

Courage My Friends Podcast Series XI – Episode 1
The Carbon Footprint: How Canada's War Economy Fuels the Climate Crisis

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

Needs No Introduction is a rabble podcast network show that serves up a series of speeches, interviews and lectures from the finest minds of our time

RESH: What does Canada's militarization of the economy look like? And why is this happening? Can we reconcile our climate commitments to this new war footing? Is this moving us further away from or closer to integration with the US? And as we accelerate into the most destructive industry on earth, what are the true costs to our sovereignty, people and planet?

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COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: Welcome back to this podcast series by rabble.ca and the Tommy Douglas Institute of Labour and Social Justice at George Brown Polytechnic.

In the words of the great Tommy Douglas...

TOMMY (Actor): Courage my friends, 'tis not too late to build a better world

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

RESH: Welcome to the premier episode of Season 11, *The Carbon Footprint: How Canada's War Economy Fuels the Climate Crisis*.

I'm your host Resh Budhu.

In our first episode of the season we are joined by environmentalist, feminist, peace activist and Senior Researcher with Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, Tamara Lorincz and climate policy researcher and advocate with Greenpeace Canada, Keith Stewart.

As we head into the Global Week of Action for Peace and Climate Justice, we discuss Canada's accelerating shift toward a militarized economy, what this looks like and how this is not only failing to address our true security needs, but is coming at considerable cost to our sovereignty, people and planet.

Tamara and Keith, welcome. Thanks for joining us.

Tamara, we last spoke on militarism and the climate crisis two years ago. In the last year, the Carney government has led the most sweeping overhaul of the Canadian economy in decades, essentially militarizing the economy.

Now, a lot is happening, but could you give us a snapshot of what this looks like in terms of spending and the major developments?

TAMARA: Thank you very much for inviting me back and talking about this crucially important topic because the militarization of the economy is actually the top priority for the Carney government.

When Carney came into power in, you know, May of 2025, the very first announcement that he made was rebuilding, rearming, and reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces, and committing to the 2% GDP target for NATO and also the 5% GDP target for NATO. So this has meant that Canada, has massively increased military spending.

So last year our military spending was \$44 billion, this year it's \$64 billion to meet the 2% target. And then Carney has committed us to reach the 5% target by 2035, which will be \$150 billion. So in the past year, Carney has introduced these new, programs and institutions to enable this militarization. And that is establishing a Defense Industrial Strategy and a Defense Investment Agency. And these new programs were revealed in the federal budget that came out last November. And it was very clear in that 400-page budget document that defense was the priority for the Carney government.

And for many of us in the progressive, you know, Left community, many of us who were expecting to see climate to be a priority felt really very betrayed by this, this hard Right turn to wanting to have defense to be the priority and massively militarizing the economy.

RESH: Right. And part of the defense uh, the defense strategy is tech and AI. Keith, tell us about the role of tech and AI in this new defense strategy and our relationship- Yeah ... with the brologarchy as well.

KEITH: Yeah. Well, first, like Tamara's absolutely right. I mean, we've seen this backtracking on climate and ironically, when you look at the recent realignment of the military there, part of this spending is gonna go for having the military respond to climate disasters at the same time that we're taking money out of the programs that would've helped avoid, you know, bigger climate disasters, like by taking action on climate change, and putting it into the military. So it's really squeezing out action on climate change.

But one of the new things that's surprising, or surprising to me, was the way in which the tech military alliance is really worsening this problem.

I mean, we see it in one aspect is simply the data center that's getting proposed and getting built.

And the Carney government actually-

RESH: All over. All over Canada, right? So many data centers coming. Oh, yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. And just two days ago the Carney government changed environmental regulations, so the federal government will no longer be assessing the environmental impacts of gas-fired generating stations.

What are they being built for? They're being built for AI data centers.

And these are not like small little plants. One single AI data center proposed in Alberta by Kevin O'Leary, Mr. Wonderful, best friend of Donald Trump, is looking at trying to build a 7,000 megawatt station. How much is that?

Well, that's more than 50% of electricity that Alberta uses right now.

The Meta data center, the one owned by Mark Zuckerberg, somehow letting Mark Zuckerberg own our data is data sovereignty you know, it's 1,000 megawatts. These things are huge.

Greenpeace got internal documents through access to information showing that, I mean, one of the policy benefits according to the federal government's AI strategy of building of AI is it creates a new market for natural gas. So we're gonna be able to produce and sell more fossil fuels to fuel these data centers.

And I thought, "Okay, that's terrible. That's gotta be as bad as it's gonna get." No, it gets worse.

