

**2021 MAW Remembrance Lecture given by Asad Rehman,
Executive Director, War on Want
14 Nov 2021**

**“Walls, Fences and Guns”
How militarised and racialised capitalism is destroying the world**

[Tim Devereux] My name is Tim Devereux, I'm Chair of MAW. Welcome to the Movement for the Abolition of War's 21st Remembrance Lecture! Let me welcome Asad Rehman.

Previously Asad was the head of international climate at Friends of the Earth; he's now the executive director of War On Want, which is a movement committed to ending poverty and inequality. His expertise has led him to be today at the forefront of the climate justice movement in the UK and around the world, helping to reframe climate as an issue of racialised capitalism and economic and social injustice. He's the co-convenor of the Global Green New Deal Project to connect the climate crisis, neoliberal inequality, Covid and historical exploitation of the Global South. We're honoured to have him as our lecturer. Over to you Asad.

[Asad Rehman] Thank you very much and thank you for this really kind invitation to join all of you. Yep as you heard it my name is Asad Rehman, I'm the executive director of War on Want. I'm speaking to you from Glasgow having been here at the COP26 summit and I've been organizing. War on Want has been one of the founders and organizers of the COP26 coalition which brought together a very wide range of movements and organisations here in the UK from trade unions, faith organisations, environmental organisations but also migrant justice organisations, economic justice organisations in a quite unprecedented coalition that explicitly centred climate justice; and also I was committed to amplifying the voices and realities of the global south and really was trying to build the movement of movements that is needed for this crisis which we all recognize is an intersectional one.

Some of you, I know, have been in Glasgow as well, and just over the last two weeks I've seen this. I think I've had in the last two weeks somewhere about two to three hours a night and I'm a bit of a walking zombie at the moment! It was a very late night last night when the COP finished and with another betrayal of both people and justice and the realities of the climate crisis; but on the positive side I think the emerging movements that we've helped create - we organized 800 mobilisations globally as part of the global day of action, over 191 here in the UK, put 150 thousand people on the streets in Glasgow, in the midst of a Covid pandemic, a People's Summit with over 250 different panels and events, movement assemblies and also organising the inside of the negotiations as well from climate justice organisations.

I don't know how many of you who made it to Glasgow were actually inside the COP, but I think you'll probably see it was the most inaccessible and inequitable COP that has ever been organised, and makes a mockery of the UK government's claim early in the year that the COP26 would be conclusively the most accessible. Obviously the UK's very poor planning about the COP really just refocuses our attention on how little regard they had for the realities of people in the Global South. This COP was taking place in the midst of the pandemic and we as civil society had called for the COP to be postponed. The UK government as you probably all know has been one of the main countries blocking the lifting of the Covid vaccine patent, which has meant that in many countries of the Global South less than one percent of people have been vaccinated and for many people who are

coming from vulnerable and frontline communities even the idea of coming here and potentially risking themselves but also risking their own communities when they went back, in the midst of an economic recession where we've already seen hundreds of millions of jobs lost globally, whilst ordinary people and working people have been the hardest hit.

We know even here in the UK Covid did really magnify the structural inequalities and injustices within our own society and expose them between rich Global North societies and the Global South. Although some people seem to have done very very well during the Covid pandemic as you probably know the two thousand billionaires in the world saw their wealth increased by an incredible 5.5 trillion dollars in last year alone.

I'm looking around and I'm seeing so many familiar faces and faces who know probably way more than I will ever do on this issue, so I really just want to pay tribute to the work of Bruce [Kent] and Paul [Rogers] and many others who really have helped I think to lay the foundations of the shape of this movement that we are beginning to create, that recognises that the climate has never been simply an issue about carbon, it's fundamentally an issue about the world that we've created, an unequal world that we've created, and unless we understand that it's a systemic crisis, our solutions to it will either amplify or just reinforce the existing inequalities and injustices that exist.

I'm hoping all of you know who War on Want is, but if you don't, War on Want was actually set up in opposition to the war in Korea. Its main mission and vision derived from the call made by leading figures in the movement at the time, that the only war worth fighting is the war against want, and thousands of people responded to that call. I was reminded when I was coming to the COP, because we've been doing a lot on what the just transition would look like, that one of War on Want's first ever reports 70 years ago was a plan for world development, and it called for swords to be turned into ploughshares, for military spending to be redirected towards tackling global poverty and inequality, for universal welfare systems and public services. And if only those in power had listened to all of our calls, then we wouldn't be on the edge of the catastrophe that we currently face.

