WHAT IS SECURITY ?
RETHINKING
OUR BELIEFS
STOP FUELLING WAR

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DEFENCE AND MILITARY INTERVENTION

CLAIMS

- Military intervention is essential to maintain security. ' 5
- Drones al low the military to pinpoint their targets: air force strikes are precisely targeted, effective and don't kill innocent bystanders. Anyway, not many countries use drones. ' 5
- You are alive today because the military has protected you and your country, along with your freedom and democracy. ' 7
- Military intervention protects us against terrorism. ' 7
- The military sacrifice their own lives for us. We should be grateful. ' 8
- The fight against terrorism is helping to keep us safe. ' 8
- Nuclear weapons keep us safe. ' . 9
- We don' t need to worry about the arms trade because it 's well-regulated. ' 9
- Personal weapons are essential for self- defence and keep us safe. ' . . 10
- Weapons sales help to maintain peace. ' 10
- Eurosatory (the Paris arms fair) sells security equipment worldwide because national police forces need to maintain law and order. ' 11
- Law- abiding citizens have nothing to fear from their governments. ' . 12
- We need the arms industry because it is a major employer. ' 12
- The arms sector benefits society as a whole. ' 14
- The arms industry operates on its own merits. ' 14
- The arms trade has nothing to do with me. Ordinary people can' t do anything anyway. It's up to politicians to take the decisions. ' 15
- The arms trade is irrelevant to environmental concerns. ' 16
- We only sell to our allies. And anyway, our transactions and partnerships with countries at war enable us to influence their policies – look at Saudi Arabia. ' 16
- There will always be conflicts, terrorism, greed and corruption, so why not let human nature take its course? ' 17

SO IS THIS TRUE?

CLAIM: 'MILITARY INTERVENTION IS ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN SECURITY.'

SECURITY FOR WHOM?

- Between 2022 and early 2025, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the war between Ukraine and Russia resulted in the deaths of more than 12,600 civilians and left nearly 30,000 injured on the Ukrainian side. Russia, for its part, does not release precise statistics on civilian casualties within its own territory. From a military standpoint, the number of Russian soldiers killed in combat was estimated to be between 185,000 and 260,000. Additionally, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, approximately 50,000 people — both civilians and combatants — are reported missing on both sides of the conflict.
- In Gaza, according to UNICEF, as of May 2025, 52,653 people had been killed by the Israeli army, including 15,613 children. A further 118,897 individuals were injured, and 11,200 were reported missing. In addition, 1.9 million people are subjected to daily evacuation orders and continuous forced displacement, with little or no access to medical care, clean water, shelter, and heating. Since October 2023, 95% of schools have been destroyed, and 470,000 people are facing famine-like conditions.
- More than 17 million civilians were killed due to wars between 1945 to 2000. The proportion of civilian deaths in wartime has surged from 5% at the beginning of the 20th century to more than 90% in more recent wars. For academic studies on civilian deaths in war, click here.

CLAIM: 'DRONES ALLOW THE MILITARY TO PINPOINT THEIR TARGETS: AIR FORCE STRIKES ARE PRECISELY TARGETED, EFFECTIVE AND DON'T KILL INNOCENT BY STANDERS. ANYWAY, NOT MANY COUNTRIES USE DRONES.'

- Drone warfare is often praised for its precision. However, there have been hundreds of recorded civilian deaths (known as 'collateral damage') in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The true numbers of civilians killed are not known. CIA military drones have killed an estimated 1,500 people since 2017. The

CIA admits that only 10% of these deaths were the intended target. 90% of these assassinations were classed as collateral damage. Since 2022, the war between Russia and Ukraine has also witnessed a dramatic surge in the use of drones. Both sides have produced thousands of units, leading some observers to refer to the conflict as a "drone war.

According to the Oxford Research Group, 'the technology of remote military armaments is impossible to control. Drones will be used as improvised aerial explosive arms by terrorists, as they are simple, not expensive, and effective. Soon each terrorist group will use them.'

- In 2015, over a period of 5 months during a US military operation in Afghanistan, 90% of the people killed were not the intended targets. The documents also show how the American military have designated these in their statistics as 'enemies killed in combat'.
- France became the eleventh country to start using armed drones in December 201 when it used Reaper drones to bomb suspected militants in Mali.
- A decisive turning point in drone warfare was reached with the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, reshaping the landscape of conventional warfare. In Ukraine, drones are believed to be responsible for three-quarters of military casualties and, according to the United Nations, for 30% of incidents targeting civilians. As of early 2025, in the Kherson region—which has recorded the highest number of human losses—short-range drones were reportedly responsible for 70% of civilian deaths.
- In Gaza, since October 2023, a significant number of civilians have fallen victim to Israeli drone strikes, although precise figures remain unclear. Hundreds of drone-related incidents attributed to Israel have been documented, including the attack on humanitarian aid vessels off the coast of Malta on 2 May 2025, the destruction of the Indonesian hospital in Jabalia on 18 May 2025, and the deliberate targeting of Palestinian journalists over the past two years.