I regularly go through the federal government's lobby registry to see who's lobbying on what. And I found that Amazon Web Services, so Jeff Bezos's company, we all know Amazon.

Amazon Web Services is one of the largest web providers in the world, they're also, work very closely with companies like Palantir and Anduril, which are heavily involved in military tech and surveillance technologies. Amazon hosts a lot of their servers. Amazon itself is also very involved in autonomous weapons systems, which is basically allowing AI to sort of pick targets without human input.

RESH: And we're seeing, we're seeing this experimented on in Gaza.

KEITH: Yeah, we're seeing it in Gaza. We saw it, a program that was developed by Peter Thiel's Palantir company helped pick the school in Iran, the girls' school in Iran, that was one of the first targets where over 100 children were killed. And Amazon is all involved in that.

So Amazon lobbied the federal government 65 times in the last year on military spending. They have met with 13 top military officers. These guys don't meet with lobbyists a lot, right?

They met with, like, the head of the Canadian Armed Forces. They met with the head of the army. They're meeting with the Secretary of State, like, the sort of semi-cabinet minister for defense procurement. They met with the Minister of Defense, the Minister of AI, the Minister of Finance.

This isn't business as normal. Like the other tech companies aren't doing this. And you don't get these types of meetings at this high level, this many of them, unless the government is interested in what you're selling and it costs a hell of a lot.

So one of my concerns, and I think public has a right to know is, is the Canadian government and Canadian military looking at procuring AI services from Amazon and integrating that into our defense forces? Like that's something we should have a conversation about before we go down that road.

But it's all happening behind closed doors without anybody noticing.

So I think this alliance between actually like the fossil fuel industry loves big tech and they both love the military. And we've seen like fossil fuel industry and military sort of hand-in-glove for a very long time, and now big tech is sort of like a new... there's now a triangle rather than that kind of single handshake.

So it's something that I think we're still trying to wrap our heads around as social movements, as analysts, activists. And it's all happening so fast. 'Cause we're being told the usual thing. It's like, "Oh, we can't risk falling behind."

And what's funny is the arguments being made now on AI were made around like nuclear weapon proliferation back when I was very, very young. It's like, "Oh, well, you know, the Russians, we can't let them get ahead of us." Now it's like the Chinese, we can't let them get ahead of us.

You know, the, the, the, the analysts or the guys in the companies are saying, "Well, there's a 10% chance it's gonna destroy all of humanity, but we, that just means we have to go faster, 'cause what if someone else destroys it first?"

RESH: Yeah. It's interesting, and there are more and more alarm bells around this, right? So you have the Brulicarchy, but I heard this also being referred to as the Nerd Reich and, and all of that. So it's very alarming.

Now, the direct and indirect impacts of militarism are massive for both people and planet.

Yet when it comes to planetary damage, there's silence, and this is known as the *military emissions gap*. And this dates back to the Kyoto Protocol in the '90s when the US successfully lobbied for the exclusion of military emissions from national emissions statistics. So your work, Keith, with Greenpeace Canada, Tamara, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, other climate justice organizations and advocates are lifting the veil on this.

The Global Week of Action for Peace and Climate Justice is taking place this September. So Tamara, what are some of the key ways, there are many, but the key ways that the shift to militarism is accelerating the climate crisis?

TAMARA: Well, the major reason is because the military is the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels in the federal government.

So the Canadian Armed Forces, the Department of National Defense uses more fossil fuel than any other department. The Department of National Defense is not only the largest consumer of fossil fuel, it's the largest landholder in the country, and it's the largest employer. So it has huge impacts.

It's also the largest consumer of hazardous material and producer of hazardous waste. So the military has tremendous climate impacts by virtue of its tactical vehicles that are dependent on petroleum products. It's so environmentally destructive because of the use of hazardous material. And the military training is extremely damaging to the environment. And of course war is extremely damaging. And we can see the impacts from the US and Israeli bombing of Iran and of Gaza.

And people should know that the largest consumer of fossil fuels on planet Earth is the US military. And the problem is, is that the emissions from military tactical vehicles are exempted.

So in Canada, the military, all of its training tactical vehicles, like its fighter jets, its armored vehicles, warships, all of those emissions are exempted from the reduction target. It's something called the National Security and Safety Exemption. And then also we are not reporting on the emissions from foreign operations.

So our military often operates outside Canadian borders. We've got warships sailing along China's coast. We've got a huge contingent, soldiers in Latvia. We've got soldiers many other places in the world, and they require a lot of energy. But all of those emissions from those military activities outside of Canadian borders are, again, they're not being counted and they're not being reported.

