

Courage My Friends Podcast Series VI – Episode 1
Climate, Conflict, and the Meaning of Peace

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ANNOUNCER: You're listening to *Needs No Introduction*.

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COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: COVID. Capitalism. Climate. Three storms have converged and we're all caught in the vortex.

STREET VOICE 1: The cost of living in the city is just soaring so high, it's virtually unlivable.

STREET VOICE 2: There seems to be a widening gap of the have and the have nots.

STREET VOICE 3: The climate is getting worse. Floods and fires. It's like we're living in a state of emergency.

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COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: What brought us to this point? Can we go back to normal? Do we even want to?

Welcome back to this special podcast series by rabble.ca and the Tommy Douglas Institute (at George Brown College) and with the support of the Douglas-Coldwell-Layton Foundation. In the words of the great Tommy Douglas...

VOICE 4: Courage my friends; 'tis not too late to build a better world.

COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: This is the *Courage My Friends* podcast.

RESH: How does conflict and occupation worsen the climate crisis for people and planet? Between our military commitments and our climate commitments, where do our priorities lie? Why the silences about military carbon emissions? And is it possible to actually green the military? Can we achieve peace and climate justice in a world of war?

I'm your host Resh Budhu.

For the first episode of our sixth series, *Climate, Conflict, and the Meaning of Peace*, we welcome environmental feminist and peace activist Tamara Lorincz, and founding member of Doctors for Planetary Health-West Coast, Linda Thyer.

We discuss the interconnected impacts of war and occupation on both people and planet. Canada's NATO commitments vs. Its climate commitments, the silences by

government and the environmental movement on military carbon emissions, and the possibilities for global cooperation, peace, and climate justice in times of conflict.

Linda and Tamara, welcome. Thanks so much for joining us. Linda, as a founding member of *Doctors for Planetary Health*, how is human health connected to planetary health?

LINDA: I think this is a really important connection that we're learning more and more about. Climate change and the destruction of the environment, the ecological crisis is impacting our health.

We're seeing this in many ways. We have direct impacts on our health with things like air pollution impacting us. We know that over 15, 000 people per year die prematurely due to air pollution in Canada. And it's millions around the world. There are direct impacts also of the extreme weather events that we're seeing, floods, forest fires. Over the longer term, droughts and famines in some areas of the world causing huge health impacts as well.

And the indirect impacts as well. So we're seeing things like changes in flora and fauna which can cause different infectious diseases. We're seeing mental health impacts, post-traumatic stress disorders and eco-anxiety related to extreme weather events as well.

And with these changes such as droughts, we're expecting also to see more and more of people being displaced from their lands, from their homelands. We see this even here in Canada when people have had to leave where their community has burned down, people being displaced.

And what we may anticipate is that this can be increasingly leading to conflict, which has its own health impacts.

RESH: Absolutely. And Tamara, your research and activism is rooted in the intersection of peace, feminism, and climate justice. How do you see war and militarism?

TAMARA: Well, war and militarism are really preventing us from having the kind of human health and planetary health that Linda was just talking about, that we need really for our survival.

Canada, for instance, is sending weapons around the world that are contributing to armed conflict and violence that's undermining the security for women and undermining their health. And wars and militarism are also very carbon intensive and very environmentally destructive. So they are contributing to the destruction of our planet, which is our life support system. So it is really important that we stop wars, that we stop militarism. And the organizations that I'm with, The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Canada, and the Canadian Voice of

Women for Peace, have long made this connection between wars, militarism and the climate crisis and the ecological crisis.

So this is why we say that peace is absolutely central to having human security and having planetary health.

RESH: Now, Linda, you recently co wrote an article entitled *It's Time for Canadian Environmental Groups to Talk About War as a Form of Climate Denial*. And we'll eventually get to the silences within the environmental movement. But how is war climate denial? What do you mean by this?

LINDA: So we have this militaristic response and a little bit of a mindset here, our Western, if you like, way of seeing things, a colonial kind of mindset where we will dominate over nature, over other beings and over other people, instead of working in harmony and working together within the web of life that we are part of. We cause more and more of this destruction and it has an impact on the planet, it has an impact on our health as well, as I already mentioned. And when we ignore that underlying militaristic kind of attitude, that dominating, needing to control nature and other people, then we are ignoring the impact that it has on the planet and ultimately on our health. So believing that a militaristic way of life, of managing people and of managing the environment around us is really ignoring that the environment is our source of life, and when we destroy that with wars, then we are undermining our own health and our own well being and ignoring the impact that it's having on the health of the planet as well.

