



# **RUNAWAY MILITARY SPENDING AND EMISSIONS:**

## An urgent overlooked international development issue

**TIPPING POINT NORTH SOUTH**

A co-operative that supports and initiates creative, campaign-driven projects that advance the global social justice agenda

## MILITARY SPENDING: A HIDDEN DRIVER OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**The global military is a major driver of climate change.** At UN level it is exempt from reporting its carbon emissions despite some countries' militaries being among the largest consumers of fossil fuels in the world. This is a scandal that needs exposing.

**These emissions are a direct result of runaway global military spending since the former cannot happen without the latter.** Combined, they ensure that international development and human safety is harmed in myriad ways: *As a matter of urgency* we need this issue addressed as an international development, environment and human safety concern.

**Last but not least, policy-makers concerned with *Green New Deal* economic thinking (in the UK, Europe, the USA and elsewhere)** must take account of the links between these closely linked issues: military spending, climate change and sustainable human safety.

***Runaway military spending and emissions: an urgent overlooked international development issue*** is one of Tipping Point North South's ***Transform Defence*** series of reports and briefings that offer a framework and a formula for progressively converting military spending into funding for development, strengthening sustainable human safety, and averting climate catastrophe.

This briefing is also pertinent to Tipping Point North South's *Green New Deal Plus*, designed to complement all current variations of Green New Deal economic proposals.

Tipping Point North South's work on global military spending (Five Percent Proposal); Green New Deal Plus; and the global military and climate change 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 social justice agenda.

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## GLOBAL MILITARY SPENDING – AND EMISSIONS – ARE AN URGENT, OVERLOOKED INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONCERN

This proposal makes the case for the international development sector and their partners to address the profoundly overlooked matter of global military spending – and its emissions – as an urgent international development concern.

In doing so, the winners & losers in the global military spending relationship will be revealed: governments & defence industries vs citizens & environment.

Civil society, north and south, is locked into the scandal and the consequences of the almost \$2 trillion annual spend on the global military. And in terms of the arms trade itself, broadly speaking, the north sells and the south buys.

International development and environment NGOs with a strong social justice campaign history need to go further – building on initiatives such as the Arms Trade Treaty and apply their influence with the wider public, media and policy-makers on the subject of excessive military spending and its impact on their development agendas.

And the climate change emergency makes this state of affairs all the more stark as the burden of climate change is borne by the least culpable and least able to manage the consequences.

For hundreds of years western elites and governments have pursued their own interests across the global south, without whose labour and natural resources they could not have grown rich. On the African continent, for example, the place where aid meets military aid meets foreign policy objectives meets energy or security interests is hugely complex, but we need to make clear – it is part of the development agenda.

On this note: In February 2016 the definition of foreign aid was changed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) after the UK and other countries lobbied to be allowed to use overseas aid budgets to support the military and security forces in fragile countries, as long as this still promotes development goals.<sup>1</sup> Under the new rules, official aid can be used to support the military in fragile countries on issues that promote development, such as human rights and the prevention of sexual violence. It also said tackling violent extremism is now formally recognised as a development activity, with more than 90% of terrorist attacks occurring in states with weak governance and poor human rights records. It said the core principle of the overseas aid system remains unchanged, as an activity that must “support the economic development and welfare of a developing country as its main objective”

## MILITARISM AND THE ARMS TRADE VS DEVELOPMENT

*“Militarism is probably the world’s largest barrier to ending poverty. Whether it be armies and weapons of war, or small arms flowing into our neighbourhoods and local communities, militarism destroys communities, wastes resources and prevents sustainable development. Military and weapons spending consumes resources that could be applied instead to human needs. The flow of arms into a conflict region destroys democratic and traditional control structures for land-use, production and the*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/feb/20/oecd-redefines-foreign-aid-to-include-some-military-spending>

*economy and replaces this with warlords, gang leaders and militias. And the use of military vehicles – aircraft, ships, rockets, tanks, armoured vehicles – in exercises and military operations constitutes possibly the largest single global contributor to carbon emissions and climate change. [emphasis added]*

*Alyn Ware, a New Zealand peace educator and campaigner, founder and international coordinator of the network Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)*

***The arms trade drives the gargantuan amount spent on ‘defence’ every year – \$1.6 trillion in 2010 alone...It accounts for almost 40 per cent of corruption in world trade. The very small number of people who decide on multibillion dollar contracts, the huge sums of money at stake and the veil of secrecy behind which transactions take place (in the interests of ‘national security’) ensure that the industry is hard-wired for corruption. I experienced this first hand as an ANC Member of Parliament in South Africa’s nascent democracy. At the time that our then President, Thabo Mbeki, claimed we did not have the resources to provide life-saving medication to the over five million people living with HIV/AIDS, we spent \$10 billion on weapons we didn’t need and barely use today. About \$300 million in bribes were paid to senior politicians, officials, go-betweens and the ANC itself. The British company BAE Systems contributed \$180 million of the bribes and received the biggest contract, even though the jet it sold had not made an initial shortlist and was two and a half times more expensive than the plane desired by the air force. The time has come to lift the veil on this shadow world, to demand that our taxes are not used to develop another deadly weapon for the material benefit of a tiny self-serving élite, but are rather employed to enhance the lives of those who go hungry, who are without work or who suffer the deadly consequences of the trade in arms. [emphasis added]***

