

# Is Nonviolent Future Possible

## CAN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY DO IT? END VIOLENCE, WARS AND INEQUALITY FOR LASTING PEACE

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## Introduction

Can we have a violence free, compassionate, caring society? Only if we are ready to abandon the Military Industrial Complex's militarist slogan, "If you want peace, prepare for war." Only if principle of peace does not remain subordinate or a slave to war or preparations to new wars. One of the biggest hurdle for the acceptance of a nonviolent future is that every citizen simply does not believe it is possible and against this unbelief, we have the greatest difficulty in making any effective case. We have to debunk the belief among individuals and countries that many guns and huge stock of weapons military hardware make individuals and a country safer. However, the truth is, world peace depends on a nonviolent peaceful society whereas the universality and freedom from war, violence and inequality makes it possible for a nonviolent future.

There are several instances in history which testify to the possibility of non-violent future. Following his release from prison and during the peace talks with the apartheid regime, Mandela is quoted to have assured President de Klerk that "I know we cannot defeat you militarily, but rest assured that you cannot kill us all." He accepted an amnesty for the majority of the brutal apartheid system and its beneficiaries but in exchange demanded a credible institutional reform to guarantee inclusive governance. The negotiations to end apartheid enabled South Africa to transition from a brutal apartheid era into a multi-racial constitutional democracy which guarantees the rights of the majority without subjugating the minority.

Mahatma Gandhi also realised that to win the Indian Independence, it was near impossible to challenge the might of the British. He embarked upon a programme and strategy of nonviolence to subdue the British, appealing to their liberal nature and stirring their conscience while making the country ungovernable by Satyagraha (a policy of non-violent resistance) till the British finally decided to quit.

Emperor Ashoka, after nearly conquering the whole of India had a change of heart at the battle Kalinga where he witnessed bloodshed and slain bodies and became a devote Buddhist not only as an individual but also spread nonviolence in his kingdom and beyond including forbiddance of killing of animals and banning deer hunting.

It is easy to have a blueprint for a nonviolent society in theory but hard to achieve as the world including our own country, India, continue to increase its military spending \$60 billion US dollars in 2013, believing firmly in peace and security through the barrel of a gun instead of working on real security built on a free, egalitarian, transparent society in which all live with harmony enjoying equal opportunities for a peaceful and safer future.

## Challenges and Obstacles to Nonviolent Future

Some of the obstacles to Nonviolent future are Wars and Proliferation of Arms, Extreme Poverty and Inequality, abuses of Human Dignitary and Human Rights, Environmental and Ecological Degradation.

**Will there be an alternative social evolution of our species towards peace without domination that might someday eliminate war (which is politically organised violent crime perpetrated by warmongers and controlled by war making lobbies) and standing armies from our present military mindset.** Will we be able to demolish the belief in popular entertainment and culture which takes for granted that violence and war are inevitable and part of human survival.

**We are programmed and conditioned, like computers - we are Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Hutus, Tutsis and so on. One of the consequences of this conditioning has been hatred, or war, or separating yourself from others.** We will be able to break this pattern of confrontation among human beings and free our minds from the conditional mental slavery for compassion and love for one another.

**Moreover, is there a way we can put people before profit and thus have growth and reduce inequality without exploitation which is the modus operandi of the capitalists who are the cause of the most of the problems including violence facing the world today.** The most damaging is the actions by the elite who murder, torture and steal to satisfy their unlimited material desires. The greed of fulfilling corporate interest by capitalist expansion and financial globalisation has created extreme economic disparities for the majority and also for racial and ethnic groups and between countries on a global scale.

**Besides, to tell the truth about militarism and have the courage and fearlessness to confront and launch actions to stop our world becoming dangerously militarised.** The global military spending in 2012 stands at \$1.75 trillion, which is about 2.5% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while 2.6 billion people live on \$2 a day and 925 million people go to bed hungry every night. The UN Secretary General Ban ki Moon observed, "The world is over armed and peace is underfunded." But this trend continues as the shameful and unethical majority of senior-politicians, military, weapon manufacturers, arm dealers, corporations and media support militarism and are perpetrating a pattern of a shady web of alliances leading to wars with devastating impact on both advanced and developing countries.

### Violence

It is pertinent to explore killings/violence which manifests in our society in the form of violent crime, homicide, public disorder, weapons crime etc. and deprivation in the form of worst effects of poverty including hunger and oppression. Some of the deadly conflicts in the past and present have been undertaken in the name of religion and ethnicity based on faith, nation, race, class, gender and thrived by propaganda of division by politicians, military, corporate, thinkers, priests and historians. Violence, whether it is at home or bullying or war abroad, simply leads to more violence. Power, elite, rulers use violence to control, dominate and legitimise it by creating fear in the masses.

