Integrated Review: Call for Evidence response template

Submission from XR Peace to the Government's "Integrated Review Call for Evidence 2020"

From Reb Eleanor Johnson on behalf of XR Peace

The Privacy Notice can be found on the Integrated Review Call for Evidence webpage.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation / company:

6. Organisation / Company

XR Peace

7. Position within Company / Organisation

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Call for Evidence questions
1. What are the key opportunities, challenges, threats and vulnerabilities facing the UK now? (Submissions focusing on rapidly evolving areas such as science, technology, data, cyber, and space are particularly welcome.)

2. What are the key global and domestic trends affecting UK international policy and national security out to 2030, and how should the government prioritise its efforts in response to these?

3. What are the key steps the UK should take to maximise its resilience to natural hazards and malicious threats? How can we build a whole of society approach to tackle these challenges?

4. What are the most effective ways for the UK to build alliances and soft power?

5. What changes are needed to Defence so that it can underpin the UK’s security and respond to the challenges and opportunities we face? (Submissions focusing on the changing character of warfare, broader concepts of deterrence, technological advantage and the role of the Armed Forces in building national resilience are particularly welcome.)

6. How should the UK change its governance of international policy and national security in order to seize future opportunities and meet future challenges? (Submissions focusing on the engagement of an increasing range of stakeholders while maintaining clear responsibility, accountability, and speed of action are particularly welcome.)

7. What lessons can we learn from the UK’s international delivery over the past 5 years? Which are the key successes we should look to develop and build on, and where could we learn from things that didn’t go well?

8. How should UK systems and capabilities be reformed to improve the development and delivery of national strategy?

Please provide your response in the box below. Make sure to note the “Guidance for respondents” provided above before completing.

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**Written Submission from XR Peace**

To Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development & Foreign Policy

10th September 2020

**Executive Summary**

XR Peace is a network of organisations and individuals that work with Extinction Rebellion to demand urgent action to prevent climate destruction and bring about fundamental economic, political and social changes for sustainable life in Britain and the world. We focus especially on the military causes and impacts of the climate emergency, and take action for peace, disarmament, human rights, genuine human and ecological security and climate justice.

We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the Integrated Review, and wish to align ourselves with the submission from Rethinking Security, which argues that the
Integrated Review should "be concerned with human security within the UK, with the UK's contribution to the shared security of humanity, and with the viability of the planetary ecosystem on which we all depend."

Climate destruction, war, and the possession, deployment and use of deadly weapons here and abroad are security threats in themselves and also risk multipliers. They are the interconnected consequences of military-industrial systems of unsustainable growth, extractivism, exploitation and violence against diverse peoples, the planet and other species.

These major security threats and challenges are compounded by disinformation, incompetent leadership, aggressive political posturing, short term decision-making, and policies that are seldom based on up-to-date facts, intelligence and accountable evidence. They rely instead on divisive populist rhetoric and practices that all too often are rooted in racist, sexist nostalgia for distorted and romanticised patriarchal-colonialist narratives of power and glory.

British history is littered with wars and disasters that could have been avoided if political-military leadership had acted prudently and intelligently on receiving warnings of risks and dangers. More recently, ill-conceived military interventions and disastrous, ideologically driven economic and political decisions have eroded British security, increased social and economic inequalities. They have badly undermined regional and international relations and respect for the UK, causing great misery, including hunger, homelessness and desperate refugees seeking somewhere safe to live and work.

In a salient recent example, security assessments and the World Health Organisation have for years warned that a high contagion coronavirus pandemic is a serious risk, with significant near-term probabilities of overloading health, economic and security resources. Nonetheless, in the name of "austerity", NHS and care services were cut to the bone after 2010, while stocks of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) were allowed to go out of date without being replaced. Exercise Cygnus, which in October 2016 gamed a coronavirus pandemic, exposed major short-comings in UK planning, resources and operations. But recent government leaders were too busy playing political games to address these real world security challenges. Their governments continued to cut health and care resources while pouring public money into fossil fuels, out-dated types of military defence, and vanity projects like Trident and Brexit, which continue to undermine our security and standing in the world.

