

UN: Peacemaker or Toothless Tiger?

Can UN Build a Peaceful World?

Reforming the UN for the 21st Century



Speaker

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The same UN Reform lecture was delivered.

4th October at Edinburgh, Scotland 'UN: Peacemaker or Toothless Tiger?'

6th October at Forres, Scotland, 'Is the UN Capable of Achieving Peace?'

29th October, at London, UN Symposium – 'Moving Towards a New United Nations'

Introduction

Dear friends, while we meet for this lecture, lots of changes are taking place in the world. UK is engulfed with the Brexit crisis and the US President, Donald Trump in the White House is flouting most of the international treaties and agreements. The world seems spinning out of control. West-Russia relations deteriorating with NATO threatening extension to Georgia and Ukraine. The Israel-Gaza border crisis festers with many protestors killed, and no just solution for Palestinians in prospect. US sanction on Iran and trade war with China and Turkey further destabilises the already volatile region. Power rivalries prevent the vitally needed peace in Syria and Yemen.

All these argues for urgent restoration of the authority of UN as world's leading and most representative forum for global conflict resolution and peace building. However the million dollar question is how 200 countries which are UN members can try to solve some of these intractable problems facing the world today?

We have also a new Secretary General (SG), Antonio Guterres, who for the first time, in the history of the United Nations was not selected on the golf course, but through a very transparent and inclusive method by the 193 members of the General Assembly. This was not like the olden times when the decision to select a new UN Secretary General was shrouded in mystery. In the past, the P5 (US, Russia, China, France and UK) used their veto power to either appoint or block the selection of the Secretary General. This new method of selecting a SG is refreshing and outstanding reform in its own way.

Another landmark UN achievement in 2017 is the historic UN General Assembly for the activation of the crime of aggression added to the International Criminal Court (ICC) portfolio as its fourth core crime adding to the three already agreed – war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. It's a great victory for UN, ICC and international community as for the first time ICC will be able to hold leaders individually criminally responsible for waging aggressive war.

What is UN? The UN is the institutional expression of the international community. The corner stone of our international system and the key factor of the effective multilateralism. It is the essential instrument of member states to confront common challenges, manage shared responsibilities and exercise collective action, in an enduring course for peaceful, inclusive and sustainably developed world, in which the international law and the dignity and worth of the human person are fully pursued.

UN and its various agencies like World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) among many other have done tremendous amount of good work in alleviating diseases, poverty and providing education to hundreds of millions of people. Not many people know that UN World Food Programme provides food assistance to an average of 104 million people in 80 countries every year. UNCHR for the first time since 2nd World War has to take care of

higher number of refugees and displaced people (over 65 million), one in every 122 people alive are refugees. UN feed people in warzones, natural disasters, health emergencies and poor countries.

After 72 year of its formation, we will explore has UN become a talking shop or irrelevant to the formidable challenges of the 21st Century, as it has not been able to fulfil its preamble goal of ...

"...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)

It is evident from continuing wars in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan before and Myanmar now, the UN has no power to prevent conflicts, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Legend has it that when US President Franklin D. Roosevelt coined the term 'United Nations', he was so excited that he burst into the bathroom to speak to the visiting Winston Churchill only to find Churchill in the tub. Apparently Churchill brushed aside FDR's apologies, saying, *'the Prime Minister of Great Britain has nothing to hide from the President of the United States.'*

The UN was born out of controversy as different countries (51 in the beginning) wanted to push their own agendas and how the UN should be run. However, the American government had an edge. In the months leading up to the conference, it had intercepted diplomatic cables from almost all the countries coming to San Francisco. It knew in advance the negotiating positions of practically every delegation except for those of Britain and the Soviet Union. Hence, US and the victors of the Second World War positioned themselves to keep all the powers in their hands. Even during the negotiations of the conference in San Francisco, all the hotel rooms of the delegates were bugged. This gave the US the advantage in negotiating with other countries.

Perceptions and Opinions about the United Nations

Dag Hammarskjold, 2nd UN Secretary General said, "The UN was not created to take humanity to heaven but save it from hell."

So seven decades after its formation it is as good a time as any to evaluate its successes, strengths and failures. For outsiders, dealing with the United Nations and insiders, working in the United Nations system, two most important issues always remain uppermost on their mind. First one is, can the United Nation be adequately reformed to face the realities of the modern world? Secondly, how it can be strengthened to become a truly global player fit for the 21st Century, whose decisions matter and are carried forward by the biggest and most powerful nations along with smaller ones.