DEFENCE AND MILITARY INTERVENTION

CLAIM: 'YOU ARE ALIVE TODAY BECAUSE THE MILITARY HAS PROTECTED YOU AND YOUR COUNTRY, ALONG WITH YOUR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY.'

IS THIS TRUE GENERALLY, OR JUST A CLAIM ABOUT THE 2ND WORLD WAR?

- It's not possible to answer such a complex statement in a few sentences. However, with respect to the Second World War (WW2), although the military did finally ensure an Allied victory, our governments should have tried to confront Nazism in the decades preceding WW2. Moreover, the seeds of the war can be traced back to the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

CLAIM: 'MILITARY INTERVENTION PROTECTS US AGAINST TERRORISM.'

DOESN'T MILITARY ACTION IN FACT EXACERBATE TERRORISM?

- Nowadays, many believe the main threat to Western democracy to be foreign violent extremism, as opposed to domestic terrorism. However, research by the US Center for Strategic Studies concluded that 'white supremacists and other like- minded extremists conducted 67% of terrorist plots and attacks in the United States in 2020.'
- It is generally recognised that the 'so-called Islamic State (IS)' became stronger following the US-led Iraq invasion of 2003. Al-Qaida was created by the CIA training the Afghani mujahideen fighting the Soviets. Al-Shabab was radicalised by the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 2006. In each case, military intervention strengthened these terrorist organisations.
- Violence leads to more violence: according to the Global Terrorism Index, terrorism has actually increased since the US-led NATO initiative started the 'War on Terror' in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, etc. Research carried out by the organisation Peace Science Digest provides evidence that the deployment of troops and the export of arms to another country increase the chances of terrorist attacks from that country. For more information, click here.

CLAIM: 'THE MILITARY SACRIFICE THEIR OWN LIVES FOR US. WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL.'

SO HOW DOES THEIR SUFFERING JUSTIFY OUR WILLINGNESS TO GO TO WAR?

- History shows that soldiers everywhere paid with their lives for their countries' wars. But surely to honour their sacrifice, we should try to avoid more deaths by working for peaceful solutions first before sending our troops into unwinnable, long-drawn-out wars?
- It has been documented by the US Veterans' Association that suicides among Vietnam war veterans exceed the numbers of US soldiers who died in combat. These tragic data are continuing: according to Pentagon statistics from 2016, suicide is the main cause of death of US troops fighting the so-called Islamic State (IS) in the Middle East.
- By the end of the war, Ukraine could have as many as five million veterans. Tens of thousands of physically injured individuals—suffering from brain trauma, burns, loss of vision, and amputations—are struggling to rebuild their lives. Beyond the physical toll, many former soldiers are also coping with psychological wounds, giving rise to issues such as alcoholism, depression, suicide, and addiction—challenges that could have long-term impacts on Ukrainian society as a whole.

CLAIM: 'THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM IS HELPING TO KEEP US SAFE'

WHAT DO THE FACTS SHOW?

- The 'War on Terror' pursued in the US, the UK, France and other Western countries has led to an increase in domestic terrorist attacks. This bloodshed has resulted in more national oppressive laws, unjustified mass surveillance, as well as excessively armed police forces and the imposition of draconian international border controls.

CLAIM: 'NUCLEAR WEAPONS KEEP US SAFE.'

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- There is a real risk of an apocalyptic nuclear war. About 17,300 nuclear armaments are currently deployed in at least nine countries, and several of these could reach their target in 45 minutes. France possesses a nuclear arsenal of over 300 warheads, making it the fourth-largest nuclear power in the world.
- The accidental firing of a nuclear missile could lead to the greatest disaster in history. Just half the nuclear arsenal of India and Pakistan would cause enough dense black smoke to produce a nuclear winter. In addition to the risk of accidents, there is also the risk of a deliberate and considered decision to launch nuclear weapons. We have seen a worrying escalation in verbal hostilities between India and Pakistan, and also between the US and North Korea.
- Nuclear arms create an illusion of security while presenting a real danger to humanity. Eric Schlosser, author of Command and Control, has documented hundreds of incidents due to accidents and mistakes. See the World Without War factsheet.
- The Doomsday Clock (measuring how close we are to nuclear war breaking out) was moved closer to nuclear meltdown on 23 January 2020. It now stands at 89 seconds (1 minute 29 seconds) to midnight. This means that the Clock is closer to midnight than it has ever been since its inception in 1947.

CLAIM: 'WE DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE ARMS TRADE BECAUSE IT'S WELL-REGULATED.'

WHAT ABOUT THE ROGUE ARMS TRADE?

