

The Economics of Killing

Book Discussion Event hosted by University of Sussex International
Relations Society

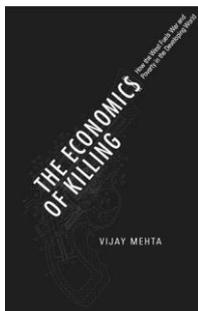
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University of Sussex
Brighton, East Sussex

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Introduction

Good evening and welcome to the book discussion. Thanks to Mark Pluck and the team of the University of Sussex International Relations Society for hosting the book discussion today. It's a privilege to address students who are instrumental in the social changes happening in our world today.

It is a great opportunity to talk face to face the reasons for writing the book *The Economics Of Killing*. It is the urgent necessity to try to stop our world becoming dangerously militarised. The 1% of the senior-politicians, military, weapon manufacturers, arm dealers, corporations and media support militarism know well that using force against force does not work. The cold war has been over for more than two decades, yet the world continues on an insane path to increase its military spending year after year as if we are living in a time of unending conflict. More problematic is the fact that by over-arming ourselves in the West and Asia, we end up repeating the horrors and the bloodshed of 20th century in which 250 wars were fought and 160 million lives were lost.

How can a society be called civilised if it has an international arms/killing industry which leads to wars, violence, barbarism, to counterproductive military budgets destroying social, economic, political and cultural fabric and values? One is baffled by the fact that here we are in the 21st Century and we still killing each other. We need to explore nonviolent ways for building peace and restoring human dignity, ethics and civilisation, reflected in a new initiative 4D for World Peace inspired by the book – 4D standing for Disarmament, Demilitarisation, Development and Democracy.

In 2011, the US is still number one in military spending with \$711 billion but China and Russia are catching up fast. USA has only 4% of world's population, friendly neighbours such as Canada and Mexico, yet spends more than the rest of the world on its military.

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. My book, *The Economics of Killing* shows how this monster is not only the cause of extreme poverty in the developing world, but contributed to 911 and the market crash of 2008. How the world can move away from the war economy to a sustainable peace economy based on soft power and co-operation, so we can tackle the biggest threats facing humanity: extreme poverty climate change and warmongering.

Military Industrial Complex and the damage done by it

The Military Industrial Complex (MIC) comprises the manufacturers of military technologies, dual use systems (from computer and software to fuel cells, lasers, robotic arms and optical equipment) and industries deemed to be strategically important. It also includes the arms trade, illegal and legal.

Some examples of damage done by 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. Islamist terrorism and War on Terror based on fear
4. 2008 financial collapse and current economic crisis
5. Marginalisation of United Nations and Weakening of World Institutions
6. Start of a new cold war in Europe and Asia with frightening prospects
7. Negative effects of MIC on environment, global and human security including refugees, migrants etc.
8. Control of information, secrecy, Manipulation of media, biased reporting and false propaganda
9. Use of Science, latest technology and research to develop satanic weapons
10. MIC Giving powers to military alliances like NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) to police the world and fight its wars

I am only going to deal with three problems created by militarism and which are relevant to our talk today.

2008 financial collapse and current economic crisis

The huge financial cost of militarism is the key factor in the crisis of capitalism.

One example: Because of their arms race, the US refuses to sell China the high-tech military and dual-use technology that China wishes to buy.

Because its exports to the US are booming, this refusal has left China with a huge surplus of dollars. It has little choice but to lend back to the United States and Europe. Over the past decade China has provided the West with a seemingly endless quantity of cheap credit.

Chinese economists say that this refusal to trade is the reason behind our global economic imbalances – the imbalances that overloaded European and American capital markets with easy credit, leading to rash and unscrupulous lending and the crash of 2008.

The ability to borrow cheaply from China also allowed the US to gather enough money to fund the Iraq and Afghanistan war. Between 2000-10 the US sold trillions of Treasury bonds to the Beijing dictatorship to fund those invasions.