RESH: And this has really been front and center recently in terms of the major conflicts that we're witnessing every day through our news feeds. Now, a conflict that has been dominating the headlines is that, of course of Israel-Palestine. Since October, Gaza has been the target of intense aerial and ground assaults by the Israeli military, as well as the cutting off and destruction of fuel, food, water and health resources. And so continuing with you, Linda, talk to us a bit about the scale of destruction in Gaza and what's happening through this interconnection of people and planet.

LINDA: So Gaza is I think one of the regions of the world where this is very recently being looked at. For a long time the military impact has not been considered and has not been well measured.

And I think we're starting to see some of the data coming out of there about the amount of arms and cost in terms of, not just human life, but also all of the other life in that area. So there's a cost to the planet and the environment around there. There's a cost to the humans there. There's a cost to the infrastructure, which would also need to be rebuilt. There is a pollution cost in the air, in the water and all of these will have their health impacts on the people there. And also on the environment with the pollution of the water, of the air with the chemical aspects of warfare that's happening.

RESH: As a physician, could you go a bit more into the health aspects of that conflict? For instance, as you're saying, when you cut off water resources, what does that mean for people's bodies? When buildings are falling, when bombs are falling, when you don't have food. What does that do?

LINDA: There can be physical and also mental health impacts and that applies to both climate change and militarism and war.

We can see obviously the direct impacts on health when people, their lives are taken and many have been maimed as well. This is an increased stress on the healthcare system. And all of these infrastructures have also been destroyed too. So there is an impact on people's ability to be able to seek help. So public services and health infrastructure has been destroyed. Along with that food security. And this is one of the issues also in Ukraine that we saw some impact anyways, which is a huge, agricultural area. And when you're destroying or even placing mines in those areas, then you're destroying people's capacity to be able to provide food to themselves or to others in this global environment.

Contamination of the water and of the soil and also of the air, as I mentioned, and that goes along with that infrastructure destruction. Sanitation systems have been destroyed. There were reports of raw sewage going out into the waterways. People not having enough safe water to drink, so they're resorting to other ways of finding enough water to drink, and they may not always be the, safest.

There are concerns about cholera outbreaks, which can be hugely devastating, have huge impacts in terms of death and disease, where people don't have adequate support.

And then there's the mental health, PTSD. And we know now that this can be passed down from generation to generation. Violence can seed further violence in the subsequent generations. It's something that can cascade through, so we really need to be looking at the non-violent solutions to these conflicts, just to have better health in future generations and in the current generation.

So we see the injuries, we see malnutrition, disease from infections. And there are of course the people who are at highest risk. Women and children are often massively disproportionately impacted.

RESH: And very much here too, because they make up 70% of the deaths, casualties in this conflict as well,

LINDA: Yes, and this is possibly one of the changes that we have seen over time. A longer time ago, many more of the casualties of war were the people who were actually fighting on the front lines. With wars being fought with a much higher technology and a little bit more at a distance.

We're often seeing so many more civilians, a much greater percentage of civilians as being the ones who are dying and who are injured.

RESH: And Tamara, come in on this, on the climate consequences of conflict, both in terms of Gaza, but also you have really been looking at what's been happening in the Ukraine as well.

TAMARA: Well, yeah, just to speak about Gaza and to add to what Linda said. You know, at this point, the Euromed Human Rights Monitor said that, over 40,000 Palestinians have been killed and over 73,000 Palestinians have been wounded. And this is just a massive toll and the health care facilities mostly have been decimated. And they've been decimated by unprecedented Israeli bombing with fighter jets, with, for instance, F-35, warplanes that are fossil fuel powered, extremely carbon intensive. And the people of Gaza have lost their health care facilities, have lost their housing.

Israel has turned off electricity and the water through the pipes and has denied them aid through the border. They are in such a desperate and vulnerable state and, struggling to survive and then in a climate constrained environment as well. The Middle Eastern region has suffered from drought and from excessive heat.

This genocide in Gaza is just horrendous for the people and it's exacerbating the climate emergency as well.