There are opposite camps that have different and opposing opinions about what the United Nations stand for and what it can achieve. One camp believes that United Nations is the only institution which confers legitimacy on the important decisions, challenges and threats faced by the world today. It has a unique representative authority which allows it to provide a framework to tackle global problems such as poverty, conflicts, proliferation of nuclear weapons, violation of Human Rights and climate change crisis. They furthermore say there is no alternative to UN and if we never had the United Nations, we would need to invent one.

Another camp, right wing neo-cons, militarists, populists and nationalists has the opposite view that United Nation is irrelevant and bureaucratic. It should have been got rid of long time ago as it

serves no purpose. One of the notorious proponents of this point of view is former US ambassador to UN, John Bolton. He once said, "There's no such thing as the United Nations. If the U.N. building in New York lost 10 storeys, it wouldn't make a bit of difference."

There is another group of people who are of the opinion that UN is a showcase or a front for the Western powers, corporations, elites and the military who have set up the UN to delude the majority of world population for its own gains. The 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council (US, China, Russia, France, UK) are also the biggest arms makers and war mongers. If that was not the case why there is continuation of wars, also why in a world of plenty in the 21st Century, 3 billion people are forced to live on \$2 a day while according to a report by Oxfam, 8 rich people own as much wealth as 3.6 billion or half of the humanity. 20,000 people die of hunger every day, while at the same time \$4 billion is spent on weapons, armaments and other military expenditure on a daily basis.

Then there is a group of countries who bypass the UN and forge alliances outside the UN likes of G8, G20 and G77 who increasingly get frustrated by the consensus criteria of the UN where all the countries have to agree to decisions taken by 193 countries. This way, this group of countries can meet together and take decisions outside the UN which will have consequences for the rest of the world without their participation. The unilateral decisions by the US and Britain to go to war in Iraq, illegal in the opinion of the world is one of them.

In this day and age, why there should be conflicts around the world. In Afghanistan - over 16 years, in Iraq – over 14 years, Syria – over 6 years killing millions of people while the main purpose of UN for which it was founded was to end the scourge of war.

Across the world, we are living in a state of continuing crisis which is the new normal. In the face of global catastrophe, the leading governments of the countries typically offer more business as usual, meaning more corporate power to fuel democracy, more capitalism to fight inequality, more war to fight for peace, and more pollution to fight climate change. Can the UN and its new Secretary General Antonio Guterres has what it takes to challenge the current disorder and reverse the tide and go back to the UN Charter which starts with, "We the People" working for all citizens of the world. We cannot depend on the 1% of the world to lead us away from disaster – they caused our global crises in the first place, continue to profit from them, and cannot bring about solutions from the top-down. It has to be the people's movements leading the way from below, deconstructing capitalism and building a better world from the bottom-up. UN has a vital role to play to that end goal.

What reforms are needed and can they be implemented?

Dear friends, when we talk of UN Reforms, It suggests in itself that there is something wrong which needs reforming and fixing. The case for reform is overwhelming. America's unipolar moment has passed. Rules help in a world where power is shifting. The longer Britain and France wait, the weaker their negotiating position as they are declining powers. Russia and China could do with reform. Nobody should think that designing a new UN would be easy. But the alternative is a declining UN in a messy, interconnected world. That would be in no one's benefit. The essential reforms which we need urgently are:

- a) International Peacekeeping and Security Reforms b) Security Council and c) General Assembly Reforms d) Other reforms - Human Rights, Climate Change, Poverty Reduction, Combating Terrorism, Gender Equality, Media and Public Relations and Funding of the UN

a) International Peacekeeping and Security Reforms:

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.

At present 18 peacekeeping nations deploying 120,000 peace keeping personnel worldwide. UN is supposed to keep peace in the whole of the world with a two year tiny peacekeeping budget for 2016-2017 for \$7.87 billion. This is less than the yearly budget of Tokyo Fire Station, less than the budget of the 2012 London Olympics or amount spent by US citizens on cut flowers and potted plants every year. Both Mc Donald’s and Coca Cola employ more people worldwide than the entire UN system.

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 in Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 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 failure to stop the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka are a few examples of its impotency on the major issues of the day.