- Acts of violence by criminals and organised groups have been perpetrated using arms bought 'legally'; however, tracing the origins of a cheese is easier than tracing the provenance of weapons!
- Increasingly, high-powered weapons fall into the hands of criminals when available on the black market. The easy availability of such weapons, coupled with gross under-investment in non-violent solutions to conflict, makes the world a more dangerous place.

- The sale of arms should not be considered as a normal commercial transaction. Neither should such sales be regarded as acceptable political foreign policy in lieu of diplomacy.

CLAIM: 'PERSONAL WEAPONS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SELF-DEFENCE AND KEEP US SAFE.'

WHAT DOES THE DATA BEAR OUT THIS CLAIM?

- The small arms industry is a little-publicised but flagrant threat to peace and security. The Small Arms Survey estimates that 1 billion small arms circulate worldwide, of which 857 million are held by civilians, and produced by more than 1,000 companies from nearly 100 countries.
- The global ammunition market size was valued at USD 30,6 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.6% from 2024 to 2032. In certain regions of the world, a Kalashnikov costs the price of a chicken.
- The more guns available to the public, the more killings there are in society: two notable examples are the USA and Mexico.

CLAIM: 'WEAPONS SALES HELP TO MAINTAIN PEACE.'

DOES THE DATA SUPPORT THIS?

- According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), there were 285 distinct armed conflicts between 1946 and 2017. According to the same institute, the year 2023 saw a historic record with 59 state-involved conflicts—the highest number recorded since data collection began in 1946. Previous records were set in 2020 and 2022, with 56 conflicts each. PRIO also reported that 2023 was the third most violent year since the end of the Cold War in terms of combat-related deaths, with 122,000 people killed. More and more people alive today have never experienced anything other than war conditions. Living in a permanent state of terror only leads to the breakdown of ethical values and to more cruelty. Sexual assault and rape become weapons of war, and the violated women and girls are completely forgotten and ignored.

CLAIM: 'EUROSATORY (THE PARIS ARMS FAIR) SELLS SECURITY EQUIPMENT WORLDWIDE BECAUSE NATIONAL POLICE FORCES NEED TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER.'

DOESN'T USING RIOT EQUIPMENT TO DEAL WITH MAINLY PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS LEAD TO THE ABUSE OF POWER BY POLICE OFFICERS?

- Events like Eurosatory go far beyond simply selling militarised policing equipment. They represent a key means by which the 'militarised police mind-set' is exported around the world. They have been aided by think- tanks promoting a militarised response as the only plausible response available when faced with perceived security threats. Arms manufacturers, using their huge marketing budgets, are persuading police forces that army-grade weapons are now essential.
- Citizens are increasingly regarded as security threats rather than members of communities in need of protection and entitled to protest and express their dissent peacefully. Moreover, borders are fortified against defenceless refugees.
- The arms industry has, as always, been quick to capitalise on these developments, and Eurosatory is no exception. Here the focus is shifting from land and air-land technologies to internal and civil security.
- Rather than protecting us and ensuring the proper functioning of democratic life, heavily armed security forces often lead to restrictions on civil rights and liberties with increased use of violence against civilians.
- Security equipment sold to police can be abused. Several European countries exported security equipment to the US for use by police forces against legitimate protests which took place after the unlawful killing of George Floyd.

CLAIM: 'LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THEIR GOVERNMENTS.

WHAT ABOUT ARMS SALES TO DICTATORS?

- Governments often favour law enforcers over the rights of civilians; this is particularly clear in the policing of protests. For instance, France should not be arming or facilitating the sales of arms to security forces in countries where state violence, torture and disappearances are commonplace, such as Egypt. France participated in developing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; however, profits now appear to be more far more important than ethical concerns.
- Since the 1990s, the equivalent of $5 billion in equipment and military arms has been given to police in various countries. Militarising the police tends to perpetuate a culture of violence, fear and assaults. At the same time, the number of people of colour or members of minorities being targeted through racial profiling has risen considerably. The conclusion is that the militarisation of the police has encouraged violence rather than: preventing it. For more information, see the World Beyond War factsheet on Liberties. A clear example of police misconduct in France is the case of Nahel Merzouk, a 17-year-old who was shot at point-blank range by a police officer during a vehicle check on June 27, 2023.

CLAIM: 'WE NEED THE ARMS INDUSTRY BECAUSE IT IS A MAJOR EMPLOYER.'

THE ARMS SECTOR – WHAT OTHER OPTIONS EXIST?

- Many believe that because a significant number of people are employed in the arms industry, therefore the whole economy benefits from spending in this sector. However, the same expenditure on health and infrastructure would produce more jobs in the social sector (or in burgeoning new economic activity such as the green economy; see below). The cause for this disproportionate impact is the 'multiplier effect' on the economy.
- Despite claims that the arms industry provides plentiful jobs, the French and British governments refuse to publish the total numbers actually working

in the sector. But if the industry is so economically important, why are they so secretive about the data? The UK-based Campaign Against the Arms Trade states: "The estimate of 55,000 arms export jobs is drawn from the arms industry's trade association (ADS). Using this figure, 0.2% of the UK workforce is employed in producing arms for export." Hardly a justification for supporting the arms trade so heavily as a so-called major employment driver.