So the military, you know, has this privileged position to consume so much fuel and emit so many emissions, and it's doing a lot of environmental damage as well as a lot of social damage.

I mean, you think about the destruction of people's homes in Gaza and, you know in Iran and elsewhere. And there isn't adequate oversight from the governments and from what we would expect the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the scientific body, the climate secretariat that is concerned about global climate change, they are not paying attention to this issue of military emissions.

So it's been up to activists like the Canadian Voice of Women that has been working on this issue with very little funding for many years, as well as other ... And it's been

largely peace groups around the world that have been raising this issue in the climate space to say, we need to start paying attention to military emissions. And then we need to start calling for demilitarization and disarmament for decarbonization, and we are not having that conversation.

RESH: Yeah. And wars don't end when they say they end, and they don't begin- Of course ... when they say they begin. So the long-term impacts of this are devastating. And speaking of Voice of Women, I mean, I remember, when they were active on Vietnam.

And one of the major contributors to the disaster there, I mean, over a million Vietnamese were killed, many were killed, was the use of Agent Orange, a major defoliant that is still causing birth defects, still having a devastating impact on the forests there. And Agent Orange was actually produced in Ontario, in Canada.

Now, from Calgary to Davos, Prime Minister Carney has been touting Canada as, quote, "an energy superpower." And, and he's not wrong, right? We rank fourth in the world in the estimated value of our natural resources, including critical minerals, which are vital to Canada's new Defense Industrial Strategy.

RESH: Keith, speak more to the climate impacts of militarism, but also what this means in terms of critical minerals.

KEITH: So, I mean, Tamara's raised all the points around emissions. They're major energy users. I think it's also important to recognize how much of geopolitics is framed around trying to secure fossil fuel supplies.

I mean, it's no longer even, you know, a fig leaf over. Trump is boasting about how they're stealing Venezuela's oil, and how he's gonna try and take Iran's. So there's the, the emissions from the militaries themselves, but also the way in which you have to like have a larger military in order to secure access to these supplies.

You know, no one can blockade the sun or the wind, which is a good thing. Which is why also a lot of countries are trying to go green right now for security reasons rather than just environmental.

But on this question of the climate impacts of all of this. It's the emissions.

KEITH: It's also this focus on having a definition of safety, which is around protecting from an enemy rather than recognizing that we're actually undermining the bases of our own lives.

You know, we all rely on ecosystems. But it's kinda like we can recognize an enemy that we can sort of visualize with two eyes, a nose, and a face.... A professor I had once sort of said like, "You know, if climate change had two eyes and a nose and a face, we would fight that enemy."

A lot of our culture is geared around like that kind of like aggressiveness. It's parodied in Pete Hegseth right now. And these sort of like deeper complicated problems around systems and reforming our energy systems are ignored.

And the costs of that are, you know, very direct, the costs are like climate change. But I also think like one of the things around the military is also just how poorly they treat soldiers. I mean, like, yes, Agent Orange was used on civilians, and it was dealt with. Yeah. They're also doing horrible things to their own people who are, you know, like often in contaminated areas. And, yeah. So I'm, I'm getting a bit off track. Sorry.

But one of the things on critical minerals .. So there's certain minerals, they call them critical, and usually everyone wants their mineral to be critical because then they'll get a better price for it.

But some are really useful for creating the technologies that we need to get off of fossil fuels. So solar panels, wind turbines. A lot of those same ones can be used for the military. And so there's actually a question of prioritization between should we prioritize critical minerals for the energy transition, which will actually make us safer and reduce this impetus for foreign wars or for military and fighting foreign wars, basically. And trying to oppress more people in order to secure access to resources that we claim that happen to be on their land or under their land.

And this federal government has sort of pivoted from we're gonna do critical minerals for the energy transition to we see it as a way to make ourselves useful to our allies and be a big player in the world.

I mean, Carney talks about "energy superpower". That phrase was invented by Stephen Harper in 2006. In his first speech he gave outside the country, he talked about how Canada was going to be an energy superpower based in the tar sands. And Carney is sort of continuing that legacy.

So on critical minerals, I think we actually have an opportunity to avoid the mistakes of the current energy system.

We could first of all say like, "Okay, a bunch of these minerals are already above ground." Like, we could simply recycle and reuse these things rather than sort of throwing them into landfills.

We could have a question of do we need to do this?

