

# **Uniting for Peace**

2015 Summer Conference on

**“Surviving the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Global Challenges,  
Threats and Prospects for Peace”**

**“From War Economy to Green Economy”**

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**Time/Date** Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2015, 10:30am – 04:30pm

**Venue** Wesley’s Chapel, 49 City Road, London EC1Y 1AU, Nearest tube station  
Old Street

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## **Introduction**

In 1973 the Nobel laureate Konrad Lorenz described the paradoxical relationship between market economics and the threat of ecological catastrophe: “All the advantages that man has gained from his ever-deepening understanding of the natural world that surrounds him, his technological, chemical and medical progress, all of which should seem to alleviate human suffering...[tend] instead to favour humanity’s destruction.”

Any rational assessment of our current military mindset seems to support this prophecy. The cold war has been over for more than two decades, yet the world continues to increase its military spending as if we were facing unending conflict. The latest figures for 2014 show that the arms trade numbers have reached US\$1.8 trillion. The US is still number one, spending US\$711 billion on its military, but China and Russia are catching up fast.

Militarism is the key driver of the economics of underdevelopment and the oppression of developing countries. Western countries install puppet governments and supply them with arms to tyrannise and control their own people, in return for unfettered access to natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals. Countries are sold weapons including small arms, cluster bombs and landmines (110 million of which lie buried under the Earth), causing wars, environmental damage and poverty.

## **The Negative Effects of Militarism on Environment**

The negative effects of this militarism on the environment and on global and human security including refugees, migrants and many other vulnerable groups are catastrophic. The poor and excluded face dire threats from climate disruption including droughts, extreme storms, heat waves, rising sea levels, and floods which could create mayhem to many of the world’s greatest cities.

The environmental risks of nuclear contamination leaks are already well known from Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and the recent Fukushima disaster. This catastrophe has made Fukushima and its surrounding towns uninhabitable for at least couple of decades making it a potential health hazard and danger to our children and whole of civilisation. What is not as well known is the pollution created by the US military – the world’s single largest user of petroleum. This profligate use of fuel is extremely harmful to the environment.

## **IMF Report – Fossil Fuel Subsidy \$5.3 trillion**

Just as most of the world’s wealth is in the hands of a few people, according to a recent article in the academic journal Climatic Change, two-thirds of man-made global warming emissions were produced by just 90 companies, with Chevron, Exxon and BP leading the list as the biggest polluters. Half of these emissions were from the past 25 years.

There are thousands of oil, gas and coal producers in the world but the decision makers, the CEOs, or the ministers of coal and oil if you narrow it down to just one person, they could all fit on a Greyhound bus or two.

Confronting climate change requires a systemic transformation of how our economies are run and who runs them. Part of this radical change will involve disempowering the global 1% and the disaster-producing industries they profit from. According to a shocking estimate by International Monetary Fund finds \$5.3 trillion (\$10 million a minute) subsidy for 2015 fossil fuels, which is greater than the total health spending of all the world's governments.

No country has developed without fossil fuels to date – so cooperation and support of international community is the key to providing the technology, finance, scales and systems to create an alternative way of developing.

### **Solutions, Actions and Way Forward**

The solutions to environmental crisis is to build real security which can only come from peace and not conflicts. Wars threatens all our lives, millions of people already face food and water shortages leading to more conflict over resources. If we want a safer world, we must cut carbon emissions fast. The transition from fossil fuels to a green energy era is essential. Instead of relying on oil, natural gas and coal, a profound shift is needed for renewable energy sources, in wind, geo thermal energy, hydro and solar power which has a potential of cutting carbon emissions, countering climate change crisis and also creating much needed jobs in the green technology sectors.

My book *The Economics of Killing* has explored the alternatives to this tragic scenario and has advocated for a shift from the war economy to a green economy; military reduction; cutbacks in the global arms trade; reform of the monetary system; and addressing the root causes of violence, wars and terrorism. According to the Global Peace Index, if countries cut back violence by 25%, as much as US\$2 trillion could be saved. Eradicating violence altogether could create a stimulus of US\$8 trillion, enough to tackle the financial crisis and climate change and wipe out extreme poverty.