Over \$2 trillion has been spent on wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The US couldn't afford this and now finds itself in record debt, with its credit rating last year downgraded for the first time in history. Britain itself is experiencing the human and economic cost of Afghanistan war today.

The knock on effects from poor governance, weak growth and prolonged austerity in the Euro zone has affected trade, aid, investment and remittances. The outgoing President of the World Bank Robert Zoellick has warned that developing countries need to prepare for a renewed wave of global financial turbulence stemming from Europe, and said they should put their finances in order to face the threat.

Start of a new Cold War in Europe and Asia

China is not a victim, here. It is desperate to acquire sophisticated weapons technologies to prove its newfound might and to impress its neighbours. Its military build-up, or to use an old slogan (Peaceful Rise), is a threat to neighbours (South Korea, Burma, Vietnam, Japan and even Australia) who are spending more on defence.

China's behaviour is changing the behaviour of neighbouring countries. According to the report released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) March, 2012, India is now the world's largest importer of arms (10%) along with 4 next largest countries all in Asia – South Korea (6% of total arms transfers), Pakistan (5%), China (5%) and Singapore (4%). It is the beginning of a new cold war in Asia which could result in horrific consequences.

Use of Science, latest technology and research to develop satanic weapons

In the name of global security, science and new technology is being used to develop and produce insane weapons and fight the asymmetric wars of the future. In universities, the scarce resources, are being manipulated to develop and produce new high tech deadly weapons for warfare. Worldwide, between 1.2 and 1.5 million people work as scientists and engineers in military research and development. Industry and public research budgets add up to 100-120 billion dollars per year. Of this, some 25 billion dollars are spent on research in universities. Regarding UK universities, the most recent assessment was published in August 2012, using freedom of information requests, this study found that 17 of the UK's most prestigious universities including Imperial college London, Cambridge and Oxford received a total of £83 million over the 3 years up to until 2011.

These include viruses and bacteria, flying drones, vaccines, food, sound and electromagnetic technology, anything with a camera, x-rays and radiation, forays into space, psychological advances, mosquitoes, vehicles of any sort including unmanned drones of every size, time travel and remote viewing, microchips and computers, robots, and even the environment and weather. We face a future of extreme unpredictability and chaos if this research is allowed to continue.

What are the Alternatives?

The alternatives are military reduction, cutback on global arms trade, reforms of the monetary system to a wisdom based economy and addressing root causes of violence, wars, terrorism and creating incentives for peace economy.

All these interdependent alternatives are included in the 4D for World Peace campaign started by our organisation Uniting for Peace. 4D Charter has holistic solutions to all the international issues and a multilateral approach in collectively dealing with the threats and challenges of today. The international community needs to link the agendas of development, environment and disarmament together by building partnerships at national and global level. It also reflects more accurately the purpose of the UN Charter, its treaties and conventions.

4D is a Charter of people and organisations which believe that through the savings gained by disarmament and demilitarisation, we can implement development, completion of MDGs and promote democracy. It also believes that true and lasting Peace can only be sustained when economic, social and environmental justice have been achieved.

To bring 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 \$2.25 trillion. Eradicating violence altogether, can create a stimulus of \$9 trillion, enough to tackle financial, climate change crisis and wipe out extreme poverty including covering cost of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

US and Western countries need urgently to restructure their economies away from its dependence on military sector. How can it be done?

Shift workers from war industry into 'green collar' jobs – renewable, waste management, pollution control, carbon capture.

Share green technology innovation by exporting it to developing countries so they escape smoke-stack stage of development.

Reform the arms, financial and drug industries, who work on giving bribes to win contracts, leading to economic instability. Close down corruption loopholes and fraud which has cost the UK economy \$73 billion in 2011 – the \$43 billion BAE Al-Yamama arms deal to Saudi Arabia

Creating a wisdom based enlightened economy where people should be the first priority, looking after 99% and not just the 1% elite.