The question of sufficiency rather than what's the highest market price you can get? It's like, okay, we actually have to have social priorities, and we should prioritize this scarce resource. Which first of all we want to reuse existing stuff that's above ground. We wanna recycle the stuff, have it in place so we need to dig less out of the ground. And for the stuff that we do actually have to dig out of the ground in the short term, before we can get into a system of recycling, 'cause that's the great thing about mineral metals, is you can usually recycle them fairly well.

We have to do that with the best kind of like social and environmental practices. That's something that I think actually Canada could lead on.

I mean, relative to other places like, for instance, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which, you know, foreign adventurism has destroyed state capacity in that country. So they don't actually have a lot of capacity to enforce rules, which is one of the reasons extraction projects are attracted there, 'cause they don't have to deal with pesky environmental and social rules.

You know, we could actually put those in place in Canada and do it right.

But we also wanna make sure we're not producing this stuff in order to make things that are gonna kill people. We wanna do things that are gonna actually protect people.

RESH: Right. And to mitigate some of the critique around the military use of critical minerals, the government is saying, or, or probably true, but the government is saying, "Well, it's actually dual use," right? So it can be used for both.

But a lot of this is focused on the territories and the Arctic. Tamara, you have been writing about the plans for the North and what this means for the largely Indigenous populations out there. So could you say more on this Northern plan?

TAMARA: Yes. But I just want to respond to something that Keith said. It's really important for Canadians to appreciate the fact that the priority for Canada's critical minerals development is for weapons production.

Canada has a plan for massive weapons production across the country and a doubling of arms exports. And this is extremely troubling because the last thing that the world needs is more weapons in circulation. And so we really need to question, you know, why is it that we are massively increasing military spending?

Why are we putting so much money into the most carbon intensive institution in the country?

You know, why are we doubling weapons production and arms exports? I mean, Canadians really need to question this.

And then we also need to wonder why is it that our Prime Minister, Mark Carney, who wrote a book called *Values: Building a Better World*, and he focused on climate change and sustainable development. Why has he done a 180 degree turn from caring about climate change and sustainability to now prioritizing carbon intensive environmentally destructive militarism?

And also David McGuinty, who is our defense minister. You know, 20 years ago, he was an environmental lawyer. He was head of the National Round Table of the

Environment. But not once has Carney or McGuinty talked about the climate and environmental impacts of all of this militarism.

And then that leads me to talk about the Arctic. You know, why is it that they have a plan to massively militarize the Arctic, a fragile oceanic ecosystem that is the fastest warming region on planet Earth, which is the traditional beloved homeland of the Inuit people.

And the Inuit people, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, has repeatedly said that they want their homeland, they want the Arctic to be maintained as a zone of peace and cooperation. And Canada led the creation of the Arctic Council. And this year is the 30th anniversary of the Arctic Council, which was a multilateral platform for all of the Arctic states and permanent observers, and members, the Indigenous peoples, to ensure that all of these Arctic challenges around the environment, around security, around biodiversity, were dealt with in a diplomatic cooperative forum.

But now that is being undermined by Canada's militarization of the Arctic. And what's driving this is NATO.

It's NATO's pressure on Canada to increase military spending, and then militarize the Arctic, what NATO is calling the "northern flank" to prepare for a global war against Russia and China.

So this is extremely concerning.

We are preparing for war instead of helping deal with the climate crisis and prepare for global warming. You know, adapt and make our communities resilient.

We're diverting resources and things like critical minerals to militarization instead of climate resilience.

RESH: Absolutely. I wanna get more into NATO in a little bit.

But the government says that it remains committed to reaching climate goals. For instance, net zero by 2050. And they're investing in clean energy and conservation targets. Keith, can this new defense strategy be reconciled in any way with Canada's climate commitments?

KEITH: So, the day we're recording this, the Canadian Climate Institute put out a report which... Canadian Climate Institute, which is like a, an arm's length agency of the federal government, like it's supposed to be reporting back on their progress on climate targets. They said Carney isn't hitting his 2030 climate targets, and he won't hit his 2030 climate targets by 2050 either, given his current plans.

So, this prioritization of the military, of fossil fuels, of this kind of like 20th century vision of what makes for a strong economy, which is actually undermining all life and economies in the 21st century, is still the dominant ethos there.

The challenge I think for us as activists right now and advocates and analysts is we have this crazy guy south of the border who's taking up all the oxygen.

KEITH: And it's really hard to have a conversation about, you know, what kind of a future do we wanna build when this guy seems to be doing a crazy new thing every day.