Violence is also exasperated by five-fold obstacles to peace described in Vedic culture, Buddhism and Hinduism. They are Kam (lust), Krodh (rage, anger, fear and hatred), Lobh (greed of wealth, power and fame) – excesses of capitalism and corporate power, Moh (attachment, delusion, ignorance or obsession) and Ahankar (Vanity, pride, ego etc. are destroyer of the tranquillity of the

mind). These are root causes of violence leading to suffering of human existence. The control of these five evils is the key to inner peace and also a core contribution of some of the major religions of the world.

### Wars and Military Industrial Complex (MIC)

Wars and MIC has been described in detail in my book, **The Economics of Killing: How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World.** – [www.theeconomicsofkilling.org](http://www.theeconomicsofkilling.org)

The horrors and the bloodshed of 20th century reminds us of 250 wars fought and 160 million lives were lost. The sad thing is that the 21st century, up to now is going the same way. When will we learn that war and killing is not the way to keep one's country safe and secure.

Continuation of wars & violence by countries and military spending since WW2 from Vietnam, Korean wars, Cold War and the present Iraq and Afghanistan war has killed millions of people, brought untold violence and suffering to civilians and taken the world in the direction of anarchy and disorder.

Terrorism and War on Terror is growing and spreading with the introduction of drones (Unmanned Ariel Vehicles), which are responsible for assassinations and killings of so called insurgents and terrorists in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Mali and other countries with the result that they are becoming breeding grounds for terrorists.

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.

Military Industrial Complex (MIC) broadly includes science, technology, industry and military. It also includes the arms trade, illegal and legal. Arms companies sell weapons not only to democracies to use for self-defence but also to repressive regimes who use weapons for violation of human rights of its citizens. The arms trade is not about defence, but about profiting from violence, poverty and human rights abuse.

MIC includes 25 million soldiers worldwide America's defence department is the world's biggest employer with 3.2 million people on its payroll. China, a big military spender employs 2.3 million in its armed forces. The MIC includes spying, surveillance and intelligence gathering centres and 1000 military bases spread around the world in 183 countries. United States is the only country in the world with thousand military bases with missile systems, nuclear systems, aimed at anybody inciting or is not willing to do their bidding. It is to protect rich people who are often referred to living in a nanny state and large part of military system is making sure that the rich are protected.

Weapon manufacturers of small arms (8 million in circulation), cluster bombs, missiles, landmines, military tanks, ships, fighter jets, nuclear weapons (approx. 22,000 in stock), chemical and biological weapons and newly introduced automated flying global killer drones (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) much more are part of the complex Military Apparatus.

Development of robotic warfare is the most dangerous military technology since the making of the Atom Bomb. If drone attacks were able to put an end to terrorism, we would have already got rid of terrorists in countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan Iraq and recently in Kenya

Some examples of damage done by violence, wars and Military Industrial Complex (MIC) are:

1. Rise in militarism and conflicts leading to millions of deaths and untold suffering
2. Oppression of developing countries & forced transfer of resources from poor to rich
3. Rise of neoliberal capitalism and globalisation – leading to gross inequality
4. Violence, Terrorism and endless War on Terror based on fear – curbing freedom and civil liberties
5. 2008 financial collapse and current economic crisis leading to massive job cuts around the world
6. Marginalisation of United Nations and Weakening of World Institutions
7. Start of a new cold war in Europe and Asia with frightening prospects
8. Negative effects of MIC on environment, global and human security including refugees, migrants etc – 45 million refugees worldwide at present
9. Control of information, secrecy and surveillance society – churning out endless lies.
10. Biased media, press reporting and false propaganda – perpetuating wars
11. Use of Science, latest technology and research in universities to develop satanic weapons
12. MIC Giving powers to military alliances like NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) to police the world and fight its wars

### *Inequality and Neoliberal Agenda*

Much of plight poor are in, has been brought about by an unsustainable economic system, driven by the corporate world - imperialism in a new form supported by foreign policies to which there is growing opposition everywhere. It is based on consumerism, militarism and a military economy. Abuse of corporate power includes domination of global institutions and interference with democratic processes and the media.

Greed by a few individuals, excessive remuneration, abuse of corporate power are theft. Global sourcing that involves exploitation of poor workers and displacement of local workers in order to cut costs is theft.

