

# Who Rules the World?

Flashpoints and Power Rivalries from Europe to Far East

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

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## 1. Introduction

*"Many of the world's problems are so intractable that it's hard to think of ways even to take steps towards mitigating them."*

That was how Noam Chomsky opened a recent speech to the United Nations. Looking at the turmoil in the world today, it's hard to see our actions meaning anything, particularly as we watch the world descend in to chaos with the rise of ISIS, the spread of Ebola, confrontation in Ukraine, tensions in the far east between China and Japan and the US led interminable border wars on Syria, Iraq and many other places.

The weapons circulating around the world have enriched American, French and German dealers. Arab countries have been destabilized for a century by a power struggle that is fuelled by the interests of the West. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr. "US is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world." In 2013 the military spending worldwide was \$1.75 trillion, which is 2.5% of global GDP and US alone spent \$700 billion which is the 40% of the world total.

Imbalance of power in the world today is the highest and our perception of each other (us and them) do not match up. At the same time we are more connected than ever economically and electronically on the World Wide Web

## 2. Turmoil in the World Today

The question – Who rules the world? – is easier to answer in the negative than in any explicitly positive way. The world is no longer ruled, as it was during the Cold War, by the duopoly of the United States and the Soviet Union, each backed by massive alliances – NATO and the Warsaw Pact – and underpinned by the appalling military doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction. It is not ruled either by the one super-power left standing at the end of the Cold War, the United States – whose unipolar moment has now ended after only the briefest of periods, terminated by the shift in the global power and economic balance towards the rising powers of Asia, and by the unilateralism, hubris and disregard for the opinions of others demonstrated by the US administrations, which brought its own downfall in Iraq and now engaged in futile wars in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. But nor is the world now governed, as many of us would wish that it were, by rules-based systems applied effectively and equitably by multilateral international organisations, with the UN at the fore amongst them. We are a good deal closer to new world disorder now than ever with the continuing bombing in Libya, the Sahel, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

The US and West are creating Islamic wastelands which hardly can be a foundation for peace. The war profiteers make us believe war is the only option and the other is doing nothing. War does not bring stability. However, the reality is war leads to violence, militarism, a resurgence in global terrorism and a disregard to life we live on this earth.

Both sides in the conflict ISIS (Islamic State) and Western military intervention has resulted in barbaric killings. Can the western leaders really think they can tackle the militants by bombing fundamentalists? If you need to create a just and civilised world we

must try to understand the root causes of conflict – talk with, listen and to empathise with the people in region and explore non-violent alternatives.

So, if the world is not ruled by a superpower or by a rules based system then who gives the orders. Who are the most powerful people of the world who decide the future of humanity? Is it billionaires with dark money who are in charge and operate the law of the strong, the corrupt and the criminal in which lawlessness unrest and violence reign supreme? Why perpetual wars are fought and for what purpose when never a solution has yet been found by continuing wars as said by the philosopher George Santayana “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”

However, the rules of the game might change as we enter a post American world. The new players – Brazil, Russia, India and China will have a seat at the international high table and will bring new stakes and rules of the game.

### 3. US Military Aggression and its Consequences

This leads to what is undoubtedly one of the world's largest problems: the insatiable appetite of US military expansion, the militarisation of Europe with NATO leading towards a new cold war and military aggression. US Neocons in alliance with NATO backed by media reporting about the Ukraine conflict are constantly pushing for war with Russia. It is a disaster waiting to happen if tensions between Russia and the West are not resolved soon.

U.S. defence industry's profits soared along with global tensions. Companies like Lockheed Martin the biggest U.S. defence contractor along with Raytheon, Northrop and General Dynamics other defence contractors are trading at record prices as shareholders reap rewards from escalating military conflicts around the world. Investors see rising sales for makers of missiles, drones and other weapons as the U.S. hits Islamic State fighters in Syria and Iraq, said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Chicago-based BMO Private Bank.

The Pentagon currently functions as the largest reverse money laundering scheme in the world. The tax dollars are filtered through the US military into the pockets of arms manufacturers and private contractors, while politicians and lobbyists make sure the money keeps flowing. Military strategists adapt to grow their market. War is waged not against nations but against ever-shifting, often ill-defined groups.

Noam Chomsky wrote that ‘The U.S. covert operations routinely resemble acts of terrorism. "The United States did not plan the formation of ISIS," he adds, "but its destructive interventions in the Middle East and the War in Iraq were the basic causes of the birth of ISIS."'

It is appalling how newspapers, TV, radio, movies, artists, authors, intellectuals and men of science all are recruited to tend their support for the next war or the next conflict. A small group made up of military/industrial/media/corporate/academic elite, whose agenda is profit, from arms trade, war and valuable resources, now holds power worldwide and has a stronghold on elected governments. We see this in gun lobbies, among others,

which wield great power over US politics. All are implicated in the obscene sums spent on war and its preparation.

The key finding by Pax Christi international on the global financing of the nuclear weapons industry in 2014 states that 411 banks, insurance companies and pension funds invested \$402 billion in 28 companies in the production, maintenance or stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

Former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark had this to say about what is happening in the world today? 'The international community is not by chance, and what happened In Libya is not by chance, what is happening in Syria and Iran is not by chance.

Who is behind the acts of terrorism? What is behind the assassinations and murder of intellectuals and high-ranking officials in both countries? We are building up to what, exactly? And where is the truth in the international press?

