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## Preventing War ... The Simpler Way

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### Abstract

The literature on the causes and prevention of international conflict in general and war in particular is strongly inclined to focus on ways of dealing with conflict once it has arisen. Much less attention is given to defusing tension before it arises and leads to violence, and even less to analysing the factors that generate tension in the first place. The following argument is that most of the discussion of armed conflict does not focus on the fundamental causal factors, which lie deep in the institutional structures and cultural commitments of our society. The taken for granted obsession with the pursuit of ever-increasing wealth, affluent living standards and GDP has driven this society far beyond the limits to growth and is inevitably generating problems of resource depletion, ecological destruction, Third World deprivation, deteriorating social cohesion and quality of life, and resource wars. The following discussion deals with the causal connections between the quest for growth and affluence and armed conflict. The implication is that warfare conflict cannot be prevented unless and until there is huge and radical transition to some form of Simpler Way.

### Keywords

Peace; Preventing war; the simpler way

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## Introduction

Logically there are only two conceivable ways to attempt to solve the present global “limits to growth” sustainability predicament. The first is to develop high-tech solutions to the problem of diminishing resources enabling development-as-growth to proceed without running out of resources and destroying ecosystems. It will be shown that this perspective is seriously mistaken; “tech-fix” solutions which “decouple” rising GDP from rising resource and ecological impact are not solving the problem and are highly unlikely to do so. The second is to abandon the quest for affluence and growth and to shift to lifestyles and systems which allow all to live well without generating high or increasing need to secure more than a sustainable and just share of the available resources. It will be argued that this can only be done if there an enormous transition to some kind of Simpler Way.

Given that almost all governments and publics assume the former path to be the only conceivable option, the present global trajectory must be towards increasing competition for dwindling resources and increasing impact on ecosystems. As will be detailed below, resource consumption and ecological impacts are already far beyond sustainable levels. The purpose of this article is to make clear the causal link between the pursuit of limitless growth in production, consumption and GDP and on the other hand increasing international conflict over access to resources. This connection has received negligible attention in the general literature on peace and war.

If there can be no hope of massive “absolute” decoupling of economic growth from resource demand and environmental impact, this limits-overshoot situation can only be defused by action on the demand side, that is by shifting to lifestyles and systems which reduce demand and therefore competition for resources. That could only be done by very large scale “degrowth” to lifestyles and systems which involve far less resource throughput than at present. How this might be done is sketched below.

This supply side focus is now being increasingly attended to in the degrowth literature but as noted above its causal significance for the occurrence of armed conflict has been more or less totally ignored within the peace literature. There is recognition that access to resources have historically been a major cause of war, but there seems to have been no analysis connecting war to affluent lifestyles and systems or dealing with the conclusion that it can only be avoided in the long run if there is transition to far simpler lifestyles and systems. The following discussion seeks to detail the causal links within this perspective.

First it is necessary to make clear the global situation, the largely unrecognized extent to which the “limits to growth” or “planetary boundaries” have been exceeded, and thus the huge reductions in consumption that are required to defuse global problems and achieve sustainability.

### The global situation.

The major source of international conflict today is taken here to be competition for access to resources and markets. The approximately two billion of the world’s people living in rich countries have lifestyles and systems that are far too resource extravagant to be extended to all the worlds soon-to-be ten billion people. Rockstrom et al. (2009) deal with the overshoot in terms of “planetary boundaries”. These rich world lifestyles and systems involve per capita resource consumption rates that have been estimated at around six times rates that all could share sustainably. (Trainer, 2021.) Given present population, consumption and GDP growth rates, by 2050 the multiple is likely to be twice as big. Meanwhile resource availability is dwindling and extraction difficulties and costs are rising. Acceleration of present demand and competition for resources is inevitable.

A common response to the numerous analyses of this kind is that there is no need to reduce rich-world production, consumption and GDP because resource and ecological impacts can be reduced by technical advances, such as more thorough recycling and more efficient production. This is the “decoupling” thesis. However, the lengthy reviews by Hickel and Kallis (2019), Parrique et al., (2019) (300 studies), and Haberl et al. (2020) (800 studies) conclude that despite constant effort to increase efficiency and cut costs absolute de-coupling of resource use and environmental impact from GDP growth is not occurring, and that it is not likely to be achieved in future. It is evident in limited areas, such as carbon emissions for some countries, but not for general resource use or ecological impact. In fact, the trends are getting worse. (Lenzen et al. 2022, and Zheng et al. 2018.)