And it's a distraction, but I think what we're seeing here is Canadian elites, Mark Carney is one of them, I mean, you don't get much more elite than that guy, are taking advantage of this crisis to kind of implement a lot of things they've wanted to do a long time, but saying it's to defend against Trump.

RESH: Yeah.

KEITH: When in fact, on militarism, on the border security stuff, on actually, you know, abandoning a bunch of our climate plan, we're actually mirroring Trump. And Carney keeps talking about he wants to get closer to Europe, move us closer to Europe and away from the US. It's like, well, if you look at our policy on things like climate, we're actually bringing ourselves closer to Trump than we are to Europe.

And I think that's the challenge of there is just so much noise.

I feel it every morning I wake up and I'm like, "Oh my God, I do not need another thing to worry about right now."

And this kind of slow creep of, you know, once you make these massive investments in the military, that means you're not spending it on something else and you're also sort of reinforcing existing systems that are gonna be that much harder to dismantle.

And that's why I think we have to try and get away from you know, the doom scrolling of what's the latest crazy thing that's happened, to actually, like, focus on some of the underlying structures.

That's hard to do, but it's something that I think social movements need to do.

RESH: We need to do it, but like you said, it's hard to do, especially in this time of polycrisis where... But of interconnected crises. Yeah. I mean, all of these things are really sort of a package deal.

Now, there are a couple of major selling points for this military shift. A big one is sovereignty. "Protecting Our Sovereignty" was the title of the defense budget line in last year's *Canada Strong* Federal Budget for 2025.

With the US trade war and threats to our sovereignty, this has garnered a great deal of public support, the whole elbows up thing as well.

Tamara, your response to the sovereignty argument. And just to continue with reasons for Canada's militarization?

TAMARA: So Canada is militarizing because of our membership in NATO.

NATO required members to meet a 2% target and most members met it last year. And then to meet the 5% target by 2035. So this is the militarization program to try to reach these targets of 5% of spending on the military.

So this is why we've gone from, you know, \$20 billion at the time of the Paris Agreement in 2015 to this year, \$64 billion.

I mean, think about how we could have spent all of that money dealing with the housing crisis and the affordability crisis and the climate crisis, with all of this money that we've spent in the past decade on the military.

And then in this coming decade, we are going to be just massively increasing.

So the federal government has already cut other federal programs, including Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, Natural Resources, Global Affairs, Crown and Indigenous Services, just sweeping cuts to other federal departments as well as mass layoffs, and this is going to have a huge impact on Canadians.

So by virtue of the fact that Canada is a member of NATO, which is dominated and dictated by the United States, it always has been. Because the United States has the biggest military. The United States general has always commanded NATO forces. This is the Supreme Allied Commander, SACEUR, which has always been an American general.

And since Canada became a member of NATO in 1949, our military has become deeply integrated into the US military. We actually have no sovereignty over our military policy because as I said, it's dominated and influenced by Washington. And we also really have, you know, no sovereignty over our budget because of this demand that we reach a 5% target.

And as part of this 5% target, Canada is required to spend 3.5% of the 5% on acquiring new capabilities. Mm. And already 70% of our military procurement dollars are buying American weapons systems. So Americans control our weapons. Americans really control our military. Canadians should really see ourselves as basically a troop of the US military.

And we also have another military structure called NORAD. This is a bilateral relationship between Canada and the US military established in 1958, and this has a great impact on Canada's militarization of the Arctic. We're gonna be spending \$40 billion for new forwarding bases, for new submarines, warships, fighter jet hangars up in the Arctic.

And so it's really Washington, DC that is influencing this massive militarization, increase of military spending in Canada. So we really don't have any sovereignty. And if we want sovereignty and independence, we would be like the other 164 countries in the UN system that are outside of NATO, and we would withdraw from NATO. Have greater control over our budget and over our military.

And so this is what our women's groups have been calling for for a long time, for Canada to withdraw from NATO and to instead really work with the UN community on the greatest security challenges that we're facing: poverty, inequality, and the climate crisis.

RESH: Right. And this is the Canada-Wide Peace and Justice Network, has put out a call for the withdrawal from NATO and the so-called "NATO War Bank", as you were talking about.

Now, going into austerity and, and therefore the second big reason for this, which is another selling point. Is that this new Defense Industrial Strategy will boost the economy. It's going to provide business for Canadian firms. 70% of the business is going to go over the next 10 years to Canadian firms. It's going to create thousands of jobs. Some are calling this "military Keynesianism". But more spending on military, as you point out, means more austerity in other sectors. Carney warned that this is an austerity budget. Greenpeace Canada responded to the 2025 budget with, "more butter, not guns." Keith, say more about this and the social costs of military spending.

