

THE HAGUE BOOK LAUNCH

# The Economics of Killing

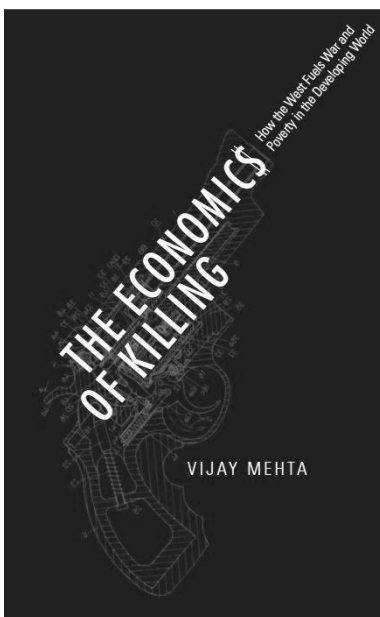
How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World

## KEY THEMES, MESSAGES AND SOLUTIONS

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Perscentrum Nieuwspoord  
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## The Hague book launch – THE ECONOMICS OF KILLING

Good evening and welcome to the book launch in The Hague, the international city of Peace and Justice. I am pleased to see so many dedicated change makers who are working to make a difference in our world.

The reason I have written the book is that I felt the urgent necessity to try to stop our world becoming dangerously militarised. We are more and more resorting to war instead of dialogue and diplomacy to solve disputes. My book examines nonviolent ways for peace and a safer world.

**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 Economics of Killing shows how this monster is not only the cause of extreme poverty in the developing world, but of 911 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.**

### **THE DAMAGE DONE**

US has 4% of world's population, friendly neighbours like Canada and Mexico, yet spends more than the rest of the world on military: \$700bn pa = 7 x China's budget.

Obsession with wars and military spending since WW2 has created monster: war economy in which biggest industries heavily subsidised by the US tax payer have become arms manufacturers alongside civilian output, e.g. Boeing, General Electric, Honeywell, Lockheed Martin and BAE. This monster – MIC – now out of control of governments acts in its own interests and against interests of everyone else. Four examples of damage done by MIC:

### **Oppression of developing countries**

- Puppet governments given arms to oppress and control own people in return for unfettered access to natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals, which keeps countries in never-ending poverty.
- This extreme poverty is the cause of 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 woman dies in childbirth, a genocide of neglect and abandonment.
- Rival factions/ countries are sold arms ('military balance') resulting in (civil) wars killing people with small arms, cluster bombs, landmines (110 million buried under the earth) causing environmental damage, stunting, and poverty.

### **911 and Islamist terrorism**

- Rise of Islamist extremism is part of a struggle against imposition of MIC (hypocrisy, disempowerment). Billions of dollars are being spent to militarise US and European countries against terrorism, a threat that has been hyped beyond belief.
- The militaristic response to terrorism benefits the MIC. War on terror is a vague and open ended conflict and can never be proven to be won or lost. For MIC, it is a perfect kind of war to expand military hardware and manufacture of armaments

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- Irony is MIC trained Al Qaeda operatives, Iraqi insurgents and Mujahidin's in unconventional warfare (guerrilla warfare) at Fort Bragg, the US Army John F Kennedy Warfare Centre, North Carolina, USA.

### **2008 financial collapse and current crisis**

- Over \$1 trillion is spent on wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which US couldn't afford and which plunged US and West into debt. Britain itself is experiencing the human and economic cost of Afghanistan war today.
- It was China that provided US with its seemingly endless quantities of cheap credit which left huge amount of liquidity in western markets resulting in low interest rates and unwise lending of loans leading to a market crash. At present China has \$1.6 trillion in US bond and securities and the gap between US and China trade deficit is running at \$300 billion. Over a trillion of Chinese cash barred from investment in US MIC created conditions for 2008 banking crisis upsetting the balance of trade in the world's biggest economy.

### **Marginalisation of United Nations and Weakening of World Institutions**

- MIC Time and again led countries, especially the US and its allies to go to war without proper UN mandate or authorisation. Like the US invasion of Iraq which side lined the UN as a result .

The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded. Military spending continues to rise and more high tech weapons are being increasingly produced. They are flooding markets around the world. They are destabilising societies. They feed the flames of civil wars and terror. Around the world, gun violence is the number one cause of civilian casualties.

### **What is the Alternative?**

Hard not to see US as drug addict, obsessed with habit that is self-destructive and threat to others: 'hole in Daddy's arm where all the money goes'.

