

South East Hants Peace Council's Celebration of Peace One Day

"The Role of UN in Establishing a More Peaceful World"

Tuesday, 21st September 2010

7:00pm

Meeting Place, The United Reform Church, Havant

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Introduction

Thanks to South East Hants Peace Council and Vida Henning for inviting me to speak today at the celebration of Peace One Day. It is great to be among an audience of dedicated peace activists who are a driving force behind all change and who keep a check on the excesses of governments and leaders.

The role of UN in establishing a peaceful world is a tall order. It as much depends on the effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping operations as the willingness and desire of the warring parties to live in peace. Afghanistan is an example where 150,000 troops with high tech weapons on the ground and air are not able to contain violence and enforce peace. The same can be said about the reforms of the United Nations. They are urgently needed and overdue, especially the veto powers of the Security Council, the general assembly, its membership, funding and the way it's peacekeeping and peace building is carried out. The willingness and ability of member countries to agree to workable and pragmatic reforms for UN is a prerequisite for it to become a fit enough organisation to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.

I'm going to examine what drives conflict, how UN peacekeeping works, why three of the today's largest peacekeeping operations Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Darfur and Afghanistan are in a mess. And what are the alternative policy recommendations for successful peacekeeping operations?

The title alludes that the UN is ineffective at peacekeeping – and is therefore not able to fulfil its vision and mandate for which it was created.

"...to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind." (Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations)

Former Secretary General Kofi Annan famously called the UN "the only fire brigade in the world that has to acquire a fire engine after the fire has started." Even when peacekeeping is the most appropriate protection tool, the UN must always overcome significant challenges to deploy and support each new mission.

The history of the UN peacekeeping is a mixed bag. There have been many successes in Cambodia, Mozambique, Haiti and Timor-Leste including long standing peacekeeping troops in Kashmir and Cyprus. Other missions are not so successful – Rwanda, Kivu in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Darfur in Sudan.

The UN has failed to stand up to dictators and perpetrators of genocide. Its failure to halt the Rwandan genocide in 1994 to intervene in Srebrenica massacre in 1995 and its recent failure to stop the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka are a few examples of its impotency on the major issues of the day. One of its agencies, UN Human Rights Council's obsession with criticising Israel and its failure to halt genocide in Sudan shows that the newly formed human rights council is not working.

2009 has been one of the worst years which the role of UN and the international community has diminished to a low level. The recent conflict in Sri Lanka, escalating war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the ongoing problems in Middle East, Iran and North Korea are a few examples where the UN and international community have not been able to broker the peace. The unfolding and growing humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka, Gaza and Swat Valley in Pakistan where 2 million people have become refugees is a fact that is shameful and shocking.

Three of the largest peacekeeping operations in DRC, Darfur (Sudan) and Afghanistan, are not achieving the objective they were set out to do. Let me tell you what Ban-Ki Moon Secretary General of UN recently had to say about peacekeeping. "The United Nations is struggling to keep its peacekeeping missions staffed and supplied as the world endures an unprecedented combination of crises, i.e. food crisis, fuel crisis and financial crisis.

What drives conflicts – civil, international and future wars

Root Cause of War

Thousands of years of conflicts and wars span over history of world civilisation. Humanity has been subject to religious, tribal, territorial and resource wars bringing endless bloodshed, misery and suffering, without much success in peacekeeping. So today's title "The Role of UN in Establishing a More Peaceful World" is timely.

What drives conflict? I think many causes which include violence (ethnic, religious, racial intolerance), neo-colonialism, lack of democracy, poor governance, role of media in misrepresenting the facts and flaring the hostilities and tensions. Military spending in armed conflicts, involvement of Pentagon and Military Industrial Complex's 'war of aggression,' has a direct vested interest in the perpetuation of such conflicts is a major cause of ongoing wars. Afghanistan and Pakistan is a example of that.

States fail when national governments can no longer provide personal security, food security and basic social services such as education and health care. They often lose control of part or all of their territory. After a point, they can become so dangerous that food relief workers are no longer safe and their programmes are curtailed (for example, Somalia and Afghanistan).

