Military v climate spending in the UK

Dr Stuart Parkinson

Scientists for Global Responsibility

http://www.sgr.org.uk/

Presentation at Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS) UK webinar, 22 February 2021; https://demilitarize.org.uk/
Military/ climate – extra spending

- In November 2020, PM Boris Johnson announced extra spending for military & climate – two prominent numbers...
- Extra **£16.5bn** for Ministry of Defence
- **£12bn** for ‘10 point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution’
- Similar or not?

Sources: Prime Minister’s Office (2020); BEIS (2020).
But...

- Ministry of Defence
  - Total extra spending over 4y: £24bn (£6bn/y)
- ‘10 point plan for Green Industrial Revolution’
  - Total spending over 4y: max. £11bn (£2.8bn/y)

Sources: Prime Minister’s Office (2020); BEIS (2020).
What climate spending do we need?

- Transition to net zero UK carbon emissions requires investment spending...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current annual spending</th>
<th>Total necessary annual spending</th>
<th>Target date for zero emissions</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole economy (govt, business, households)</td>
<td>£10bn</td>
<td>£50bn</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>Committee on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt spending</td>
<td>£5bn</td>
<td>£10bn</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>Committee on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt spending</td>
<td>£3.1bn</td>
<td>£15bn+</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>This presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Figures in 1st two rows from: CCC (2020), table 6.1, p310; ‘necessary’ govt spending is rounded (actual range is £9-12bn)
- ‘This presentation’
  - Current govt spending has been reduced by £1.9bn as Green Home Grants programme will only spend 5% of its budget this year due to mismanagement (Guardian, 2021)
  - Figures for meeting 2030 net zero emissions target are hard to find – £15bn is rough minimum estimate
Military v climate: total govt spend

- Military total does not include Trident contingency fund, military pensions etc
- No official govt figures for annual climate spending

Main sources: HM Treasury (2020); CCC (2020); Guardian (2021)

Calculations based on: HM Treasury (2020); CCC (2020); Guardian (2021)
Military v climate: total govt spend

- Military total does not include Trident contingency fund, military pensions etc
- Extra needed for Net Zero 2030 is minimum value

Main sources: HM Treasury (2020); CCC (2020); Prime Minister’s Office (2020); BEIS (2020); Guardian (2021)

Calculations based on: HM Treasury (2020); CCC (2020); Prime Minister’s Office (2020); BEIS (2020); Guardian (2021)
UK government-funded R&D, 2018

- Military R&D spending will double in 2021
- Renewable energy R&D spending unlikely to rise much

- Military spending figures from: Office of National Statistics (2020)
- Renewable energy spending from: International Energy Agency (2020)
- Future spending plans: Prime Minister’s Office (2020); BEIS (2020)
- New ‘high risk’ R&D agency, ARIA, founded in February 2021 – many ethical concerns
‘10 point plan for Green Industrial Revolution’

- 1: Offshore wind
- 2: Low carbon hydrogen
- 3: New/ advanced nuclear power
- 4: Zero emission vehicles
- 5: Green public transport, cycling & walking
- 6: Zero emissions planes & ships
- 7: Greener buildings
- 8: Carbon capture, usage and storage
- 9: Natural environment
- 10: Green finance and innovation

Advanced nuclear power included but onshore wind & solar excluded – despite major benefits of renewables
Was there military influence?

- 10 point plan: BEIS (2020)
- Military-civilian nuclear links, see: Johnstone (2020)
Job creation: govt projections

• Extra £24bn of military tech spending
  – 40,000 jobs in 4y
• Extra £11bn spending for 10 point climate plan
  – 90,000 jobs in 4y
• So climate spending could create about 5x as many jobs per £bn of govt investment

• Further detailed economic analysis needed to verify this – there is a question about jobs ‘created’ v jobs ‘transferred’ from one sector to another
• Figures from: BEIS (2020); Prime Minister’s Office (2020).
UK military contribution to climate crisis

- **UK military carbon footprint**
  - At least 11 million tonnes CO2 equivalent
  - Comparable with annual use of 6 million cars

- **UK deployment of nuclear weapons**
  - If used, warheads carried by one Trident submarine could cause ‘nuclear winter’

- Nuclear winter is a catastrophic climate cooling caused by smoke from nuclear explosions & firestorms rising into the stratosphere blocking Sun’s warmth

- Sources: SGR (2020); SGR (2015)
### Current UK govt spending plans

- Extra £6bn/y on (eg)...  
  - Playing leading role in robotic arms race  
  - Deploying aircraft carrier group to South China Sea etc  
  - Deploying nuclear weapons, creating risk of nuclear winter  
  - Exporting weapons to fossil fuel dictatorships  
  - Fuelling international tension  

- Extra £2.7bn/y on...  
  - Carbon reduction measures  
  - Including speculative tech unlikely to help  
  - Not enough for climate crisis, hence rise in instability and war

### Spending plan for tackling climate emergency

- Extra £7bn/y on hitting 2050 net zero climate target  
  - Including wide range of energy conservation, renewable energy, energy storage & nature options  
  - Some behaviour change  

- Extra £12bn+/y on hitting 2030 net zero climate target  
  - Accelerated carbon emissions reduction  
  - Behaviour change, especially for wealthy  
  - Environmental justice & conflict prevention prioritised

- Extra £7bn/y spending plan is CCC (2020) option  
- Extra £12bn+/y spending plan is high ambition plan to approach Paris 1.5C target  
- More detail in slides 4+6
References


