

# Called to be Peacemakers 2012

by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, in association with Pax Christi and Quaker Peace and Social Witness

10:30, Saturday 20 October  
Friends House  
173-177 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BJ



## Harnessing Money and Power for Peace

Vijay Mehta | [vijay@vmpeace.org](mailto:vijay@vmpeace.org)

### Contents

- Introduction
- Money and Power-use and Misuse
- Building an Ethical World to End Violence, Militarism and Wars
- Way Forward
- Conclusion

## **Introduction**

Good morning and thanks to Fellowship of Reconciliation and Millius for the opportunity to explore the title Money, Power and Peace – what are you living for? It is a privilege and an honour to address Young Peacemakers. You are instrumental for most of the social changes happening in our world today.

On a plane journey to India, I found myself sitting next to a Japanese student going to India to study Buddhism and also visit holy shrines where Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment. Obviously, we talked about Buddhism and he said, one of the Buddha's teaching is to renounce money as it is the root cause of evil. Without money, I could not have taken the trip to India to study Buddhism. I said to him, about an Indian saying Bhuke peet na bhajan hoye Gopala – translated in English means, "You cannot pray or sing devotional songs on an empty stomach. Scriptures of most religions have alluded that material wealth is not the aim of life. The goal of life is living in harmony with yourself and surroundings creating an atmosphere of inner peace which can ultimately lead to world peace.

My book *The Economics of Killing* aptly explores the misuse of money and power by describing that ethics should precede economics. Capitalism without conscience in pursuit of greater and greater profits have endangered the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat leading to environmental destruction. Moreover it has undermined global poverty by pursuing the murderous path of wars and militarism. My book also puts a plan that we can rectify this devastating situation by adopting the 4D for peace campaign of Disarmament and Demilitarisation for equitable development and promotion of Democracy for a safer world.

I will explore in my talk that, we need both, the compassionate or enlightened use of money and use of power based on morality and rule of law not only to harness peace but also to realise our full potential as individuals. I will also examine as peacemakers how can we have a bigger impact than those who use the power of money and military to achieve their ends of unleashing violence, suffering, chaos and mayhem.

## **Money and Power-Use and Misuse**

Money and Power has a the capacity of doing good and bad. The basic concept of money, wealth or economic growth should be to increase equality and enhance quality of life for all. However the wealthiest 1% elite, along with bankers, corporations and leaders are using money and power to amass more and more wealth. Their material desires can never be sated, who act as economists say they should, who murder, torture and steal in exchange for billions in a Swiss bank account, for a fourth yacht or a tenth palace.

Democracy is strangled by the power of money to buy politicians and media, The globalisation of power into unelected bodies like IMF and NATO, and the hyping of alleged threats like terrorism. The corporate media distracts from real issues, promotes the elite as credible and helps with divide and rule tactics .

It is a shameful scenario for all of humanity when billions go to bed hungry while commodity giants like Glencore by gambling on food prices reported \$ 2.2 billion pre-tax profits out of the misery of poor people without any slightest shade of moral conscience.

The result of this is extreme poverty for two billion people subsisting on less than \$2 a day. Every 3.6 seconds, a person dies of starvation. Every 30 seconds, a child dies of malaria. Every minute a women dies in childbirth, a genocide of neglect and abandonment.

Depending on the way it is used, misplaced power has been the cause of violence, wars, suffering and bloodshed. As a result, money has been spent on armaments instead of development, education and many other life improving essentials that poor people currently lack. One is reminded of the quotation of Former US President Dwight Eisenhower who said and I quote, *"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed"*

Misplaced power of individuals and leaders has resulted in increased violence, militarism and creation of a powerful Military Industrial Complex.

## **Culture of Violence**

Violence and aggression domestic or outside including gun crimes is happening on a regular basis in propagating fear in our society.

780 million guns are in circulation worldwide and 5 to 6 million are manufactured on a yearly basis. Shootings in US occur every 4 to six weeks, the recent one being in Sikh Temple in Wisconsin. In UK

Dunblane school massacre killed 18 school children of 5 years old. And the recent murder of 77 people in Norway is another example of manifestations of inner restlessness and mental imbalance. Individuals like Breivik (murderer of Norway Massacre) seem to be ideologically driven, yet in the depths of their mind they are a victim of distortion of the personality. On a wider scale this imbalance of personality and mind has the potential of creating havoc. It leads to militarisation and leaders engaging in futile wars as in Afghanistan and Iraq. The flame of fear destroy individuals, engulfs families, ethnic groups, nations, and eventually the whole of humanity.