Failing states are an international problem because they are a source of terrorists, drugs, weapons and refugees, threatening political stability everywhere. Somalia is a failed state and has become a base for piracy; Iraq is a hotbed for terrorist training and Afghanistan is at war and is the world's leading supplier of heroin. Following the massive genocide in Rwanda, refugees from that failed state, thousands of armed soldiers among them, helped to destabilize neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo. Once states fail, no one assumes responsibility for their debt to outside lenders. If enough states disintegrate, their fall will threaten the stability of global civilisation.

Civil, International and Future Wars

There are some 20 civil conflicts burning around the globe, from Colombia to Iraq to Pakistan. Which raises some questions: How long do most civil wars last? What is a civil war, anyway? And how, finally, are they ended? A civil war is one fought within a society, but there are two kinds. In one, rebels seek to take over a region (as in Sri Lanka); in the other, they aim to control the whole state (like the FARC in Colombia).

Future wars now are mainly guerrilla wars, insurgencies and terrorism. The methods of operating are changing as space technology is co-ordinating the war in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan with tragic consequences to hundreds of innocent civilians who have been killed by United States unmanned aerial vehicles, or "drones" as they are popularly called. This is becoming the future face of wars. These killing machines are Pentagon's answer to escalating war costs, human casualties and difficulty in recruiting.

The early decades of the new millennium, wars will be fought not over ideology but over access to dwindling supplies of precious natural commodities. The political divisions of the Cold War have given way to a global scramble for oil, natural gas, minerals, and water. And as armies throughout the world define resource security as a primary objective, widespread instability is bound to follow, especially in those areas where competition for essential materials overlaps with long-standing territorial and religious disputes. The recent explosive conflict between the United States and Islamic extremism stands revealed as the predictable consequence of consumer nations seeking to protect the vital resources they depend on.

The conflict in Darfur – Sudan is one such example where fighting is over scarce grazing land and shortage of water. Today notion of resource wars leads us to think immediately of oil, but water will be fundamental need of some countries and peoples. We need to preserve rain forests, but expanding populations will increasingly create regional shortages of food – especially when nature turns fatal. We are entering the century of not enough and will fight for things we could previously have.

How peacekeeping works?

Peacekeeping institution is not mentioned in the UN's original charter. Dag Hammarskjold, UN secretary general seized the opportunity of the Suez Crisis created by Britain and France's invasion of Egypt in 1956 to persuade governments to create peacekeeping forces. Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, "Blue Helmet" peace keeping missions have multiplied and UN peacekeepers now serve in flashpoints as far apart as East Timor and Haiti, though chiefly in Africa and the Middle East.

The UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is by far the biggest and most recognised brand of peacekeeping today. It has more than 112,000 personnel in the field as start of 2009 extended over 4 continents operating 16 peacekeeping operations and 27 other political missions in the world's trouble spots, with a budget of \$7 billion. To keep these peacekeeping operations going, the budget approved for 2008-2009 was \$4.7 billion for UN

activities, staff and infrastructure. Citizens of the United States approximately spend the same amount on cut flowers and potted plants each year.

Most of the peacekeeping operations have been following former Secretary General Boutros Boutros – Ghali's seminal report, Agenda for Peace which outlines how peace enforcement should work, which should also include peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction.

Evidence suggest the UN's legitimacy coupled visits with its long and diverse practical peacekeeping experience makes it the most effective and cost effective vehicle for most types of interventions to aid a country emerging from conflict. Also, to the negative side of peacekeeping is the sexual abuse committed peacekeepers as was recently witnessed in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Are the three largest peacekeeping operations effective?

- MONUC (Democratic Republic of Congo)

- UNAMID (Darfur – Sudan)

- IASF (Afghanistan)

Three of the biggest peacekeeping operations in the world, DRC, Sudan, and Afghanistan are not producing the desired results.