Money is a means of exchange and should be subservient to the needs and requirements of the people. Instead, it dominates and people are enslaved by debt. Speculation in money markets and the stock exchanges causes damaging instability for enterprises, their stakeholders, savings and retirement pensions. Free market capitalism obstructs long-term stewardship, which is seen as a constraint on the fullest short-term exploitation of people and capital for share growth, profit and dividends. Making a few people super rich without creating real wealth damages the rest of humanity.

### **Necessary Steps for a Non-Violent Future**

For building a nonviolent future we need to put in practice constructive programmes for fundamental change which will include:

- A World Without War
- Developing an Alternative Vision – Cultivating Inner Peace to Global Peace
- Follow Nonviolent Ways for Peace, Justice and Coexistence
- Creating a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence
- Disarming for a Weaponless World
- Reducing Inequality for a more Ethical World
- Harnessing Spiritual Roots for Peace
- 4D for World Peace – A New Campaign Idea for Nonviolent Future

### *A World Without War*

The United Nations Charter signed in June 1945 says in its preamble and exemplary message, “We the peoples of The United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.”

To follow and put in practice that vision, we should work:

1. Towards increasing public awareness to the costs of war
2. To restrain governments from increasing military spending (\$1.75 trillion in 2012) and intervening other nations conflicts
3. To end the arms race and eventually eliminate conventional and nuclear weapons
4. To abolish violence and war as an instrument of finding solutions instead of dialogue, diplomacy and conflict resolution
5. To take small routine actions to make our world a little kinder, a little less angry and a bit more loving to end wars
6. To form groups or a worldwide movement / coalition to bring an end to the practice of war as an instrument of ordinary policy and push towards the total abolition of the institution of war.
7. Have education, communications, legislations, treaties and campaigns to resist against wars or weapons and military spending in support of transition to peaceful and green industry.
8. To change the mindset from culture of guns which rely on recrimination and revenge to a culture of peace through tolerance, forgiveness, compassion and reconciliation by breaking down barriers and conditioning of our mind.

In fact it has been established in various studies that human beings are not inherently warlike creatures. Hunter-gatherer life led by the vast majority of our ancestors might have been entirely free from organised conflict, at least before the advent of agriculture and animal husbandry. So war is a recent phenomenon which may have started around 10,000 years ago when hunter-gatherer life changed to agricultural mode and animal husbandry.

The belief that our ancestors were relatively violence free has been endorsed by scientists gathered at Seville in a conference sponsored by UNESCO. They produced a document which came to be known as Seville Statement on Violence. The statement concluded that biology does not condemn humanity to war, is free from biological construct that violence is genetically built up in the framework of humans.

### *The Alternative Vision - Cultivating Inner Peace to Global Peace*

Our vision is to achieve a peaceful, safer, violence free, ethical, compassionate, and non-killing world. As human beings, single or community or in a family, how can we live peacefully with each other? This can be realised by uprooting wars and inequality from our society through harnessing spiritual nonviolent soft power approach – dialogue, diplomacy, conflict resolution, education for culture of peace and a foreign policy which encourages peaceful negotiations for a better world.

We need a holistic approach to peace, that includes not only absence of armed conflicts, right to disarmament, etc., but also absence of structural violence generated by socio-economic inequalities; and absence of cultural violence produced by gender violence, family-related violence, mobbing or bullying.

Our aim is that we live in a peaceful society in which violence and wars should be a rare occurrence and not the norm. By harnessing spiritual nonviolent approach, we can build a mutually reinforcing structure of political and economic cultural systems so that reversal to violence is unlikely. So there can be only peace when mankind, when you and I, have no conflict in ourselves. So if you kill another and if you are in conflict with another, you are destroying yourself. You can observe very carefully without distortion, it is all us and not you and me. Path to freedom and human dignity lies in love, wisdom and compassion from one another.

To understand war is to understand that it is the projection of inner conflict in human beings which is projected outside. Individual violent behaviour is an extension of leading to tribal warfare. It is essential to see that along with political, economic, scientific and cultural reasons the inner conflict is also a root cause of war.

When we cannot establish inner peace, we cannot establish world peace. One reason there is no world peace is because many minds have opposite views of what reality should be, who should be in control, and what is right and wrong. The emotions that accompany these positions promote resistance, hate, a desire to dominate others, and a cultural willingness to kill. These attitudes block our capacity for creatively addressing the challenges of our times.

By challenging ourselves to become more forgiving and willing to negotiate; more fearless and unwilling to humiliate; more generous, with all of our resources; more constructively empowered to do right by ourselves and others; more willing to learn from our mistakes without allowing ourselves to feel degraded in the process, we will slowly, steadily build a more secure world, from the inside out.

