8 MYTHS ABOUT THE ARMS TRADE AND DEFENCE

Myths that prevent focus and investment in peace building

PUBLIC SPACE

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

MEDIA

CULTURE

GOVERNMENT

ARMY

ARMSTRAND FIRMS

WAR
Cessez d’alimenter la guerre

FOLLOW US

@stopfuellingwar  @StopFuellingWar  stopfuellingwar.org
The arms industry is a key employer and job-creator good for workers and the economy.

**FACT:** Its success depends on huge government subsidies to help it export arms. Research and create new weapons, and lavish entertainment and gifts for potential clients, whatever their regime. If these subsidies were instead invested in wind and marine energy, they could create more jobs than the entire arms industry and help prevent conflicts around resources.

**FACT:** The arms industry pays professional lobbyists and influential ‘expert advisors’ (often ex-ministers, officials and retired senior military figures) to drum up bigger arms budgets in the name of employment and national security.

The powerful arms lobby promotes military approaches to foreign policy issues. The result, time after time, is more violence, more refugees, more conflict.
WE REAP WHAT THEY SOW

IF WE DON'T DEVELOP/SELL ARMS, SOMEONE ELSE WILL

THIS EXCUSE DOES NOT BRING THE WORLD SECURITY,
IT IS A BROKEN SYSTEM THAT NEEDS CHANGING!

**FACT**: As part of the contract, the seller transfers skills and technology and the right to manufacture to the purchasing country who then start their own arms industry, where is the security in that?

**FACT**: The governments want to fund their military machinery, companies want profit and people suffer.

**FACT**: Many great inventive minds, fascinated by their journeys into new sciences deeply regretted their well-funded work when the weapons were actually used.

WHAT GOES AROUND COME AROUND!
WE ONLY SELL WEAPONS TO OUR ALLIES.

YESTERDAY’S ALLIES ARE SEEN AS TODAY’S “PROBLEMS” - IRAQ · SYRIA · LIBYA - YET FEW ARMS LICENCES ARE DENIED, EVEN TO REPRESSIVE REGIMES.

**FACT**: In 2016, France granted around 99% of arms export licences, despite knowing that weapons meant for ‘national defence’ are routinely used against civilians.

**FACT**: Saudi Arabia remains one of France’s biggest clients, despite revelations that French-made weapons are being used in the war in Yemen, where civilians have been targeted and face a terrible humanitarian crisis.

**FACT**: Once sold the governments lose control as to how they are used. Arms deals should not be considered legitimate tools of foreign policy. International laws regulating the trade in weapons are often ignored and there are more international laws regulating the trade in foods than weaponry.
DRONE MAKE TARGETED KILLINGS AND ARE THEREFORE OK.
AIR STRIKES ARE TARGETED AND EFFECTIVE.

ARMED DRONES - TODAY'S METHOD OF EXECUTING SUSPECTS WITHOUT TRIAL - ARE SUPPOSED TO BE PRECISION WEAPONS, BUT OFTEN GO HORRIBLY WRONG. WHEN THEY KILL INNOCENTS AND DESTROY HOMES AND LIVELIHOODS, DESPERATE PEOPLE ARE FORCED TO MOVE AND ANGER AND CONFLICT SPREAD.

FACT: Oxford research group says: “the technology of remote-control warfare is impossible to control... drones will be used as simple, affordable and effective airborne improvised explosive devices”.

FACT: Thales, in partnership with the Israeli company Elbit, both present at the Eurosatory arms fair, developed the Watchkeeper 450, a surveillance and reconnaissance drone for the British army. In 2007, The UK ordered 54 Watchkeeper drones, at £800 million, including in the price new facilities at Boscombe Down. The project significantly went over budget, and in 2015 the drones were expected to cost 1.2 billion, despite being used for the equivalent for 2 days of active service per drone. The Watchkeeper 450 was based on the Elbit drone Hermes 450, with was extensively used in Gaza by the Israeli army.