The cases of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the African Union (AU) Mission in Somalia and the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) show that the moral authority of an operation is crucial to securing local legitimacy. If an operation is perceived to lack moral authority, this may affect countries' decisions to deploy personnel. Reluctance to provide the reinforcement requested by MONUC at the end of 2008 was probably influenced by the misconduct scandals that have surrounded the mission.

In the DRC, UN's beleaguered peacekeeping operations which cost more than a billion dollars a year has failed to stop violence. An invisible war has been going around for 12 years where UN peacekeepers (Monuc) are not only producing any results but according to some observers they are actually standing by as the perpetrators massacre people. Over five million dead, hundreds of thousands of women and girls raped and sexually tortured in the most unimaginable ways as witnessed recently. There are 800,000 internally displaced persons since January 2009 and close to 350,000 forced to flee to neighbouring countries. This violence is fuelled by the world's need for minerals, most recently due to the economic crisis. Congo, the sixth most mineral-rich country in Africa, has become the stage for a regional war fuelled by - economic interests – a resource war backed by extraction of minerals.

Up to 2009 the UN has not been able to tackle the rebel leader, Lauren Nkunda, and neutralise his troops. In a desperate attempt, they are joining with the enemy militias by offering logistical support. However, this has not yet taken place as war continues as the Western world is hungry for minerals. Only an effort by the international community to support a solution other than military means can bring forward a peaceful solution in a war destroyed country.

The situation in **Darfur, Sudan** is problematic and its challenges are vast and difficult because of the size of the country. UN peacekeeping troops under UNAMID (African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur) have difficulty in the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement. The conflict began in 2003, when rebel groups began attacking government targets. In retaliation, the government launched a military and police campaign in Darfur. More than 2 million people fled their homes due to government aircraft bombing villages, after which the Arab Janjaweed militia would ride in on camels and horses to slaughter, rape and steal. Many have claimed that this has been a deliberate attempt to drive black Africans out of Darfur. The government admits mobilising "self-defence militias", but denies links to the Janjaweed and says the problems have been exaggerated.

There are efforts to stop the fighting but the results remain mixed owing to the fact that the president, who has been issued with warrants for his arrest for crimes against humanity, is free and remains in power. The Doha meeting where Khartoum and Jem signed an agreement in February 2009 to pave the way for broader peace talks were sponsored by Qatar, the United Nations, the African Union and Arab League. The joint African Union-UN peacekeeping mission, UNAMID, took over from January 2008 from an African peace force. But the mission is currently at only 60% of its mandated strength, with just 15,000 of the 26,000 planned troops and police on the ground. Some say even the full force would not be enough to cover the remote area.

The search for durable peace in the war scarred Darfur region of Western Sudan has gain momentum lately and let us hope things will improve in the region.

Afghanistan has 150,000 US and NATO troops under International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Established by the UN Security Council in December 2001, its stated role is to promote security and development. The country suffers from insurgent attacks, slow political and economic progress. I think the lack of coordination and strategy hampers progress and frustrates the Afghan government and people. There is also a media coverage which continues to give bleak prospects and emphasis on an unwinnable war. The drone attacks by the US into a sovereign country make it harder the job of the peacekeeping troops. It makes Afghanistan a complex place where future political and economic efforts are frustrated and where peace is becoming a distant dream.

Increasingly, it is now felt that within the UN, NATO, and by other military and government leaders that there is an increased need to have a dialogue with the moderate elements of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda for a peaceful outcome of the Afghanistan conflict.

UN peacekeeping reforms, alternatives, policy recommendations and campaigns to kick-start effective peacekeeping?

All peacekeeping operations go through 3 processes. These can be described as pre-conflict, peace enforcement in conflict and post-conflict peace-building, faster and better peacekeeping enforcements. Peacekeeping is successful by adhering to UN charter and International Law, disarmament and non-proliferation, humanitarian intervention, sanctions, prevention of war, activism, education, culture of peace and more robust allocation of funds for peacekeeping. A

combination of these will be needed to meet key peacekeeping challenges which are a) demand for increased peacekeeping, b) limited reality of UN reforms c) escalating terrorism, d) increasing violence of civilians and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Some of the recommendations are below:

Comply with the UN Charter for stopping conflicts as states have signed and agreed under Chapter 7 provisions of the UN Charter, and have accepted not to go to war which in other words, make the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan illegal.