War on Want is also unique that it focuses on the root causes of poverty and inequality and injustice; we work with a network of movements and frontline communities all around the world. We don't set up projects as War on Want, we're not like other charities, development or aid or anything like that. We very much amplify and work with other movements so everybody from landless farmers and peasants to trade unionists working in the garment industry to frontline communities working against extraction, both existing mineral and metal, and the new wave of green extraction that we see in the green minerals and metals that are being touted for the new resource wars of the future. We also focus on campaigning here in the UK particularly, focusing on the policies of our own government from trade policies and unjust trade policies, policies around the power of corporations but also militarism.

We have a very very strong thematic area of work around militarism and security. We focus on the UK's role in the arms trade and also work very extensively on supporting movements and peoples particularly facing occupation. So we work extensively with movements in the Occupied Territories of Palestine. We also work with the Saharan people in Western Sahara and our call to end occupation is part and parcel by tradition of working around global justice issues and recognizing that the role of the Global North, what we used to call the West, in terms of its interventions in the Global South has been one of occupation, militarism, exploitation. We all know that simply discussing the realities of climate injustice, the killer fires and floods and famines we can all see now on our

television screens, that are destroying the lives of millions of people in the Global South, displacing them or how climate amplifies all the existing racial, patriarchal, economic injustices within societies and between the richest and poorest societies; and I think there is increasing recognition that the climate crisis is a result of the very same form of racialised capitalism that connects everything from the shackles of slavery, through these governments of colonialism, to what I call the noose of imperialism and neoliberalism, and its root has always been this idea that the lives of some people, particularly those in the Global South, can be sacrificed.

We don't have time here, but we could spend a lot of time going right back to talking about how the "doctrine of discovery" brings this notion and legitimises this idea of occupation and displacement and dispossession, and begins to codify this idea that the lives of and the very humanity of people in what the West call 'discovered lands' which were never lost, and then how that justification was used all the way through the history of the last few hundred years, and that the extraction of wealth and resources and exploitation of people has been sitting at the heart of that profit accumulation. And we could speak for a very very long time about, right back to the 1770s, how close to 86 per cent of all of the investments in the British economy at the time came from the profits of slave markets, slave plantations and slave commodities, and that powered the industrialization of Britain.

I'm sitting here in Glasgow. When I look around this beautiful city you see an incredible architecture, and Glasgow was built on the profits of much of that exploitation. There's another story of Glasgow which is of radicalism and the fight for justice here, but these are the two stories of Glasgow, and it's not just an historical reality. We know that just during the British Raj of India, for example, when Britain went to India its share of global GDP was about 24 per cent, when it left it was 4 percent, and in that time 45 trillion dollars had been taken out of India. It's said that Britain never financed a single war from its own coffers and that it was the profits and the extraction of wealth from the Global South that financed the massive expansion both of capitalism in the new colonies and Canada, Australia etc but also the militarised expansion of the empire.

But at the heart of all of these notions about, when we talk about racialised capitalism, and that sits at the heart all of these multiple crisis that we face, I like to categorize it as this idea of 'sacrifice zones'. In environmental justice work, particularly from the United States, the idea of environmental sacrifice zones where it came out when people were trying to explain how is it that in the United States you saw areas, particularly where black, Hispanic and white working-class communities live, which had this incredibly high incidence of ill health: cancer rates, poverty etc, and to explain that these environmental issues weren't simply abstract but that they were a result of political decisions that were being made, often to site the heaviest polluting factories and biggest infrastructure in some of the poorest communities, the people who had the least ability to be able to affect the political process, and so in the United States this idea is these are sacrifice zones that have been just hard-wired into our economies, into our political systems. I think the idea of sacrifice zones is not simply geographical or even at moments of time, but it's clearly now both an historical and a present day calculation - that the lives of the poorest black, brown, and indigenous people can be sacrificed, and it still sits at the core of a lot of policy making in the Global North.