KEITH: Yeah. So, I put that reference in 'cause I'm the oldest person basically in Greenpeace. 'Cause I remember, like, those debates between guns and butter, like, what are you gonna spend the money on? Dating back to, I think, the US in the '60s. And I think what we're seeing is, like, when you make these massive investments in military, that means you're not doing other things.

And I think this is where, you know, to echo something Tamara said is, like, what provides true security? Is it having, as apparently we're gonna have, a million drones? Which will no doubt be used for surveillance and all sorts of other stuff like it. Or is it actually having, decent social programs, good healthcare. A competent, diplomatic corps that can negotiate with other countries?

And a climate policy that's helping, you know, remove what the US military has called "a threat multiplier," which is climate change. 'Cause the thing about climate change is it takes every existing problem and kind of makes it worse. This is part of the polycrisis you're talking about.

You know, if one of the sources of tension in the world is refugees. Well, if there's no water, you move.

And if climate change is drying up where you are, you have to move somewhere else. And you're gonna move.

So telling people they're not allowed to move and they should just let their kids not have any water, that's not gonna work.

We definitely need to start investing in adaptation to the changes we can't avoid, but there's levels of change that you can't adapt to, and we have to avoid those.

And we recently saw a report from the UN on this saying, " we've missed our 1.5 target, but every tenth of a degree matters. Every ton of emissions matters."

And the things we have to do to fight climate change can actually help make our world a better place and make people's lives better.

It can be about, you know, providing secure access to good food, decent housing at a reasonable cost. Those types of investments, however, are at odds with buying a million drones.

RESH: Mm-hmm.

KEITH: Or more US fighter jets.

It's easy to get caught up in the "elbows up" stuff. Like, you know, when Trump was saying all those things, like I was kind of like, "Ah! I don't like that."

But I think it's like we have to have a cultural identity around sovereignty, which is about, for instance, respecting Indigenous rights and Land Back. It's a different notion of sovereignty from we're gonna have bigger weapons than you.

RESH: Yeah. Or we're going to sacrifice our social security for our military security, right? Yeah.

KEITH: I mean, I closely follow the fossil fuel industry, 'cause my day job is working with Greenpeace, and one of the things I find fascinating is they've spent the last 15 years investing tens or hundreds of millions of dollars into trying to cultivate a sort of a petro populism as a form of nationalism. Not just here, but also in the United States.

RESH: Mm-hmm.

KEITH: That identification of what's good for big oil is good for Canada- which is very strong, particularly in Alberta. But we're seeing this with the Carney government.

This didn't come out of nowhere. This is like something that they have spent on advertising dollars, on creating front groups, on trying to create clientelistic relationships. So we're not gonna pay taxes, but we'll build you a community center and put our name on it.

They're trying to create a notion of sovereignty, of national identity, which is about being an energy superpower. And we're gonna like dominate other people.

Although, actually, our energy minister went to Houston last year and said, "Canada really wants to help Donald Trump in his agenda of energy dominance.

We'll sell you all the natural gas and oil you want."

That's a very different idea of sovereignty, of what constitutes protecting people, what constitutes security. Certainly within progressive movements it's a different issue. But I think for a lot of people, if you actually ask them, "Would you rather have people with homes and kids who have lunches at school or, you know, fancy fighter jets?" They'd go for the former.

But for the really big companies that have the political influence, they make a lot more money from the latter. You want the tens of billions of dollar contract for fighter jets rather than, you know, small companies retrofitting homes across the country, over the next decade.

RESH: Right. Now, Tamara, what does this mean for sectors already struggling under austerity? So housing has been mentioned, there's also healthcare, there's education, there's startup tech. I mean, there's many, right? They were already struggling with austerity when this budget came out, so this is really just compounding the austerity that they're already dealing with.

Are they being pushed to now integrate into this war footing?

TAMARA: Absolutely. So when our Minister of Defense, David McGuinty, was in Toronto doing a talk at the Empire Club last October, he specifically said that this is a whole of government, whole of society initiative for this militarization. So he said, "We need industry on board. We need academia on board."

And, you know, just finishing my PhD at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, which is jointly run by the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, I can see the universities turning to more defense and military research to get these defense dollars. And then you can see it in the community with industry wanting to get into the action.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Carney was in Calgary, and he talked about needing 400 suppliers for this new drone program. They want to ramp up drone production making two million drones in the next two years. And so this is going to require, as McGuinty said, companies thinking about converting their factories from producing things like, let's say engines or manufacturing appliances, to manufacturing weapons systems so that they can double the weapons production and the arms exports, these targets that they have said.