To stop stealing and extorting materials from developing countries under the guise of free trade and globalisation. Adopt Chinese model (lifted 600 million people out of poverty, despite corruption): They have done this by a policy of protecting growth of state champions which should be followed by other developing countries.

Reform UN to play better leadership role in new global economy, international peace and security.

These are some of the ways we can change the system

How the World Benefits?

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 is the philosophy should be applied to International Trade, i.e. to achieve China like levels of human development and economic prosperity.

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.

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.

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.

Any demilitarisation plan should begin with US by slashing its cold war level of military spending being the biggest player in arms race.

As a start, US could easily cut 15% from the defence budget, saving US\$1 trillion, by laying off the 92,000 new defence personnel hired over the previous 10 years and reducing the US presence in Asia and Europe, scaling back or terminating wasteful projects such as the F-35 fighter (\$1.51 trillion over its lifecycle \$680 million apiece) and the Virginia class submarine (\$2.4 billion per unit), and shrinking the bureaucracy at the Pentagon that consumes 40% of its budget.

Withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan; refraining from propping up 'venal' governments in chaotic states, letting rich allies defend themselves; and imposing a spending freeze on the Pentagon until it renders itself auditable and amenable to financial oversight. Although some of these factors are unique to the US, these could be adopted by other industrial nations with large military establishments.

In the UK we can save huge amount of money by scaling down on Trident nuclear submarine replacement, which will cost UK economy over \$130 billion over its lifecycle.

What can civil society do?

Our hope for abolition of war and demilitarisation lies with us – Citizen Power. We can mobilise strong grassroots movements, to change public opinion with the help of internet and social media. Change comes through from bottom up, grassroots social movements. It is easier to make connections between people, teams and ideas to make a difference and change the world. When enough people are convinced that war is not necessary then elected leaders will be forced to change policies from war mongering to peaceful resolution of conflicts.

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

My book demonstrates that in 4D for World Peace, there is an alternative model to the deadly cycle of military and economic disaster. It is the vital necessity for disarmament on a world scale and a strict regulation of arms trading to create a peace dividend within an international legal framework. It will pave the way by which the military industrial model could be replaced by adopting equitable policies for disarmament, demilitarisation and working for sustainable development thus ending the cycle of violence and poverty.

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.

Conclusion

How will history remember us? It can only be kind if we can all join in our campaign for abolition of war, nuclear weapons, poverty and violence and work for a culture of peace and non violence. Today's book discussion is an opportunity to move forward the debate against the military mindset, to start and activate a political discussion to change the system for a safer planet, leading to peace and prosperity. It is selling arms and expecting peace is unrealistic. What we do require is to change war economy to peace economy.

Remember, peace is our birth right and we should claim it.

When 25 million soldiers worldwide are replaced with 25 million peace-keepers, the world will be a different place. It will be a bliss to be living in that dawn when the civilisation would have taken a full turn towards a better future. Only then we can leave a lasting legacy for generations to come ensuring the continuation and progress of our sacred civilisation and humanity. I think after Arab Spring and occupy Wall Street, students have proved that they have what it takes to make vital changes in our society.

Thanks for listening.

The materials and excerpts have been taken from the book *The Economics of Killing*.

This speech can be downloaded from www.unitingforpeace.com

Please watch 4D for World Peace film:

“Change the World” – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9GEK4FFrXk>

And The Economics of Killing Book Launch at Hilton London Euston:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LISJZEECvrE>

Vijay Mehta is chair of Uniting for Peace (www.unitingforpeace.org), renowned author and global activist for peace, development and human rights. He is also the Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity (www.fortuneforum.org) which was founded by his daughter Renu Mehta. Fortune Forum 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, 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.

In 2012, Vijay Mehta has been selected for the Global Indian Karmaveer (Action hero) Puraskaar (Award) by iCONGO as a noble–laureate 2012–2013. It is an award for outstanding luminaries working for peace and social justice.

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

“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