Shocks and crises, as we are experiencing now, can also create space to recognise the real threats, problems and causes, and to work together differently to turn the challenges into opportunities, change what we do, and rethink security in more realistic, practical and integrated ways. This is what this Integrated Review now needs to do, with no ring-fenced white elephants and shibboleths.

Security crises are not isolated events. Dealing effectively with them – and, more importantly – preventing probable risks from becoming humanitarian catastrophes –
requires understanding what security, defence, development and our international ("foreign") policies need to deliver in the 21st century.

To move forward, Britain needs a responsible team with diverse experiences and skills to undertake a regenerative, structural and systemic rethink our political and security institutions and practices. While recognising this needs to happen at all levels of social, economic, political and international decision-making, this XR Peace submission mainly addresses issues relating to security, defence, militarism and the climate emergency.

The threats of climate destruction, nuclear weapons and coronavirus pandemics are increasingly recognised – by most if not all nations. It is time to seize the opportunity to work together with governments and civil society across the world. Global, regional, national and local security and safety are mutually interdependent, and UK policies, structures and decision-making processes need to adapt to this reality.

To be taken seriously at home and abroad, UK governments need to recognise that aggressive posturing is counterproductive (and looks ridiculous). Effective policies have to be based on real facts and evidence. The challenges over the next two years, including Covid-19 and the 26th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26, due to take place in Glasgow in November 2021) will demonstrate whether Britain has sufficient leadership and capabilities to look after ourselves and contribute towards saving our shared planet.

True defence and resilience require a combination of self-reliance and collective responsibility.

The British Isles need to be more sustainable and self-reliant in terms of our food growing and use of resources, including renewable energy and transport. The UK also needs to become a more responsible actor in supporting and reforming the United Nations so that it is better equipped to tackle the climate emergency and end the scourge of armed conflicts, racism and gender based violence and inequality.

We must act as we preach, and uphold international laws, human rights, and humanitarian norms and principles. To create greater security and resilience, UK governments need to support, develop and respect local, regional and international systems for sharing resources, scientific and intellectual research, information, and ideas that can benefit all people and address the planet's ecological needs.

If we do not share then there will be more resource wars and desperation, causing greater insecurity and worsening economic and climate crises. We will all gain if we work together and all lose if we do not.

The security and well-being of British people will depend on rebuilding and strengthening constructive, peace-enhancing political and economic relations and upholding human rights, norms and the rule of law. Instead of behaving like an arrogant outlaw, it is imperative for British security that we have governments that can contribute positively to strengthening international humanitarian law, human
rights, disarmament and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The UK needs to take urgent steps to back the UN Secretary-General’s recent call for a Global Ceasefire, and contribute plans and resources for its speedy implementation, not just while Covid-19 is raging, but for the future. We must demonstrate diplomatic and scientific leadership to ensure that COP26 moves forward to take the tough but necessary decisions to give future generations a chance to survive and thrive.

We consider that in conjunction with fundamentally rethinking security, all sectors of government and society need to develop and implement a responsible Green New Deal for Britain, based on principles of human rights, sharing resources, and mutual care and support.

For far too long, UK governments and businesses have profitted from arms sales, rapacious nuclear and fossil fuel projects, and other military-industrial activities that are not effectively monitored or held accountable for their impacts, costs and consequences.

Corrupt practices often siphon development aid into private pockets and arms deals, which are subsidised by British taxes. In addition to corrupt and profiteering activities, irresponsible and short-term government decision-making harm the security, health and environment we all rely on. The government needs to end British involvement and contribute towards eliminating these corrupt and harmful practices, which steal resources from the poor, here and internationally.

It is imperative that UK governments and unions stop evoking "defence" and "jobs" to justify subsidising the production and sales of arms companies like BAE, that make and sell weapons to warmongers, tyrants and human rights violators. UK weapons cause dangers and instabilities wherever they are traded, with blowback consequences that will undermine our own safety and security.

Jobs and economies in the future need to promote human and environmental needs in all their aspects. As more people can now see, the most important jobs for Britain’s real security (personal, family, human and economic) are in health, care, education, sustainable energy and agriculture, and essential public transport and deliveries.

Responses to the IR Questions
1) The greatest security threats we face are from climate destruction, wars and the possession and use of weapons. Threat multipliers include militarism and armed violence of all kinds, as well as aggressive, incompetent leaders and political systems that violate human rights and the environment. These are the major challenges that undermine our safety and security, endanger our lives, homes and families, and pollute and destroy the ecological systems on which we depend for clean water, food, our health and well-being.

