Paper: *Peace Building in an Unstable World. Outline*
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I would like to take this opportunity to say how happy I am to have been invited to this meeting and to thank Vijay Metha for his kind invitation.

What I would like to share with you today are some of my own experiences and ideas in relation to the possibilities of *Peace Building in an Unstable World*. This is a very good title because it covers some of the most fundamental issues challenging the creation of a culture of peace - such as how we can build security in what many believe is a very dangerous world.

In this sense the concept of 'security' must be broad enough to include concepts such as environmental integrity and social justice.

My analysis lies somewhere between Diagnosis and Prognosis and is probably more descriptive than prescriptive.

My approach is to identify the year 2010 with a number of significant milestones.

In the area of the study of peace the year 2010 can be seen as the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of Peace Research which can be defined as 'The Scientific study of Conflict' in its broadest sense. This should be seen as a very important development. Because if our analysis of the fundamental causes of conflict is faulty then the solutions that we put forward based on those analysis will also be faulty by implication.

But the Peace Research agenda has also moved on and now we could define Peace Research as the scientific approach to the possibilities and the practicalities of peace in an unstable world.

The year 2010 is the 60th anniversary of the proposal put forward by Robert Schuman for a European Coal and Steel Community. This was the foundation stone for the European Union which is seen by some to be the greatest practical example of peace building in an unstable world.

The year 2010 is the one hundredth anniversary of the death of the Great Russian novelist and pacifist Leo Tolstoy. I want to refer briefly to Tolstoy's diagnosis and his prognosis on the question of peace and identify how relevant his analysis may be today. Because Tolstoy himself believed that he had rediscovered the foundation stone for a peaceful future.

The last date I would like to mention is the year 2030. That was the date predicted some time ago for the first landing by humans on the planet Mars. It now looks like this prediction will be a little bit optimistic. For reasons that are in many ways connected into the war system. One of the best forecasts that I have heard about landing on Mars was from an Irish astronomer (Leo Enright) – His vision was that the first Man to land on Mars would be a woman.

In this regard I sometimes try and picture how future generations will see and judge us and our times

The Conundrum at the Heart of Our Culture of Violence

In the last few hundred years we have made the most astonishing and unexpected discoveries in relation to the natural forces that have shaped the world in which we live and about the cosmos within which that world is situated.

Most if not all the historical knowledge that had been passed down to us through previous generations concerning the natural world has proven to be mistaken and in many cases to be false.

In almost every area of human knowledge from the understanding of our place in the cosmos to understanding our own health issues –progress has only come about when what has passed for traditional knowledge has been rejected.

The only exception to this experience would seem to be in the Science of Human Understanding, both in the area of human social understanding and human spiritual understanding. If this conundrum is a reasonably accurate reflection of reality then it has some positive and also some negative implications in relation to building peace in an unstable world.

In relation to the culture of violence a good example of this conundrum is the following which has been used before. If you look at Thucydides History of the Peloponnesian War in the fifth century B.C. (431-404 B.C.) it is truly amazing how little our understanding of war and conflict has changed in the last two and half thousand years.

In relation to the Athenian attack on the neutral island of Melos - Thucydides gives a very clear outline of the 'moral' and 'realist'arguments that were being used by the Athenians to justify and rationalise the need for the action that they were taking.

The incredible thing about the Melian Dialogue is that it contains the very same rationalisations and justifications that are being used today to justify most of our contemporary conflicts and from this perspective it identifies and highlights our failure to bring about any change whatever in the last two and a half thousand years in the norms of our understanding of the culture of violence.

President Obama and the Peloponnesian War
People who believe that the earth is flat are entitled to that belief if they so wish. But at the beginning of the twenty first century it would be very hard to take any ideology seriously that is based on a flat earth scenario. But in relation to the culture of violence that is similar to what we are being asked to do.

To bring this debate right up to date I want to take the example of President Obama's speech on his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize. (2009)

On one level the speech should be seen as very significant from the perspective of the culture of peace. But at another we are back to the Melian Dialogue and the same fundamental problems that still need to be addressed.

It should be seen as an amazingly positive development when a serving American President can say the following: And we should not underestimate its significance.

> As someone who stands here as a direct consequence of Dr. King's life work,
> I am living testimony to the moral force of non-violence
> I know there is nothing weak – nothing passive, nothing naive – in the creed and lives of Gandhi and King.

