

Green Party calls for new vision for armed forces in response to defence review



22 March 2021

- **Calls for refocusing on promoting peace and protecting people and places from the effects of climate change**

The Green Party has criticised the government's plans to focus the defence review away from the needs of citizens and towards robots, drones, and cyber warfare [1], warning the armed forces should instead be used to promote peace and defend people and places from the effects of climate chaos.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has criticised the rationale of both last week's integrated review [2] and the defence review today as being posturing about the power of Global Britain rather than a practical plan to make British people safer.

Bartley said:

"We utterly oppose the decision to encourage a global nuclear arms race by increasing the cap on our warheads. This is a play to defend our seat on the UN Security Council but is no substitute for the geopolitical security we had as part of the strong European bloc.

"We continue to insist that the government lives up to its legal obligation to prevent proliferation by signing up to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons."

Bartley also argued for a new purpose for our armed forces, that have performed such an important national role during the pandemic.

"The armed forces have played a crucial logistical role in the pandemic and we are likely to need them in similar roles as climate change threatens more intense weather events.

"It is flesh-and-blood servicepeople who have supported Covid testing and who we will need to provide national resilience as the climate crisis intensifies. Cyber soldiers are no substitute for real soldiers and killer drones are a dangerous development that distances us from the moral responsibility for taking a human life.

"Greens would use our armed services to make peace not war. We would rename the Ministry of Defence as the Ministry for Security and Peace, making the promotion of peace a key foreign policy objective and linking the role of the defence services more closely to the crises that actually threaten global security.

“A central part of their responsibilities would be the defence of people across the world from the effects of climate chaos and dealing with the humanitarian and environmental impacts of climate-related disasters.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56477900>

2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/969402/The_Integrated_Review_of_Security_Defence_Development_and_Foreign_Policy.pdf

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Government's industrial decarbonisation strategy “aimed low and will still miss its target”, Greens warn



17 March 2021

- **Councillor Carla Denyer:** “It is depressing to see how, yet again on a vital green issue, the government has aimed low and will still miss its target.”

The government's new industrial decarbonisation strategy [1] goes nowhere near far enough and lacks the proper plan and finance to achieve its aims, the Green Party has warned.

Bristol Green Party Councillor Carla Denyer, who proposed the UK's first climate emergency declaration, said:

“We welcome the government’s recognition that CO2 emissions must be squeezed out of UK industrial production, although the target of reducing emissions by two-thirds by 2035 is inadequate.

“But we have to ask Greta Thunberg’s resounding question: ‘Where is the plan?’ This isn’t the first time we’ve seen a government department offer only hot air when what is needed is a clear plan and funding to back it up.

“Instead of an ambitious plan and funding on the scale we have seen from the EU and US, this strategy is nothing more than wishful thinking. It is depressing to see how, yet again on a vital green issue, the government has aimed low and will still miss its target.”

David Flint, convenor of the Green Party’s Climate Emergency Policy Working Group, added:

“If we take the strategy on its own terms, it fails to address the ultimate high emitters – oil and gas – which are problematic both offshore and onshore. Indeed, without a clear commitment to reduce oil and gas refining, both carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) and hydrogen may simply prolong the pollution. Hydrogen is not a solution unless it is rolled out alongside sufficient renewable electricity to produce it and we are far from achieving that.

“The government has also failed to rise to the challenge of phasing out carbon-intensive blast furnaces in steel production. We simply cannot arrive at a net-zero carbon emission economy unless we undergo a rapid transition of our steel industry. We need a government plan to urgently invest in electric arc furnaces melting scrap steel to minimise the amount of carbon released from the industry.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-decarbonisation-strategy>

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Greens Condemn Integrated Review as 'Misguided'



16 March 2021

'Unless everybody is secure, nobody is secure'

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has responded this morning to the Integrated Review calling it 'Misguided'. He said:

"This review is based on meaningless rhetoric about Global Britain and a desire to boost the sale of arms by British companies. It will do nothing to increase the security of British people. The posturing about providing global leadership on cooperation and democracy will convince nobody, especially coming from a government that is in an ongoing dispute with its closest neighbours and has shamelessly broken treaty obligations entered into less than a year ago.

"Much is made of the potential of the Indo-Pacific region. But the power in that region lies with the Quad – USA, India, Japan and Australia – who had their inaugural meeting last week and felt no need to call on the services of Boris Johnson. [1] Such post-colonial fantasies will do nothing to make up for the damage to our trading, diplomatic and security relationships caused by Brexit."

Bartley went on to consider the real meaning of security, saying:

"We are also horrified that, at a time when the UN is actively seeking to negotiate nuclear disarmament, the government is proposing to increase the UK's stockpile of nuclear weapons. We repeat our demand for the government to live up to its legally binding commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and sign up to the UN Treaty on the Prohibitions of Nuclear Weapons. [2]

"We deeply regret the misguided framing of security as a competitive survival of the fittest and a failure to grasp that the real source of insecurity across the world is the sale of arms and climate destabilisation for which the UK itself is largely responsible.

"Rather than being based in competition, the government should set a vision for global security and resilience in all countries.

"Unless everybody is secure, nobody is secure."

ENDS

Notes:

[1] [White House statement on the Quad](#) reaffirming their commitment to 'quadrilateral cooperation between Australia, India, Japan, and the United

States.'

[2] Mark Urban, Newsnight's Diplomatic Editor, notes proposal to raise 'cap' on nuclear warheads from 180 to 260. As he notes 'it's hard to reconcile with, "the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic & progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally", a commitment made by UK govt in 1995 extension to Nuc Non-Proliferation Treaty'.

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[Road building and airport expansion must be scrapped say Greens](#)



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[Green Party responds to Met mismanagement of Sarah Everard vigil](#)



14 March 2021

The Green Party has condemned the harmful and shocking Metropolitan police action on Clapham Common this weekend.

Responding to policing at the vigil, Green Party co-leader and candidate for Mayor of London Sian Berry said:

"I can't think of a more shameful way for an organisation to have handled this whole situation.

"There was literally no chance of this being a violent event if it had been

left in peace. And given what prompted it, these scenes are just abhorrent and traumatic to see for so many of us.

“The Met has failed on every level and it’s hard to see how the Commissioner – and the Mayor and the Home Secretary – could not be considering her position right now.”

The highly politicised policing bill arrives in the House of Commons tomorrow, and the Green Party is adamant this should be opposed in order to stop the right to peaceful protest being curtailed.

Jenny Jones, Green Peer and former member of the Met monitoring body said:

“The government wants to use this new policing bill to buttress its political power in a way typical of an authoritarian regime.

“The police used extra-ordinary powers this weekend to stop and break up a peaceful vigil, imagine what they would do if given a new set of extraordinary post-covid powers to stop peaceful protest.

“The resources spent on our police force should be used to protect us all. We don’t want money that could be used to protect women’s lives spent defending the political interests of this far right government.”

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