These fossil fuel powered weapon systems that Israel is using not just fighter jets, but attack helicopters and tanks.

And the fact that Canada, it took over two and a half months for us finally to support a ceasefire, but we've been continuing to send weapons to Israel. So we're prolonging the genocide and we are contributing to a climate emergency.

And just as Canada is contributing to this terrible crisis that we see in the Middle East, Canada is doing the same thing in Eastern Europe by continuing to send arms to Ukraine. We're prolonging a conflict instead of calling for a ceasefire there and negotiations with Russia. We are contributing to human suffering, to a lot of death and destruction and contributing to the environmental harms that Linda identified.

In Ukraine, for instance, the destruction of the agricultural land, wetlands, forest. And weapons that we've sent to Ukraine, like tanks are again fossil fuel powered. They're extremely carbon-intensive and they're very destructive to the landscape. They destroy forests, they destroy soil, and you know, they're not helping to bring about peace.

The best thing for human health and environmental health is peace, is to end these conflicts by stopping sending weapons and to start supporting negotiations for lasting peace in both regions.

RESH: Absolutely. Just to really understand the impact of military and war industry carbon emissions, how much does war and war industries contribute to global carbon emissions?

TAMARA: Well, this is actually very difficult to discuss precisely because we don't have a lot of data.

So, for instance, the latest United Nations Environment Program Emissions Gap Report, finally, for the first time, identified military emissions. But it's just one line, and they say that they recognize that military emissions are a significant source of emissions, but there isn't enough data to know precisely what the impacts are.

In Canada, since 2017, the federal government has been trying to account for military emissions, but they're only looking at fossil fuel consumption by the Department of National Defense. And the only emissions that they're counting are what they call Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions.

So these are just the carbon emissions from military buildings and from the commercial vehicles that the military uses. And those are the emissions that are part of Canada's greenhouse gas inventories and military is trying to reduce those emissions. But they account for approximately 30 percent of military missions. The bulk of military emissions come from military vehicles and military operations. So this is training and wars. And these emissions are the emissions that the government is not including in the inventories and not requiring to be reduced.

So what the military is going to be doing is trying to offset these emissions. But there is no public plan right now for how Canada is going to offset its emissions, for instance, from its warplanes, from its warships, from its NATO operations in Eastern Europe, and from its weapons production.

Ten days after COP28, the U. S. government passed its National Defense Authorization Act, and in that there is a provision that expressly prohibits, weapons manufacturers from reporting their greenhouse gas emissions.

So, in the United States, which is the largest weapons manufacturer and largest exporter of weapons in the world, it accounts for 40% of the arms trade, it has exempted its weapons manufacturers from having to report on its climate impacts. And people need to recognize that the U. S. military is the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels on the planet and it is not including military emissions comprehensively in its greenhouse gas inventories, and it is not requiring the U.S. military to fully and transparently report its emissions or reduce its emissions.

So there's an exemption for military emissions. So this is actually a huge problem in global climate governance, and it's actually one of the principal reasons why the international community is not on track to meet the Paris Agreement targets to halve emissions by 2030.

Globally, our emissions continue to go up and one of the prime sources of the emissions in the world is the emissions from Western militaries.

RESH: I found this shocking and surprising that we talk about the tallies of different countries global emissions, but that we don't include our wartime emissions within our so called carbon footprint. And I know Linda, you have also written about this. So do you want to say more about this?

LINDA: Just to add to what Tamara is saying. This is also a long standing problem. It's not just something recent. This was a deliberate thing in negotiations of some of the previous climate accords of leaving out the military operations emissions.

And one of the other aspects as well is in the fabrication of arms. And this has several impacts too. This requires significant mining, processing. We often go overseas to find the materials that we need, the minerals. This can include significant pollution of soil and water in other areas of the world and the air. To fabricate arms and vehicles where the main purpose is to kill other people. It just makes no sense.

So even looking at the entire life-cycle of these arms, of vehicles and those kinds of things. There are huge emissions, not just carbon, but pollution emissions, and then the impacts that that has on local people.

RESH: So is this part of the reason for that silence then in not including it, because it would just be opening up a whole can of worms in terms of what this country and the United States is doing all over the world because this really is a global enterprise.