How can we attain holistic peace? – In a multi-polar, interconnected and interdependent world, holistic peace is a power within every human being which can be effectively used to change the world to a more peaceful place. One of the ways to do it is via dialogue and living compassionately in unity for constructive co-existence.

Inner peace is a state of being mentally and spiritually at peace, living in harmony with yourself and surroundings. Peace starts within ourselves. When we cultivate inner peace, we have a calm mind and an open heart, which builds positive qualities such as love, joy and optimism. When we achieve inner peace, world peace becomes inevitable.

By our altruistic acts, service and contribution to human society we can transform inner peace to attain universal peace in which all mankind can live in joy and harmony. Path of peace brings peace. Peace has an inner dimension and an outer one, the latter unattainable without the former.

The concept of Inner Peace is as old as the hills. In his book *Being Peace*, the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh writes: “Without being peace, we cannot do anything for peace”. He adds: “How do you want to create peace, if there is no peace inside yourselves?” His Holiness The Dalai Lama also stressed the importance of inner peace in the world as “The question of real, lasting world peace concerns human beings, so basic human feelings are also at its roots. Through inner peace, genuine world peace can be achieved.”

By practicing five timeless thoughts and actions one can attain inner peace. These are – Simplify (the simplification of life is one of the steps to gain inner peace), Forgive (inner peace can be reached only when we practice forgiveness), Accept (acceptance of others, their looks behaviour, belief brings tranquillity), Do what you enjoy or are passionate about and lastly Do not lose your inner peace for anything.

By training children and adults, practicing and spreading peace not only make them better citizens but also non violent persons building an ethical and non-killing world. Follow your heart to build inner and outer peace. Do not let the noise and opinion of others drown your resolve. The practice of internal and external peace will bring a balance in spiritual and material values benefitting the entire human race. It will reinforce the belief, “Thou Shall Not Kill,” “Ahimsa Paramo Dharma” and “We are all one family.”

### *Follow Nonviolent Ways for Peace, Justice and Coexistence*

Nonviolent actions and civil resistance has been used for centuries to achieve peace and justice. There are examples of people and countries working in creative ways to end violence. In 1948, Costa Rica abolished its army and since has been able to invest resources in public interest – education, healthcare, development or quite simply it invested in its people. No one has attacked Costa Rica because they have no army. 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. At one time, a thousand NGO’s were working around the world for the formation and implementation of the treaty.



Nonviolent 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.

Europe, with all its problems, is an example of one of the most peaceful region in the world. Europe during the first half of the 20th Century, not once (WWI) but twice (WWII) wrecked itself. Now after the creation of European Union and enhancement of trade, war between UK and France or France and Germany is inconceivable.

Gandhi wrote in Hind Swaraj, 1909, “Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take a note of this fact.” We do not hear about peaceful living because peace is normal condition of life. So history does not take a note of ordinary and normal.

We firmly need to demolish the belief in popular entertainment and culture which takes for granted that violence and war are inevitable and part of human survival. Our environment in the school, playground, home and our media focus more on violence rather than peace. The boys are given guns and trucks to play and we see violence in everyday games. How do we expect peace in our children?

### *Creating a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence*

UNESCO Declaration of Culture of Peace say, “Since wars began in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed.” So the bottom-line is, we have to change the mindset and attitudes of people with deliberate efforts for breaking the patterns and conditioning of the mind hardwired for war for thousands of years.

We need also to help create a culture of peace which is a multifaceted task. Areas of action for a culture of peace are listed below.

1. Culture of peace through education. “The very concept of power needs to be transformed—from the logic of force and fear to the force of reason and love.”
2. Sustainable economic and social development. “This represents a major change in the concept of economic growth which, in the past, could be considered as benefiting from military supremacy and structural violence and achieved at the expense of the vanquished and the weak.”
3. Respect for all human rights. “The elaboration and international acceptance of universal human rights ... calls for a transformation of values, attitudes and behaviours from those which would benefit exclusively the clan, the tribe or the nation towards those which benefit the entire human family.”
4. Equality between women and men. “Only [the] linkage of equality, development and peace can replace the historical inequality between men and women that has always characterized the culture of war and violence.”

5. Democratic participation. "This is the only way to replace the authoritarian structures of power which were created by and which have, in the past, sustained the culture of war and violence."
6. Understanding, tolerance and solidarity. "There has never been a war without an "enemy", and to abolish war, we must transcend and supersede enemy images with understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all peoples and cultures."
7. Participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge. " ... needed to replace the secrecy and manipulation of information which characterize the culture of war."
8. International peace and security. " should include dialogue, diplomacy, peacekeeping, disarmament and military conversion. ... "

We have to do significant work in transforming the attitude of members of one community to members of other communities. This work is primarily educational, seeking to remove ignorance and prejudice and encouraging people to make friends with members of other societies. Schools and colleges and the media have a role to play to bring it to fruition.