2017 has been one of the worst years in which the UN has not been able to broker the peace in the continuing wars in Afghanistan (over 16 years), Iraq (over 14 years), Syria (over 6 years) and Yemen (3 years), and its trust has diminished to a low level.

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 the retiring 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.

Among the peacekeeping reforms I am advocating the UN should have:

- To eliminate big power aggression, and reassert privacy of international law as stipulated in UN Charter
- Work for reduction of weapons as security does not come from multiplying weapons instead work for dialogue, diplomacy, remedy injustice, and creating opportunities for a multipolar world working in harmony.
- Clear, achievable mandates for peacekeeping and peace-building missions, matched by the adequate resources.
- Regular and rigorous oversight of peacekeeping missions to ensure effectiveness on the ground.
- More emphasis on peace-building and conflict prevention in those countries where insecurity remains high.

- Consideration of the UN Regular and Peacekeeping Budgets to take into account the current economic climate and the need to pursue good budget discipline, and more modernised cost-share calculations to secure value for money.
- To have better trained UN peacekeepers who are more respectful of Human Rights and they do not engage in sexual misconduct in the countries where they are deployed as peacekeepers.

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

b) Security Council Reforms:

Pretty much everyone agrees that the Security Council's permanent, veto-wielding membership reflects a bygone age, when victors of the 2nd World War chose to become the permanent members of the security council with veto powers. The veto ensured that the general assembly could not act against any of the permanent five. In other words, the P5 were and would be a law unto themselves. No wonder the Mexican delegate at the Charter adopting meeting at San Francisco in 1945 ruefully concluded that, "The mice would be disciplined but the lions would be free."

An increasingly unrepresentative, anachronistic Security Council speaks with diminishing authority. It is less able to debate the issues that matter, because important actors are missing. And it is less able to hand down opinions that count, because they do not bear the seal of all the world's great powers. Whether you think the UN can accomplish a little or a lot, a better Security Council would be able to get more done.

Alas, the consensus ends there. Among today's permanent members France and Britain worry about their declining influence. China objects to Japan as a permanent member. Mexico and Argentina object to Brazil. Italy objects to Germany, and Pakistan objects to India. African states cannot choose between South Africa and Nigeria. Do you need a Muslim state? And if so, which?

Some of the essential reforms needed to deal with the five permanent members and their excessive power are:

- Widen the membership of the Security Council to make it more representative.
- Abolish the veto and permanent seats – which puts all major reforms under the control of the existing permanent members.
- Have more emphasis on dialogue, diplomacy to solve conflicts and build a culture of peace and tackle root causes of conflict, inequality, lack of opportunity etc.

c) General Assembly Reforms:

- Work for General Assembly regaining its powers. A welcome news is the selection of the new Secretary General Antonio Guterres which was through a transparent and inclusive method by the 193 members of the General Assembly.
- The Charter makes it clear that the General Assembly of all member states is the primary UN body. Article 15 says that "the Assembly shall receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council...and from the other Organs of the United Nations".

- The chief limitation on its powers comes from Article 12 which states when the Security Council is exercising its functions in dealing with matters of peace and security the Assembly shall refrain from making any recommendations, which should be modified giving General Assembly the powers to implement peaceful solutions to conflicts.
- The powers of the General Assembly should be enhanced as it is the most representative body of the UN which includes all the members. So that it can play a vital role debating and deciding important international issues. At present, each autumn, it is faced with a daunting agenda and same resolutions year after year are put forward for discussion. The GA has ongoing 9,000 or so mandates, some of which are obsolete and redundant. The UN's agenda should be streamlined in order to devote more time to pressing threats and challenges facing the world today.
- On a positive note, the General Assembly has powers which can be activated for bringing Peace as the Uniting for Peace resolution of 1950 which was used to override the monopoly of Security Council for resolving the war in Suez which was fought between Israel, France and UK against Egypt in 1956 which paved the way for ending of the Suez War.

d) Other Reforms

Human Rights Reforms – The newly adopted The Declaration on the Right to Peace by the Human Rights Council in 2016 in Geneva by majority of its member states is a landmark achievement. In promoting the right to peace, it is imperative that we implement the Declaration Programme of Action on a culture of peace, which focuses its attention on human security, eradication of poverty disarmament, education, development, environment and protection of vulnerable groups, refugees and migrants.