TAMARA: Yes, Resh, let me say that it was in the Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, COP3, the negotiations in Kyoto, Japan, where the U. S. government, its delegation had a priority in exempting military emissions from the Kyoto Protocol and Canada supported that exemption. It was called the National Security Exemption. And the U. S. government, like I said, had that as one of its top priorities in the negotiations in 1997. And this, of course, was a demand from the Department of Defense and from the security elite in the United States because they didn't want to have to constrain the U. S. military. They wanted to ensure that the U. S. military was able to have a global reach and to continue to conduct its operations. And it didn't also want to constrain at all its leadership of NATO.

Because of this, over the past 27 years, countries haven't had to fully and transparently report military emissions and haven't considered the climate and environmental impacts of military operations and wars.

And we've seen endless wars over the past 27 years that have been extremely harmful to the environment and have also cost a lot of money and has diverted the resources away from acting on climate change and adapting to the climate crisis. Instead, it's really exacerbated. climate breakdown.

RESH: In terms of both Israel-Palestine, Russia- Ukraine, and so many other conflicts, we are seeing the production and use of really advanced weapons technology. And as was said, incredible amounts of spending on this.

Linda, talk to us about Canada's military spending and how Canadians are roped into this, whether we want to be or not in terms of footing the bill?

LINDA: Yes, absolutely. Canadian military spending is or it has been anyways around \$36 billion per year recently. So this is a massive amount of money, could certainly be much better used - and the personnel also that this funds - used to mitigate climate problems, used in new technology even just to better efficiency, energy efficiency and in the things in our daily lives as well. And could be used to help recoveries internationally as well as locally from these extreme weather events that we're seeing.

In some of these war zones, people are being conscripted against their will to fighting. In Canada, our conscription is through our taxes that we are paying for this militarism, for the harms that are being done to the planet and to other people through our taxes every year.

And we don't really have a choice in that.

RESH: Also through our pensions. I mean as a worker, I'm paying for the war machine.

TAMARA: The drive to increase military spending primarily derives from our membership in NATO and our defense partnership with the United States. And if people consider that in 2015, when the Paris Agreement, was negotiated, that was about the same time that the members of NATO made a commitment to increase military spending to 2% of GDP.

At that time in 2015, Canada's military spending was \$20 billion. And in the past decade, it has increased 95%. So that in 2022, as Linda said, it was \$36 billion, but in 2023, according to the latest NATO Defense Expenditures Report, Canada reported military spending of \$39 billion.

Military spending is comprised of not just spending for the Department of National Defense, but also things like Veterans Affairs and other military aspects, you know, intelligence and things like this. But the other thing to appreciate is that at this level of military spending, about \$36 billion, we're only at 1.3% of GDP. And the Trudeau government has said recently that Canada has plans to increase military spending to the 2% GDP target that's demanded by NATO. And that will mean that we'll be spending upwards of \$45 billion to \$60 billion annually on the military.

And so Canadians need to really think critically about is this how we want to spend our money? And why is it that we're not spending any money on peace, on

peacemaking, on peace-building, on diplomacy. Why are we continuing to send weapons and fuel wars around the world?

And then the other thing is just to compare and contrast how much we spend annually on the Department of National Defense, which is \$31 billion versus the Department of Environment and Climate change, which is, \$2.4 billion. So we're spending 15 times more on the Department of National Defense, which is causing a lot of harm to the climate and to the environment and to people.

RESH: This is very alarming, right? I mean, all of this is alarming. The climate crisis has brought us to an existential tipping point. The UN Secretary General says we are at "a code red for humanity."

So to turn this around, Canada, along with other nations, has signed on to global climate commitments that include conservation and the reduction of carbon emissions. But as you're saying, Canada, being a member of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, that we're actually prioritizing our military commitments over our climate commitments.

And I know Tamara, you have been a very vocal critic of NATO and our membership in NATO. Could you speak a bit more to this in terms of what is the meaning and what is the purpose of NATO?

TAMARA: Well, NATO is a military alliance of now 32 Western European, North American countries. So Canada was one of the 12 founding members of NATO in 1949. This year will be the 75th anniversary of NATO.

But it's always been a U. S.-led military alliance. An American general has always commanded NATO, and it's a nuclear armed military alliance. And if we look at its post Cold War record over the past 30 years, we can see that NATO has been engaged in a tremendous amount of war and armed conflict. So the illegal bombing of the former Yugoslavia in 1999, the war in Afghanistan in 2001, it was also involved in the war and occupation of Iraq and the bombing of Libya. And now it's very much involved in the war in Ukraine.