We should also try to dispel the glamour from war and highlight its realities. The importance of peace-education from an early age needs to be more widely recognised. This includes getting rid of war toys and war-games.

We need to begin education from the time children enter school about conflict resolution and the actions we all need to take to create a global culture of peace. Once David Frost challenged John Lennon in an interview, "When Hitler marched into Czechoslovakia, if people had said 'peace and love' to him, it wouldn't have done much good." Lennon said, "No, but what if they had been saying it to him from the moment he was born? That was wonderful." Gandhi also said that if we want peace in the world, we have to start with children.

Another example is campaigning to restrict the trade in arms. The Syrian conflict as we know has been fuelled by arms sent to the rival combatants from many parts of the world. We need to urge governments to become signatories to the Arms Trade Treaty, which the General Assembly of the UN adopted on 2 April 2013. The treaty regulates the international trade in conventional arms, from small arms to battle tanks, combat aircraft and warships. The treaty will put a stop to destabilizing arms flows to conflict regions and will prevent human rights abusers and violators of the law of war from being supplied with arms. And it will help to stop warlords, pirates, and gangs from acquiring these deadly tools.

### *Holistic Disarmament for a Weaponless World*

Peace and nonviolence are meaningless without general and complete disarmament for which we need to work to create a violence free society.

We need holistic disarmament which forgoes the physical necessity and mental conditioning of possession of armaments which is born out of fear of insecurity. This fear has been inculcated by a highly violent and militarised society engaged in continuous warfare including the much publicised propaganda of war on terror.

Guns or weapons do not make a nation safer. The US, have the most guns per head (300 million guns for 300 million people) and has the highest rate of deaths from firearms. On the other end, Japan has a low gun ownership rate and their firearm related deaths are also the lowest. So, there is a significant co-relation between guns per head in a country and firearm related deaths. So the current thinking that guns provide safety is only a hypothesis and not a reality.

Weapons – small arms to nuclear weapons to high tech 21<sup>st</sup> century military hardware which includes the latest drones and how they are sold through corruption and bribery leading to conflicts and development reversals.

Uniting for Peace has been running a campaign called: **4D for World Peace** which works on disarmament and demilitarisation and advocates the reduction and eventual abolition of weapons and arms trade. 4D stands for Disarmament, Demilitarisation, Development and Democracy. The core message of the campaign is to disarm and demilitarise the world and the savings thus achieved to be deployed for development and democracy. Please visit our website [www.unitingforpeace.com](http://www.unitingforpeace.com) for more details.

We need to explore nonviolent ways for building peace and restoring human dignity, ethics and civilisation. The 4D for World Peace Campaign offers a choice: continue on the same destructive path of greed and competition based on market forces and suffer even more – or build a safer and fairer way of life for lasting peace. I think we have a good chance as any to accomplish this now.

The present severe financial crisis is the right time for governments and parliaments to take legislative steps to adopt good policies of disarmament for development to overcome policies that endanger current and future generations. The additional benefit is, international peace and security, a prerequisite for global development which has been elusive and hampered by the ever more dominant military industrial complex, which oversees corporate interests and financial elites prosper at the expense of almost everyone.

We need to expose drivers of military expenditure i.e. rogue traders, arms brokers, corporate and government lobbyists, military industrial complex (Pentagon, CIA, MI5 Defence Departments). We should also expose the double rhetoric of leaders and government officials and military generals who talk of bringing peace in the world while preparing for war and creating artificial fear in countries for generating demand for military hardware.

We also need to expose unnecessary tax breaks and tax incentives to the arms, oil and banking industry despite their record profits. These initiatives given to industries which are already thriving should be deployed for education, health care and social security. Let me quote the former French Prime Minister, Pierre Messmer: “There are military secrets that translate into budgetary silences. Nowhere will you find within the military budget the possibility of precisely calculating atomic weaponry. We did this on purpose.”

In our interconnected world a future built on global military expenditure, corporate greed and injustices which has the foundations of mass poverty in the midst of plenty is economically inefficient, politically unsustainable and morally indefensible. We have to expose the double

whammy of continuation of war for destroying the infrastructure of countries like Iraq and Afghanistan and then reaping profits in reconstruction.

We also need to pinpoint scandal of international trade of giving aid in return of lucrative contracts or buying arms and military hardware. We need to highlight wars which are used for plundering oil and scarce resources like diamond, coltan and cobalt from poor countries. We also need to explore how wars are continued for the sake of artificial growth of economy and for the benefits of elites to the tune of trillions of dollars.

Nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass and indiscriminate destruction are immoral and criminal, and stockpiling such weapons with the intent or threat to use them erodes the very foundation of moral civilisation. We recognise the relationship between disarmament and development. Disarmament can free resources for development and the proper investment for the progress of life and future as discussed in detail in 4D for World Peace Campaign.

We need to take the following steps for disarming the world:

- i) Reduce military spending which in 2012 stand at \$1.75 trillion. Make reduction of military spending and armaments (from nuclear weapons to small arms )a part of economic and social recovery and development to be spent on healthcare, education, jobs and peacebuilding.
- ii) Dismantle the 1,000 military bases in 183 countries as it is a outmoded concept of peace and security which encourages continuous wars.
- iii) Replace the 25 million soldiers by 25 million peacekeepers who can create and maintain a nonviolent, peaceful world.
- iv) Implementation of education programmes for disarmament, democracy and peace building.
- v) Start arms collection initiatives such as disarmament, demobilisation and programmes such conversion of military hardware for peaceful uses for a weaponless world

### Reducing inequality for a more Ethical World

For nonviolence to work, we need a more equal society by reducing the gap between the rich and the poor so that we can share the world's resources equitably. We have an obligation to stand by the poor who are denied the basic rights and are oppressed.

Reducing inequality has been aptly described by HH Acharya Mahapragya, as follows:

“A person's spiritual development is absolutely necessary along with his material development.”

“If we do not have a feeling of equality towards all living beings, our dream of peace will just remain a daydream. It will never become a reality. In order to change it into reality, what is needed is the inculcation of a feeling of equality towards all creatures and the practical form that emerges from it is the human solidarity.”

“The problem today is that the behaviour of man towards man is not as humane as is expected of him. In the present age, some people are living in a state of luxury, while there are others who are not even able to get enough food to satisfy their hunger. If the social consciousness of equality had been awakened earlier, the problems of hunger, poverty and persecution that we see today would not have arisen. Today the slogan of ‘human unity’ is reduced to a mere theoretical jargon. It is not being put into practice. Let us try to understand ahimsa and peace at an empirical level. If our behaviour is really associated with a feeling of unity, the world can be wholly transformed. It can even be completely rejuvenated.”

### *Harnessing Spiritual Roots of Peace*

This sense of our common humanity, at its deepest, flows from a mystical experience of ‘Oneness.’ This is why the growth in inner peace is a vital contribution to the peace of the world and why the roots of lasting peace are to be found in the great religious and spiritual traditions of the world. Nonviolence is nurtured by inner peace and spiritual unity and spiritual development will lead to universal peace.

Alternative solutions to reduce violence are described in Eastern and Western traditions. Indian scriptures in various ways in Vedic culture, Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism advocate the practice of prayer, meditation, and yoga for attaining inner peace and building a just and violence free society.

The wellbeing of one is dependent on the wellbeing of all. Diversity and unity are integral to unity and two sides of the same coin. The Advaita tradition argues everything is divine and there is no two-ness – we are all one. We cannot live happily whilst violence and injustices are going on. Every human being is a microcosm of the universe – there is no separate self.

Advaita philosophy was one of the traditional sciences. In Sanskrit, the word for philosophy is ‘tattva-shastra’, which means the ‘science of truth’. Advaita is a system of enquiry with only one aim. It looks for truth. And it takes this search to the furthest extreme. It looks for one hundred percent truth, unmixed with anything pretended or false.

The Mayan spiritual leader, Abraham Garcia, who was tortured in the civil war in Guatemala, has said, ‘Peace isn’t the simple silencing of the bullets. It must be an inner change toward other people, respect for the way they think and live.’

This sense of Oneness inspires a deep concern for others. Thomas Merton, in describing his Louisville experience, went on, “There are no strangers... If only we could see each other (as we really are) all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed.’ Francis Younghusband continued Lhasa account by saying, ‘Never again could I think evil. Never again could I bear enmity. Joy had begotten love.’

To sense the Oneness of God, the oneness of the human family, the oneness of all life is the well spring of compassion and our commitment to human rights, peace building, non-violence, reverence for all life. Without such a starting point I feel these good causes are impoverished.

By affirming our common humanity, we are also able to affirm our other forms of identity, such as religion, race, age, sex, ethnicity and status, as part of the wonderful diversity of human life.