*Andrew Feinstein, Author and former ANC MP*

## **THE UN: SDG 16 VS THE PERMANENT 5 MEMBERS OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL**

Like so many cross-cutting issues, runaway military spending impacts on many of the 17 SDGs but there is a great deal of awareness raising that needs to be done for this to be more fully appreciated. SDG 16 – the last but one – does not go far enough. It is tasked to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

*Peace, stability, human rights and effective governance based on the rule of law are important conduits for sustainable development. We are living in a world that is increasingly divided. Some regions enjoy sustained levels of peace, security and prosperity while others fall into seemingly endless cycles of conflict and violence. This is by no means inevitable and must be addressed.*

*High levels of armed violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on a country’s development, affecting economic growth and often resulting in long standing grievances among communities that can last for generations. Sexual violence, crime, exploitation and torture are also prevalent where there is conflict or no rule of law, and countries must take measures to protect those who are most at risk. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to significantly reduce all forms of violence, and work with governments and communities to find lasting solutions to conflict and insecurity. Strengthening the rule of law and promoting human rights is key to this process, as is reducing the flow of illicit arms (emphasis added) and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.*

The 12 targets within SDG 16 are wide-ranging and include those that relate to rule of law, corruption, accountability and transparency, access to justice and extended participation in

democratic processes. In relation to conflict there is one target that specifically references the arms trade which reflects the work undertaken by civil society on the Arms Trade Treaty. By 2030, significantly reduce *illicit financial and arms flows*.

This is a good starting point from which to expand the debate in order to take on board the (much) wider ramifications of this one target within SDG 16. More often than not, the lines that separate the 'goodies' (eg governments) from the 'baddies' in the arms trade are (deliberately) blurred as author Andrew Feinstein makes clear in his book 'The Shadow World'. And the use of the word 'illicit' also begs a question: where it is the case that arms sales are legal, does it automatically follow that this is a good enterprise between buyers and sellers (ie arms industries, defence corporations and governments)?

**Approximately 70% of arms sales are made by the P5 members of the security council,<sup>2</sup> the same five nations charged with keeping the peace of the world (USA, France, UK, Russia, China) – and the majority of those arms sales go to the global south. While we all live in the real world and understand that weapons will be made, sold and used, the distinction between 'good' arms sales and 'bad' arms sales is not helpful, self defence or freedom struggles notwithstanding.**

And finally, let's not forget that arms manufacturing, arms sales and military spending are interconnected. So while we do need a reduction in illicit arms flows, we also need a much bigger debate about the 'legitimate' billions of dollars spent by governments, in our name (and legally) on overpriced and wasteful hi-end projects (F35 and Trident to name two) to the multitude of weaponry and hardware deployed to kill or injure civilians and destroy environments and infrastructure along with it.

## MILITARY SPENDING IMPACTS ACROSS ALL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORK

- **The impact of runaway military spending on the 'development' narrative is huge.** We require more than simply the Arms Trade Treaty or SDG 16 to get to grips with this issue
- **The global military is a significant contributor to climate change.** Large military budgets enable this since they fund the gas guzzling equipment.
- Foreign policy, defence spending and development are inter-linked. Moreover, **military spending is central to understanding power, poverty, economic collapse and unjust distribution of resources**
- In this sense, **military spending is no different from other structural campaigns** - debt, trade, tax, climate change and most recently the 'war on drugs'. It is not an adjunct to any of these issues – it is implicated in each and every one of them.
- By joining the ranks of debt cancellation, financial transaction and other tax related measures, **military spending savings could be regarded as yet one more significant**

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/fssipri\\_at2017\\_0.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/fssipri_at2017_0.pdf)

‘new’ revenue stream, redirecting the funds captured to serving the needs of the global community.

## THE FIVE PERCENT IDEA IN TWO STEPS

1. **First Decade:** We call for decade long absolute and annual cuts of 5% to top 20 military spenders. The top 20 spenders account for 85% of all military spending.<sup>3</sup> This delivers a 10 year **compound cut of 40%** to global spending delivering an estimated **\$700 billion to be redirected** to core urgent human and environmental needs. **\$350bn for International needs:** Immediate and urgent poverty reduction; sustainable development reflecting civil society activism on climate & economic justice; peace/conflict prevention & human rights; investing in the global green economy. **\$350bn for Domestic needs:** counteracting effects of austerity on public services; investing in clean, green jobs.
2. **After 10 years we will have reduced** annual global military spending to the mid 1990s level of \$1 trillion – still way too high but the lowest level in recent history. The annual global military spending is now close to \$2 trillion. **At this stage, we call upon all nations to adopt the 5% threshold rule to sustainably restrain** the global military spending. No country increases military spending to outstrip its economic growth. The formula is designed to be mainstreamed into budgeting beyond the first 10 years, acting as both a military expenditure ‘dampener’ and a economic growth ‘accelerator’ for all nations, while facilitating and enabling the public to more deeply interrogate the many inter-linked issues of the military spending debate.