Because obviously much of our media at the moment is dominated by the COP26, I want to just say a little bit about the climate reality. I'm sure probably many of you are well aware of this. We all know now that breaching the critical 1.5 degree guard rail tips us into

what is called catastrophic climate change. It's when runaway climate change begins, when the impacts that we're already seeing (and these are all impacts that are happening at just over one degree warming) will begin to spiral out of control and begin to amplify themselves, so the hotter the planet, the more ice melts, the more sea level rises the more it'll change our weather systems; more extreme weather, more extreme weather, more ice melting etc, and so our ability to even begin to intervene and to be able to cut emissions becomes more and more challenging, and we are then in an era of talking about how do we even begin to adapt to these realities. In a couple of months' time the IPCC, which is the climate scientists of the world, will issue a new report basically saying that the ability of the world and world's peoples, particularly frontline people, to adapt to the climate crisis has pretty much reached the furthest it can go, and now we are moving into an era of incredible losses and damages. So we know, and you hear this phrase quite a lot, "1.5 to stay alive". We coined it many many years ago, fighting around climate, when we were trying to convince policymakers and even actually mainstream environmentalists in the UK that their call for a limit to two degrees was built on an acceptance of huge impacts in the Global South. Already movements decades ago were saying, "No temperature level increase is safe" and, "It's deadly for many and it's deadly for the people that you don't deem valuable, and it's deadly for our planet and our ecosystems."

Being here in Glasgow reminded me of Copenhagen in 2009 when we were calling for the UN summit to adopt a limit of one degree; and if only we'd been successful then we would not be seeing the scale of impacts that are happening here now. Some tough realities! and I think it's incumbent upon us to always know the truth, because truth is something that is massaged quite a lot and it depends on the perspectives and the realities of those who tell you their version of the truth; but I think for us as progressive people it's really important to recognize that the carbon budget for 1.5 degrees is currently about between five and ten years at the current rate of emissions and even that is based on a one in three chance of breaching that critical 1.5 degree guard rail. Now none of us would get on a bus or a train if there was a one in three chance of it crashing, but that's what policymakers are telling people in the Global South, "That's the best we can do".

Instead of recognising that the call for halving all emissions by 2030 and then being at zero by 2050 means that the richest (because most of this problem, 18 percent of the world's population, overwhelmingly in the Global North, are still historically responsible for over 60 percent of global emissions, and that's at the lowest rate. There are other estimates that it's way higher if you begin to calculate what we call embodied emissions or consumption emissions.) So much emissions that are coming from the Global South are overwhelmingly for use in the Global North; but what we've seen here in the halls of Glasgow is what has been termed carbon colonialism, the idea that the richest countries can seize even more of what's remaining of the carbon budget and that they can bank on technologies that simply don't exist, or they're unproven, risky technologies; and the one technology that does exist is called "bio energy and carbon capture and storage" which is the idea that you can grow more green things and they'll suck carbon out the atmosphere.

Now the problem is we live in a world which has got a finite amount of land and actually there's not a huge amount of land. If you currently look at, for example, land as we see it, you would need about three times the land mass of India simply to meet the net zero promises of some of the richest countries in the world. Now that land doesn't sit somewhere magically in that way of, like, "Oh, we never use this land, let's do it there!" - the reality will mean it will begin to create a further displacement of people and we know what that has meant: militarised responses. And interestingly, even the conversations around protecting current forests, what the prime minister said was "the lungs of the

world”, is often prefaced on this idea of creating reserves, displacing the very people who live and have sustained those forests from them, and that's done because we only calculate the value of those forests in terms of carbon, not in terms of how they are part and parcel of indigenous and forest dwelling communities - part of their life systems and their relationship with land.

The second part I just wanted to just mention because I think it's probably all over everybody's televisions at the moment with the COP. Back in 2009 the then secretary of state for the United States, Hillary Clinton, plucked out a number from thin air and said, “A hundred billion is what the poorest countries and developing countries need in finance to deal with both the climate impacts and for them to be able to adapt to this crisis.” Now you probably know that for 12 years that \$100 billion has not been met, and of the \$100 billion money that has been provided (which again, at its most generous, if you go by the OECD which calculates literally every penny of everything, and so not actual climate finance, it's about \$60 billion; if you calculate new and additional finance then it's about just over \$20 billion), eighty percent of that is in debt creating loans. This is a moment when we know that both with the pandemic and the existing debt crisis we've seen many many countries overwhelmed - their own economic systems, their ability to be able to protect their citizens; and incredibly, the poorest countries are paying about \$800 billion to the Global North in unsustainable debt repayments and therefore more debt creating loans. From the estimates, and that's a far cry from actual need if you look at the UN's own estimates, at a minimum you need between \$1.5 trillion and \$2.4 trillion, some estimating even higher, a year for the next 10 years, if we want to try and transform and tackle both the climate crisis and inequality. I'm just going to throw in there - there's a paradigm which says if only we gave more aid everything would be okay - for every one dollar that flows to the Global South from the North, global capital still takes out \$24 from the South to the North. The seminal book by Walter Rodney, “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa”, sets out that even in the 1970s, the structural systems that were in place meant that the wealth of the Global South flows to the Global North, and that is still a reality .