It is true to say there is no peace and sustainable development without respect for Human Rights. The UN has a key role to play in strengthening member states capacity to comply with Human Rights obligations without discrimination. The UN should ensure the mainstreaming of Human Rights across the whole UN system, preventing violations and abuses, ensuring accountability and plight of victims.

Democracy and Human Rights are not an optional extra to be deployed selectively. UN need to ensure that Human Rights rhetoric is not allowed to be used as an instrument to pursue wars, traditional geopolitics and economic imperialism.

Climate Change Reforms – UN has been in the forefront and a leader of all the landmark agreements – the Agenda 2030, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Marrakesh Implementation Conference with a clear strategy to overcome the climate change crisis. A unique opportunity that must be seized for the survival of mankind. UN has got a pivotal role to play to combat climate change crisis and build a sustainable green economy to avoid persistent droughts, repeated crop failures and thus mass migration flows.

Poverty Reduction Reforms – UN needs to address the endemic poverty around the world and recognise that there is no peace without development and no development without peace. The new UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) has to be given a priority and mobilise actions for the implementation of SDGs to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. UN to address inequality as it is an important factor in stability in the world. UN should lobby

governments to implement a programme for cracking on tax dodging, increased investment in public services and action to boost the income of lowest paid.

For the first time in the history of UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), goal 16 has been included which urges us to, "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

Combating Terrorism Reforms – Today's threats are changing and with that multiplicity of non-state armed actors are employing asymmetric / guerrilla warfare methods like terrorism which has become a global menace. The UN should follow its Counter Terrorism strategy which should also include bridge building between hostile communities and faith traditions, conflict prevention diplomacy, economic and social aid to address the impact of globalisation and gross economic inequality. Terrorism is thriving in a world governments have helped to shape, with its failed states, military interventions and occupations where millions are forced to flee conflict and hunger.

Gender Equality Reforms – Violence against women is a year round occurrence and continues at an alarming rate. Violence against women can take different forms. There can be an attack upon their bodily integrity and their dignity. UN needs to address substantial gap in gender equality and pay as women make the majority of the lowest paid workers around the world. The new Secretary General should present and implement a roadmap for gender parity at all levels with clear benchmarks including freeing women from many social, cultural and economic walls which imprison them.

Media and Public Relations Reforms – UN and its agencies do tremendous amount of good work in many areas working for the common good. However the positive news are ignored by the media who just concentrate on the negative stories like recounting disasters and the rape allegations, abusive behaviours of UN peacekeepers which is frequently in the news. Today, wars and disasters are news because of improved technology and more democracy, partly because wars and disasters are the preferable media choices because as it is said – "if it bleeds, it leads" – and partly because media instinctively focuses on bad news like terrorism etc.

So in this respect, the UN communication department has a massive job to do to filter positive UN stories to the whole world. The UN must communicate in ways that everybody understands and use the most modern digital platforms, reaching out to common citizens and making the most of its unique and powerful brand.

Funding Reforms – At this moment in time, UN is dependent on the contribution made by countries according to their size. That hinders the progress of UN because the big donors like US (25%) try to bend the rules to suit their agenda. A new system should be formed in which United Nations should be funded in an independent way like a small percentage of tax on currency transactions worldwide which is over \$ 5.1 trillion per day or some similar solution. This way UN will be independent and free to voice its concerns against wars, injustices and violation of Human Rights without being influenced by its biggest donors.

Recommendations for strengthening the United Nations

Dear Friends, the reforms of the UN have been debated fruitlessly for years. Diplomats roll their eyes and say that talking about reform is a waste of breath. Yet international governance has eventually changed the selection of the present Secretary General, which is a step in the right direction and a milestone achievement.

Any plausible UN reform starts with compromise. The Security Council needs to be large enough to be representative, but small enough to do business. It should reflect real power in the world which means countries not represented in decision making like India, Brazil South Africa should be given a Security Council membership which will legitimise decision making.

The UK plays a key role at the UN. It is one of the 15 strong security council's 5 permanent members, which means it can play a key role in the decision making process of the united nation. In that respect it can help establish peace keeping mission and place sanctions on countries. Being a Security Council member of the UN it can help to make an effective and strengthened UN for ending wars and interventions, maintenance of international peace and security. It can set an example by actively helping to implement the newly agreed Sustainable Development Goals, work for nuclear disarmament and also for the recently concluded Paris Climate Agreement.