### Militarism and Military Industrial Complex

The culture of militarism and reverence for military is prevalent in all societies throughout history.

In my book *The Economics of Killing*, I have advocated the urgent necessity to try to stop our world becoming dangerously militarized. 1% of the senior-politicians, military, weapon manufacturers, arm dealers, corporations and media support militarism. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) data for 2011, the military spending has risen to \$1.74 trillion while 925 million people go to bed hungry every night. 4% of the military spending is enough to wipe out extreme poverty, financial crisis and climate change. The cold war has been over for more than two decades, yet the world continues on an insane path to increase its military spending year after year as if we are living in a time of unending conflict.

How can a society be called civilised if it has an international arms/killing industry which leads to wars, violence, barbarism, to counterproductive military budgets destroying social, economic, political and cultural fabric and values. Today countries are more and more resorting to war instead of dialogue and diplomacy to solve disputes. One is baffled by the fact that here we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and we still killing each other with new and sophisticated weapons.

The US obsession with wars and military spending has created a monster – the military-industrial complex – which acts against the interests of people everywhere, including US citizens themselves. The US military has blown \$3 trillion on the Iraq war and \$1 trillion on Afghanistan war which primarily have been responsible for 2008 financial collapse and current economic crisis. My book, *The Economics of Killing* shows how this monster is not only the cause of extreme poverty in the developing world, but of 9/11 and the market crash of 2008. How the world can move away from war economy to a sustainable peace economy based on soft power and co-operation, so we can tackle the biggest threats facing humanity: extreme poverty, climate change and warmongering.

In the name of global security, science and new technology is being used to develop and produce insane weapons and fight the asymmetric wars of the future. In universities, the scarce resources, are being manipulated to develop and produce new high tech deadly weapons for warfare. Worldwide, between 1.2 and 1.5 million people work as scientists and engineers in military research and development. Industry and public research budgets add up to 100-120 billion dollars per year. Of this, some 25 billion dollars are spent on research in universities. Regarding UK universities, the most recent assessment was published in August 2012, using freedom of information requests, this study found that 17 of the UK's most prestigious universities including Imperial college London, Cambridge and Oxford received a total of £83 million over the 3 years up to until 2011.

### **Building an Ethical World to End Violence, Militarism and Wars**

The aim of individuals and society is to harness money and power for peace education for building an equitable and safer world—in short living in a atmosphere of peace and harmony. To work for peace, It is important to understand and act on culture of peace.

Peace is often called absence of war. But it is much more than that. It is the ability of society to function on ethical and moral core values of life where everyone is provided an opportunity to find decent work, earn a living, contribute to their communities and societies and fulfil their full potential, It is about shared values which comprise some of the most basic aspirations of human kind – freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, shared responsibility and multiculturalism At a wider level, it is preparing and nurturing citizens to grow and become vehicles for change to find solutions to the issues we are facing today.

“Peace is upholding universal and eternal truths of life– love, kindness and harmony. It is nurturing qualities of self control, sacrifice, non-violence and understanding for resolution of conflict. It is spreading culture of peace and to challenge the futility of violence and wars. Peace is recognition of our interconnectivity at all times and in all places.

## **Way Forward**

What we need is urgent necessity to adopt nonviolent ways for building peace, equitable development, restoring human dignity, ethics and civilisation, which are reflected in a new initiative 4D for World Peace inspired by my book. It is about taking actions on disarming and demilitarising, and the savings thus achieved to be deployed for peace-building, development and promoting democracy. A booklet and a film, Change the World (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9GEK4FFrXk>) has been produced as part of promoting the 4D for World peace Campaign.

Among the ideas for change we need radical reforms of accountable democracy, full transparency of state and corporate power, opening up of corporate media and development of an independent forum to promote the real issues and solutions .

The only way to avoid global wars and catastrophes is for all to support ways of peace. We spend billions on military and pennies for peace. Were the money spent on evil weapons to kill people spent on global understanding, peaceful resolution of conflict, eliminating the causes of violence and hate, there would be no more wars.

We are living in amazing times when it is becoming easier to build new pathways. It is very similar to pioneers and innovators of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. We can harness the advantage of technology, internet and social media to go global with our message in a short span of time.