I think for a long time many in this climate movement turned their back on the principles of (I don't know, I hope it's a word that we all used to use, and we want to try and bring back) of *anti-imperialism*; of the notion that justice goes beyond the borders of our nation state; and some have always seen the climate has been just an existential issue. I was reminded of that when I heard the European Union's commissioner, in the plenary last night, put up a picture of his grandchildren and say, “My grandchildren will be 30 in that time and I don't want them to be fighting resource wars for food and water”. The reality is, well, those resource wars already exist now and the children, it's not the children of the future but children already in the Global South who are facing this. So challenging that in terms of not looking at this through a narrow lens of just carbon, or not thinking about it also in terms of how the Global North protects their own economies, (and you see this very much in the narrative about, “We have to protect British jobs at home”,) there's a flip side and a third pillar to that which is around the militarised responses that are being already part baked into that.

I think it's important for us as progressives and as part of the progressive movement, to really re-establish and bring and recognize the importance of that word *solidarity*. I've always said it's the most important word of the working class movement; it was the most important word in the anti-racist movement where I first was involved decades ago, and it's the most important word in both the broader climate justice movement and this movement that we're in, and the reason why is that we need to look at these issues beyond looking at them in silos or focusing only on their impacts now. Many

people look at, for example, particularly on this issue about militarised walls and fences, and say “Look, these extreme weather events are going to displace people,” and there are UN estimates that one in 30 people in the future will be displaced from their homes from extreme weather events. But simply looking at those people who are being displaced from extreme weather, fails to recognise that the displacement of people is both from economic, conflict, and climate and they're often results of the same systems.

It's said for example that the conflict in Syria, which has many many different reasons as to why it's been taking place, and continues to ravage Syria and bring misery to the people of Syria, was that Syria faced one of its longest ever droughts, and a food crisis, and a forced displacement of people from rural to urban areas; that both the positive part of the Arab Spring but also the reactionary part in terms of the militarised response to the Arab Spring was started because of, not just a lot of issues around democracy, but also very fundamental issues in terms of the collapse of food, of agriculture, food prices increasing threefold etc. So we're already beginning to see that looking at climate or looking at conflict can't be seen in isolation and increasingly they reinforce and are results of the same systems.

We face at this moment this idea of, “Well we need to cut our emissions at speed” - and of course we do need to cut our emissions at speed. It's done in the name of protecting economic interest, and it's really interesting to see both some parts of what I would call the “Red Left” and the Green movement triangulate to the right on internationalism and migration, using much of the same arguments that the right have traditionally used; and begin to wrap itself up in this flag of patriotism. Some of you may follow European politics see there's a Danish Red-Green government in place, and the Danish government is applauded often because of the steps that it's taken around climate. But in order to get elected, actually it decided that if it wanted to deliver on climate, they needed to move to the right, and more right than the far right, on issues of being anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim; and so some of the most draconian and xenophobic laws in terms of anti-migration are now being enacted in Denmark. So on the one hand it's a champion of climate but on the on the same hand it's popularizing the narratives of the far right; and this argument is done because people argue we need to win the social license, and the only way to win the social license is to recognise where people are and we have to respond to that. And if Europe is increasingly xenophobic and anti-migrant, then for us to succeed on climate we have to accommodate those views and those ideas.

And secondly there is also a conversation about, “We can't go too fast in the Global North”. Now at the heart of the climate crisis ultimately you can try and go slow; you can cook the books, but you can't fiddle the physics of climate, right, and so the only way you're able to go slowly in the Global North is if you then calculate that what happens in the Global South is baked in. That you are accepting a level of violence and displacement and disruption to the Global South and that winning slowly really is a luxury only in the Global North and not in the Global South.