#### 4D for World Peace – A New Campaign Idea for Nonviolent Future -

To highlight, promote and adopt the soft power approach for the well being of humanity, we need to reinforce the fact that there should not be any place for violence and wars in our society. There are no military solutions – dialogue and diplomacy are the key which can guarantee lasting peace. In 2012 I started a campaign, 4D for World Peace inspired by my book the Economics of Killing. It is a campaign for civil society groups to work not only to change government policies, but also economic incentives and cultural understandings.

#### **The 4D's are DISARMAMENT, DEMILITARISATION, DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY**

This campaign aims to create global frameworks for taking actions on interconnecting global issues of disarming and demilitarising the world and the savings thus accrued to be deployed for real development and genuine democracy. World Peace and building a compassionate society is not a utopian dream. It can be realised by overcoming forces of destruction, violence, & war mongering. A film [Change the World](#) and a booklet 4D for World Peace is taking the campaign to the next level.

The work of reversing society's ills and standing up to injustice is not easy, and we need to be willing to invest the time and resources necessary to prepare ourselves just as much as a military prepares its front-line soldiers. Social change and the process of social transformation is not something that can be done overnight. One needs to frame issues which can resonate with the masses, building democratic decision making structures within the movement as well as in the larger world one that is disciplined in the face of repression. Those characteristics come with nonviolent training which can bring change.

Reduction of military spending should be a tool to fund development. It's time for a mentality change within and among states towards new budget priorities, the demilitarisation of societies and the financial support for development efforts deriving from these sources. This can be done by uprooting the two most hideous features of the contemporary world – inequality and wars.

The mission of the campaign is to take the Quantum Leap Faster, Higher, and Further to spread the message of 4D which is resolution of conflicts in a peaceful way. The campaign has many supporters the world over.

“I support this important campaign of 4D for World Peace necessary steps to peace.”

- Mairhead Maguire, Noble Peace Laureate, Northern Ireland.

“I support Uniting for Peace for a safer world and endorse 4D for World Peace. 4D, Count me in...!”

– Deepak Chopra, Best Selling Author

“Peace is not only the absence of war, it means calm and it means conditions where human beings can maintain their human integrity” – Dr. Shirin Ebadi Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Iran, says about 4D for World Peace campaign

### **How the World Benefits?**

It will benefit by bringing fundamental shift in our ethics and values to eradicate wars, violence and establish peace to reduce debt and financial crisis in which US and most of European countries are engulfed. According to Global Peace Index 2011, if the countries cut back their violence at the rate of 25% for example, it could save global economy \$3 trillion. Eradicating violence altogether, can create a stimulus of \$9 trillion, enough to tackle financial, climate change crisis and wipe out hunger and extreme poverty including covering cost of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It could also provide education, stimulate culture and improve social justice. The total impact of violence in 2012 was \$185 billion to UK economy.

As I have said in my book, military spending is anti development. 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. A Chinese proverb states “Give a man a fish and you feed him for one meal, teach him to fish and he is set for life.” This philosophy should be applied to International Trade, i.e. to achieve China like levels of human development and economic prosperity.

### **Way Forward**

The future of peace lies in finding the root causes of conflicts and building an ethical bases for society in which equal opportunities are available for all citizens, especially the bottom billion entrenched in poverty for whom peace is a dream. Culture of selfishness and individualism have to be abandoned for fighting hunger and poverty, otherwise lasting peace will be far from reality if we exclude a large part of humanity from prosperity.

A report by Global Peace Index describes the Pillars of Peace as the attitudes, institutions and structures that are associated with peaceful societies.

The research by Global Peace Index defines 8 key Pillars that underpin peace; these Pillars are both interdependent and mutually reinforcing, meaning that the relative strength of any one Pillar has the potential to either positively or negatively influence peace.

These Pillars are: a well functioning government, a sound business environment, an equitable distribution of resources, an acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbours, free flow of information, a high level of human capital, and low levels of corruption.

For achieving a peaceful world, there is a desperate need to change global spending priorities and calculating the true costs of war and conflicts. The global community spends more than \$1.75 trillion per year on military and weapon programmes against \$129 billion (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2010 report) on global development, less than \$10

billion on UN Peacekeeping operations, and less than \$4 billion (African Development Report 2008/2009) on peace building and conflict resolution activities. This mismatch of funding need to be challenged and changed for building sustainable peaceful societies with money being spent on health, education and decent living for all.

**“Remember, peace is our birth right, a Human Right and we should claim it”**

The message is simple: Peace is an investment in our humanity’s progress for a better future. The way to peace is to overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth and hatred with love. The bottom line is we should have increasing desire to be of service to others with greater love and compassion for building societies and cultures on the basis of peace and nonviolence.