These resource-intensive and environmentally-destructive lifestyles and systems are delivered by a global economic system that is grossly and inevitably unjust. It allows the distribution of goods to be determined by market forces, meaning that richer individuals and nations acquire most of them, and that the industries developed are those that

will attend primarily to the demand of those most able to pay for them. Production and development are not determined by what is most needed, morally acceptable, just, socially cohesive or ecologically sustainable. The welfare and fate of billions is determined mainly by the investments the few who own most of the capital believe will most increase their wealth.

Thus, the global economy generates a large net flow of wealth from poor to rich countries, estimated by Hicke (2021), and Hickel, Dorninger, Wieland and Suwandi (2022), to be many trillions of dollars p.a. In addition there are the social and ecological costs of production left in poor countries, in the form of toxic mine wastes, cleared forests, soil loss, air pollution, CO2 emissions, and the health effects of damaged ecosystems.

These situations remain in place primarily because “development” is conceived in capitalist terms and because poor countries are prevented from deviating from it by the nature of the global economy and its agencies such as the IMF and World Bank.

It is taken for granted that development must involve participation and competition within the global market economy. This requires stimulating increased business turnover, attracting foreign investment, selling national resources to pay for imports and borrowing to build the infrastructures investors want. A major consequence is the accumulation of huge debt. (Perkins 2004, documents the role he played in enticing countries to take on impossible levels.) When the debts cannot be repaid, the problem is solved ... by further lending, on condition that economies be more tightly aligned with the interests of rich-world banks and corporations. They are then firmly locked into a form of development that gears their economies to competing against each other to earn more export income to pay debt and providing favourable terms for foreign investors. This involves enforcing unsatisfactory wages and working conditions and having to cut expenditure on assistance to the poor. The result might be described as thinly disguised legitimized plunder. (TSW, 2019.)

Underlying this process lies the indubitable conventional conception of “development” held by all parties including Third World elites. The goal of development is taken to be striving within the global market system to become like the rich countries. This means embracing a “growth and trickle down” strategy, which suits the interests of local elites and foreign banks and corporations. No alternative is conceivable, certainly not one that entertains the possibility of keeping out of the global economy as much as possible and devoting local land, labour and skills to providing humble but sufficient basic necessities via local resources and low technologies, and trading only enough to acquire a few crucial inputs. Only in recent years has this ideological yoke begun to be thrown off, evident in the “post-development” literature and the many grass-roots initiatives such as the Satyagraha, Ubuntu, Campesino, Zapatista, Rojavan Kurd, Chikukwa, and Catalan Integral Cooperative movements.

Thus the extensive flows of resources and wealth mostly result from the normal functioning of the global economy. Again, this involves market forces being allowed to determine what happens with the inevitable result being that resources automatically go mostly to those who can outbid the rest, development of industries that attend to their demand, the rich thriving while the poorest are ignored, and increased inequality, national debt and bondage to the global economic system.

This perspective on the global economic system prepares the way for an understanding of the connection between rich world wealth and warfare.

### **The empire**

These arrangements, procedures and systems constitute an empire which siphons resources and wealth to the rich countries and their corporations, banks and supermarket customers. Again, according to Hickel (2021) the sums are in the trillions p.a. People in rich countries could not live as affluently as they do without these structures, processes and wealth flows.

But these arrangements need to be maintained and extended and a great deal of diplomatic and military effort is put into achieving these goals. This includes providing aid mostly to projects that will strengthen the global market system, assisting or installing repressive regimes imposing on their people economic policies that benefit their elites and rich world corporations, and getting rid of those that will not comply. Often military equipment is provided to prop up or set up regimes which will rule in our interests, especially enabling foreign investment in resource extracting industries. Funding and arms are provided to secure favoured regimes or bring down non-compliant regimes. Coups, death squads and assassinations are among the means employed. The list includes the invasion and

destruction of governments and entire countries. The US has about 800 military bases on foreign soil and in recent decades has invaded another country over seventy times. (Menadue, 2018.)

There is a vast literature documenting the long history of the effort to secure and expand the empire. Following are illustrative extracts from it.

‘...we maintain a global empire ... the purpose of an empire is to draw wealth from the periphery to the center. This is what the Romans did, what the British did, and what we now do ... few make the crucial connection between our history of conquest, regime change, and global policing, and our oversized levels of consumption, privilege, and wealth.’ For this reason, ‘... the U.S. government has been involved in the overthrow or attempted overthrow of scores of governments over the course of the twentieth century ... challenging American global power or doing anything that directly dampens our ability to consume to our hearts desire is likely to be met with the appearance of a few aircraft carriers or some targeted drone strikes, if not teams of CIA operatives in search of a more favourable government.’ (Lindberg, E., (2018.)