And thirdly, (sorry I'm giving you a very doomed story about climate) the third element which I think is also really important for us as progressives to be aware of in this conversation, is that much of the conversations about transitioning the Global North requires a doubling of resource extraction of the Global South. Now if you look at the OECD, at the moment they say that we currently used about 89 billion tons of materials from a finite planet, and that within the coming decades that will double. A sustainable level is about 50 billion. Now we know when we talk about that in the sense of just saying, “Oh it's material use” it doesn't tell the story; but actually what that is, is poisoning of air, land,

water, of communities, and displacement and increasingly a militarised response to communities. If when we hear that two environmental defenders are murdered each and every week, that's what they're murdered for. It's murdered because they stand in the way of the extraction of those resources; and a new wave of green extraction, this time being told it's necessary to save us all, will simply further reinforce that securitisation agenda. In fact before Covid we were at BHP Billiton, which is one of the biggest mining giants in the world (It's domiciled here in the UK) with communities from Chile, Colombia and Argentina talking about what was happening to them: the displacement, the role of the mining company, the violence etc, and what I find really telling was that it didn't deny any of these impacts or anything. The chair and the CEO basically said, "But we are needed for the green transition, we are the future, we are going to save the world". And so there's already building a logic into that, which is, that these next decades are going to be about these critical resources. We know rare earth minerals are metals. Most people are, you're all aware, that current estimates already say our need would be 400 per cent of the existing lithium and cobalt, but it's not just those rare earth minerals and metals. We will need a massive amount of iron and copper. And so the same ravages of extraction and violence reproduce itself, and the same logic is reproduced and the same militarised response also follows it. So how do we look at this moment? Well, I think it really requires us to step back and really begin to tell a very very different story of the world.

I often say that neoliberalism's biggest victory was not the damage it's done in terms of our economic and political structures, not its forced privatization or its corporate power or its attack on our democratic spaces. It's actually what it did to all of us as people. It took away our ability to be able to imagine that there is anything different, that this moment we live in is permanent, it is somehow inevitable; and we've all heard this, "There is no alternative, it's the market, it's this, all the best we can ever do is tinker around the edges." But this is a moment for us, I think, to think really bold. I don't want to quote the architect of neoliberalism, Milton Friedman, but he did say something very telling: "Only a crisis, perceived or real, creates profound change." And what matters is the ideas and policies that are lying around, and our ability then to make the politically impossible to become the politically inevitable. I think this is a real moment for us, when we talk about the "movement of movements", that we all know, because none of us can win and fight where we are by ourselves. We recognise they are much more powerful than we are individually, but collectively we do have a hope. So I wanted to just say a little bit first about what that vision is, before I say a little bit about securitisation.

So this is a moment where I think we need to be talking about a really radical anti-militarised Global Green New Deal, one that's anti-imperialist. Yes, it fights for 1.5C, says rich countries need to do their fair share, we need to have decarbonisation in the Global North, and it recognises that that can't be done through a new wave of resource wars, that you actually have to think about energy and food in a very very different way. So the answer isn't simply saying, "Let's end fossil fuels and go to renewable energy," because that's just simply impossible. We have a world where 60 percent of the world don't have access to electricity or clean cooking. Energy demand is massively increasing, yet we need to reduce by 60 percent our energy use. How do you do that? You can't do that simply with renewable energy, you have to start thinking about energy in a very very different way, energy as a social good, as a product.

What energy do we need for our well-being and for a productive economy and not for wasteful economy? And of course one of the largest consumers of energy, as we know, is the military. So to begin to ask this question, "Well, what do we deem to be important within this future world we're all trying to create?" Similarly with food; but it also needs to

tackle inequality and poverty: similar figures. Often we're all told this story that global poverty is falling; and it falls if you accept that the poverty level is \$1.90, if you accept it; but the reality of actual poverty is about \$5.50 a day and that's not \$5.50, it's the equivalent of what \$5.50 would buy you in the United States. And if you calculate that way, then we're talking about three and a half billion people are living on less than \$5.50 a day.

You need about \$10 a day to be able to escape poverty; you need about \$15 a day to be able to live with some sense of dignity. Not all the consumption of the West, but to be able to say, "I can feed myself, I can put a shelter, I can send my kids to education and I can access some basic services". So the ability to be able to live with dignity requires us to be at that level, and that needs us to be making arguments about living wages. So, here in the UK I'm sure all of us recognise that poverty wages and poverty pay. with 4.2 million people relying on food banks, that the answer is £15 an hour, but if we're making arguments about £15 an hour here, we should be realising that internationalism says then at least we should be doing \$15 a day in the Global South. And we all recognize, in this last year more than ever, that social protection and universal public services are the critical determining factor between when crisis hits. And that's been as true for climate and for economic inequality and poverty as it is for Covid.