WE NEED A PROFOUND RETHINK ON HOW WE APPROACH SECURITY RATHER THAN CONTINUING TO DEVELOP EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE AND TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED WAYS OF INJURING, INCAPACITATING AND KILLING.
THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE MACHINERY OF WAR.

THERE ARE MANY ALTERNATIVES, BUT RATHER THAN DISHING OUT WEAPONS, THEY INVOLVE A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTEXT, INCLUSIVE PEACEBUILDING AND INVESTING IN LOCAL PEOPLE.

**FACT:** Billions are spent on arms that gather dust in hangars or are too dangerous to use. Arms costing further billions are used, requiring more billions to pay for security against retaliations, repairing infrastructure and support for the displaced. War cannot end unemployment, poverty, lack of education, intolerance or injustice. As climate change creates new conflicts, it would be wiser to invest in renewable energy sources, lowering carbon emissions and support for those who will be first affected by climate emergencies.

**FACT:** Civilians are the victims of irresponsible commerce in armaments. They are often the first hit and affected by conflict. The proliferation of weapons is detrimental to global security.

THE FUTURE NEEDS INSPIRED SOLUTIONS ALLYING THE GENIUS OF SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS WITH THAT OF PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PEACEBUILDERS. WE SHOULD HEAR AND ACT UPON THE ETHICAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS WHO ARE NOT FUNDED BY THE ARMS INDUSTRY.
It is not in the national interest to promote low-tech alternatives to the arms industry.

The arms industry, unsurprisingly, is not enthusiastic about low tech solutions to conflict. Even those which have been proven to work. Low tech usually means low-cost. Which of course is good for most of us, but won’t pay the huge commissions of arms sales people.

**FACT:** Successful ideas include ceasefire monitoring; early warning and early response systems; community-base security; support for former combatants; sports projects; interfaith projects and many, many more.

**FACT:** As of April 2019, the EU has adopted the regulation for the European Defence Fund, moving towards €13 billion being put aside for research and development of military equipment, whilst planning the reduction of the budget for civil violence prevention and transformation.

We know enough about alternatives to militarisation but these other solutions need investment.
There will always be conflict, terrorism, greed and corruption.

This is an excuse really, not a myth. We are humans, we will always need peacekeepers and total disarmament is not feasible. On the other hand supplying weapons to people with unaddressed grievances makes violence inevitable.

FACT: More and more people alive today have known nothing but war. Sexual assault and rape become weapons of war, women and girls their forgotten victims.

FACT: By continuing to treat armaments as a legitimate business like any other - by selling arms indiscriminately to whoever will pay and allowing arms fairs like Eurosatory - we are promoting death, degradation and the destruction of the very values we are supposed to hold most precious.

Gandhi said: “When violence appears to do good, the good is short term. The evil it creates lasts forever”. 
WEAPONS DO NOT PROVIDE SECURITY

IT IS NO

THE ARM

FACT: Success

FACT: As of A

WE KNO
With the knowledge of the irregular and global threats that we face, terrorism, resource scarcity, cyber warfare, forced migration and many more, we know that conventional and advanced military solutions will not bring us security. Military intervention has proven in the 21st century that violence breeds violence and is a very short term solution at best, the fall out being: long term resentments, infrastructural damage and trauma.

Justification for military intervention as in liberation and humanitarian wars and the right to protect ‘just wars’ could be countered if there was in place the preparation for non violent interventions, swift response teams, with the same (or much less) investment as the military response.

The military-industrial complex is old-fashioned, outdated and propped up by vested interests in business and governments. We need and have different solutions.

Different actors in society at international, national and local levels can work together to build security and peace and answer these threats. For example: context specific solutions through diplomacy, democracy and politics, justice, security, communication and media, education, business, culture...

We all want peace and security, let’s shift the paradigm.
HIGH TIME TO CHANGE TACTICS
WE KNOW IT IS COMPLEX

START FUELLING PEACE
THERE ARE PROVEN ALTERNATIVES

FURTHER READING
• Business Plan for Peace, Dr Scilla Elworthy
• Rethinking Security, rethinkingsecurity.org.uk