to establish an Office for Disarmament Affairs in the UN Secretariat, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon affirmed that "general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control remains a central issue on the global agenda.⁸⁶ In UN 2007 annual report, he stated "the ultimate strategic goal of the United Nations is 'general and complete disarmament under effective international control'".⁸⁷

THE RUSSELL-EINSTEIN MANIFESTO⁸⁸

On 9 July 1955, the Russell- Einstein Manifesto was launched in London. It warned of the perils that had arisen as a result of the development of nuclear weapons. It is hard to read this now and not see the echo of climate breakdown today. Today, we face threats from both nuclear weapons and climate chaos. ... *We have to learn to think in a new way. We have to learn to ask ourselves, not what steps can be taken to give military victory to whatever group we prefer, for there no longer are such steps; the question we have to ask ourselves is: what steps can be taken to prevent a military contest of which the issue must be disastrous to all parties?....*

Here, then, is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful, and inescapable: Shall we put an end to the human race: or shall mankind renounce war? People will not face this alternative because it is so difficult to abolish war.

The abolition of war will demand distasteful limitations of national sovereignty. But what perhaps impedes understanding of the situation more than anything else is that the term "mankind" feels vague and abstract. People scarcely realize in imagination that the danger is to themselves and their children and their grandchildren, and not only to a dimly apprehended humanity....

There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal, as human beings, to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death....

Signatories:

Max Born, Percy W. Bridgman, Albert Einstein, Leopold Infeld, Frederic Joliot-Curie, Herman J. Muller, Linus Pauling, Cecil F. Powell, Joseph Rotblat, Bertrand Russell, Hideki Yukawa

THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE 'WAR FOOTING' IS THE ONE THAT CAN SAVE OUR PLANET

At this precarious moment in human history, the time has come to advance the case to abolish all wars on Earth.

As Martin Luther King said "the arc of history is long but it bends towards justice". It does and it will – but it is a race against the clock that we must win. We don't want a world war triggered

⁸⁶ <https://docs.un.org/en/A/61/749>

⁸⁷ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/607104?ln=en&v=pdf>

⁸⁸ <https://pugwash.org/1955/07/09/statement-manifesto/>

with Russia, China or any other nation on earth. We want to stop the 6th mass extinction; the permafrost from melting; the coral reefs from disappearing; the ocean from boiling. We want Earth – our precious and only home – to flourish. We want to stay within 2C limit (or if still possible 1.5C) – we don't want a terrifying 3 degrees of warming or more.

Ordinary people all over the world are in the fight of their lives to save their livelihoods and home planet. We need a transformational shift in foreign policy and international relations because climate change does not recognise borders. We need to relearn co-operation if humanity wants to have any hope of resolving the climate emergency

But though we cannot redirect military spending nor decarbonise the military armoury overnight we can – paradoxically enough – prevent and halt all wars at anytime with enough political will. The absence of war means a massive reduction gas-guzzling military equipment. Without the need for fossil-fuelled military, the carbon-intensive (and hardest to decarbonise) arms industry is redundant.

Every military and political leader knows that their addiction to fossil fuels is the Gordian Knot of our time. To “abolish war” could be the Alexandrian sword waiting for the first courageous leaders to untie the knot and set us on a different path.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Decarbonisation of the military-oil-industrial complex:** All nations to include their militaries and the associated supply chains (eg the military technology industry) in their GHG emission reduction plans and targets in NDCs and NAPS.
2. **Implement Article 2.1.(c) of the Paris Agreement** which obliges states to “making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development”. Increasing and high military spending undermines the mandate of Article 2.1.(c) and should therefore be progressively reduced to bare minimum.
3. **Proposal for demilitarisation:** since military spending accelerates the climate emergency, a Working Group should be formed led by progressive nations that wish to support research, advancement and implementation of route(s) by which nations can agree on the universal and equitable redirection of wasted military spending to climate finance and just transition.⁸⁹
4. **UN general and complete disarmament (GCD) goal:** Restart UN's longstanding GCD process, and this time not just in words but in practical and tangible actions. Let's help the United Nation make war 'history'.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ <https://transformdefence.org/the-five-percent-proposal/>

⁹⁰ <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2025/05/a-proposal-to-revive-the-1961-mccloy-zorin-plan-as-a-basis-for-collective-security/>