So beginning to think about social protection and universal public services, a global NHS, a global welfare system, these are not ideas that are impossible; and as I said, 70 years ago War on Want wrote that in its first plan, and said it's actually totally possible and it has always been technically possible. We have enough resources to be able to do it. Obviously the main barrier has always been political will, but secondly to put people's well-being ahead of this idea of growth and consumption of the age. But to be able to do all of those you really need to begin, and this is where I think we play collectively a really important part in this conversation, when people talk about delivering those three things, you can only do them when you begin to say, "What are the systems of oppression that sit in the way of doing that?" So people often say, "Well that's racism, it's colonialism," and we have to say, "Absolutely", but that's also about *militarism* as well, both in where resources are being funnelled but also the systems that have been hardwired into the realities of dealing with the climate crisis.

I'm going to come to that, because there is a danger at this moment, that this doom and urgency of the climate crisis begins to validate that any response in the face of this climate crisis is legitimate, right, because if we are standing on the edge of catastrophe then of course you do anything, but *what* you do really matters, and the *logic* of what you do really really matters. Too much of our movement has forgotten that our progressive movement was rooted always in anti-militarism; that we recognize this argument that for ploughshares you need to beat swords. This question about, "There's never enough money": I said we have never enough money for the £hundred billion. but we managed to find over £12 trillion in the last year for the Covid responses; we found £16 trillion to bail out the banks in 2008, but it's impossible to find this paltry figure and of course that is a drop in the ocean when it comes to global military spending, and particularly spending by the richest countries in the North.

So in this vision is why it's really important to recognise that our movements have moved away and jettisoned these ideas of internationalism and anti-militarism, and "How do we rebuild global solidarity in there?" is a really really important part. So I want to just maybe then talk about the second part which is: often people look at this moment and they say, "Yes we have a vision of the world, and we know change needs to happen" and actually it's not that change is *not* going to happen. I think we all know changes *are* now

going to happen; there is no way that change is not going to happen. The only question is going to be, what kind of change will it be? Who will be sacrificed, who won't be sacrificed, who will pay the heaviest price, and that it's also about class.

It's all of those issues, but one area which I think should be of extreme concern to all of us, is this narrative and this language that the climate crisis requires a new way: a language of wars and fences, buttressed by these arguments, by racism and xenophobia and an anti-migrant rhetoric. It's interesting because it comes at a moment where our language, to some extent, and our critique of the world, is even being echoed back. I mean I've been struck by how many world leaders now talk about 'multiple crises' and talk about poverty and climate, even talk about 'just transition' and talk about that 'we know change is going to come'. We had our prime minister talking about 'one minute to midnight' and 'change is going to come' and 'it will be the poorest who will be affected', 'we need to have all of this change'. We've had the secretary general last year talking about that free markets can't deliver, that we're not in the same boat. We've had the UN special rapporteurs talk about climate apartheid. We've had the secretary general talking about Covid apartheid. I think there's an increasingly important recognition about that. So this is a collective work that we all have to do, which is: we have to provide an intellectual framework and political education and we have to remember to tell and be the connective tissue between these movements and tell a very very different story as to how and why we got here.

Many of us, I know, have campaigned for decades and we have a story to tell which is, "Look, the Global South is where it is, not because of some accident but because of our politics of militarisation and military intervention." Not just about the war in Iraq for resources, but going all the way back of the overthrowing of Mosaddegh, the assassination of Allende, of Patrice Lumumba. Always, fundamentally, movements and leaders that stood in the way of the extraction of resources from their countries for accumulation of profit and to be directed to the Global North. That's a very very different story to the story of how the climate has just happened in abstract, that actually there hasn't been this bloody hand of militarism that has played a part and parcel of this. I think only when we begin to do that, that we begin to tell the story of militarisation and securitisation and begin to remind people that the answer isn't going to be that.