- The German government has been more transparent, although the last published data for 2015 showed a total of 65.700 full-time employees directly employed by the defence industry and a further 46.300 indirect employees as civil suppliers, making a total of 112.000 direct & indirect employees out of a total workforce of 40.3 million in the same year. In other words, only 1.9% of the total workforce. They are in the process of updating the information, so clearly national security cannot be a justification for such secrecy among other states. The real employment rate in some European countries is estimated by peace groups to be between 2 % - 3% of the work force, and governments have never denied this.
- There are very few data at the European level but one study by the the Aerospace and Defence Industries Association of Europe estimated in 2019 "the European defence technological and industrial base is concentrated in a few Member States. ..... France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK; " These, plus a few countries with small niche industries, account in total for 438, 000 jobs.
- Given the total combined labour forces of these six countries are approximately 163 million, this makes an average of 2.7% of the combined six nation's labour force engaged in defence industries. Again, hardly an impressive figure to justify the huge subsidies from the employment perspective.
- Everyone needs and should have a decently-paid job. But why must these be in the arms industry? More jobs can be created in more benign sectors – health and social services, teaching, medical services, socially responsible manufacturing, environment-friendly products, ecological transition, etc. The new European Green Deal focusses on transforming our economies, so this is an ideal time to transition from weapons to eco-friendly products. Billions of euros are being spent on creating new government-backed green bonds in Europe, the US and elsewhere. Now is the time to take advantage of these new investments to provide alternative job opportunities. A 2020 study by

Stanford University estimated that switching to renewable energy sources would not only transform the climate crisis but that 30 million additional jobs worldwide would be created.

- According to the US-based Institute of Political and Economic Research (2011), each $1 billion spent on maintaining 12,000 jobs in the 'military industry' corresponds to 18,000 jobs which could be created in the public health sector, or 25,000 in education.

CLAIM: 'THE ARMS SECTOR BENEFITS SOCIETY AS A WHOLE

WHAT ARE THE ECONOMIC COSTS?

- According to World Bank estimates (2021), an annual investment of 229 billion dollars until 2030 would be sufficient to provide every person on the planet with access to clean water, hygiene, and sanitation—equivalent to 8.4% of global military spending in 2024..
- Spending on military weapons and equipment exacerbates a nation's economic inequalities by transferring billions of dollars to private armaments-producing companies. This in turn concentrates the wealth of the country in the hands of a small group of people.
- The world spends nearly $2,000 billion each year on weapons and military hardware, much of which is inappropriate. Military conflicts lead to billions and billions of dollars worth of destruction each year, according to the Global Peace Index. The global economic impact of violence is in the region $19.1 billion in 2023, representing 13.5% of the global GDP.

CLAIM: 'THE ARMS INDUSTRY OPERATES ON ITS OWN MERITS.'

THEN WHY THE NEED FOR SUBSIDIES, LOBBYISTS AND KICKBACKS?

- The success of this industry depends on enormous government subsidies; these are essential to ensure the sales and export of arms, and to carry out research on new types of weapons. These policies entail the spending of lavish sums of money on entertainment and 'presents' for potential buyers, irrespective of who the arms buyers are and the dubious morality of their governments.

- The armaments industry finances professional lobbyists and expert advisors in this field (very often former government ministers, high-level public officials, and retired army grandees) to encourage an expansion of the arms budget, in the name of 'national security and job creation'.
- Supporting dictators who are waging war will not resolve the problems which caused the conflict in the first place. These include social exclusion, poverty and injustice are exacerbated by unemployment, shortages of schools and healthcare, and high levels of corruption. Tackling these underlying problems is the way to achieve more peaceful societies.
- As new conflicts arise from competition for increasingly scarce resources caused by climate change and the implementation of an aggressive extractivist approach worldwide, the money spent on weapons would be better invested in developing renewable energies and the just distribution of resources.

CLAIM: 'THE ARMS TRADE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME. ORDINARY PEOPLE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ANYWAY. IT'S UP TO POLITICIANS TO TAKE THE DECISIONS.'

HOW COULD THE BILLIONS CURRENTLY SPENT ON ARMS PRODUCTION AFFECT YOUR LIFE IF THEY WERE SPENT ON SOCIALLY USEFUL SECTORS?

- In democracies, politicians must take account of voters' wishes. If enough of us care, we can change policies. It's in our own interests to do this.
- Unfortunately, everything in today's world will affect you sooner or later: terrorism, refugees, climate emergency, violent policing, freedom to demonstrate, all are connected to the arms trade.
- Democratic governments cannot rule without the will of the people. 'The people' include those who develop, produce and sell weapons, and those who lend their tacit support. But 'the people' also include those willing to stand up and oppose government decisions that are unjust and unethical.
- Hundreds of millions are spent on redundant arms that are left to gather dust in warehouses because they are considered irrelevant to certain conflict situations.