And NATO accounts for about 60% of the global arms trade, and it also accounts for about 60% of global military spending, which is \$2.2 trillion. And NATO is about \$1.2 trillion.

NATO is not an alliance for peace and security. It's really for preserving Western domination and Western capitalism.

We have felt and campaigned for almost 15 years that NATO is the greatest threat to peace and security, and it is also the greatest threat to the environment because it's led by the U. S. military, which is the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels.

And so we are calling for Canada to withdraw from NATO for the alliance to be abolished. Instead, what the Trudeau government is doing is most likely next month, it will be hosting NATO's Center of Excellence for Climate and Security in Montreal.

We believe this is a greenwashing exercise. That there is no way that we can make weapons and war more environmentally friendly and that the best thing for the climate, the best thing for the earth, the best thing for people would be for the dissolution of NATO.

RESH: As part of Canada's commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by the magical year of 2050, the Canadian Department of Defense and the Canadian Armed Forces have announced plans to go green by, for example, increasing energy efficiency and switching to green power on military bases and ships. But this idea of essentially greening the military, you're saying, is just a false idea?

TAMARA: Well, it really can't be done. The Department of National Defense accounts for 61% of all federal government emissions, and the majority of those emissions are coming from military vehicles like the fighter jets, the warships, the tanks, the attack helicopters. And these weapons systems run on fossil fuel powered energy systems that cannot be modified.

So, for instance, Canada is investing \$19 billion in a new fleet of fighter jets. This is going to be the F-35. This has been in development for 20 years. It's a Pratt and Whitney engine that is run on fossil fuel. It is impossible to use any type of green fuel for that engine. It's been designed for fossil fuel and it cannot be converted.

And it's the same thing with the diesel powered warships that we're building at the Halifax shipyard. And in the helicopters and the strategic tankers that Canada is investing in. These military vehicles and types of operations are heavily dependent on fossil fuels. And there is no substitute.

And so this is why they're using the claim of net-zero, but they don't have a plan for net-zero. So the Canadian government hasn't told Canadians, you know, how many trees are we going to have to plant or how many solar panels are we going to have to build to offset the emissions of our new fleet of fighter jets, or even the emissions from our current fleet of CF-18s.

The best thing if we really cared about the climate would be to not invest in a new fleet of fighter jet and instead invest in things like high-speed rail. Canada doesn't have one kilometer of high speed rail to help Canadians get out of their cars and use modern transit.

So we should not be spending any resources or any time in trying to green weapon systems and trying to make the military more environmentally sustainable. We need to start talking about conversion and demilitarization for decarbonization.

LINDA: If I just might add on to that. I totally agree with what Tamara is saying and what she says also underscores this false mindset that was also exemplified in that whole national security exemption from the Kyoto Accord, with security being this idea that if we arm ourselves more and we can dominate more and we can suppress and oppress and harm other people more, then we will be safer. And that just is completely false.

Often we will see in these wars that when people are oppressed like that, that just feeds more health harms, mental health harms, which will drive further violence, sometimes in subsequent generations. And we need to really have a change in our fundamental mindset, and switch to more, a worldview where we see each other and all of the other living and non-living beings in our environment that we are part of that.

And even the word, the "environment" is a bit othering. It's our living home. We are part of this web of life with all of the other humans and all of the other beings, and we need to live in harmony.

That's what true peace will be, is when we can live in harmony together and we know that we are not posing a threat to others and they are not posing a threat to ourselves. It will cost much less in terms of finances, but also in terms of health impacts that we are seeing with wars. The mental and physical health impacts.

RESH: Right. It really is about changing a mindset. We need to go beyond just changing the stuff we use and go into why we're using it and where it's coming from.

Now, the silence surrounding the climate impacts of conflict is also shared by the environmental movement. Linda, your article looks at this in terms of Israel-Palestine.

So why this silence? Is this just part of the chilling that we've seen around critiques of Israel's actions on Gaza, or does this silence by the climate movement extend to war and militarism in general?

LINDA: I believe it does. I think part of that silence especially within the environmental movement, if you want to call it that, goes back to the exclusion of counting emissions, for so many decades now.

So it hasn't been considered something that is important or that contributes in any way. We've been ignoring it, willfully ignoring it. And I can tell you Mother Earth does not ignore this.