But again, as I said, the climate and environmental impacts and the social impacts have not been considered by the Prime Minister, by the Defense Minister, even the rest of the government or other political parties aren't asking these questions about what the social impacts are going to be.

And quite frankly, we need to stop this militarization. Because if we don't, it is going to mean an acceleration of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss. It's gonna mean an acceleration of immiseration in this country. We'll see more Canadians living in tents or living in their vans, and that's what we see in the United States.

Do we want our country to move in the direction of a highly militarized economy and society like they have in the United States?

And look at the poor infrastructure. You know, so much homelessness and poor education systems. This is the future that we're facing.

So Canadians, really we're at the crossroads. We're either gonna follow Trump and NATO and move in this direction of militarism, or we're gonna get out of it and say, No, and we're going to have a just transition, as Keith said, that's good for communities.

You know, getting off of fossil fuels means less out of control wildfires and flooding and it means cleaner air. It means a more protected environment. And it means more resources for the things that really bring security to Canadians.

Investment in housing, infrastructure, education, healthcare. That's what the security needs are. That's what needs to be defended. And that care economy is an economy dominated by women.

So this is why our women's organizations are saying, we need a care economy, investment in that, not a militarized economy, which is really a male-dominated, violent environmentally destructive economy, and this is what we want to avoid.

RESH: And this is part of... I mean, you drafted the recommendations that comes from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Canada and the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, that was submitted to the Standing Committee on Finance for the upcoming budget 2026. So do you just want to continue and speak to some more of the recommendations that have been made?

TAMARA: Well, we are recommending that Canada cut military spending, not meet the 5% GDP target for NATO, and instead invest in the care economy, which meets the real needs of Canadians.

And the care economy is an economy where we see a lot of women. So women's jobs are dependent on investments in the care economy, 'cause we see women working in schools, in hospitals.

We don't see women working on factory lines for weapons production. And women aren't joining the military despite 40 years opening all military trades to women.

86% of the military is dominated by men and mostly white men. And so a militarized economy isn't an economy that's just not good for women, but it's not good for society because it's not productive. It's not producing products and services that benefit Canadians. So we are calling for, in our submission for the pre-budget consultations, cutting military spending, investing in the care economy and investing in climate action.

We also have this campaign and people can go to our website. It's 1,000 women. We are collecting signatures calling for "Care Not Warfare". And so trying to raise women's voices because we're excluded from all of these conversations on defense. If you look at who the talking heads are in the media or who are the witnesses to the standing committees, the advisors, to defense, the whole defense establishment, it's absolutely male dominated.

So women's voices calling for peace, peace-building, cooperation, diplomacy and dialogue, our voices are being completely excluded. So we're trying to raise our voices. We're gonna be in Ottawa on Peace Day on September 21.

We're gonna be also showing the film *Earth's Greatest Enemy*. We're doing a press conference. And we're doing a rally outside the Prime Minister's office saying that Canadian women don't want to go down this path of carbon intensive militarization.

We want peace, cooperation and climate action, investment in the care economy.

RESH: Fantastic. And we will put that link in the show notes. And George Brown is also showing *Earth's Greatest Enemy* on September 24th.

Two final questions. The upward trend in military spending is not just happening in Canada but also among major powers all over the world.

RESH: Globally, we're in a very dangerous place right now, and this is impacting people in so many ways, including in terms of their civil and political rights as well. Civil liberties groups across Canada are really raising the alarm on this. Keith, how can people mobilize against this militarization and get involved with the work like Greenpeace Canada?

KEITH: So, I mean, one of the great things about the climate crisis is that it's so big and there's so many aspects to it that there's something everyone can do.

So part of what I always say is, like, find something that you think you're good at and you like to do, and do that to make this world a better place.

We always want people to volunteer with Greenpeace. But also get involved with your local community group. And get involved into helping build that better world, but also, you know, removing consent from things you find unacceptable.

Like recently, over 250 organizations, including Greenpeace and the United Church and Oxfam and everyone, signed onto this letter supporting, ... So there was in Alberta border guards were basically called in to harass international students who were protesting against policy changes.

And I think what we're seeing right now is, you know, on trans rights, on migrants' rights, there's this push to kind of dehumanize those people, take away their rights, and it's a thin edge of a wedge. We should protect them because it's the right thing to do, but also recognize that it's not going to stop there.