As usual, the obedient press, has managed to come up with the same goods time and time again and so long as a gullible public, obediently swayed to where it is supposed to be by swallowing the tidy controlled media package daily, it is going to work: public opinion will conform to the schemes of the arms and energy and banking lobbies which control Washington, and by proxy, NATO and the USA's allies'.

#### 4. Solutions and Actions

There are more academics in existence than ever before, but most prefer not to confront authority even if it debars the path of free thinking. I will recommend you to read a book written by a German journalist Udo Ulfkotte who reveals in his bestseller "Bought Journalists", how he was 'taught to lie, to betray and not to tell the truth to the public'. The former editor of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which is one of Germany's largest newspapers, was secretly on the payroll of the CIA and German secret service, spinning the news in a way that was positive for the United States and bad for its opponents.

The tradition of questioning a dominant authority, be it religion or the state, continued with Locke, Hume, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot, Rousseau and others. When asked by an American journalist about the motto of his life, Karl Marx said "Doubt everything". The trouble is when there should be voices, there is silence. Are we all co-opted easily by the comforts of conforming.

We need to ask relevant questions. As political and peace activists we have a bounden duty to pursue that tradition and protect our hard won political, economic, social and civil liberties. As Abraham Lincoln said "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today"

In my last book, *The Economics of Killing* I argued that war and continue war is not a solution to terrorism, jihadism, sectarianism, we cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past. We cannot bomb an ideology, or heal sectarian conflicts with the barrel of a gun. Invisible to the public, the bombing inevitably causes widespread suffering among innocent people, multiplying enemies and provoking further 'terrorism.'

I have advocated a solution by campaigning and developing an effective strategy for nonviolent future by following 4d for World Peace campaign. The 4D's stand for Disarmament, Demilitarisation Development and Democracy and advocate for promoting soft power approach for the well being of humanity. It is a campaign for civil society groups to work not only to change government policies, but also economic incentives and cultural understandings to resolve all conflicts by dialogue and diplomacy for lasting peace. It works on the principle that what we have in common is more important than our differences.

For a start, stop expansion of NATO and take steps to wind down its military pact with the European Union. Disband its operation like the Warsaw Pact. Why in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, world is producing more guns, weapons and bullets? Arms along with drugs and human slavery are the three largest illicit trades in the world.

The cold war paradigm of confrontation and militarisation should be abandoned for close cooperation between Europe and Russia, USA and the Middle East for seeking peaceful solutions.

We do not require a cold war thinking in Europe we should continue to build structures through which we can cooperate and which reflect our relations of interconnectedness and interdependence. The vision of the founders of the European Union to link countries together politically, economically and culturally, in order to lessen the likelihood of war among nations is one of the most worthy endeavours in the history of mankind. We should try utmost to keep it intact.

## 5. Conclusion

And yet belief and the example of progress in civilisation is a testament that even when the barbarians are too close for comfort our work bears great fruit. We have the witness of those who did not despair in the face of fear knowing well that the power of the pen, the power of the word and the power of individual and civil society is much stronger even if world may seem to be drifting in to a very dangerous time.

The UNESCO preamble is as relevant today as it was in 1945: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

We call ourselves civilised. But a true civilisation does not need to possess weapons and to train millions of men and women in armed forces and send them to war. To counteract the evil of warmongering we need a global movement for a positive change to show we can live with our fellow human beings in peace, by taking steps to build a peaceful and secure world based on non-militarist approaches. A radical rethinking of political forces is needed to initiate an act of reconciliation.

More constructive alternatives to military intervention include:

- Need of political will and more effective leadership, efforts at a global scale for a world without war
- Accelerating humanitarian assistance for displaced people

- Immediate halt to air strikes and stopping the flow of arms to the regions of conflict,
- Prioritising diplomatic intervention under United Nations auspices,
- Insisting on a renewed peace process for Syria, Iraq, Middle East and Ukraine that includes all parties
- Moving away from secrecy, war propaganda, and the outmoded macho approach so often manifested in the defence, foreign affairs and national security sectors
- Helping create peaceful and just societies – changing the mindset from culture of guns to culture of peace
- Changing the current political-economic system which is a form of plutocracy or elite rule to diverging form of democracy significantly influenced by the public will
- Stop the pursuit of profit without any ethical and moral compass

Peace starts in recognising and valuing the inherent humanity in each of us as the Archbishop Desmond Tutu famously said ‘My humanity is bound up with yours, for we can only be human together’. So, let us take the first step in recognising the world we live is interdependent and interlinked. We all have to work together to solve the intractable problems we face not by rivalries but through co-operation.

Things do change. Europeans have made Europe peaceful for the first time in history. Apartheid era is gone. There was cold war, but then the Soviet Union dissolved. Recently we had reunification of Germany. What we need today is urgent change by extraordinary change makers, courageous peace leaders who do not give up against all odds to inspire global movement for a just and peaceful world. Our greatest strength as individuals is citizen power. Individuals, organisations and countries - let us cooperate on a global scale to take bold but doable, practical steps to change things around and sow the seeds for a more peaceful and prosperous world. Then we need not worry who rules the world.

Thanks for listening.

## Notes:

The following articles were consulted and excerpts have been taken from them

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This article can be reproduced at anytime, anywhere.

Please watch 4D for World Peace film: "Change the World" –  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9GEK4FFrXk>

Bio – **Vijay Mehta** is a renowned author, international speaker and global activist for peace, 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. 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, Ahtak-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) Puraskar (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.theeconomicsofkillling.org](http://www.theeconomicsofkillling.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

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)