But I think it is also linked to this mindset, whether we don't have the imagination yet to think differently, or we haven't been educating in ways to find peace. It all goes along with the colonial mindset of domination. And I think we need to be focusing more on looking at how we see the world in a different way, even within the

environmental movement. So that we are recognizing the depth, I guess, of the impact that we're having, even with the military.

The support for our military is worldwide in the sense that we are going into so many of these other areas to extract. It will require massive energy input just to maintain the kind of military that the government is maybe forecasting. Even green energy still will require massive amounts of energy and all of that comes from natural resources, which is destroying our planet.

RESH: Now, just to continue on this idea of colonialism, because Global South climate activists, as well as Indigenous and racialized activists in this part of the world, have really shifted the conversation on the climate crisis to recognize its roots within colonialism that fueled industrialization which of course is what has caused the climate crisis.

And they say it doesn't stop there. Terms like environmental racism, climate apartheid, waste colonialism, green colonialism, ecofascism are being used to discuss how wealthier countries continue to exploit largely Global South nations in this ongoing process of climate colonialism. So Linda, could you speak a bit more about how conflict fits in to this thread of climate colonialism.

LINDA: Yeah. And we can even see that here in Canada to a certain extent with our Indigenous people. Where they have been given legal rights to determine what happens on their land and yet we will use military action to suppress their attempts to protect their land from these fossil fuel projects, infrastructure that is going on. We see that in the Wet'suwet'en territories, for instance.

But this extends internationally. Even the switch to green or sustainable energy will require significant natural resources.

Here we have somewhat more stringent environmental laws, so it can be much cheaper and easier for many of these mining companies, for instance, to go abroad and to go into other, nations, other people's lands and extract there for our needs, for our increasing energy needs.

So, part of what we have to do is just simply reduce and expanding the military won't help with that.

This brings in that environmental justice aspect where we will tend to go into communities, these polluting, highly polluting industries into communities within Canada, within North America, but also globally, where people are poorer, have less of a voice, will have less of a means to resist as well in terms of the power of their voices. Which is really exploitation and continuing on with this colonial mindset.

RESH: As stated, we're a military power, but Canada is also a real mining Power. So, Tamara, do we treat wartime emissions the way we do mining emissions,

essentially ignoring the climate impacts of our activities in other countries in a type of ecofascism?

TAMARA: Your question makes me recall when I was in Egypt in Sharm-el Sheikh for COP27 and interacting with climate activists from across the African continent. And when I would introduce myself and say that I'm from Canada, they would say: Do you know what your Canadian mining companies are doing in our country? How they're contaminating our water and our land and displacing our communities?

Canada has mining companies that are operating all across Africa, Latin America, and causing a lot of damage.

Our pursuit, for instance, of critical minerals for electric vehicles and also for weapon systems are causing environmental and social harm in other countries. And it's something that we need to really step back and think about. And it's not just overseas. Here at home, there's a real concern about mining, especially lithium mining that may take place in Northern Ontario in the Ring of Fire.

We need to think about why are we extracting all of these minerals for weapon systems or for personal vehicles when we could be more prudently investing in things like high speed public rail and in reducing energy consumption so that we don't need this kind of extractive, very environmentally destructive mining operations.

And in terms of, ecofascism, neocolonialism, NATO is very much a colonial project. And NATO military spending, has been more than the hundred billion dollar pledge that Western countries made to developing countries for climate adaptation. As I said earlier, the now 32 countries of NATO have increased their military spending by over \$200 billion annually. So now it's \$1.2 trillion per year that NATO is spending on their militaries.

But these same countries that are the developed countries, that have the financial obligation to meet the \$100 billion dollar pledge for developing countries that are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis, they have failed to ever meet that \$100 billion dollar pledge for climate adaptation. It is an example of this environmental fascism. Is an example of continuing Western colonialism, the failure to meet our responsibilities on finance, on reducing our mission to help developing countries in this climate emergency.

RESH: Right. So this climate crisis does have a colonial component, a very strong one. It has a racist component. There is environmental racism that's going on here. Today we're recording on International Women's Day. So could you just say a bit about the intersection of conflict, climate, and what this means through a gender lens? How is it impacting women and girls?