The well-known 1948 statement by George Kennan, Head of a division within the State department, which set US post-war policy:

‘We have about 50 percent of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population...we cannot fail to be the object of envying resentment. ...Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity.’ As Kuznick says, the U.S. pursuit of this task sometimes required supporting brutal dictatorships. (Buzzanco, 2018.)

‘U.S. officials and their corporate sponsors are looking at an almost irresistible gold mine if they can bring Venezuela to its knees: a fire sale of its oil industry to foreign oil companies and the privatization of many other sectors of its economy, from hydroelectric power plants to iron, aluminum and, yes, actual gold mines. This is not speculation. It is what the U.S.’s new puppet, Juan Guaido, has reportedly promised his American backers if they can overthrow Venezuela’s elected government and install him in the presidential palace.’ (Benjamin and Davies, 2019).

‘The effort to rollback Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution must be seen as part of a determined effort to pry open all economies to transnational capital – it’s about access’, says sociologist of globalization William I. Robinson. ...Should the CIA stooge Guaido and his white supremacists grab power, it will be the 68th overthrow of a sovereign government by the United States, most of them democracies. A fire sale of Venezuela’s utilities and mineral wealth will surely follow, along with the theft of the country’s oil, as outlined by John Bolton.’ (Pilger 2019.)

‘The US has been extensively meddling in other countries’ affairs and elections for a century. It tried to change other countries’ governments 72 times during the cold war. Many foreign leaders were assassinated. ... Jeffrey Sachs said ‘... The US has a long history of using covert and overt means to overthrow governments deemed to be unfriendly to the US.’ ... Historian John Coatsworth counts 41 cases of successful US-led regime change ...’ (Menadue, 2018.)

‘Libya, for example was the richest, most equitable country in Africa, under Gaddafi, who had a vision for Africa of independence from the colonial west, that the West didn’t like at all... But western powers wanted to get rid of Gaddafi in 2011 because he stood in the way of what the US-led west wanted. (Hayward, 2018.)

In 1937 George Orwell said ‘...the high standard of life we enjoy in England depends upon keeping a tight hold on the Empire – in order that England may live in comparative comfort, a hundred million Indians must live on the verge of starvation, an evil state of affairs, but you acquiesce in it every time you step into a taxi or eat a plate of strawberries and cream.’ (Monbiot, 2001.)

‘An elite group of less than a billion people now take more than 80 per cent of the world’s wealth.... In defence of this power and privilege, known by the euphemisms “free market” and “free trade”, the injustices are legion: ... Western terror is part of the recent history of imperialism...’ (Pilger, 2001.)

‘All national economies in the North are engaged in international forms of accumulation which are in essence predatory.’ (Biel, 2000.)

'Since the end of the Cold War, the US has intervened in 72 countries, in an attempt to change the government there. Those actions and their maintenance of 800 military bases/facilities overseas, are the indelible signs of imperialism.' (Butler, 2017.)

'From 1898 to 2004, the US government undertook 41 successful regime change interventions in Latin America, an average of one every two-and-a-half years. And that excludes the unsuccessful ones, such as the Bay of Pigs invasion.' (Gowans, 2019.)

'To maintain its levels of production and consumption...the US must be assured of getting increasing amounts of the resources of poor countries. ...This in turn requires strong support of unpopular and dictatorial regimes which maintain political and police oppression while serving American interests, to the detriment of their own poor majorities. If on the other hand Third World people controlled their own political economies ... they could then use more of their resources themselves...much of the land now used to grow export cash crops...would be used to feed their own hungry people for example.' (Moyer, 1973.)

'It is in the economic interests of the American corporations who have investments in these countries to maintain this social structure (whereby poor masses are oppressed and exploited by local elites.) It is to keep these elites in power that the United States has ...provided them with the necessary military equipment, the finance and training.' (Green, 1980.)

These things are done primarily to secure resource sources and markets. The rich few people and nations could not continue get the lion's share of world resource production if they were not done. A world in which resource distribution was determined by equal or just sharing, or by need, would allocate to the rich perhaps 5% of the per capita share they now get.