UK military-industrial manufacturing deployments, spending and use of weapons, delivery means, facilities, and related sales, employment and maintenance, are major
sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, estimated at 11 million tons of CO₂ equivalent in 2018.

Nuclear weapons cause particularly horrendous suffering and environmental harm. The detonation of a single nuclear bomb would cause catastrophic humanitarian, health and environmental harm wherever it occurred, whether through accident or intent. Detonating just a fraction of today's deployed nuclear weapons would contaminate the Earth and cause "nuclear winter" and mass starvation. The mushroom clouds from incinerated cities would disrupt the world's climate systems and destroy agriculture, natural ecosystems and food resources. Global famine and disease would follow, killing an estimated two billion people.

If the nuclear weapons on just one of the MOD's current nuclear armed submarines were fired – through cyber attack or computer error, or on the instructions of a Prime Minister or submarine captain (real, mad or hacked) – the explosions could cause millions of deaths and injuries, environmental contamination, climate devastation and economic collapse. The ensuing humanitarian catastrophe would affect the whole world. Electronic communications and cyber capabilities have increased the risks of this happening by mistake if the UK continues with the Vanguard-Trident system or upgrades to Dreadnought. Think about it.

The nine states that possess and upgrade current nuclear arsenals (over 13,000, according to SIPRI) contribute to proliferation, global insecurity and nuclear risks. Since 1945, the world has been brought close to nuclear war at least a dozen times due to leadership mistakes, accidents and computer errors.

Weaponised conflicts contribute to climate and ecological destruction. Together with armed nationalism and racism (a frequent combination), militarism also disrupts development and is a major cause of poverty, hunger, social and political instability, deteriorating mental and physical health, homelessness, unemployment and mass migrations of people seeking somewhere safer to live. When things go wrong, the most vulnerable are at greatest risk. Children, women, refugees, and other minoritised, disadvantaged people inevitably pay the highest price.

2) Current facts and projections point to negative security trends unless there are rapid and fundamental changes in the world. At time of writing, regional and international relations among some of the world's most heavily armed leaders have deteriorated, with potentially serious consequences for the future.

All nine nuclear armed governments, including the permanent (P5) members of the United Nations, exhibit dangerously short-sighted attitudes relating to the climate emergency, nuclear and fossil fuel dependence, unsustainable extraction and use of finite resources, unsustainable environmental and economic policies and pollution (air and marine). Despite opposition from civil society in almost all UN Member States, a handful of other regimes are following as the most heavily-armed and environmentally irresponsible governments lead the world towards ecological disaster.
Without fundamental change, and more understanding and positive actions by competent leaders and people, time will run out – and not just for the UK. The world is heading towards mass species extinction, worsening levels of global heating, environmental destruction and climate chaos. If these trends are not urgently reversed, we should expect terrible disruption, more wars, violent extremism and nationalism, increases in hunger and homelessness, and mass movements of desperate refugees.

Unless nuclear weapons are comprehensively and urgently eliminated, any war nowadays could provoke the use of nuclear armaments, with the humanitarian catastrophe and suffering that would inevitably bring.

3) There are several ways to look at resilience. **Sustainable security requires a resilient combination of self reliance and collective responsibility.** No-one can be secure if others are benefitting from violence and destruction. As highlighted in Women, Peace and Security research arising from the application of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), women should not be confined to ‘victim’ and dependent roles in security and defence approaches. On the contrary, women are frequently the most effective agents of change. Providing equal, whole life educational opportunities and resources is vital for any society that wants to enhance its resilience.

**Building a whole society approach to security, development and defence requires that we tackle inequality, violence and racist, sexist and nationalist behaviours** that marginalise, divide and exclude some people from full access to opportunities and participation in our society, democracy, economy and policy-making processes. To strengthen our security will require greater understanding and appropriate policies to tackle gendered and racist violence in personal, political and institutional behaviour, in our homes, communities, and international relations.

**Supporting high quality, whole life education will contribute more to security, resilience and deterrence than militarism and nuclear weapons.** This is vital for Britain’s security, development and future, and an international challenge we need to prioritise in our international relations. Education narrows inequalities, strengthens democracies, and equips people and nations to respond to adversity, challenges and change with greater resilience.

