



## How to Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety

### 10 Talking Points for a Difficult Conversation

## Summary



*“What we urgently need now is a rethinking of the entire concept of security. Even after the end of the Cold War, it has been envisioned mostly in military terms. Over the past few years, all we’ve been hearing is talk about weapons, missiles and airstrikes... The overriding goal must be human security: providing food, water and a clean environment and caring for people’s health. To achieve it, we need to develop strategies, make preparations, plan and create reserves. But all efforts will fail if governments continue to waste money by fueling the arms race... I’ll never tire of repeating: we need to demilitarize world affairs, international politics and political thinking.”*

*Mikhail Gorbachev*

## TIPPING POINT NORTH SOUTH

Creative campaign-driven projects that advance global social and environmental justice

**10 Talking Points for a Difficult Conversation** is one of Tipping Point North South's **Transform Defence** series of reports and briefings that offer fresh new thinking on how to redefine 'defence' as we seek *sustainable human safety* in the face of the climate emergency. **Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety** was launched in December 2020, marking the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement. It is a policy and advocacy project that brings together all Tipping Point North South's military-related work.

This includes the Five Percent Proposal & military spending; climate change, global military emissions & UN reporting; and Green New Deal *Plus*. Our work is supported by Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation, the Ratcliff Foundation, and Jam Today.

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**Tipping Point North South** is a 'for the benefit of community' co-operative, supporting and initiating creative, campaign-driven projects that advance the global justice agenda.

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# TRANSFORM DEFENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SAFETY

## 10 TALKING POINTS FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

### SUMMARY

The Transform Defence project wants to see *sustainable human safety* put at the heart of fit-for-purpose 21st century foreign, defence, security and international development policy-making.

It argues that we must question the limits of 20<sup>th</sup>-century national self-interest if we are to fully address the single greatest threat to our collective survival – runaway climate change.

But as we are warned of '[Code Red for Humanity](#)' with the 6<sup>th</sup> mass extinction underway, *the* most socially and economically damaging threat to our collective global safety – climate change – is but a poor relation when set alongside other 'conventional' threats.

#### **Military spend to public climate spend is 6:1**

The numbers speak for themselves. In 2020, globally, public climate finance was \$321bn ([CPI](#)) while military spending was \$1981bn ([SIPRI](#)).

That is a 6:1 ratio of military spending to public climate finance.

The foreign and defence policies of nations around the world are preoccupied with a plethora of adversarial threats on land, air, sea and space; nuclear weapons; hypersonic missiles; cyber warfare; AI and killer robots. National budget allocations reflect this, from battlefield to nuclear wasteland; from outer space to cyberspace.

As we write this, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is still underway. The combined military spending of the ever-expanding NATO bloc of 30 nations was not enough to deter Putin (indeed, he says this was a reason for the invasion); nuclear weapons use is seemingly back on the agenda; military budgets will now increase; and ever more as depleted stocks on all sides (Russia, Ukraine, NATO) will get replenished.

And we have yet to know the emissions burden of this conflict.

It is insane.

The bulk of military spending is by G20 nations. They account for 87% of annual \$2 trillion global military spending. Russia vs NATO, the West vs China, Iran vs the West and Israel, Saudi Arabia vs Iran – whatever the geopolitics, they're all locked into fossil fuel dependent hardware like tanks, warships and fighter jets, guzzling enormous amount of fossil fuels in operation. For example, F-35, the most advanced and most expensive fighter jet currently on sale, drinks [nearly 6000 litres of fuel per flight hour](#). The Pentagon is the single largest consumer of energy in the US and the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels in the world. In the UK, the MoD, by its own admission, is the single largest contributor to GHG emissions within the central government, responsible for more than half of the total.

#### **Foreign and defence policy-making is stuck in the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century frame**

How is that our leaders are able to direct such incredible political energy, tax-payers money and fossil fuels (for gas-guzzling military hardware) into war and potential conflict (Russia/Ukraine, the

West/China) while climate chaos is actually playing out, pandemic still with us and profound global inequality widespread?

The answer is clear: foreign and defence policy-making of all stripes is stuck in the national or regional mindset, sometimes fatally stuck in the past. All of this is a pity, since rising sea levels, drought, coronavirus or nuclear radiation don't care for your passports or borders or how big your geopolitical punch.

But these numbers fill in the picture.