TAMARA: Well, women and girls are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis in so many different ways. Women have often, less access, power at the levels of decision-making in positions of power to be able to, you know, create the kind of policies that would help them. We see this even in the Canadian government

disproportionately spending on a patriarchal institution of the military, which is made up of 84% men, and premised on the use of force and violence and weapons. And instead of investing in the needs of women to help us deal with the climate crisis.

So green, affordable housing and adequate investment in public transit and health care and education. Many single mothers, for instance, are living in rental properties that don't have access to air conditioning. And in our summers, which are much more humid and hot, this makes it very difficult for women.

On the conflict side, women aren't making the decisions, for instance, to engage in armed conflict and war and to help end them. I mean, we're so often excluded from these crucial positions.

Today is International Women's Day. When it was established in 1977 from the United Nations General Assembly, it was a day to promote women's rights and international peace. So there's very much a connection that is overlooked at International Women's Day.

You know, with this concern for peace, for women to really have that kind of security that they need, we need to have the conditions of peace. And this doesn't come from the military. It doesn't come from weapons and guns. It comes from investing in women's needs and women's empowerment and giving women a say in decisions and in policies that affect their lives.

LINDA: If I might add into that and bring that back a little bit to the mindset view. Tamara has alluded to this as well. That in a different worldview, where there is equality amongst all the living beings of the world, that we all have an important role to play in this web of life. Where we are all dependent on each other, women are considered equal to men, different, but equal and will bring an important aspect.

When I read Indigenous worldviews, where everything is, everyone is related. And when I've had conversations with older Indigenous people, they talk about the women's view coming from the heart. The women come from the heart and the men come from the mind. And that these are the two wings of the bird. To be able to fly well, we need some balance there between these two sides. And what Tamara was describing is this kind of mindset of the mind being dominant over the last probably few centuries. And what would it look like if we brought the heart back into decision-making on issues of conflict and on how we live our lives?

What if we did look at this from the heart, the sort of more feminist or feminine way of looking at things? - These are generalizations of course.

Would we be looking at the same kinds of solutions to conflict? Would we be even educating people in the same way? Our kids, would they be learning about peaceful ways of managing conflict? And peaceful ways of living with all of the other living beings?

RESH: Indeed. So the recuperation of our full humanity within all of this. Absolutely.

You know, I was surprised to learn that the carbon footprint measure, which I actually used earlier, was actually created by the oil and gas giant BP Oil. And last year's COP28 saw more fossil fuel lobbyists attending and in key positions than ever before. All of this to ask. How much of an influence do war connected industries have in setting the climate goal-posts?

TAMARA: Well, COP 28 in Dubai last year, you're right Resh, that there was the highest number of oil and gas lobbyists there. I did not see any of the big arms manufacturers at the meeting.

There's no doubt that the big weapons manufacturers in all of our countries, particularly in the United States and Canada, are driving our defense policies and our decisions to go to war. That's for sure. And they are heavily dependent on fossil fuel. But I would not say that they are necessarily driving our climate policies and, you know, setting any type of goal-posts. But they are very dependent on a steady and reliable supply of fossil fuels because they are so dependent on oil and gas for all of their military vehicles and operations.

But it's definitely the oil and gas lobby that has a disproportionate impact on our governments and in setting the climate agenda. And it's one of the reasons why ... you know, this year will be the 29th COP and our carbon emissions continue to go up and we are not on track to meet the Paris Agreement. We never met the Kyoto protocol, and it's because of that intense oil and gas lobby.

LINDA: And part of this whole national security exemption may actually play into that. So it is built in that the military industrial complex, if you like, is protected by governments. So we are not even talking about it. We are not even challenging it. It's not even being challenged within the climate community and within those conversations.

It is being protected so they don't even need to be there. They don't have anything that they need to be protecting about their industry because it's not being challenged. We need to change that.

RESH: Indeed. Indeed. Now, the Ukraine, and of course Gaza, and I'll also bring in one of the longest running conflicts, that for some reason we don't hear about on our mainstream news, the Democratic Republic of Congo, all have cases of genocide or crimes against humanity before the International Court of Justice. Linda, is climate a part of making these cases and should it be?

LINDA: I think definitely we need to be considering the climate impacts in all of this.

With the accelerating climate crisis, we are seeing more and more of the impacts on, like I said, on health and well being in general. And when you add in the impacts of war they are multiplying.