**Conclusion**

Progress towards a nonviolent future is not inevitable. It depends on all of us – individuals, who are willing to work and are driven by a passion for a better world.

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 19th Century. We can harness the advantage of technology, internet and social media to go global with our message in a short span of time.

Grassroots activists and change-makers, let me share a pragmatic vision with you. Let us create a public outcry and demand for abolition of war and military spending for eradicating violence and building a peaceful world. Let us campaign towards replacing 25 million soldiers worldwide with 25 million peace-workers, the world will be a different place. It will be a bliss to be living on the cusp of a new dawn when mankind would have taken a full turn transforming our world towards a better future, ensuring the continuation and progress of our sacred civilisation and humanity leading to global peace.

There are many grounds for confidence that we can stop killing each other. Most humans have never killed anyone. Otherwise humanity long ago would have spiralled into extinction. Ninety-five countries have completely abolished the death penalty. 27 countries have no armies. Forty-seven countries accept conscientious objection to military service. Spiritual traditions and humanist philosophies proscribe killing. Science promises new understanding of causes and prevention of killing. Components for nonkilling societies already have been demonstrated somewhere in human experience. If creatively combined and adapted in any single place, nonkilling societies can be approximated even now anywhere. In short, knowledge exists to assist crossing the threshold of lethal pessimism to confidently envision a nonkilling global human future. However, war is not going to end on its own. We have to end war and killing. Let us take the message as far and wide as possible – to schools, universities, temples, churches, libraries, trade unions, policy makers for discussions and actions.

We are in the beginning of the 21st Century. People are throwing off their mental shackles and realising their potential. A new age of enlightenment has begun in which we have already seen worldwide rise of nonviolent activities and achievements for seeking alternatives to war and



violence. There has been key moments in history where ordinary people have risen up and struggled against governments, corporations and even empires. Let me conclude by saying that slavery, colonialism, apartheid and gender discrimination in voting, all been abolished. Let's work for the day when people seeking peace, like wonderful people in this room, will be in majority, barriers to peace will be lowered and future will be safe, secure and violence free. It is already happening as more and more people refuse to be frightened, faint hearted and passive spectators who refuse to accept the present system based on greed, speculation and imposition. I believe all global citizens have the passion, talent, determination and power to be agents of change. After Arab Spring, Europe's Indignados, Occupy movement and now the Turkish and Brazilian Spring where millions of people are demanding a better future, the youth and citizens of today have what it takes to change the world as world is ready to be moved. Now is your time and your moment. Let's live our pragmatic vision of a nonviolent future and change the world together.

This article can be reproduced at anytime, anywhere.

Peace and love,  
Vijay

Thanks for listening

### **Peace Quotations from Major Religions**

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

**Hinduism** – “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.” *(from Vedas: considered to be the oldest book on earth)*

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

**Jainism** – A person should treat all the creatures as he himself would be treated. *(Sutrakritanga)*

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

**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.

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

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

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

Notes:

1. Vijay Mehta, "The Economics of Killing: How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World," Pluto Press London, 2012
2. Marcus Braybrooke, "Race, Faith and World Peace" – meeting, London 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013
3. Vijay Mehta, "Race, Faith and World Peace," – meeting, London 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013
4. "Charter of the United Nations: and Statute of the International Court of Justice" – 1945
5. Seville Statement of Violence, UNESCO
6. Glenn D. Paige, "Towards a Nonkilling World: Festschrift" – April 2012
7. David Adams, "Toward a Global Movement for a Culture of Peace" – UNESCO, 2000
8. Bruce Nixon, "All Rise – How Gandhi's thinking can help us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" – Challenge Paper, Schumacher Institute
9. Google Sites – The Advaita Tradition, Advaita enquiry:  
<https://sites.google.com/site/advaitaenquiry/the-advaita-tradition>
10. Vijay Mehta, 4D for World Peace booklet:  
[http://unitingforpeace.com/resources/4D%20World%20Charter/4DCharter\\_for\\_World\\_Pea ce\\_05\\_Sept2011.pdf](http://unitingforpeace.com/resources/4D%20World%20Charter/4DCharter_for_World_Pea ce_05_Sept2011.pdf)
11. David Swanson, War No More: The Case for Abolition, eBookIt.com, 2013
12. Sir Richard Jolly, "Disarmament and Development – The Kindest Cut of All"
13. Kathy Galloway, "Hope in a Rime of War; A Religious Perspective on Peacemaking"
14. Vijay Mehta, "Ending Wars and Achieving Peace – A Dream or a Reality," Edinburgh, Scotland

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

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).

He 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.

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.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