- And when they have been deployed in war areas, their use abroad creates the need for increased budgets to finance counter-terrorism operations, repair infrastructure and help refugees. As citizens, we have the power to oppose these situations through voting, demonstrations, petitions, boycotts, civic and political engagement, supporting organizations working in this field, and more.

CLAIM: 'THE ARMS TRADE IS IRRELEVANT TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS.'

SURELY THERE'S A LINK?

- In fact, the whole military-industrial complex (MIC) is one of the biggest contributors to the world climate crisis and directly harms the environment. Yet military activities are often exempted from treaties and environmental norms and goals such as the UN Climate Change Conference targets. For more information, click here.

CLAIM: 'WE ONLY SELL TO OUR ALLIES. AND ANYWAY, OUR TRANSACTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH COUNTRIES AT WAR ENABLE US TO INFLUENCE THEIR POLICIES – LOOK AT SAUDI ARABIA.'

WHERE'S THE EVIDENCE?

- If that is the case, why hasn't France been able to stop the bombing of schools and hospitals in Yemen?

Yesterday's friends are today's problems (Iraq/Syria/Libya). Yet very few arms export licences are rejected, even those covering sales to dictatorships.

- For example, France approves 98% of armament export licences, despite clear evidence that use 'for national security' regularly becomes 'use against dissidents or ethnic or religious minorities'.
- Weapons made in France are used against civilians in Yemen. French armaments support the Egyptian regime, which uses arbitrary imprisonment, summary executions and torture. Arms sold to our allies end up in enemy hands, such as IS, which has been inadvertently 'armed' by the US.

- Since the beginning of the Gaza offensive in 2023, France's arms sales to Israel have come under close scrutiny by several NGOs. According to the report to Parliament presented by the Ministry of the Armed Forces, France delivered €30.1 million worth of military equipment to Israel in 2023. In February 2024, the Minister of the Armed Forces stated that this equipment was intended solely for defensive use and had therefore not been employed in the Israeli offensive, which had already resulted in tens of thousands of Palestinian deaths.
- However, investigative media outlet Disclose revealed that in October 2023, France authorized the export of over 100,000 machine gun cartridges potentially usable in Gaza, in the context of Israel's genocidal policy. Both the government and the arms manufacturer involved, Eurolinks, maintained that the cartridges were intended for re-export to third countries.
- According to the Observatory of Multinationals, official figures and statements do not tell the whole story. Attention must also be paid to arms deliveries from French companies to Israel routed through other countries, the use of critical components in weapons systems that are not officially classified as military equipment, and the growing number of partnerships with the Israeli military-industrial complex. For more information, click here.

CLAIM: 'THERE WILL ALWAYS BE CONFLICTS, TERRORISM, GREED AND CORRUPTION, SO WHY NOT LET HUMAN NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE?'

IF THIS IS TRUE, WHY DO WE HAVE LAWS?

- Yes, there have always been wars and perhaps there always will be. But the increasing sophistication of weapons means it's easier to kill ever- greater numbers of people. After the 2nd World War, there was an emphasis on peacebuilding in Europe, resulting in the European Economic Community (later the European Union) being created. Who could have foreseen that long-term enemies like France and Germany could co-exist peacefully and become allies? And whilst we also know that there always have been murders, all governments try to limit them through legislation and other means.

- By accepting arms sales as normal commercial transactions, we are all endorsing death and deprivation and participating indirectly in the destruction of those values we claim to hold dear.
- Resistance to the use of force stems not from optimism, but rather from the painful experience of countless millennia of violence. Time and again, we claim that this show of force will be the last time. But each time, it appears that violence breeds new violence. It is misguided optimism to think that governments with weapons of mass destruction will never use them.
- As for the argument that 'human nature is violent', there is evidence that human beings are capable of being much better (for examples, see Humankind: A Hopeful History by Rutger Bregman). People have the capacity for acts of violence but also for great acts of love.
- If our approach incorporates teaching and educating citizens to think in an inclusive way, rather than emphasising the 'otherness' of different cultures and societies, then violence can be reduced. The Rwandan genocide is proof that hatred can be created and encouraged.
- To avoid repeating this we must consider how we can think and live in a way that respects the interests of others. We can create and develop a society conducive to critical thinking, in which we search for creative, peaceful solutions. Nonviolence is not so much a strategy to eliminate violence as a conscious way of living humanely amid violence.
- We also acknowledge that violent crime is a part of society. But civilised communities still try to reduce crime through legislation. In Europe, we curb gun sales to reduce murders. Why can't we apply the same policy to arms sales?
- Violence never provides a sustainable solution to any problem. It is possible to counter aggression; peaceful solutions already exist. Denouncing and criticizing arms sales is the beginning of a solution to counter national violence, rather than accepting it as a feature of our daily lives. Western Europe has not experienced a war in the past 75 years (except for Northern Ireland). The return of war to our doorstep, with the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, has brought renewed attention to the possibility of a war in Europe. However, it is important not to forget that cooperation makes peace achievable.