UN and civil society should promote laws which prohibit wars like:

- The general treaty for the Renunciation of War (Kellog-Briand Pact)
- The Nuremberg charter and principals
- The charter of the United Nations

The main legal principals included in the UN charter are that:

- International disputes must be settle by peaceful means,
- Member States must never threaten or use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any of a state.
- The only legal use of armed force should occur when a state has been attacked and must defend itself and/or on the authorised resolution of the Security Council to restore international peace and security, provided all peaceful means of settlements have been exhausted

Bringing UN Security Council reforms should be priority. These should be to increase the peacekeeping budget; accelerate preventative measures to concentrate on pre-conflict and post-conflict policing, and to working on recommendations of the peacebuilding commission.

The UN Security Council should craft mandates and determine the character of each UN peacekeeping deployment which is achievable. It should also ensure that all new peacekeeping operations have clear mandates and they are well resourced to fulfil the tasks that the UN has set for them.

Applying UN's Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine and international law (under ICC) to stop genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Follow the R2P doctrine to stop conflicts and to get rid of dictators and evil politicians who have perpetrated rapes and murders in their own countries against their own citizens. R2P, which has been agreed by the UN, can be applied for failed states, chronic low-grade conflicts, and ungoverned spaces (Somalia and Rwanda).

Rapid Reaction Force or a civilian peace mission should be formed with trained civilians which can be rapidly deployed to help prevent weak states from collapsing and preventing deadly conflicts.

UN should target sanctions and hold Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) to prevent future conflicts like the one in South Africa, Peru, East Timor and Morocco.

Following the work of the UN Peacebuilding Commission will help bridge the gap in coordination of peace building activities in countries just emerging from violent conflicts. It should be corner stone of UN peacekeeping. It helps post conflict recovery, reconstruction, institution building and sustainable development

Campaigning to ban US military bases as in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places around the world should be started. American bases in particular now ring the entire globe and represent a huge financial, environmental and human investment. Have they really made anyone safer? The answer is NO. It has more likely increased wars and conflicts.

In America Military Industrial Complex (MIC) calls the shots. America is a global bully with 750 bases in 130 countries. In addition there are 1000 bases in US alone. It also deploys half a million soldiers including spies who work under a dozen or so Carrier Task Forces in all oceans and seas of the world. America is a military juggernaut intent on world domination. It spends approximately \$250 billion annually to maintain troops, equipment, fleets and bases world wide.

Stopping the war propaganda is used for selling war to populations and should be defended by alternative non-violent demonstrations, material-magazines, records, brochures and the like extolling the virtues of peaceful co-existence and the resolution of conflicts.

Reduce the influence of the military-industrial complex and military spending which is currently \$1.53 trillion. It is obvious that this huge military spending and the method of war and militarism are not bringing any real human security.

The money saved from the dividend of peacekeeping can be deployed for poverty reduction, completion of Millennium Development Goals¹ and offsetting the climate change crisis. The best estimates are that a ten year commitment of around \$76 billion per year, less than 7% of military expenditures, would lead to the Millennium Development Goal's fulfilment.

Adopting a Culture of Peace and Prevention of Warfare – It's incredible that even in the 21st century, the institution of war is well and alive. Most conflicts today are fought with small arms and light weapons which need to be contained.

The role of civil society should be to promote education and non-violent ways of ending conflicts build on arms control treaties, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. Also Protect Human Rights violations and environment from destruction as both lead to maintaining long term peace and security.

Building peace must include all parties in the process to build trust and long term commitment for finding lasting solutions. Promote reasons to avoid wars as it destroys environment, hinders development and hampers the desire for decent living.

¹ The eight MDGS are:

1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. 2) Achieve universal primary education. 3) Promote gender equality and empower women. 4) Reduce child mortality. 5) Improve maternal health. 6) Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases. 7) Ensure environmental sustainability. 8) Develop a global partnership for development.