If we do nothing, MIC monster will continue to grow along fault lines of today's world. New cold war. It will result in growth of China MIC and threat to neighbours (Korea, Burma, Vietnam, Japan). It will start a new Cold War between US and China which will result in US/Chinese rivalry over new resources (lithium, coltan). This will encourage growth of cyber wars or information warfare. MIC is also a source of threat and rivalry between India and Pakistan supplying both with armaments. According to the report released by SIPRI March, 2012, India now is the world's largest importer of arms (10%) global arms imports along with 4 next largest countries all in Asia - South Korea (6% of total arms transfers), Pakistan (5%), China (5%) and Singapore (4%). USA gives aid to Israel who is threatening to attack Iran and the Palestinian and Israeli relations in Middle East Region are on a knife edge. World today looks like world 100 years ago on eve of WW1.

The good news is: this doesn't have to be like that. There is an alternative: peace economy instead of war economy. Instead of fighting one another, world powers can choose to co-operate in own interests and interests of rest of the world by focusing on 4Ds: disarmament, demilitarisation, development and democracy and through 5 principles:

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- 1 US and Western countries should restructure their economies away from its dependence on military sector, a dead weight around their neck and gradually dismantle MIC. Shift workers from war industry into 'green collar' jobs – renewables, waste management, pollution control, carbon capture: cleaning up world instead of despoiling it
- 2 Share green technology innovation by export to developing countries so they escape smoke-stack stage (hundred years of burning coal which UK and USA did in their industrialisation phase) exporting these technologies to the developing countries to help the West to balance its trade. This process will also provide poor countries with the much needed energy security to industrialise themselves.
- 3 Close down corruption loopholes – the \$43 billion BAE Al-Yamama arms deal to Saudi Arabia in which BAE paid \$400 million in fines for false accounting and misleading statements in UK over giving bribes to Prince Bandar bin Sultan, son of Saudi defence Minister. Tony Blair, Former UK Prime Minister, shut down the enquiry started by Serious Fraud Office (SFO) in 2006 on grounds of National Security.
- 4 Adopt Chinese model (lifted 600m people out of poverty, despite corruption): protected growth of state champions in developing countries. Western governments should stop offering aid programmes with strings attached like forcing them to buy armaments. Aid should be given without any strings attached like forcing recipient countries to buy armaments. Transferring money from destruction to constructive development There are examples of state champions – Japan has Mitsubishi, Mitsui Corporations in South Korea companies such as Samsung, Hyundai. India's state champion are TATA, Mittal and Reliance Groups etc.
- 5 Reform UN to play better leadership role in new global economy. The reassertion of the primacy of international law under the Charter, in support of the Geneva Conventions and other treaties of the 20th century, is the most important action required from the UN and its supporters.

### How the World Benefits?

Across the world, the MIC has handed power to that 1% of humanity whose 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.

Al Qaeda is the manifestation of the anger and humiliation of people living under puppet regimes.

The developing world does not need hand-outs from industrialised nations. All it needs is a level playing field and leaders who place their country's interest over personal wealth. (Give a man a fish and you feed him for one meal, teach him to fish and he is set for life)

Like China and India, the poor countries should start the state managed progress by import substitution, trade protection and promoting state champions. This will put them on the road to the catching up strategy – producing value added goods, transferring base metals into high value electronics and machinery. Chinese government is investing in biotechnology, nanotechnology and renewable energy, leading the way in green technology

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My book Economics of Killing states that democratic, sustainably developing and demilitarised world is good for everyone

- End to hideously costly and destructive wars and instead spend our energy, ingenuity and resources into tackling three biggest challenges: extreme poverty, climate change and warmongering.
- By ending extreme poverty we make world a safer place for everyone as well as a better place
- By addressing climate change, we ensure preservation of environment

The bottom line in future peace keeping is that more efforts and resources should be spent on soft power, such as dialogue, diplomacy and reconciliation to end conflicts instead of military options.

The message is simple, “NO” to the Military Industrial Complex and “YES” to wellbeing of all. “NO” to extreme poverty, “YES” to economic equality; “NO” to weapons and violence, “YES” to peace and a safer world. This can be done by changing the military mindset and culture.

Warring countries should be honest in acknowledging mistakes that military solutions do not work and try not to repeat same mistakes again and again. Instead we should explore alternatives and ideas in a open minded way of thinking and reasoning that non-violent approaches to disputes work. Examples of mindset change are apartheid in South Africa and gender equality which are now accepted universally because these ideas flourished and grew roots within a society thus changing the mindset of people. New ideas set in after persistent challenging of the status quo. Over time, it becomes politically and socially unacceptable to maintain old and outdated ideas. So, let us nurture qualities of tolerance, inclusiveness and forgiveness instead of violence and war, which can become a catalyst for changing our mindset to peace.

There are examples of how people working in creative ways can end violence. The campaign against landmines which resulted in the Mine Ban Treaty – signed by 159 countries – began with the collection of data by hospital staff treating the victims of landmines.