ALTERNATIVES TO MILITARY INTERVENTION AND VIOLENCE

ARGUMENTS

‘Non-violence is naïve and unrealistic. Aren't you just abandoning people if you refuse to use Force to protect them?’ 20

‘You can't justify staying out of a conflict just to keep your hands clean.’ 20

‘You can't achieve justice in the world without violence. How else are we going to stand up to groups like IS who use brute force?’ 21

‘Only force is effective in fighting terrorism. Non-violence doesn't work.’ 21

‘If we use enough military force, we will eventually subdue terrorism. Terrorists only understand military might.’ 22

‘Arms sales are essential to keep the peace in troubled areas. There are no viable peaceful alternatives.’ 23

‘Peacebuilding doesn't work and is weak. Only successful wars ensure peace.’ 24

‘There's nothing you can do when conflict breaks out, except fight to defend yourself.’ 25

‘If we don't sell armaments then someone else will. If we don't develop new armaments, someone else will.’ 26

‘Even if we reduce arms sales, Russia and China will continue to sell them.’ 26

‘Legitimate defence is permitted by law and by all religions.’ 27

CLAIM: 'NON-VIOLENCE IS NAÏVE AND UNREALISTIC. AREN'T YOU JUST ABANDONING PEOPLE IF YOU REFUSE TO USE FORCE TO PROTECT THEM?'

- Using force as a first response is short-sighted. The pain and humiliation inflicted on the weaker calls for vengeance, inevitably leading to more violence. For non-violence to work, the root causes of the conflict need to be fully understood and addressed. To ensure a successful, sustainable outcome, all the actors in a conflict - including marginalised groups (women and young people, etc.) - must be heard, along with the usual recognised male 'leaders'.
- There is an over-optimistic belief in what force can be achieve. We have seen what happened in Iraq: the violence of the invading forces strengthened the nascent terrorist movement, ISIS.

CLAIM: 'YOU CAN'T JUSTIFY STAYING OUT OF A CONFLICT JUST TO KEEP YOUR HANDS CLEAN.'

MILITARY ACTION OR SELLING WEAPONS CAN NEVER LEAD TO A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION.

- Our hands are sullied long before the weapons are used. For example, Western governments produce and exports arms to nations that have difficulties providing basic services or food to their own people and to regimes that use Western weapons against citizens demanding basic human rights. Western states provide support to companies that evade taxes elsewhere (including developing countries).
- We import goods manufactured in degrading conditions (clothing from the Global South), products that have fueled conflicts between armed groups and the massacre of civilian populations (such as cocaine), and raw materials whose extraction harms both local people and the environment. The huge amount of the earth's resources that we in the West demand to maintain our unsustainable lifestyles far exceeds our fair share. So it's hardly about keeping our hands clean, it's more about what we need to do to make them less dirty.

CLAIM: YOU CAN'T ACHIEVE JUSTICE IN THE WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE. HOW ELSE ARE WE GOING TO STAND UP TO GROUPS LIKE 'IS' WHO USE BRUTE FORCE?'

WHAT LED TO THE GROWTH OF TERRORIST GROUPS?

- Non-violent action is twice as likely as armed conflict to achieve positive change. This can be seen from research conducted by US-based political scientists Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan.
- When images of violence against civilians are shown on television, our first response is sometimes 'we must come to these people's aid'. That response is followed by the call to do 'something'. That too may be justified. But in practice, it turns out that this 'something' very often entails the use of violence. We must also learn to be critical. As the proverb says, 'if your only tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail'. That's what we see happening when governments ignore conflict resolution as an alternative to violent conflict.
- Governments worldwide waste many billions on armies, weapons and military research. In contrast, the amounts spent on non-violent solutions, including the research and training required to implement them, are miniscule compared with military expenditure. Because official knowledge and understanding of non-violent interventions hardly exist, violence is quickly seized upon as the only possible solution. Violence is therefore not the 'last resort' - as is often claimed - but rather the first and only option considered. Diplomacy, economic pressure, advocacy, political negotiations, and active civic engagement are all effective alternatives to armed military interventions

CLAIM: 'ONLY FORCE IS EFFECTIVE IN FIGHTING TERRORISM. NON-VIOLENCE DOESN'T WORK.'

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT NON-VIOLENCE?

- Being non-violent doesn't mean being passive or inactive: achieving non-violence takes energy, time and money. It can mean conflict prevention, conflict resolution or an inspired standing up for what is right in a way that blocks aggression or turns violence around (e.g. Rosa Parks). We need to remember that directing aggression at someone or something can result in its

being turned against the original aggressor. The emergence of violent jihadist groups in response to armed intervention is a case in point.