More important is the coming competition for access to resources that will inevitably be generated by the determination to secure increasing quantities of resources, driven by the universal commitment to limitless increase in production, consumption, "living standards" and GDP. The following sayings summarise the situation.

"If you want to maintain your affluence you would be wise to remain heavily armed."

"If you want peace, you cannot have it unless there is global justice, and you cannot have that unless the rich cease hogging global resources."

These commitments generate a number of forms of violent conflict. At the local level they create conflict between peasants and the governments and corporations wanting to take their lands, between tribal people and their governments supporting extractivist "development", and between factions and war-lords jockeying for access to new sources of wealth. It leads to rebellions and coups. It involves providing arms to assist or resist rebellion and regime change. It has led to the invasion, conquest and destruction of entire nations. These are resource wars and they result from the determination of some people and nations to live in ways that are far beyond those that it is possible for all to share.

This situation is clearly understood by large numbers within academic and diplomatic circles and is the subject of a voluminous literature. For decades authors such as Chomsky, Pinter, Pilger, Blum, Hedges, Gowans and many more have detailed lengthy documentations, with it would seem negligible effect as governments and the majority of people in rich countries seem to remain either unaware or uninterested.

International relations and foreign policy are largely about the maintenance of and benefit from the imperial system. For instance, continual rhetoric is devoted to promoting adherence to "the rules-based order", the main rule being that the distribution of world resource access should be based on market forces and profit not on need. But the greatest difficulties are to do with the effort that must be made to secure "our" resource sources from encroachment by others. The Western nations led by the US are currently attempting to "contain" China, that is to stop that country from securing more resources and markets, threatening our capacity to dominate and derive wealth from them. This contest could very well end in the elimination of civilization and the human species. It is the classic "Thucydides Trap" whereby a dominant power cannot tolerate the thought that a rising power might beat it in the struggle for domination and wealth, and therefore resorts to violence in order to prevent that from happening. Thus Sparta and Athens destroyed each other. Had they been content to share the looting opportunities and agree not to expand into each other's fiefdoms they need not have done so.

History has largely been about the failure/refusal to make such choices. There have been empires siphoning out wealth for around 6,000 years, the first apparently being the Akkadian beginning in 4,300 BC. More recently the Portuguese dominated, followed by the Spanish, Dutch and then the British beating off the French and Germans to become top dog. The British fought more than 70 colonial wars to conquer their empire. World Wars I and II were about the Germans challenging the British for domination. When this exhausted the British the US became “leader” of the empire.

The powder keg that is now the Middle East with its associated “terrorism” was initiated in large part by British and French imperial arrogance, deceit and thuggery. Britain promised the Arabs a homeland if they would help overthrow the Turkish empire, (so the British and French could take it.) But then they promptly made the Sykes-Picot agreement to divide the Arab lands between themselves while totally ignoring the wishes and rights of the people living there. Sometime later the American CIA eliminated the Mossadeqh government in Iran, installed a brutal dictator, and thereafter enjoyed access to oil on favourable terms. A major factor leading to the outbreak of the war with Japan was that country’s effort to get access the resources of the region, and the determination of the Americans not to let them into the spheres they had secured access to. Not irrelevant was Japan’s threat to steal the lands the US had stolen from the Spanish, who had previously stolen them from the Filipinos.

We have a society that inevitably, by virtue of its acquisitive nature, generates vicious conflicts, which easily and often result in war. At the core of modern Western culture is the fierce, unquenchable determination to increase individual and national material wealth without limit.

Modern Western history can be seen largely as the wreckage-strewn path that this acquisitive culture has generated. Nations have been led by their “entrepreneurial” classes to seek more wealth than they have, either through direct conquest and plunder or through the exercise of the economic power to take wealth by competing and winning according to the prevailing rules of free market exchange and trade. The fierce commitment to the pursuit of affluence and growth guarantees the continuation of this history. It cannot end until and unless humans become content with what is sufficient and transition to social forms that enable this.

The single most powerful long-run driver of war is simply the capitalist economic system because limitless growth is fundamental to its nature. Firms must “grow or die”. Whether they like it or not they must ceaselessly search for more business opportunities; if they fall behind their competitors they will be driven into bankruptcy. Thus, there is massive pressure within the “Transnational Elite” to constantly find, create or take more opportunities to do more business, and this fuels the ceaseless quest to bring more regions, activities and nations into the integrated global free market sphere.