If you just read that far in the President's speech you might think that some major breakthrough in our cultural understanding of violence and non-violence had taken place.

But then he comes to what I call 'The Big But':

President Obama immediately qualifies what he has just said and in fact he invalidates his own analysis by using two of the most traditional examples for justifying and rationalising the foundations of the culture of violence.

> A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies

> Negotiations cannot convince Al Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms

This is what I call the Big Conundrum

> We_____ have learned to our costs that they _____
> will not listen to anything but force.

The last statement is not form President Obama but it does support his analysis and it is form someone he mentions in his speech. It is taken from Adolf Hitler's Mein Kemp.

In many ways the speech by President Obama identifies unwittingly and indirectly the core problems of peace building in an unstable world or creating security in a dangerous world.

I want to move on to look at two very practical examples of how stability was built and created against all the odds in an unstable world.

How Stability Was Built in an Unstable World – Two Examples

There are a number of very significant examples that show beyond doubt how peace can be built in an unstable world. And show quite clearly the potentiality of the culture of peace over the negativity of the culture of violence.

These are very concrete examples of how peaceful cooperation has worked where violence has failed and failed utterly.

The two examples which I want to mention are both from the European continent.

This is significant because over the last three or four hundred years Europeans have created some of the most bitter and destructive conflicts imaginable with levels of cruelty that defy analysis. You would have to go back to the fall of the Roman Empire to see destruction on such a scale.

The first example is the rise of the European Union from a position of almost total devastation at the end of 1945 (at the end of the second thirty year war).

The second example relates to how the Soviet Empire collapsed in the face of the 'Velvet Revolution'.

The John Hume Analysis

In relation to the European Union I want to start with what I call the John Hume analysis.
John Hume was the leader of the moderate Nationalist party (the SDLP) in Northern Ireland during the worst years of the recent sectarian conflict.

He stood firmly against the use of violence to try and resolve the bitter ethnic, national and religious conflicts that had afflicted the island of Ireland and in particular Northern Ireland for centuries.

He won the Nobel Peace Prize (1998) for his contribution to long drawn out peace process.

He was and still is a great supporter of the European Union and he repeatedly stated his belief that the European Project was and is one of the great success stories in relation to creating peaceful societies our of war torn systems and regions. – Of just how you can build peace in an unstable world.

In his Nobel peace prize (1998) acceptance speech he emphasised the same beliefs when he said:

> The European Union is the best example in the history of the world of conflict resolution and it is the duty of everyone, particularly those who live in areas of conflict to study how it was done and to apply its principles to their own conflict resolution.

He went on to emphasise what he believed was one of the key factors in this process.

> One of the most fundamental principles of peace as established within the European Community is the respect for diversity.

> The peoples of Europe (then) created institutions which respected their diversity.

Is John Hume right? Have the squabbling nations of Europe with their deep and bitter historical grievances become one of the first post war civil societies?

The European Miracle

It seems to be very easy to underestimate just how much progress has been made in Europe through peaceful cooperation.

One of the best ways to appreciate the significance of the changes would be to try and cast our minds back to Europe in 1945 or any time just after the end of the war in Europe.

If you were to say, at that time, to even the most optimistic European - that within fifty years Germany, France, England. Poland, Austria and Italy- would be part of a political, economic and cultural union without borders and with a minimum of hostility towards each other.

Those Europeans would consider you some kind of visionary who was totally out of contact with reality

But in a matter of a few decades the European Union project has moved the countries and the peoples of Europe beyond their bitter historical animosities. This achievement cannot be underestimated. If you believe in miracles this has to be one. Even Robert Schuman would not have believed that such a union was possible in so short a time.

What are the lessons if any that can be learnt for other regions that are still experiencing their own bitter conflicts? Or is the European experience unique to Europe?

Why Europeans Hate War and How Americans are Seduced by War

Some of the arguments about the European experience have been developed in two books published over the last few years which I would like to identify.

The first is the book by Professor James Sheehan: '*The Monopoly of Violence* (2007) but it is the subtitle of the book that reflects the arguments being developed on the issues of Europe. The subtitle is '*Why Europeans Hate going to War.*' This subtitle is in the form of a statement rather than a question. If the statement is correct and if Europeans do hate going to war as Sheehan argues than that does really signify an incredible change in the European culture of violence.