We require a revolution, a genuine momentum for an energy transition from Oil and Gas to renewable and green technology. We need to build a new social, political and cultural society that is sustainable, equitable and in harmony with the environment. Stopping militarism and deploying resources towards mitigating climate change and completion of the UN's much-needed Millennium Development Goals would leave a lasting legacy for generations to come, ensuring the continuation and progress of our sacred civilisation and humanity. Then we would be able to meet the challenges of the paradoxical relationship described by Lorenz.

Thanks for listening.

Bio – **Vijay Mehta** is a distinguished author and leading peace activist and a champion for Development and Human Rights. He is the chair of Uniting for Peace ([www.unitingforpeace.org](http://www.unitingforpeace.org)) and Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity ([www.fortuneforum.org](http://www.fortuneforum.org)).

Working since 1979, Uniting for Peace is a non-profit organisation devoted to creating and promoting a global culture of peace, nonviolence and poverty reduction. The flagship campaign of Uniting for Peace is called 4D for World Peace. It is a campaign to create global frameworks for taking actions on interconnecting global issues of disarming and demilitarising the world and the savings thus achieved to be deployed for development and democracy.

The charity Fortune Forum whose founder is Renu Mehta, daughter of Vijay Mehta, held summits (2005 and 2006) where Former US President Clinton, Former US Vice President Al Gore and Actor Michael Douglas were keynote speakers. The summits raised over a million pounds for charity and attracted a worldwide audience of 1.3 billion people (one fifth of humanity) including print and media coverage.

Vijay Mehta's books include *The Economics of Killing* (2012), *The Fortune Forum Code: For a Sustainable Future* (2006), *Arms No More* (2005) and *The United Nations and its Future in the 21st Century* (2005).

In 2014, Vijay Mehta's bio, "The Audacity of Dreams" appeared in the book *Karma Kurry*, published by Jaico Publishing House (India). It included 25 other inspiring change-makers' biographies. Nelson Mandela who wrote the foreword to the book, had this to say, "Ordinary people do extra ordinary things. These stories have that power to inspire people to rise and act, to make a difference." To read Vijay Mehta's full bio, please follow this link: <http://goo.gl/JcUGwr>

He has appeared in various TV programmes including BBC World, Press TV, Ajjak-24 hour Indian news channel, and Think Peace documentary, Canada, among others. The Sunday Times, Independent, Observer and Guardian newspapers, among other journals have written about him. His life is devoted to the service of peace, humanity and our planet.

Vijay Mehta is the recipient of the Global Indian Karmaveer (Action hero) Puraskaar (Award) by iCONGO (International Confederation of NGO's). He is now a noble-laureate 2012 – 2013 of the iCONGO team of advisors and mentors ([www.icongo.in](http://www.icongo.in)). It is an award for outstanding luminaries working for peace and social justice.

He has been appointed a fellow of the New Westminster College, Province of British Columbia, Canada in 2013.

Vijay Mehta's new book "**The Economics of Killing: How the West Fuels Wars and Poverty in the Developing World**" is published by Pluto Press (UK) / Palgrave Macmillan (USA) / Amazon (Worldwide). For reviews and endorsements of the book, please visit: [www.theeconomicsofkilling.org](http://www.theeconomicsofkilling.org)

"Vijay....a long standing activist for peace, development, human rights and environment"  
**The Sunday Times Magazine, London** 1st February, 2009

"Vijay Mehta lends intellectual credibility to the project and wrote 'The Fortune Forum Code for a Sustainable Future', a sort of manifesto that will underpin the group's future activities."  
**The Independent, London** 26 September 2006

"Thank you for all you do Vijay - both the Organisation and yourself are inspiration and give us all hope that both yourself and Uniting for Peace can bring a world without war. Indeed it is possible, even in our own time."  
**Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate (1976)**

Vijay Mehta is among the 1,300 Notable Peacemakers Throughout History  
[http://peace.maripo.com/p\\_peacemakers.htm](http://peace.maripo.com/p_peacemakers.htm)

He is among the 98 Peace Philanthropists around the world.  
[http://peace.maripo.com/p\\_philanthropy\\_bios.htm](http://peace.maripo.com/p_philanthropy_bios.htm)