### **The failure of peace literature.**

The foregoing themes have received little or little or no attention in the literature on peace, or war and its prevention. There has been concern with the connections between resource access and armed conflict, but very little recognition of the causal connection between war and unsustainable levels of production and consumption and therefore resource demand. There has been in effect no recognition of the implications for “degrowth”, let alone for transition to far simpler lifestyles and systems. Following are brief notes supporting this claim of oversight, via illustrative reference to the literature in major categories.

General overview accounts of war typically mention competition for resources, but do not go on to consider whether conflict might be reduced or eliminated by reducing the quest for them, the ways this might be done or the connection with cultures and economies committed to affluence. Illustrative examples are to be found in Wikipedia (2023), Levy (2022), Lind (2022), Hinkkaiaen, Kinkkained and Kreutz, (2019), UN (Undated), Renner (2002), Blainey (1988), Ohlson, Jackson and Morelli (2011), Hogue (2017), Jakobsen (2015), Goodman (2023), Blattman (2022), Howerth (2016), Heuser (2022), National Bureau of Economic Resources (2011), Ohlson (2008), and van der Ploeg (2018).

Accounts focusing on causal factors attend predominantly to immediate or proximate triggering causes rather than distant factors generating tensions such as cultural commitments, let alone attend to affluence. Examples are Andregg (2023), Frankel (2023), Ohlson, Jackson and Morelli (2011), Blainey (1988), Goodman (2023), Blattman (2022), Howerth (2016), Heuser (2022). Klare has provided detailed accounts of conflict of this kind involving resource access, (e.g., 2000, 2002, 2009, 2012, 2015a, 2015b.)



Works on the correlates of war are similar to those in the causal category. See for instance the Correlates of War Project, (2022).

Much of the literature focuses on prevention of war, and “peace keeping” is a category within this domain. However again the main themes concern defusing conflicts that have arisen, rather than establishing arrangements, policies, commitments and cultures that would ensure that conflicts do not arise in the first place. See for instance MAPW (2023), Levy (2022), The International Crisis Group (Undated), Frankel (Undated), Aguirre and Lewis (2022), Sisson (2022), American Historical Association, (Undated), Heuser (2022).

Occasionally there is indirect and minimal reference to cultural factors as contributors. For instance, “An entirely new mode of human culture must be established—a global “zero-point” cooperative culture—and not the ego-based culture that is based on “tribalism” and mere individual or group consumerism. (Two is not Peace, Undated.) But the focus is usually on psychological or human nature traits such as belligerence, not social or cultural factors such as commitment to affluence.

These illustrative cases derive from a lengthy search which found no analyses of the kind that this discussion argues must be focal if humankind is to eventually eliminate armed conflict. This remarkable blind spot might be partly due to the fact that it has only been in the last few decades that awareness of the limits to growth and planetary boundaries has arisen. However, the oversight is puzzling and difficult to explain given the clear causal connections between consumption and conflict outlined above.

### **Prerequisites for a peaceful world.**

This analysis of the situation has clear and inescapable implications for the pursuit of a peaceful world. To repeat, in the long run that quest is doomed to failure unless humankind accepts transition to lifestyles and systems that only require very limited and stable quantities of resource inputs. This is also the prerequisite for the solution of most of the other alarming global problems presently threatening to destroy Western “civilisation” including ecological damage, the deprivation and impoverishment of several billion people in poor countries, and the deteriorating social cohesion and quality of life even in the richest countries.

How plausible is it that such a path to a peaceful world might be workable? Since the 1980s The Simpler Way project (TSW) has been arguing that the solution to the multi-factorial global predicament must involve transition to radically different values and systems whereby all people can live well on far lower per capita resource use rates than rich countries have at present. Following is a brief outline of that vision, an indication of the grounds for regarding it as workable and attractive, and a suggested path to its achievement. (For a detailed discussion, see TSW, 2023, Trainer 2020.)

Most people would be living in small, highly self-sufficient local communities, largely independent of national or global economies, devoting local resources to meeting local needs, with little intra-state let alone international transport or trade. This would mean transition from globalised to localised systems. Infrastructures, systems and procedures would be far simpler. Local economies can eliminate most need for transport, factories, heavy industry, global trade networks, cities, sewers, big dams, power stations and bureaucracies.