And I think part of what we have to do is show that cross-movement solidarity. Because if we want to maintain vibrant democratic spaces for participation and debate, we actually have to push back on this growing authoritarianism which, you know, serve very direct interests. And I mean, this is where, again, like the tech bros, the book you referenced, *The Nerd Reich* by Gil Duran, talks about when you actually look at what these guys think and believe, it's kind of crazy. It doesn't seem real, right?

Like it- Yeah ... if it was in a movie, I'd be like, "Okay, this villain's a little over the top." But I think a big part of this is actually, like, showing that solidarity, but also not forgetting and sort of removing our consent from things we believe are unacceptable.

And right now, that's happening the hardest against trans kids, against migrants, against land defenders, Indigenous land defenders. We have to show support there, but we also have to, like, build that alternative at the same time, which is the harder thing to do.

I think a lot of people are also kind of waking up and recognizing that that danger is there, and I'm actually like heartened by the pushback on the tech bros.

I think these guys have now sort of like they've gone too far and I think people are like, "Hey, this is not okay." And we have to also show the linkages between the type of surveillance state or actually the surveillance corporate state that they want to put in place, and they're being very overt about, and we're seeing it in our daily lives, and all these broader harms.

And I think that push towards security equals guns, equals weapons, equals you know, letting AI pick where the bomb goes, which I heard recently described as so much of our military technology is about precision without intelligence or accountability. And we're so fascinated by the things we can do and how- what these toys, how neat they are, that we've lost track of are we actually using them in a way that is achieving an end we actually wanna get to. And I think at a broader scale, that push towards military spending over other forms of spending is kind of like we're

getting, distracted by the shininess of the toys rather than thinking, "Is this actually taking us anywhere we want to go?"

RESH: Finally, Tamara, in addition to your ongoing work, you're also involved, and you spoke a bit about this, but you're also involved in organizing for the third annual Global Week of Action for Peace and Climate Justice, that is happening September 21st to 25th. This year's theme is *Divest From War, Invest In A Just Transition*. So how can our listeners get involved in the week and in the movement for a peaceful climate just Canada and world?

TAMARA: Well, there are peace and environmental groups all across the country that, you know, people can join and get active in.

For people who are close to Toronto, there are some really important events coming up this week that relate to pushing back on Carney's petroleum and military agenda. So Carney has an investment summit taking place on Monday, September 14th. But progressive groups have come together to have a "many versus the money summit", an evening event on Saturday.

Then there's gonna be a teach-in on the Sunday, September 13th. And then there's gonna be a big protest at Nathan Phillips Square at 6:00 PM on the 14th. When Carney's investment summit begins.

RESH: Now this episode is actually coming out on the 16th

TAMARA: Well, just to say that Canadians are mobilizing against Carney's agenda. This investment agenda on AI, on petroleum, and on militarism.

The week of climate and justice, we've got many actions taking place in Ottawa. And we are connecting with the Seniors Climate Witness Caravans that are coming from British Columbia and coming from Nova Scotia. There are seniors coming. They're converging on to Ottawa on September 19th for the big climate march.

And then we are doing the screening of *Earth's Greatest Enemy* about the climate and environmental impacts of the US military, this excellent documentary by Abby Martin, on September 20th in Ottawa.

And then on the 21st, which is International Peace Day, we've got a press conference at 11:00 and then the rally at the Prime Minister's office at 4:00.

So Canadians are joining our international activists that are trying to raise awareness about the destruction of militarism and the need to transition not just from fossil fuels, but from this military industrial complex into a clean, green, peaceful economy and future.

So Canadians are taking action. You can find out more information if you go to Seniors Climate Witness and you go to the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, vowpeace.org. It's all on the website.

RESH: And we will again link those in the show notes to this episode.

Tamara and Keith, thank you so much for joining us, and for your work and advocacy for peace and climate justice.

It's been a pleasure.

KEITH: Thanks.

TAMARA: Thanks very much for having us.

RESH: That was Tamara Lorincz, environmentalist, feminist, peace activist and Senior Researcher with Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and Keith Stewart climate policy researcher and advocate with Greenpeace Canada.

Links to their organizations and others mentioned in the discussion are in the show notes to this episode.

Also be sure to check out events connected to the Global Week of Action for Peace and Climate Justice, September 21st-25th including screenings of Abby Martin's new documentary "Earth's Greatest Enemy" on September 20th in Ottawa and September 24th at George Brown Polytechnic in Toronto.

And this is The Courage My Friends podcast.

I'm your host, Resh Budhu. Thanks for listening.

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