- Non-Violent Peace Force is a NGO that successfully deploys civilians to protect the population in conflict zones, an approach which enables the local populace to find their own solutions.

CLAIM: 'IF WE USE ENOUGH MILITARY FORCE, WE WILL EVENTUALLY SUBDUE TERRORISM. TERRORISTS ONLY UNDERSTAND MILITARY MIGHT.'

HAVE THE THOUSANDS OF LIVES LOST DURING THE DECADES OF FIGHTING TERRORISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST REALLY REDUCED THE NUMBERS OF RECRUITS TO TERRORISM?

- Why did the IS ideology develop? Drones killing leaders of an ideological movement solves little since others emerge immediately who are sometimes even more embittered and extreme. Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabat or IS members killed now will simply be replaced by others. Longer-term solutions have to be found.
- The IS has been using propaganda worldwide to 'legitimise' its ideology and 'State', and to gather support from local populations. State violence cannot counter or undermine its narrative because the IS is supported by fighters from all over the world who felt marginalised in their respective national societies. All the countries concerned need to tackle these social issues by ensuring that their population feels secure and cared for. Tackling underlying problems will eventually make IS less attractive to these 'foreign fighters', as well as to local populations.
- There is a strong link between fundamentalist terrorism and conflicts. The Taliban was created by US support for the mujahideen in Afghanistan. The IS was strengthened by the US-led Iraqi invasion. All the terrorist organisations in Africa have grown out of conflicts, war, poverty, and corruption, often stemming from the colonial history and usually because Western governments supported their dictators with weaponry. Our governments considered these dictators indispensable allies and friends, even though it was known that they used the arms against their own people. Mobutu, Abacha, Al-Bashir, etc. are just a few examples.

- Fundamentalist terrorism can only thrive in societies where there is poverty and social injustice. Young people are attracted to violent extremism as a way of solving these issues of inequality. Therefore, without fundamental changes in the economic system, there will be no end to terrorism. Every nation where this form of terrorism exists has a very unequal society – and such nations are often de facto dictatorships. Look at whose governments are supporting these dictators by selling them armaments.
- Domestic terrorism can also be a reaction to inequality. It's no accident that the German far right party AfD has done better in the poorer areas of the ex-communist east. The 'left-behind' people who have not benefited from growth and globalisation lay the foundations for populist movements which can become the extreme right. The same dynamic is unfolding in France with the Rassemblement National and its social base.
- We can diminish and perhaps stop the growth of terrorism by supporting movements for economic justice and realising that sustaining unpopular leaders/dictatorships by selling them arms will, in the longer term, harm us in the West. Look at the support for the Shah of Iran in the 50s, 60s and 70s, and what happened after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. We are suffering the fruits of our own policies.

CLAIM: 'ARMS SALES ARE ESSENTIAL TO KEEP THE PEACE IN TROUBLED AREAS. THERE ARE NO VIABLE PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVES.'

CAN YOU PROVIDE ANY EXAMPLE WHERE ARMS SALES HAVE ENSURED LONG- TERM PEACE IN CONFLICT AREAS?

- Peaceful solutions usually exist before conflicts arise, but these approaches require effort, political will and time. Instead of relying on selling high- grade weapons, non-violent solutions require a knowledge and understanding of local cultures. This means taking into account the histories and views of the people involved, and then putting time, money and energy into finding the best inclusive and sustainable peaceful solutions based on the experiences and needs of the communities themselves. Suppressing opposition by military means will never provide a long-term solution to conflict.

CLAIM: 'PEACEBUILDING DOESN'T WORK AND IS WEAK. ONLY SUCCESSFUL WARS ENSURE PEACE.'

HAVE YOU SEEN HOW MUCH EVIDENCE THERE IS THAT THESE ASSERTIONS ARE UNTRUE?

- Among the tried and tested peacemaking solutions are the following: ceasefire monitoring, rumour control, early warning systems, and rapid reaction to escalating situations, creating local autonomous infrastructure (including training), the strengthening of conditions for a dignified life (access to education and healthcare, infrastructure development, and the integration of isolated regions) and encouraging women and young people (instead of only armed men) to become involved in peace and police operations.
- There will always be conflicts linked to greed and to power struggles, but if even a part of the bloated budget currently spent on the research, development and marketing of new weapons were diverted to active peacebuilding, new practical solutions could be found.
- There is no example in history where a sustained peace was achieved through violence and war. We now understand that prosperity can only be brought about by peace. That depends on using successful non- violent solutions like diplomacy and peacebuilding. A good example is Europe after WW2. But lasting peace has only been possible because we created the European Union to avoid another war.
- There are proven solutions offered by conflict prevention, peace building and working to resolve the root causes.
- However, profit and technology are now the real drivers of conflict; their huge budgets, together with erroneous military intelligence (e.g. weapons of mass destruction in Iraq), have made the world increasingly unstable.
- We do not claim to have all the answers, but current social science research can offer a better understanding of what drives and motivates the lust for power, of corruption, and of our human potential for acting morally. Scientific research into these traits needs to be incorporated into our approach to conflict resolution. This should help avoid the automatic response of resorting to armed drones and killer robots.
- We need to focus on more intelligent and considered responses than our perceived rivals, and not just depend on increasingly deadly and sophisticated hardware to deal with conflicts.