We talked already about environmental justice and racism and how we need to be considering that and the role that it plays even in our extractivist approaches to the way we live.

Even in the places such as Gaza, where there are so many harms being perpetrated there already, just with the war, and if you add in situations of extreme heat, and sometimes these environmental conditions, if you like, or climate catastrophes even, are being factored into how wars are being waged, they just compound the effects of the war as well. And they may be used as weapons in some ways. That there is drought, that there is floods, and these can sometimes be used, like I said, as weapons against people as well.

So, all of this needs to be considered. There again, if you can imagine having war in a situation where people are already do not have enough to eat or to drink because of the effects of climate or there is flooding. And people who are already being displaced or are unhoused because of war and conflict.

RESH: Thank you.

Tamara, what are the implications for global cooperation in a world at war? Is it at all possible to come together on averting or turning back the climate crisis?

TAMARA: Well, it is undeniable that we need international cooperation to solve the climate crisis because it is a transnational, environmental problem. And in the U. N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UNFCCC that was negotiated in 1992, it expressly said that international cooperation was needed to deal with climate change.

And in the latest climate agreement that came out from COP28 in Dubai. it's the new Global Stock Take - that 21 page text, it's divided into five parts. And the third part, the heading is International Cooperation. And the international community recognizes that multinational cooperation really is a prerequisite for ambitious climate action.

Even the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its Sixth Assessment Report that came out last spring, said in the final paragraph that "international cooperation was the crucial enabler for ambitious climate action and adaptation".

And so for us to have that international cooperation, we need to end the wars and we need to start working collaboratively with all the countries on this planet.

That means we need to work with Russia. We need to work with China. We need to work with Iran, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Venezuela, all of our so-called enemies on dealing with this crisis, because it's adversely affecting all of us.

You know, last year there were forest fires across Canada. There were forest fires and extreme heat in Russia too, and in China. And the only way that we are going to

be able to deal with this is by working together. So that means all of this money that we're now spending on militarism, on re-arming ourselves, we need to stop doing that, and we need to start collaborating and investing in cooperative climate solutions.

RESH: Thank you for that.

Linda, you know for our audience, why must we continue to focus the climate lens on conflict? And how do we do that?

LINDA: Yeah, so I think we just need to be having these conversations more and more.

Part of non-violent communication is listening. Listening to the other sides and as Tamara said, we need to be doing this on a global level, but also on a personal level.

When we do have differences of opinion, what can we learn from the other person? How to see things from a different perspective? How do we approach these issues that are global and that impact every one of us, as seeing these as issues that are common to everyone, but also to all of the life around us. And start talking about this, listening as much as we are speaking about it. Listening to the different points of view that are there and trying to find the common ground.

I think to keep on bringing up the conversations and learning about this. Learning about ways to be less violent and be more peaceful in the world.

RESH: Lovely. Thank you. And Tamara, what actions would you say to listeners that they can take in becoming involved in the pursuit of peace and climate justice?

TAMARA: Well, I would encourage listeners to join a local peace group and to get involved in building peace.

There's the Canada Wide Peace and Justice Network. So it's an umbrella organization of about 45 peace and anti-war groups from coast to coast. And the website is peaceandjusticenetwork.ca, and people can get involved.

And people can also participate in this really exciting campaign that we have this spring. It's called the On to Ottawa Peace Caravan. There are going to be people taking the train, biking, and carpooling from British Columbia and from Nova Scotia and converging on Ottawa. Leaving in mid-May and arriving into the capital on May 28th. This is the day before the big Arms Fair happens in Ottawa, CanSec. And so we are going to be trying to shut down CanSec and calling for a conversion from the war economy to a green-peace-care economy.

So we encourage people to join us and to help bring that message to Parliament. That we really need peace for climate justice and we need to cut military spending

and to invest in our urgent environmental and social needs that we have in this country.

RESH: Wonderful. Thank you so much.

And so with that, Tamara and Linda, thank you so much. It has been a pleasure.

LINDA: Thank you so much, Resh.

TAMARA: Thank you so much for having me.

RESH: That was Tamara Lorincz, environmental, feminist, and peace activist and Linda Thyer, physician and founding member of Doctors for Planetary Health- West Coast.

And this is the Courage My Friends podcast. I'm your host, Resh Budhu.

Thanks for listening.

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