Sheehan argues that the forces that have brought about the decline of militarism in Europe – in the world's most violent continent – have been misunderstood and have not been fully explained. We Europeans have murdered each other over every conceivable difference and in many cases for no particular reason. Sheehan believes that today more than ever: 'The conventional wisdom about war and peace no longer fits the reality of the contemporary world.

The Monopoly of Violence contributes some important new perspectives on the long historical debate on the role of war in creating even more war rather than creating peace as some of the advocates of war want us to believe.

Immanuel Kant was one of the first philosophers of the Enlightenment to envisage the possibility of a peaceful Europe.
In his classical work *Perpetual Peace*: *A Philosophical Sketch* (1795) he outlined his idea that the foundation of peace in Europe would be a - *Federation of Peaceful Democracies* - of course Kant was not the only philosopher of the enlightenment to outline this type of infrastructure as a means of establishing stability in the international system.

Are we really living in the Europe as envisaged by Kant and has the European war system really collapsed and if so where do we go from here?

From a purely historical perspective the argument for Europe as a post war civil society seems very strong. But of course there are dangers because within the European Union countries there are significant vested interests who are not happy with what they perceive as the military weakness of the European Union.

The second book that I want to acknowledge is by Professor Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism* (2005). But again it is the subtitle of the book: *How Americans are Seduced by War* - that reflects some of the arguments that are worth looking at.

I think the subtitle could have just as easily have been '*How Europeans were historically seduced by war.*'

Bacevich's own background as a graduate of the West Point Academy and a Vietnam War Veteran does give his arguments some authority. He identifies what he describes as a relatively new phenomenon as the 'military metaphysics'. He sees this as a major development in the political culture of the western hemisphere. This development manifests itself:

> In a romanticized view of soldiers, a tendency to see military power as the truest measure of national greatness, and outsized expectations regarding the efficacy of force

In historical terms he could be describing England, France, Germany or any other aggressive European states. In contemporary terms he could be describing China, India, Pakistan and many other countries moving along a similar path.

Bacevich is not the first person to describe this 'Military Utopianism' but he does it with a clarity that is refreshing.

Who Fears Civil Society?

To bring the argument right up to date I want to use to relatively recent quotes. I think these quotes reflect the problems of trying to build peace from the more traditional perspective of the war system of international relations.

The first is from the British Foreign Sectary –David Miliband. In a very thoughtful statement shortly after the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by the Irish voters (2008) he said the Irish vote raised:

> The fundamental question –what is the purpose of the European Union now?
> The old question that it represented an end to war in Europe is no longer sufficient?
> The trouble we have today is not that the EU has failed. It is the opposite the problem is that it has succeeded and the people of Europe now take that success for granted

I find the implications of the first part of this statement absolutely amazing.

David Miliband is right the European Union does seem to represent an end to war in Europe which is historically unprecedented. The amazing part is that he and others would think that this is no longer sufficient for the peoples of Europe. Maybe he is he right?

The second quote is from Robert Gates who is the United States Secretary of Defence from a lecture he gave a few weeks ago at the National Defence University (January 2010) where he was very critical of the European Union and its refusal to take its military role seriously.

> The demilitarisation of Europe – where large swathes of the general public and political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it – has gone from a blessing in the 20th century to an impediment to achieving lasting peace in the 21st century. (Irish Times 25/02/2010)

I find this statement even more perplexing than David Miliband's. We should not doubt the sincerity of their beliefs but at one level these statements reflect a flat earth ideology or an ideological perspective that is more appropriate to the Mad Hatter's Tea Party in Alison in Wonderland. Where nothing is what it seems to be and every word or idea can mean the exact opposite to the general acceptance.

The End of the Cold War and the Collapse of the Soviet Empire

Very briefly: The second example of how stability was created in a process which by its very nature should been driven by instability - that is the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

From the perspective of the power of peace and non-violence to create meaningful and lasting social change 1989 must be seen as the start of an almost un-precedented movement of peaceful social change.

We should remember that right up to the fall of the Berlin Wall the experts –the cold war warriors where predicting at least another hundred years of cold war in Europe and associated proxy wars around the world.

The historical significance of the Velvet Revolution can best be understood by looking back to the early part of the year 1989.

