

**News Release**

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**GOVERNMENT SPENDING DECISIONS ON DEFENCE AND DEVELOPMENT UNDERMINE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

Rethinking Security, a network of peace and security experts, today criticised the Prime Minister's pending announcement to grant an exceptional four-year increase to the Ministry of Defence's budget while other government departments face swingeing cuts and long-term funding uncertainty.

Reports that the Treasury is considering a significant and exceptional reduction in spending on overseas development aid from the legally mandated 0.7% of GNI to 0.5% in 2021/22 are of great concern. This would further undermine conflict-affected and developing countries in the midst of pandemic and global recession and damage the UK's attempt to position itself as a 'force for good' in the world.

The prioritisation of military spending over other levers of influence also pre-empts and undermines the much-delayed Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, which was supposed to integrate and balance the needs of different departments concerned with international security.

The additional sums allocated to Defence over the current parliament are expected to be at least triple the £8 billion in new funds allocated to a green recovery by PM Johnson on 18 November.

**Rethinking Security Co-ordinator Richard Reeve said:**

"By prioritising military spending over other means of influencing international security, the government is sending a powerful signal that *Global Britain*'s security strategy is increasingly and overwhelmingly about projecting military power.

Spending and behaving more like the United States and Russia than our European neighbours will not make the UK more respected, trusted or effective in global affairs.

If the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us one thing it is that the real threats to people's lives and livelihoods cannot be tackled by spending on weapons. A return to cold war confrontation makes us all less safe and does nothing to address health crises, ecological collapse or colossal inequalities.

The government's spending calculus is a retrograde step that would reverse two decades of rebalancing from defence to development, coercion to cooperation. The Integrated Review is disintegrating before our eyes."

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

1. Rethinking Security Co-ordinator, Richard Reeve is available for comment – 07811 362054
2. The Rethinking Security media page and factsheet is at [www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/media](http://www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/media)
3. Rethinking Security's evidence submission to the Integrated Review (Sep 2020) can be viewed at <https://rethinkingsecurityorguk.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/rs-submission-to-the-integrated-review-03-sep-2020.pdf>
4. About Rethinking Security:
  - Short description – Rethinking Security is a network of peace and security experts.
  - Long description – Rethinking Security is a network of organisations, academics and activists working together for security based on justice, co-operation and sustainability.
5. Member organisations:
  - Campaign Against Arms Trade
  - Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament
  - Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy
  - Conciliation Resources
  - Forces Watch
  - International Alert
  - Medact
  - Movement for the Abolition of War
  - Northern Friends Peace Board
  - Oxford Research Group
  - Peace Direct
  - Quaker Peace And Social Witness
  - Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network
  - Saferworld
  - Scientists for Global Responsibility
  - United Nations Association – UK
  - War on Want

Our work also benefits substantially from the active participation of academics from the universities of Bradford, Coventry, Kent, LSE and Oxford Brookes.