UK must put its values at the heart of its foreign policy. It cannot be silent at the cruel Saudi war on Yemen, while continuing to supply arms to Saudi Arabia or the crushing of democracy of Egypt or Bahrain or the tragic loss of life in Congo, and fail to condemn the violence committed against the Rohingya in Myanmar. So let Britain's voice be loud and clear for peace, justice and cooperation.

Recommendations for the New Secretary General

The new Secretary General Antonio Guterres should as a matter of urgency implement the following new recommendations for reform to strengthen the United Nations:

1. First and foremost, different parts of UN should work in unity in coherence for the same purpose without duplicating efforts in its agencies, programmes and funds.
2. To initiate General Assembly for setting up a truly neutral (de-escalation committee) to settle conflicts by bringing people back to the negotiating table even after the adversaries have burned bridges behind them, confrontation at present.
3. To create the post of a Special Advisor to the Secretary General on the prevention and elimination of warmongering.
4. The UN should provide a friendly forum where politicians who have galloped away in their belligerent rhetoric can lower their tone, diffuse the tension and discreetly withdraw without losing too much face as in North Korea and Syria.
5. The Secretary General should tackle propaganda of war. The prevalence of belligerent rhetoric, sabre-rattling and war-mongering, including irresponsible media-hype and blatant propaganda for war have been responsible for many armed conflicts. It happens because of incitement by politicians and the media, pursuing a logic of war and rejecting other options for the solutions of international disputes by negotiation and diplomacy.
6. The new SG should work to deter the undemocratic impact of the Military-Industrial Complex on governments and the general lack of budget and fiscal transparency in most countries which constitutes a major problem. Few people know, in 2016, the world spent \$1.8 trillion in armaments. US on its own spend \$900 billion every year in engaging in foreign wars and maintaining military bases. As the retiring UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has famously said, "The world is over-armed and peace is underfunded."

7. The SG should use his unique moral authority to uphold the rule of law which is a vital element of conflict prevention and peacekeeping as the rules – based international system is enshrined in the Charter of United Nations. The breach of peace by aggression constitutes an international wrongful act giving rise to state responsibility, the obligation to make reparation and personal criminal liability. There has been countless wars and aggressions since the Nuremburg and Tokyo trials and whereas tribunals have produced significant case and law on war crimes and crimes against humanity, there has been no progress with regard with the prosecution of the crime against peace.

Way Forward

In an age when more and more problems facing humanity are global and the world has more and more need for a global institutions through which to forge and implement global strategies, it is more than ever necessary for the United Nations to live up to the promise of its Charter – and, above all, the demands and hopes of future generations.

All the efforts to reform and strengthen the UN including the endless books and materials written on its usefulness and demise – has anything changed? In some ways it has gone worse and other ways it has gone a bit better. The ideal of UN to get rid of world of wars have taken a knock in the continuing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen and the drone attacks by US. UN is a bystander while America and NATO alliance and Russia attack sovereign countries under the pretext of terrorism while violating Human Rights and freedom of these countries.

What has changed is that the permanent members of the Security Council are realising that they are no longer the superpowers of the world as they were once after the Second World War. Countries such as India, Brazil, Japan, Germany, South Africa and others are playing a very important role in the 21st century and should be members of the Security Council. It is increasingly being realised that if proper status and inclusion is not granted to the emerging giants, they will bypass the UN Security Council and take their own decisions as they will be the one who will be running the show in the 21st century. It's time the UN becomes more representative of the people of the world, reflecting the importance of emerging countries of the world.

The other thing which has changed is that the threats and challenges of today are increasingly global, like terrorism, climate change and financial crises. They are so vast and huge that it cannot be tackled by one single country no matter how powerful it may be. We are living in an interdependent world, a global village in which co-operation and not rivalries will work for the survival of mankind.

The future of the UN lies in it as a major contributor of people, ideas and bringing new and invisible issues to the forefront. I believe UN benefits the world, it creates a global forum for discussion, dialogue, communication for the progress of mankind.

UN should mobilize international civil society and global public opinion to carry forward a vision for a just and fairer world. Its strength is evident from the fact that when the United Nations passes a resolution, it is seen as speaking for humanity as a whole, thus giving it unique legitimacy and support for an action to be taken by a country. 193 member states should embark on a reform agenda for security council which will make UN accountable, transparent and democratic decision making body, an organisation fit for facing challenges and threats of 21st Century successfully.