There was absolutely no guarantee that the political pressure for change and the instability building up in the countries of central Europe would not descend into violent chaos.

The ferocity of the conflicts associated with the break-up of the former Yugoslavia can confirm just how explosive these forces were and still are.

But after the Velvet Revolution Europe was and still is a continent at peace with relatively stable social, economic and political systems. Almost Miraculously!

If anyone one had said at the beginning of 1989 that within 18 months and without a shot being fired the cold war system and the iron curtain would collapse – That country after country would see fundamental but peaceful changes in their political, social and economic systems - they would have been considered as totally out of touch with reality. I know this from personal experience being involved in various peace movements at that time.

One of the best summaries of the significance of the events as that unfolded through the Velvet Revolution can be summed up in the following statement:

> No amount of violence could have achieved in one hundred years the type of social and political change that was brought about through non violent direct action.

I would like to have seen these two examples being acknowledged by President Obama in his Nobel speech.
Tolstoy

2010 is the one hundred anniversary of the death of the Great Russian novelist and pacifist Leo Tolstoy and so I did not want to let this opportunity go without referring his contribution and more particularly to the potential contribution that his ideas may contribute to an more peaceful future.

For the last thirty to forty years of his life Tolstoy was a passionate believer in the power of non-violence as the only possible blueprint for a better future and a more peaceful world.

Tolstoy became a 'prophet for peace' and like John the Baptist he knew himself that he was a prophet crying in the wilderness. He believed that war and - all what he called 'the childish absurdities assorted with war' - would wither away within one hundred years of the clear statement of the understanding of the absurdity of war and violence.

He gave as one of his examples the campaign against the slave trade. – Within one hundred years of Wilberforce clearly articulating the criminal absurdity of the slave trade – the slave trade was abolished from a legal perspective and from this victory the cultural process of totally rejecting the concept of slavery was given a major boost in the right direction.

It is my opinion that in the end Tolstoy saw himself as the Wilberforce of the War System and that for him the war puzzle was solved and it would only be a matter of time before the war system would collapse.

Now Tolstoy was not as out of touch with reality as some of his critics would have us believe. He was well aware that even after the abolition of the slave trade that appalling social conditions associated with wage slavery and other forms of economic and cultural exploitation would still exist.

But he felt that the abolition of the slave trade was the first and necessary step in the process that needed to be taken so that the next set of challenges could be addressed.

In the same way Tolstoy accepted that even after the abolition of the war system much violence and exploitation would remain within our social and economic systems. But he believed that the abolition of the war system was a necessary step in the creation of a peaceful society.

Of course it is not easy nor advisable to try and sum up Tolstoy's Prescription or Blue print for a peaceful the future.

But Tolstoy's critical analysis of the institution of war and his critique of the traditional moral justifications for violence are distinctly relevant to the same issues today.

Tolstoy bases his faith and his hope on changing the individual on 'the regeneration of the inner person'. He sees this type of change as much more significant than the revolutionary changes of the political or social system as proposed by Lenin and many others of Tolstoy's contemporaries.

How far these two factors can be separated or how far they are interrelated remains partly unanswered in Tolstoy's analysis.

Tolstoy's analysis of just how human society works is the key in trying to understand his approach to the question of war and violence and the cultural structures on which their foundations are laid.

He message is very uncompromising and has been dismissed by many. He believed that at the fundamental level there are only two possible laws that govern society and he believes that these laws are mutually exclusive.

You either have one or the other. For Tolstoy human historical experience has been a battle ground between the 'Law of Love' and the 'Law of Violence'

The problem is this if Tolstoy is right in his analysis then almost everyone else is wrong right back to Plato and Aristotle.

But as we know from historical experience traditional knowledge has been turned on its head time after time. So Tolstoy's analysis should not be dismissed because it seems to go against traditional knowledge and contemporary experience.

For example Galileo's analysis of the working of the solar system were initially dismissed on the same grounds that they went against all traditional knowledge and logical experience.

Peace Research and the Collapse of the War System

We have to accept that the 'win-lose' scenario which is the historical bases for the justification for most conflicts is still relevant to specific conflicts today.

And in many ways we have to identify the 'win-lose' scenario as one of the bedrocks of the culture of violence. The logical absurdity of this scenario can be summed up in the concept of 'If you want peace, prepare for war.'