- (Pre-Ukraine) At \$2 trillion p/a, global military spending is twice what it was at the peak of the Cold War.
- Climate Finance shortfalls: poorer nations expected to face up to [\\$75 billion six-year shortfall](#) in climate finance (2020-2025, Oxfam).
- WHO is profoundly underfunded given its remit and [less than 16% of WHO's finances are guaranteed](#).
- SDGs face a dire funding gap of something in the order of [\\$2.5 trillion annually](#).
- Conflict prevention, [peace-building](#) and peacekeeping all remain [underfunded](#).
- The world would experience 560 disasters each year by 2030, or 1.5 disasters per day ([UNDRR](#)); "setting humanity on a spiral to self-destruction," UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed warned.

To put some of this in perspective, [\\$2 trillion lifetime cost of F-35s could have funded](#) any one of the following

- International climate finance (for climate-vulnerable developing countries) for 20 years
- UN disaster response for the next 400 years
- UN disaster risk reduction for the next 4,000 years
- Global biodiversity conservation at \$100bn per annum for the next 20 years
- WHO funding at \$2bn per annum for the next 1,000 years
- WHO's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for 2,963 years
- Global pandemic surveillance and control at \$8bn per annum for the next 250 years

### **How do we turn this madness round?**

*How to Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety: 10 Talking Points for a Difficult Conversation* is an attempt to offer up a framework that tries to envision how we get a much better deal for the world's citizens from the abject failure of past and current foreign and defence policies that sees us stagger from one war to the next; the world carved up according to spheres of influence; stupid narrow mindsets prevailing over catastrophic climate change and more than 6 million dead due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is an attempt to think through the 'how, what and why' of a difficult conversation – the move from 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century framing of foreign and defence policy such that it really is fit for purpose in a 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> century climate changed world, all the time fully recognising that *every person, community, society, nation, region needs protection from aggressors and terrorists and it is the job of government to defend its citizens from such threats*.

But change it must. And we offer it up as 10 talking points that form a basic narrative. The first and the last are almost the toughest and the need for new doctrines arguably the most important.

- ❖ *Changing the mindset – tough but necessary*

- ❖ Upgrade the language: move from 'defence' to 'sustainable human safety'
- ❖ Demand real 'defence and security' value for money
- ❖ Tackle the defence industry pig-trough
- ❖ *New 'doctrines' needed: carbon neutral peace and defence; non-offensive defence*
- ❖ Empower the only game in town – the UN
- ❖ Consider concrete proposals for deep equitable cuts to military budgets
- ❖ Transforming defence is a win-win for the green economy
- ❖ Everyone is a stakeholder
- ❖ *Vote with your eyes wide open: empathy vs the 'dark triad'*

### **Those who have framed our world have not led us to a good place.**

Those who enable gross inequality and poverty; those who profit from climate chaos; who threw millions of vulnerable people under the Covid-19 vaccine apartheid bus; those who fund and enable warfare – they not only led us to the cliff edge, they are pushing us over.

Why? Because they are safe from the havoc they knowingly create: they have their parachutes – wealth and isolation from society.

Phenomenal efforts have gone into rethinking our economies such that we can move from fossil fuel reliant to sustainable, clean and green energy. It's a monumental, difficult task, across myriad industries and areas of human activity.

We need to square the circle and do the same for foreign and defence policy thinking. Just as de-coupling modern society from its addiction to fossil fuels is hard, so moving away from old-school geopolitical rivalry will be too (as will be the war profiteering, by the way).

One thing is for sure – transformation of foreign and defence policy cannot fail people and planet any more than the hugely costly abject failures of recent invasions – Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Ukraine are some of the conflicts of just the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Or the wilful political ignorance of a century worth of deadly climate warnings by a culpable oil industry. Or, indeed, the warnings of pandemic that were also utterly sidelined. And to look to the not-so-recent past, we have two world wars and, before that, the colonial atrocities of the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. We, people and planet, deserve way, way more from our leaders than that sorry tale of loss, pain and waste.

*"People who don't understand the importance of co-operation and disarmament shouldn't go into politics...there should be no place for such people in politics. But they're very much there... in the defence industry and politics."*

*Mikhail Gorbachev*

### **PURPOSE & AUDIENCE**

The purpose of this publication is to start as many conversations as possible in as many fora as possible whether you know nothing, something or a lot about international relations or foreign and defence policymaking.

We have been working on this topic for a few years now and the more we read and the more we write, the clearer it is to us that – for myriad reasons – there is next to no meaningful public or political discussion about the absolute lack of leadership vision on how nations re-imagine international relations in the era of climate chaos, pandemic and now, again, the use of nuclear weapons in war.