One such example is the ammunitions destroyed in Colombia. As part of the peace process, 18,000 weapons and 2.7 million pieces of ammunition were melted into 25 tons of metal in the city of Sogamoso in 2007. The metal was transformed into sculptures in memory of victims of paramilitary activities.

Engaging Multilateral Diplomacy for peace – Multilateral diplomacy at international level is the best way forward in the world. Nations should deal with global problems first, instead of putting their own agenda which is a recipe for disaster. Europe is a prime example that shows the world that political solutions of the wider world are possible without endangering the agenda of the nation states. This is a quantum leap in solving world problems, keeping away the unnecessary violence and wars which are creating untold suffering in the world.

For multi-lateral diplomacy to succeed, reforming the global institutions should be made a priority. The motto should be adapt to the 21st century or die. This means effective reforms of not only UN but also of G8/G20, World Bank, IMF and other global institutions.

Setting up an international agency to find solutions to inter-related global issues – Most of the world problems today of peacekeeping, conflicts, development, climate change and human rights are inter-related and should be dealt in tandem.

Lasting peace cannot be achieved if we concentrate solely on peace when all the inter-related issues are destroying our environment, creating a shortage of food, leading to conflicts and chaos. What we urgently need is a global collective security agency to tackle all these inter-linked problems in co-operation with UN and regional bodies. It is worth noting that players in the conflict zone can take a decisive role to contain the conflict.

Talking to terrorists and learning from the Northern Ireland Peace Process – The peace agreement in Northern Ireland is now held up as a beacon for conflict resolution around the world. The 'lessons of Ulster' are being applied by prime ministers, presidents, diplomats and intelligence agencies to numerous areas of violent conflict, including Spain, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Promoting the role of activism. Most of the changes for the better in our world have taken place because of campaigning, activism and advocacy. The repression, injustice and brutality of Iran regime was exposed by citizens protests against their government in Iran after the recent elections. Vietnam, Orange and Velvet Revolutions in Eastern Europe are examples of role of activism.

The power of internet technology and community actions like Twitter, Facebook and Youtube can harness the energy of citizens for effective campaigning. So write to your MP's, MEP's, newspapers, media and demand from our elected leaders that they work for a peaceful future and not encourage war mongering.

Let me summarise the peacekeeping alternatives and policy recommendations which are

- Using preventative diplomacy against the surge of war
- Prioritising, taking measures for protection of civilians against violence
- Continuing the work on general and complete disarmament, including nuclear weapons and conventional weapons.
- Promoting a culture of peace, reconciliation and non-violence as a vision of future peacekeeping
- Dealing with violations of human rights as a precondition for peacekeeping
- Convening a World Summit on disarmament, non-proliferation and terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction & exploring innovative ways of peacekeeping.
- Making UN peacekeeping a global partnership, a united body more effective with a fast turnaround
- UN should provide better peacekeeping training and support regional peacekeeping training centres to increase global peacekeeping capacity, with tactical and strategic lift capacity, and other 'enablers' like helicopters to help UN missions deploy quickly and completely.
- UN peacekeeping missions should only be deployed where mandates are achievable.
- The UN should work with regional partners such as the EU and the African Union to develop protection capacities that can be deployed quickly and respond effectively to counter threats against civilians.
- The UN should support the Responsibility to Protect as a global norm and use diplomatic resources to advance the concept among countries.

Way Forward-What can we do?

For the peacekeeping recommendations to work, we need to engage the public with the issues and harness their energy to action towards peace. Also to ensure leaders and legislators keep their promises for changing things around for a better world. Some of the campaigning tools are below:

- Before anything study the problem
- Urge your MP and to key decision makers to support peace and disarmament policies.
- Write letters to world leaders and the editor of the newspapers
- Educate the public and especially young people
- Raise money
- Write a letter to the editor – or a longer article for publication
- Translate materials into – local-national languages, and arrange distribution
- Plan a demonstration
- Call a radio talk show
- Hold a meeting or run a workshop
- Put up posters
- Show a video on a campaign topic
- Distribute leaflets and brochures
- Make links to Uniting for Peace: www.unitingforpeace.com
- Join peace organisations or a more general group; or set one up yourself

STUDY... EDUCATE...ADVOCATE...ORGANISE!