We know now that advances in the science and the technology of destruction and extermination has fundamentally changed this scenario not just from 'win-lose' to 'lose-lose' but to something that is almost unimaginable the total destruction of the Earths biosphere.

The Collapse of the War System.

We can now say that the war system of international relations collapsed on Saturday the 27th of October 1962. I am just guessing that historians in one hundred years time might identify this date as the significant date.

We now know that on this day the world in which we live and all its potentiality came to within the literal 'hair's breadth' of total annihilation. Robert McNamara who was the secretary of state at that time gives a very clear picture in his 'Fog of War' analysis of just how lucky the world was on that day.

It just so happened that some years before the crises the former American ambassador to Moscow and his wife had become friendly with Premier Khrushchev and his wife. At a vital time in the crises the ambassador gave some advice to the American President based on this friendship. This piece of advice was seen by McNamara as the key to saving the world from destruction.

The ambassador advised President Kennedy that if he offered what could be seen as a victory to Khrushchev – then Khrushchev would be able to respond in a positive way.

The compromise was that the United States would guarantee not to invade Cuba if the nuclear weapons were withdrawn or not installed.

So Khrushchev was able to go to his hardliners and declare a victory- he has stopped the invasion of Cuba.

The real lesson that McNamara identified from this and similar other experiences was that even good men behaving in a very rational manner and even with the best of intentions can under the traditional war system so create an unimaginable disaster.

Many Other Close Calls

We also know that on numerous other occasions since then that similar problems have brought the world to the brink of nuclear disaster. There are lest five very well researched potential disasters that have brought our world

to within a hair's breadth of a nuclear winter. Robert Mc Namara identified three such events while he was secretary of state.

In 1972 due to a computer malfunction in the Soviet early warning defence system – A launch order was given to one of the forward command posts which would have resulted in a nuclear strike against the United States.

The only thing that stood in the way of this disaster was the cool head of Russian officer – who disobeyed his standing orders and made a personal phone call to a friend of his in a different part of the system to check if he had got the same order and to see if it the order was legitimate.

The man who saved the world on this occasion lived in retirement on a tiny pension in a small apartment in Moscow. Now that's gratitude for you.

The conspiracy theorists would say that there have been many other close calls apart from the ones that have been researched in detail.

This type of potential catastrophe has not gone away – In a recent edition of the Scientific American journal (January 2010) there was an in-depth study of the possible Global consequences of a limited nuclear war between India and Pakistan. The scientific results from the analysis of even a regional nuclear where nightmarish.

In a recent report from the committee of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (January 2010) the committee looked again at the dangers that still exit from nuclear weapons.

While the committee recognised that the total number of nuclear weapons has fallen significantly and now stands at about 10,000 weapons –

But what they found and this is the most important figure is that almost 1,000 of these weapons are still on what is called 'trigger alert' – that is prone to computer malfunction or human error – this is despite the absence of any credible justifying threat.

Conclusion

My conclusion starts from the position that 'The War Puzzle' has been solved. That is the traditional rationalisations and justifications for war and for the use of violence have been critically undermined during the twentieth century.

Whether we like it or not we are the children of the enlightenment and we must accept the consequences of critical thinking

 – And that critical thinking has shown that the Potentiality of Peace is far greater than the Potentiality of Non-peace (Violence).

So we can conclude that in the long human struggle between Peace and Non-peace
– Peace has won.

That the Culture and Ideology of violence for all its perceived historical importance has proven to be a false ideology and the future will be structured around the Culture and the Philosophy of Peace.

In the broadest sense Human Intellectual Progress (such as it is) and Human Cultural Intelligence (if it actually exists) have shown us that

Justice   is (better) than   Injustice

Security is (better) than   Insecurity

Sustainability is (better) than   un-sustainability

We can push this analysis into more metaphysical areas of human understanding and say that

Tolerance	is (better) than	Intolerance
Love	is (better) than	Hate
Peace	is (better) than	Non-Peace

The only downside to this victory is that it has come about through the incredible advances in the efficiencies of violence. So much so that not only has the culture of violence reached the point of diminishing returns it has gone way beyond that point.

It may seem ironic that the fundamental changes in our analysis of the war system has been brought about partly through developments in the science and technology of extermination.

But these developments have shown quite clearly that the arguments against war and violence were correct.

And that the individuals and organisations who support peace are the visionaries of the future.

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