So, just talking a little bit about that securitisation agenda. Often progressives think that the Right, and I talk about the Right as in the Far Right, are all climate denialists. Now it's true that people like Trump and Bolsonaro do propagate a climate denialism on one level, largely to protect the economic interests of big industrial agribusiness and fossil fuel giants etc, and that alongside their climate denialism is a very militarised authoritarianism. You look at Duterte and the 40 thousand people who've been killed in the so-called war on drugs, but also the trade union leaders who have been assassinated, environmental leaders etc. You see similarly with Bolsonaro the huge repression of indigenous movements and of progressive movements and we saw with Trump this normalization of extreme right-wing populism, and what it meant in the United States. But actually there's another part of the right which I think is a lot more concerning for us, and that part of the right is what I would call the populist far right, and that populist far right which emerged from the ruins of the financial crisis in 2008 has been very adept at adopting much of our critique of the economic systems, but then tailoring it and using it to justify their ethno-nationalist politics. We saw that with Orbán in Hungary, with Salvini in Italy, Le Pen in France, and you see it again and again and again. We use the language of "no one left behind". The working class have been failed by corporate elites but the answer of course is that the threat of the of black, brown, muslim etc requires us to protect our own.

They also use the climate emergency, in fact they are making stronger use of climate science than many of our leaders do, and they're much more literate about what the carbon budgets are and they already are saying, "Yes this is inevitable now, it's catastrophic, the only question is going to be how do you respond?" and their argument is, "It's impossible to respond so what we need are walls and fences" and since we already saw the influence of that narrative of walls and fences which has become so normalized that I think many of us were highlighting these issues decades ago, and said there will come a time when the European Union will sit by and allow people to drown in the Mediterranean. People said, "That will never happen, liberal democracy in the west would never allow that to happen, we're built on the principles of human rights" and we see that happening in the Mediterranean. We have a Home Secretary who's now saying, "If a border officer takes the life of a migrant in the process of stopping them, that's totally acceptable and they should be able to do that with impunity". We've seen the whole rolling back, and we saw the government talk about, that the response to this migration on the small boat says, "We need more warships, we need more warships".

But that play, that story isn't just there in the extreme Right, it comes from the role of actually a very senior military, the war apparatus as such. I always say, "If you ever want to see who understood climate the best look at what the military are writing" and that's been true for decades. The US military has long been writing about the climate crisis and has been putting forth this argument that this moment requires climate security, and it sees this moment in policy and probably policy framework that says, "Look, we're going to have these extreme weathers, there's going to be massive disruption and they're going to disrupt our economic, social and environmental systems: therefore what that means is a security issue". And when we think about security issues that's overwhelmingly the security of the Global North, and the military sees that and then begins to say "Well if it's a security issue, what are the threats? who are the threats? and how do we address those threats? and then how do we begin to put in place policies?"

Now part of the military are talking about how these extreme weather events will affect their military, their bases, or how will conflict happen, or how will climate trigger new conflicts. So if you look at their thinking on climate security it's really interesting: they are pinpointing, "Listen, when we get to 1.1C or 1.2C and you start to see collapses in food production across the Sahel, it will lead to displacement of people, that will lead to violence and conflict, you will lead to people moving. Conflicts between pastoralists and traditional farmers there will be and space will be created" and very much fitting into their logic of the war on terror and that these will be new theatres, new theatres of war will start to happen because of this. But they also predict there will be new theatres of war because these crises will create a demand for new resources, whether that's food or these new minerals, but also geopolitical: so, the more the ice melts in the Arctic, more possibilities of more extraction of resources, and more new shipping routes and so climate becomes this, (it's often they use this word) *threat multiplier* or a catalyst to conflict. The language within the military, and you see it again, is around this, "We're gonna be in a persistent conflict, this is going to be more unpredictable than during the cold war, and as such we need to increase our militarised budget".

I always remind people that we all of us looked aghast at Trump when he started banging the drum about, "Build the wall, build the wall" but actually the build-a-wall argument was first normalised by the US military in its reports. It said, "In future, climate will create a displacement of people and force migration of people from the Caribbean and Latin and Central America and they will be a threat to the United States and our only

option will be to build a wall between the US and Mexico” and they began making the argument for increased border security, for new border technologies and actually that budget began growing and growing and growing and so when Trump was looking for that, these ideas didn't come from the far right they actually were sitting with the US military that they picked up and started to talk about. And it's not just right-wing leaders like Donald Trump. If you look at even President Biden when he talks about climate, he talks about his national security priority. NATO have got plans on climate and security. The UK has declared it a security issue. Increasingly the language is beginning to permeate everywhere.