Conclusion

There is a book called 'The 33 strategies of war' by Robert Greene. It describes the horrific and brutal way wars are fought and won. The lesson from that book I learnt is that Generals and great warriors demonstrate prudence, agility, calm and keen understanding of conducting their armies in the battlefield, so that they can defeat their enemies. Similarly we need to organise ourselves on a massive scale and apply our resourcefulness, acumen, patience, dialogue, negotiation and diplomacy for making successful peacekeeping operations, otherwise peacekeeping will always remain a dream and a distant reality.

We have covered a lot of ground today from the role of the UN in international peace and security to reforms of the UN. Let me reiterate what I said in the beginning, affirming our faith in the vision of the preamble of the UN Charter and article 1 of Chapter 1 which categorically states for bringing peace by peaceful means.

Peacekeeping to be effective is combination of several factors which include dialogue and mediation at the pre-conflict stage, enforcement of peace during the war, giving parties breathing space to reach an agreement, and post-conflict reconstruction when the warring parties entered a peace agreement and trying to work things together for a future free of violence.

However, I will argue that the reconciliation and neutralising the tensions in the pre-conflict mode is the most important for not only finding causes for tensions and hostilities but also for resolving disputes before they become full-blown war. This is the sign of a successful peacekeeping operation. It not only saves millions of lives which are lost in a nasty war, but also saves billions of dollars (\$7 billion dollars at present spent on peacekeeping) and free much needed valuable resources (food, water, energy, etc) which are increasingly in short supply owing to global warming.

Let me conclude by saying that we have just drawn down the curtain on the bloodiest century of human history. Let us make the 21st century less violent than the one before and the UN has the tools to achieve it.

The United Nations is the most universal world body. It has the amazing ability to continually rise from its ashes and work for a better future for humanity. The priority for the United Nations and its agencies is to live up to their original mandate, which was to bring all nations of the world together to work for peace and development, based on the principles of justice, human dignity and the well-being of all people.

Thank you for listening

Notes

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

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2. Prompt Global Strike: Pentagon Plans series of 5-10 year wars
3. Research Institute (SIPRI). "Recent Trends in Military Expenditures". http://web.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_trends.html 2009
4. Talk by Vijay Mehta at Royal Over Seas Club, Edinburgh Scotland. 'Reforming the UN for the 21st Century.' 8th December 2008
5. Talk by Vijay Mehta at House of Lords, London. 'World Security, Global Governance and the role of the UN.' 29th October 2008
6. World Trends – Fights among neighbours are the hardest to end. New York Times / The Observer London, May 31st 2009.
7. Wars, Guns and Votes – Author Paul Collier, Oxford University
8. The Guardian, 'An apathetic, greedy west has abandoned war-torn Congo,' 18 June 2009
9. Brookings Europe and the emerging powers at the G8 summit, July 1st 2009
10. Who's Priorities? A guide for campaigners on military and social spending – Colin Archer, International Peace Bureau, www.ipb.org

The full version of this speech can be downloaded from:

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www.vmpeace.org
www.action-for-un-renewal.org.uk

Vijay Mehta is president of VM Centre for Peace www.vmpeace.org , Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity www.fortuneforum.org , Chair of Action for UN Renewal www.action-for-un-renewal.org.uk and co-Chair of 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 Summit: For a Sustainable Future, Arms No More, and The United Nations and Its Future in the 21st Century.

His latest book is on Global Warming and is called 'Climate Change IQ,' which is available to download free of charge in electronic form from the website www.climatechange365.co.uk

He along with his daughter Renu Mehta founder of Fortune Forum charity 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, Ajtak-24 hour Indian news channel, and Think Peace documentary, Canada, among others. The Sunday Times, Independent, Observer and Guardian newspapers, among other journals have written about him. His life is devoted to the service of peace, humanity and our planet