Economies would not be driven by profit, market forces or growth but would be deliberately and rationally organised to meet needs, and ensure rights, justice, welfare and ecological sustainability at minimal levels of resource demand. They would be designed and run to maximise the quality of life of all. They would for instance eliminate unemployment and provide everyone with a valued livelihood. No attention would be given to the GDP. Most small farms and firms could be privately owned, operating under strict guidelines. Much and probably most productive activity would not involve money as most “tax” would be paid in voluntary working bee participation, many goods would be free from the commons this input maintained, and many would come via sharing of surpluses and gifting. Paid work might average two days a week.

The towns and neighbourhoods would be largely self-governing, via community assemblies and voluntary committees, and decisions would mostly be implemented by community working bees. Few paid officials would be needed. Thus, citizens would take cooperative and participatory control over their own local economies and development. There would be a greatly reduced role for the remnant centralised state, and a high level of local control over it. This would be an anarchist form of government, not socialist; centralised agencies could not run large numbers of small local communities effectively.

These communities would not be viable unless they were caring, cohesive, cooperative and collectivist, and run by socially-responsible citizens prioritising the welfare of all and of their ecological systems. It is likely that such dispositions would be produced and maintained by the realisation that the individual's welfare depended on that of the community, and by the security, mutuality and other benefits experienced.

Obviously none of this could be achieved without immense cultural change away from currently dominant ideas and values, especially change towards collectivism, frugality and non-material sources of life satisfaction.

These far simpler lifestyles and systems do not imply any need for reduction in socially-useful high-tech research, medicine, universities, cultural activities etc.

The capacity of these ways to greatly reduce resource demand can easily be overlooked. It is illustrated by a study of egg supply (Trainer, Malik and Lenzen, 2019.) which found that the dollar and resource costs of eggs supplied via the usual supermarket path were found to be around 100-200 times those of eggs supplied via backyards and community coops. The latter localised path eliminates the need for large amounts of transport, chemicals, marketing, refrigeration, bureaucracy, paid work forces, computers and expensive personnel, fertilizer production, packaging, "waste" removal and soil-damaging agribusiness production of poultry feed. Manures moved to gardens via methane digesters would help to replace fertiliser imports while producing energy, thus contributing to the recycling of a more or less fixed quantity of community nutrients and the elimination of any need for sewer systems. The application of such Permaculture and related principles in all aspects of settlement design would enable synergistic or compounding reductions in resource and ecological costs while multiplying benefits in terms of social cohesion, security, solidarity and resilience.

The general validity of these reduction claims is evident in various studies. Lockyer (2017) found that the Dancing Rabbit ecovillage in Missouri had per capita rates for resource consumption around 5-10% of the US average. The study "Remaking settlements for sustainability" (Trainer 2019) explored application of alternative principles and technologies to the possible restructuring of an outer Sydney suburb, deriving possible areas and yields. It was found that the suburb could be almost sufficient in food production and able to devote several thousand person hours per week to community maintenance and culturally enriching activities.

Another study explored "How resource cheaply we could live well" using records of per capita consumption on a frugal and partly self-sufficient homestead in the Sydney region. (Trainer 2022. See also the video, A Visit to Pigface Point, 2021.) Again, very low rates of materials and energy consumption were evident. Electricity use for instance was under 1% of the Australian household per capita average.

The argument here has been that the enormous reductions required can be achieved but only via transition to the kinds of settlements and lifestyles sketched above and labelled The Simpler Way. If this is so then equally radical and coercive implications follow for thinking about transition strategy, and these depart markedly from those evident in the degrowth literature.

Consider the reductions these ways would enable at the macro-economic and national levels. Trade between and within nations would be very low. Many industries would more or less cease to be necessary. For instance, in the food domain these would include, sewage removal and treatment, fertilizer production (given closed loop nutrient circulation within small communities), feed-lot meat production, packaging and transport systems including warehousing, supermarkets, advertising and refrigeration (given the proximity of fresh foods). Many more sectors and industries would need to function at dramatically reduced levels, including all forms of transport (except bicycles), production of vehicles, aircraft and ships. Most roads would cease to be needed, enabling transformation to food production and commons. The development of leisure-rich communities and surrounding regions would largely eliminate the demand for holiday travel and tourism. There would also be major savings associated with the social benefits of these changes, including less physical and mental illness, crime and family breakdown.

And ultimately, defusing the need to secure distant resources and markets would eliminate the need to spend more than \$2 trillion pa. on arms.

These considerations might seem to have no useful implications for resolving current armed conflict but unless they become more focal on the global agenda conflict cannot but increase in future years. Only transition to systems and ways that allow all to live well on sustainable levels of resource consumption can eliminate the major source of armed conflict.



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