It's not unlike discussing how we get to zero-carbon future without discussing growth, or god forbid, capitalism. So it is with foreign and defence policy in the era of climate chaos.

We are not from the international relations discipline, rather the international development structural campaigning sector. This is why we seek to not only describe the problem but also offer some practical routes forward.

As we are now in the eye of several entangled storms – climate change, pandemic, wars and rampant inequality – we hope we can draw some attention to this hugely important topic from civil society and advocacy organisations; public figures and opinion formers; UN departments; governments with an open enough mind to hear us out; Green New Deal advocates.

While we work on specific calls such as [an IPCC Special Report into the role of the global military on climate change; concrete proposals for cuts to military budgets to help plug SDGs and climate finance gaps](#) and [a high-level UN debate on Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence](#), these are all but steps along the way to something bigger.

How we *transform defence for sustainable human safety* is the debate we need to start – and sooner rather than later. Climate chaos demands absolutely every aspect of human life and activity must be reassessed. [Defence is no different](#) and on this, our leaders need to 'up their game' to say the least.

## ABOUT US

*Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety* was launched in December 2020, marking the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement. It is a policy and advocacy project that brings together all Tipping Point North South's military-related work together

It includes roadmaps for progressively converting military spending into funding for development; calling military emissions to account to UN processes; developing new thinking on how to reshape current foreign and defence policies that better advance our collective human safety.

All Transform Defence reports and briefing can be found at:

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

***Indefensible: The True Cost of the Global Military to Our Climate and Human Security***

<https://transformdefence.org/publication/indefensible/>

*"[This report] is an important addition to the growing evidence on the significant role of military emissions in causing climate change. Using a novel methodology, it widens the analysis to all the world's militaries... it connects the dots between military fuel use, military spending, war, and the burden of climate change on development... it [also] offers important solutions. It is essential reading for all those concerned with climate change and the path to a sustainable and secure future."*

Neta C. Crawford, Professor and Chair of Political Science Boston University and Co-Director of the Costs of War Project

### **Global Military Spending, Sustainable Human Safety and Value for Money**

<https://transformdefence.org/publication/value-for-money/>

*"[TPNS's] Global military spending, sustainable human safety and value for money report... demonstrates how deeply inadequate the concept of 'national security' is in light of the ongoing pandemic and the rapidly unfolding threats of climate change," "It asks what we can learn by looking at the policy and spending priorities of governments, and argues that, unquestioned and at our peril, governments are massively outspending on weaponry compared to the climate emergency or global health protection."*

*Jen Maman, Senior Peace Adviser, Greenpeace International*

### **Transform Defence piece on 'From Poverty to Power'.**

*"If it is right to address the damage of Western finance, on development through the lens of indebtedness or tax havens, then surely the time has come to look at the impact on the global south of rich nations foreign and defence policy as manifested through insane ever rising levels of military spending."*

*I wholeheartedly endorse that... Think back to the Overton window... What do you have to do to shift military spending into a legitimate discussion rather than security is for big boys ie there's no way we're going to let you climate change people get your hands on that... (But) this is how things move into the Overton window, through this kind of forward thinking so I hope it's part of a longer-term shift.*

*Duncan Green From Poverty to Power, Oxfam Strategic Advisor*

### **Stockholm+50 & Global Military Emissions**

<https://transformdefence.org/publication/stockholm50-and-global-military-emissions/>

*"This briefing from Tipping Point North South, published as the Stockholm+50 Conference gets underway, seeks to tell a parallel story and it is one that connects military spending, emissions, accountability and re-distribution. It is yet one more lens through which to understand the intersection of power, money, climate change and historic responsibility. Its 'ideas for discussion' are ambitious, yes, but worthy of attention as the climate emergency gets ever closer to home."*

*Professor Saleemul Huq, Chair of the Expert Advisory Group for the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF); a lead author of the third, fourth and fifth assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); advisor to the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*

### **Military and Conflict Related Emissions: Kyoto to Glasgow and Beyond**

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

*"This report is a valuable aid in mapping out the steps to achieve important goals such as an IPCC Special Report into military carbon emissions. Through my work at Scientists for Global Responsibility, I see the momentum around this topic is growing rapidly. The report recommendations give a clear direction for action through the formal UN climate convention processes."*

*Dr Stuart Parkinson, Executive Director of Scientists for Global Responsibility*