The UN security council earlier this year had a high level debate on climate and security. Walk around the plenary rooms and the meeting rooms, what I call the Davos trade fair that's taking place at the COP26, and you see people talking about climate and security as the justification for certain approaches, saying “This is now a security issue”, and if it's a security issue then that begins a logic, an approach in a particular way. The flip side to that is you also see those very same regimes talking about people protesting about climate. That has also been a security issue, because we threaten core part national or the economic infrastructure and I don't think it's a surprise that the government is forcing through the most restrictive legislation on the Right to Protest that we've ever seen. Effectively we'll be criminalising what we've longed for, which is a fundamental right, because the idea of a protest not causing nuisance and allowing people to define what nuisance is, in itself begins that narrowing of civil society space.

Anybody who has gone to Glasgow in the last two weeks will tell you one thing: Glasgow was like a military city. There were more police on the streets, more fences, more walls, more barriers than we've ever seen, and increasingly that's how the state will also begin to respond to those of us who want to see change. So, not just walls and fences for the outside, but walls and fences on the inside, and anybody who goes to the arms trade fairs will tell you that a lot of the technologies there now are no longer about just the guns and tanks and ships, which are all there, but they're all about new technologies, about fences and walls, and facial recognition and control etc. A new wave of what I call social and political control. We've seen that in the increasing number of walls and fences that are now littering around the world. The idea of a wall and militarised walls has become so prevalent that India is talking about a wall all around it; then we talk about walling Kashmir. We've seen the same: the apartheid wall in Israel and Palestine is being exported and the argument is, “This works.” You see Moroccans building a militarised fence around the Western Sahara as well. So this is becoming, not just something in fantasy in years to come, but already a reality.

What's really worrying for all of us, should be worrying for all of us, is that the very countries that yesterday in the climate negotiations were saying, “We can't act any faster, we can't do any of this” are the very same who are pouring more and more money into defence planning around security. It's the UK, the United States, Canada, Germany. All of these countries are all beginning to say, (and I've sat in policy meetings with policymakers, having worked at the UN for about 15 years,) that they are planning for a two, two and a half degree world, and they see that two and a half degree world as being a world of violence and extreme resource wars, and they're already planning for it. They're already saying, “We are going to be prepared”. I think that that is something that should be of huge concern and it's important, I think, again for us as a movement to bring that into this emerging new climate justice movement: that where people talk about and recognise fossil fuels and renewable energy but don't really centre the importance of both preventing this new wave of militarisation but also making the arguments, that if we're looking for money

in the finance and the resource of technology, it's there, it's just in the military budgets rather than anywhere else in the world.

Paul [Rogers] is here on this call so I know he's done a lot of the heavy lifting on this area of work, really trying to draw a lot of attention to it, but it is not just the military that is talking about this. What should worry us is the number of voices within broad civil society which are also beginning to talk about using the security agenda. I often warn people that making the argument, "We must act on climate because one in 30 people will be displaced from the world", actually creates a logic that they want us to create. So we have to be changing that discourse from about the 1 in 30 people being displaced, as these 1 in 30 people will ever cross international borders and come to the West, to begin an argument about, "We have to make sure, yes, people have the right to move, but people should have the right *not* to move, and the right not to move requires us to have a very very different approach and this approach is not going to be solved by military budgets, by militarisation, bombs, war etc. It's going to be solved by the various things that we talked about in the beginning: public services, security in terms of economic security not militarised security.

I just want to end – there's so much more which we could talk about on this issue - so I'm just trying to think about one of the issues which is really important for us, and maybe an area we collectively need to be looking much more at: who are the businesses and corporations that are sitting at the heart of this new nexus? Because often they are exactly the same corporate interests that have got links with extractive industry, with the new mining giants etc and I think that's a way for us to begin to tell a very very different story when people talk about militarisation; because often people talk about it only in that it's country to country. It's when we bombed Iraq, but nothing about the web of militarisation that takes place through private security, through securitisation. This agenda actually is a state subcontracting that down into new private security entities and forces. We know that by this logic it simply begins to even narrow the policy spaces for the kind of transitions that we generally want.

I'll stop there because I'd love to us to have more of an opportunity to have a conversation with everybody. Thank you so much.