**Britain needs to end reliance on aggressive practices of unsustainable, competitive and exploitive trade.** We must become more sustainable and self-reliant in terms of our food growing and use of resources, including investing in renewable energy from solar, winds and wave, which are less carbon intensive to construct and more abundant in these islands than more polluting, wasteful and unrenewable technologies. UK people need to learn how to work effectively as part of interdependent economic relationships based on shared institutions, respect, and equality under law.

**Building peace and sustainable security is a global task that also has specific regional and local aspects and needs.** That will require responsible behaviour by
leaders and fuller engagement by civil society. We need to mobilise the best we have to develop integrated, holistic solutions, putting disarmament, human security, environmental protection and sustainability at the heart of government policies.

4) We have to move beyond outdated beliefs in the efficacy of weapons-based alliances that put billions into the pockets of arms manufacturers and dealers that profit from equipping all sides with the latest weapons systems and tools of aggressive power projection.

Notions of 'hard' or 'soft' power miss the point. Rethinking security means changing how we think about power altogether.
We identify deep problems with the structures, forms, objectives and uses of 'power over'. Whether categorised as hard or soft, this familiar coercive concept encompasses controlling forms of power that have historically been pursued and weaponised in traditional militarised defence policies. For our genuine security and well-being, the concepts and practices of personal and political empowerment ('power of' and 'power to transform') teach safer and more effective ways to bring about sustainable security. These need to be based on greater equality, shared responsibility for human security, climate justice and nonviolent regenerative systems for disarmament, shared decision-making and sustainable security.

5) Britain would become safer and more secure by ditching nuclear weapons and the dangerous illusions of nuclear deterrence. By doing this we could put our knowledge and skills into supporting the UN SDGs and fulfilling British obligations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as a founding state party and depositary to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

To take disarmament and nonproliferation steps forward coherently, the UK should sign and ratify the multilateral Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and working within the rule of law to help all nations to reduce nuclear dangers and prevent the production, deployment, use and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Using AWE Aldermaston's know-how, Britain could lead the way in enabling the best possible verification, compliance and implementation systems to be development to create and maintain the world free of nuclear weapons that successive governments have claimed to support.

6) Consistent with XR Peace arguments for rethinking security and tackling militarism and climate chaos, we align ourselves with proposals in the Submission from the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy for restructuring with two new Ministries to deal with the interconnected security and international challenges we face in more coherent ways. The new Ministries would be responsible for "Human Security, Defence and Climate Action" and "International Relations, Development and Peacebuilding".

Each of the new ministries would comprise departments to deal with specific priorities within the overall ministerial remit. The institutional models for these integrated ministries should facilitate high levels of expertise, practical experience
and accountability in each department area. Once the two ministries are established, they and their relevant departments would liaise closely, with specific department responsibilities and cross sectoral work determined by the security priorities and assessments of the elected governments and peoples assemblies.

7 and 8) Drawing lessons from the Covid-19 crisis, XR Peace calls on the Integrated Review to rethink the assumptions of "national security" and "national strategy" that are currently embedded in UK policies, and prioritise human and environmental security approaches that recognise the interconnectedness of the risks, threats and necessary changes.

Britain's strategy for recovery must be undertaken together with the rest of the world, recognising that our national survival rests on our global survival. The strategy needs to take into account British governmental roles and responsibilities, especially in relation to the causes and negative impacts of the climate emergency, nuclear dangers, armed violence and Covid-19.

To improve UK systems and capabilities to tackle the interconnected security threats and challenges we face now, the Integrated Review and the government's integrated Ministries for Human Security, Defence and Climate Action and International Relations, Development and Peace-Building will need to reframe defence as well as security, development and foreign – or rather, international – relations and policies. To start, we need to:

Recognise and halt the damage caused by patriarchal violence, arrogance, militarism and abuse of the natural world and other people.

Ask questions, look at the facts, prepare and plan for the real, foreseeable threats we face.

Make the links, raise awareness, and change to more responsible personal and political behaviour, expectations, and sustainable consumption and use of resources.

Take responsibility and mitigate dangers by taking cooperative action for global peace, health and climate justice.