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, is a defining moment in history, a challenge to all of us, not to buy the false narrative of the Military Industrial Complex, because of which we had the horrors and the bloodshed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in which 250 wars were fought and 160 million people died. However, the history is full of examples in which disputes have been settled by dialogue, diplomacy and understanding of each other instead of resorting to war. Nonviolence and peaceful means have achieved miracles. Some examples are Indian Independence Movement, the Civil Rights Movement in the US, Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland Peace Process, the recent Orange revolution in Ukraine, Velvet revolution in Czech Republic, Rose revolution in Georgia in Europe, and the reunification of Germany are a few examples where non violent revolutions have taken place instead of bloodshed.

**In conclusion**, let us diminish the role of military in international relations. There is no need for global military spending which is 1.6 trillion in 2010. There is no need for Military Industrial Complex to look for excuses to continue perpetual wars. When there is no visible enemy, do we

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need Trident submarine replacement at a cost of \$130 billion during its lifetime, F-35 Stealth Fighter Jets programme costing \$1.51 trillion over its life cycle, each plane costing \$680 million apiece. What we do require is to change war economy to peace economy in which world powers can choose to cooperate and focus on human security which can be enhanced by a strategy of disarmament and demilitarisation, freeing up resources for constructive economic, political and cultural development.

Instead of warmongering we need to find ways to building a culture of peace for a safer world

1. Conflict resolution through education for sustainable development
2. Equality of women and men
3. Eradication of poverty
4. Respect for Human Rights and cultural diversity
5. Promotion of Democracy, accountability

The practicalities of winding down military expenditure were assessed by a panel of experts convened by the New York Times in May 2011. One panellist, Professor Gordon Adams at the American University's School of International Service, argued that the US could cut 15% from the defence budget, saving US\$1 trillion, by laying off the 92,000 new defence personnel hired over the previous 10 years and reducing the US presence in Asia and Europe, scaling back or terminating wasteful projects such as the F-35 fighter and the Virginia class submarine, and shrinking the bureaucracy at the Pentagon that consumes 40% of its budget.

Other panellists suggested cutting the V-22 Osprey, which costs \$100 million a plane; asking service personnel to pay more towards their healthcare benefits; replacing military trash collectors and fire prevention officers with lower-cost civilian workers; withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan; refraining from propping up 'venal' governments in chaotic states; letting rich allies defend themselves; and imposing a spending freeze on the Pentagon until it renders itself auditable and amenable to financial oversight. Although some of these factors are unique to the US, others could be adopted by other industrial nations with large military establishments.

As I have said in my book *The Economics of Killing*, diffusion of knowledge devolves power from the elite to the masses, the grip of the MIC will finally end: not with a bang but in a peaceful murmur of prosperity.

Today's book launch 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. Only then we can leave a lasting legacy for generations to come ensuring the continuation and progress of our sacred civilisation and humanity.

### **What can civil society do?**

Our hope for abolition of war and demilitarisation lies with us-Citizen Power, when people are convinced that war is not necessary then we will not need to change the policies of the Government .

Here is a list of action points – things that we can all do to oppose wars, militarism and promote UN.

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- Before anything – study the problem.
- Write to your MP, key decision makers and government ministers.
- Write letters to world leaders and the editor of newspapers.
- Educate the public and hold meetings and run workshops.
- Call a TV or radio talk show.
- Contact your Peace Organization, local interfaith group to discuss the issue.
- Make paper cranes to send to decision makers (they have become a symbol of disarmament).
- Join Uniting for Peace, or UNA a peace organisation for promoting United Nations
- Attend a “Dialogue with decision-makers”.
- Promote complete and general disarmament for an end to wars and militarism.
- Speak truth to power. Our elected officials are making the daily decisions to fund new weapons programmes. Build a relationship with your local and national elected officials by writing letters, making phone calls, and setting up lobby visits to put an end to Arms Trade .

Thanks for listening.

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

Vijay Mehta is president of Mehta Centre ([www.vmpeace.org](http://www.vmpeace.org)), Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity ([www.fortuneforum.org](http://www.fortuneforum.org)), Chair of Uniting for Peace (Action for UN Renewal and World Disarmament Campaign). He is an author and global activist for peace, development, human rights and the environment. Some of his notable books are The Fortune Forum Code: For a Sustainable Future, Arms No More, The United Nations and Its Future in the 21st Century and Climate Change 365.

He is a Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity. Who's founder is Renu Mehta. Fortune Forum held two summits in London in 2006 and 2007. 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. The keynote speakers for the first and second summit were Bill Clinton, former US President and Al Gore, former US vice-President, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize 2007.

Vijay Mehta has appeared in various TV programmes including BBC World, Press TV, Aitak-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.

The Sunday Times described him as a 'longstanding activist for peace, development, human rights and the environment', who along with his daughter, Renu Mehta, has set a precedent for striving to change the world. (The Sunday Times, 1 February 2009). Vijay Mehta's new book "The Economics of Killing: How the West Fuels Wars and Poverty in the Developing World" has been published by Pluto Press later in 2012.