With the right use of money and power more peacemakers will be able to muster the courage to spread the message of peace, non-violence and love in the world, a time will come in the history of mankind when the perception of sudden change from a gun culture to a culture of peace becomes a reality. That period in history can become the golden age of living.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, allow me to share a message and a vision. We have made tremendous amount of progress in science, medicine and technology. In some parts of the world, average age is 75 – 80 years. From typewriter, we have entered the computer and internet age where via the social media, we are living in a global village. However, we have not been able to shed violence and warmongering from our world. If we are not fighting in Europe which we used to do up to the second world war, war now has been exported to Middle East, Africa and other regions. We are ready to sell armaments without any ethics. We sell weapons, for example to Syria where sectarian and tribal killing has been going on for last 18 months. So how the peacemakers of today can be of service and fulfil the highest aspiration of humanity to live a peaceful world.

How will history remember us? It can only be kind if we can all join in our campaign for abolition of war, nuclear weapons, poverty and violence and work for a culture of peace and non violence. Today's call to peacemakers conference is an opportunity to move forward the debate against the military mindset, to start and activate a political discussion to change the system for a safer planet, leading to peace and prosperity. It is selling arms and expecting peace is unrealistic. What we do require is to change war economy to peace economy.

*Remember, peace is our birth right and we should claim it*

My dream is how can 25 million soldiers worldwide be replaced with 25 million peace-keepers, then the world will be a different place. It will be a bliss to be living in that dawn when the civilisation would have taken a full turn towards a better future. Only then we can leave a lasting legacy for generations to come ensuring the continuation and progress of our sacred civilisation and humanity. I think after Arab Spring and occupy Wall Street, peacemakers, students and youth of today with the right use of money and power can prove that they have what it takes to make vital changes in our society.

**Thanks for listening.**

**Peace Quotations from major regions and Vijay Mehta's bio follows:**

**Christianity** – Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

**Islam** – God will guide men to peace. If they will heed Him, He will lead them from the darkness of war to the light of peace.

**Buddhism** – There is no happiness greater than Peace

**Hinduism** – Without meditation, where is peace? Without peace, where is happiness?

“May there be peace to the heavens, peace to the sky, peace to the atmosphere. May there be peace on the Earth and peace in the waters. May there be peace to the forests and peace to the mountains. May there be peace to the plants, animals and to all creatures. May we all live in Peace”

**Vedas (considered to be the oldest book on earth)**

**Baha'i** – War is death while peace is life

**Confucianism** – Seek to be in harmony with all your neighbours...live in peace with your brethren.

**Jainism** – All men should live in peace with their fellows. This is the Lord's desire.

The things that will destroy us are: politics without principle; pleasure without conscience; wealth without work; knowledge without character; business without morality; science without humanity; and worship without sacrifice

*Mahatma Gandhi*

The following publications/websites were consulted and excerpts have been taken from them during the writing of this article:

1. Vijay Mehta – The Economics of Killing: How The West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World, Pluto Press 2012, London, UK [[www.theeconomicsofkilling.org](http://www.theeconomicsofkilling.org)]
2. Vijay Mehta – The Fortune Forum Code: For a Sustainable Future, 2005, London UK.
3. Santiago declaration to the human rights to peace <http://goo.gl/Twy9o>
4. Culture of Peace – [http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/uk/uk\\_sum\\_cp.htm](http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/uk/uk_sum_cp.htm)
5. Vijay Mehta, From Inner Peace to Global Peace, a lecture given on UN International Day of Peace, September 2012, Liverpool, UK
6. Vijay Mehta, The Economics of Killing book discussion event, September 2012, Edinburgh, UK

7. ATCA– Intelligence Unit – 2012

8. Reiner Braun, Militarisation of Science Versus Peace Research: A Call for a Paradigm Shift

This speech can be downloaded from [www.unitingforpeace.com](http://www.unitingforpeace.com)

**Vijay Mehta** is chair of Uniting for Peace ([www.unitingforpeace.org](http://www.unitingforpeace.org)), renowned author and global activist for peace, development and human rights. He is also the Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity ([www.fortuneforum.org](http://www.fortuneforum.org)) which was founded by his daughter Renu Mehta. Fortune Forum 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).

He has appeared in various TV programmes including BBC World, Press TV, Ajtak–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.

In 2012, Vijay Mehta has been selected for the Global Indian Karmaveer (Action hero) Puraskar (Award) by iCONGO as a noble–laureate 2012–2013. It is an award for outstanding luminaries working for peace and social justice.

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