*The 5% Threshold rule – for example: 0% economic growth = 5% cut to annual military spend; 2% growth = 3% cut to annual military spend; 5% growth = no increase; 7% growth = only 2% increase on annual military spend. Most economies grow less than 3% annually; this effectively translates as 2% annual reduction to their military spending. These savings are then divided equally to fund both domestic and international needs.*

**The 5% Formula allows every nation** – relative and proportionate to its economic growth – to share in ‘sensible’ defence budgeting with the long term effect of acting as a dampener on arms races.

**Military spending is one of the least efficient ways** of investing our limited resources to advance economic growth and prosperity; thus, the significant outpacing of its increase to the economic growth is harmful to the real economy and consequently wider society.

## SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGNING IN AN EVER-HOSTILE WORLD

Having emerged from the Cold War, we found ourselves fighting the ‘War on Terror’. We can also add to this a possible return to the ‘Cold War’ with Russia, while tensions created through the rise of China’s influence in the world seem to be increasing.

All this manifests itself in many ways.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/fs\\_2020\\_04\\_milex\\_0.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/fs_2020_04_milex_0.pdf)

- Hard as it is to believe, military spending is higher now than it was at the peak of the Cold War. As the USA military budget rises, so the world follows suit; as the USA military budget rises, so its infrastructure crumbles and its public services suffer. There is a lesson here for us all
- The USA has a network of 29 bases across the African continent;<sup>4</sup> France has bases across the continent east to west; China and Japan have each opened up their first base in Djibouti.
- **80% of arms sales are made by the P5 members of the security council (USA, France, UK, Russia, China) plus Germany.<sup>5</sup> Most sold to developing countries (in Asia, Africa and the Middle East).**
- African governments and rebel groups imported 45% more weapons in 2014 than in 2005, according to Sipri. 'Violence and destruction associated with rising arms imports into Africa costs the continent an estimated \$18bn (£12.1bn) a year as infrastructure is destroyed, businesses are closed and children are kept out of school, said Martin Butcher, arms policy adviser at Oxfam. "Burundi spends an average of \$5 a year on healthcare for each citizen, but the cost of treating a victim of armed violence in Burundi averages \$165 a year," (Guardian 20.3.15)
- There is a great deal of scope to 'twin' campaign groups across buying and selling nations ie *Don't Buy Don't Sell*.

#### GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY MUST CHALLENGE, REDUCE AND REDIRECT EXCESSIVE MILITARY SPENDING

- The 'business' of the defence industry does not advance or respect notions of 'sensible defence' spending when so much profit is to be gained from contracts and/or war. Its close relationship with governments around the world is central to this.
- This has consequences for development across the global south. It is reflected in the carnage of Iraq, Syria, Yemen and other developing nations where profits are made from conflict while societies are destroyed. Selling arms with one hand and delivering aid with the other, is governmental hypocrisy.
- That we spend \$2trillion p/a on military while SDGS and climate mitigation, disaster risk reduction and peacekeeping all struggle to be funded is unacceptable. Add to this now pandemic and an underfunded WHO. Moreover, increased inequality undermines local, national and international security. Poverty is a driver of conflict. Over 900 million people in the world are hungry; 40% of people in the world live on less than US\$2 per day.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/27/africa-us-military-bases-africom/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/fssipri\\_at2017\\_0.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/fssipri_at2017_0.pdf)

- Oil as a driver for conflict linked to increased military spending is clear; climate change induced conflict is a development issue (ie water wars) as is the increasing role of military planning linked to climate refugee flows from global south to north.
- Nuclear weapons are often misguidedly overlooked by wider civil society yet they comprise a huge element of military spending; are the ultimate un-useable lethal weapon sucking money from domestic needs; and they are also increasingly are part of the developing world agenda.

All these factors conspire to escalate military spending and crucially undermine international development goals. Development NGOs and their partners in the global south can play a leading role in driving a ground-breaking campaign to:

- expose and reduce the malign power and influence of the defence industry over governments and society, in the global north and global south so as to
- reduce military spending and divert savings into a transformative funding stream delivering social justice and meaningful investment in conflict prevention and peacekeeping
- reduce military spending and divert savings to deliver a sustainable, non-fossil fuel, green economy that addresses the many dimensions of climate (in)justice.

### **GLOBAL MILITARY SPENDING – AND ITS ASSOCIATED EMISSIONS – IS A DEVELOPMENT ISSUE**

This proposal stands on the shoulders of those in the peace movement who have long campaigned on the war-spending/arms trade issues.

It would be a major step forward for the development sector to take the issue on in the same way and with the same courage. Moreover, given development is now fundamentally locked into climate change and the global military is a driver of climate change, this proposal is doubly relevant.

As we head towards the \$2 trillion p/a global military spending red-line, we should all be deeply concerned, for many reasons.

*“Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism.”*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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