- It is not naïve to believe we must address issues by applying all the knowledge we already have in a rational and sensible way. History has shown that relying solely on the military-industrial complex is hugely expensive in terms of both economic costs and human suffering. It's also outdated and ineffective.

CLAIM: 'THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO WHEN CONFLICT BREAKS OUT, EXCEPT FIGHT TO DEFEND YOURSELF.'

WHY WAIT UNTIL CONFLICT ACTUALLY BREAKS OUT?

- Violent conflicts never appear out of the blue; there are always many warning signs. Violence is preceded by events requiring early responses. At this stage, conflict prevention, conflict transformation and conflict resolution may still be developed and applied successfully.
- The causes of wars and violence are increasingly found in situations of poverty caused by environmental degradation such as drought, flooding, and the depletion of fertile lands. Many people are forced to flee because of the battle over access to precious scarce resources. Using violence will not solve those problems, but only exacerbate their effects. Timely detection of imminent violence (which can be seen from emerging refugee flows, arms deliveries, etc.), coupled with rapid and appropriate responses, can prevent much suffering.
- The international community is often very reluctant to get involved to prevent these catastrophes by setting up mediation platforms or offering help in crisis situations. It is only once the violence has started that governments begin to think about possible solutions, which are by then harder to find. Those who highlight risks and flashpoints are often ignored, while profitable arms are being continuously developed and sold as 'defence'.
- Those working in peace and protection are not given seats at the negotiating table. Unlike wealthy arms dealers, peacemakers don't have the income to lobby and become a recognised power bloc. Their research and development budgets are almost non-existent. Experienced peacemakers don't offer alluring hardware and new weapons, but rather tried and tested solutions. If there were a more level playing field, they could offer realistic and workable peaceful ways to move forward, to protect people and avoid bloodshed.

CLAIM: 'IF WE DON'T SELL ARMAMENTS THEN SOMEONE ELSE WILL. IF WE DON'T DEVELOP NEW ARMAMENTS, SOMEONE ELSE WILL.'

SO SHOULD STATES ALSO START SELLING HARD DRUGS? AFTER ALL, IT'S THE SAME ARGUMENT!

- This is a moral question, rather than an economic one. The claim above made by those involved in the arms trade uses the same arguments as those deployed by drug dealers selling heroin. The arms trade is a trade in death and oppression, with ancillary support services that are vastly over-developed to the detriment of the economy.
- Yes, there may be a need to protect civilians so that peace building can happen. But that doesn't mean we should focus on military technology, research and investment and on ever-increasing military budgets, while prevention gets sub-minimal funding.
- Defending people is one thing, but mostly the military machinery is used to protect vested interests and property while causing destruction and violence to people and land.

CLAIM: 'EVEN IF WE REDUCE ARMS SALES, RUSSIA AND CHINA WILL CONTINUE TO SELL THEM.'

BUT DON'T RUSSIA AND CHINA SELL ARMS TO MAINTAIN THE GEOPOLITICAL BALANCE?

- We don't claim to have all the answers, but we know that the real drivers behind political decision are the arms traders and the military. Arms build-up in any region triggers an arms race. Russia and China vie for geopolitical influence, often through economic policies (trade deals, aid, etc.) which we could also deploy.
- Even if there are some approaches in peace building that may not be totally effective, we need to remember that history has shown that violent intervention does not work; it causes years and decades of repercussions and ever-escalating hatred and violence, while a handful of people profit enormously.

ALTERNATIVES TO MILITARY INTERVENTION

CLAIM: 'LEGITIMATE DEFENCE IS PERMITTED BY LAW AND BY ALL RELIGIONS.'

SINCE WHEN HAS LEGITIMATE DEFENCE INCLUDED ARMS SALES TO DICTATORS?

- Our current expenditure on weapons production and sales cannot be justified by the term 'legitimate defence', since so many arms are sold to powers that use them in proxy wars (e.g. in Yemen).
- The price of weapons sales is not just the people killed directly, but includes the other inevitable consequences – famine, illnesses, displacement, refugees, etc. It has been estimated that the numbers of people dying because of war have been underestimated by a third. For more information, click here (and see palestinian example here).

A RADICAL REFLECTION IS NECESSARY TO PUT PEOPLE AND PLANET FIRST.

THIS COLLECTIVE PEACE STARTS WITH US WITH THE CHOICES WE MAKE TODAY.

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Stop Fuelling War

Rethinking Security France