Dear Friends, UN is the only inclusive global institution suitable for bringing a peaceful future. The bottom-line is how we can make a better place for ourselves and for future generations. We can start today, in this room. How? By some of you taking up the mantle and working for strengthening the United Nations to realise the aims of its founders – which are International Peace and Security, Environmental Protection, wiping global poverty, Respect for Human Rights, Economic and Social Justice and The Rule of Law. You can do so by joining United Nations and its Agencies and the best place to look for choosing a career in the international field is to check out the UN Portal (careers.un.org). Be a diplomat, travel the world and change it for better for yourself and others.

A reformed, democratic, transparent and accountable UN, along with the cooperation of the international community and a strong civil society, can produce the result in consigning war to history and making the dream of achieving peace a reality.

Conclusion

Remember there is no challenge that is beyond our capacity to achieve as human beings. People like you in this room and across the world have the capital, knowledge and technology to implement changes for not only to eliminate extreme poverty, bring peace and justice but also realise the UN Charter Preamble Goal of “...to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.”

If we can fulfil the above reforms, UN will not be a talking shop or irrelevant, but a global player fit and strong to tackle the challenges facing the 21st Century. Then we can proudly say everyone has the right to enjoy peace.

Thank you for Listening.

Any part of this lecture may be transcribed without permission giving credit to Vijay Mehta as the author of the article/speech and providing a link to Uniting for Peace website (www.unitingforpeace.com)

“We have to go forward with the giant undertaking of building a democratic United Nations to make the real world safe, just and sustainable for all our children.”

Erskine Childers, UN Diplomat

Notes:

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

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3. Vijay Mehta, Surviving the 21st Century – Global Challenges, Threats and Prospects for Peace, May 2015, London
4. Clare Short, UN at 70: What Prospects for Peace?, 23 September 2015 speech at London
5. Federico Mayor, Building a Culture of Peace in a World of Conflicts, 6th October 2016 speech at London
6. John Smart - A 21 century United Nations? It is about time- 2010.

7. Vijay Mehta Reforming the UN for the 21 century – Royal Overseas Club, Edinburgh Scotland 2010.
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11. The Economist, ‘Thinking the Unthinkable.’ 11 November 2010
12. Antonio Guterres, Challenges and Opportunities for the United Nations, 2016
13. Vijay Mehta, UN Institutional Reforms, Vancouver 2006
14. Caroline Lucas, Crisis in the UN, NATO and the EU, 2003
15. Denis Halliday, United Nations: The Embarrassment of International Law, 2002
16. Alfred de Zayas, The Human Right To Peace – Foundation for a Just International Order, London, October 2014
17. 8 People own the same wealth as half the world, Oxfam Report, January 2017
18. Rene Wadlow, Many Forms of Violence Against Women, November 2016

The full version of this speech can be downloaded from: www.unitingforpeace.com

Vijay Mehta is an author and peace activist. He is Chair of Uniting for Peace and founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity. His books include United Nations and its Future in the 21st Century (2005), Arms No More (2005), The Fortune Forum Code: For a Sustainable Future (2006), “The Economics of Killing” (2012) and “Peace Beyond Borders” (2016).

The Sunday Times described him as a “longstanding activist for peace, development, human rights and the environment, who along with his daughter Renu Mehta has set a precedent for striving to change the world” (**The Sunday Times, February 01, 2009**).

In 2014, Vijay Mehta’s bio “**The Audacity of Dreams**” appeared in the book form “**Karma Kurry**” published by Jaico Publishing House, India with a foreword to the book by Nelson Mandela.

“Thank you for all you do Vijay – both the organisation Uniting for Peace and yourself are inspiration and give us all hope that both yourself and the organisation can bring a world without a war. Indeed it is possible, even in our own time.” – **Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate 1976**

“The book, Peace Beyond Borders by Vijay Mehta, an astute non-European observer, uses this unprecedented, extraordinary experience as the centrepiece of a carefully crafted theory on the construction and maintenance of peace and prosperity on a global scale.”

- **Jose Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate 1996 and Former President of Timor-Leste**

Vijay Mehta’s latest book, ‘**How Not To Go To War: Establishing Departments for Peace and Peace Centres Worldwide**’ published by New Internationalist will be released this Autumn of 2018. Some of the luminaries had this to say about the book:

‘I am happy to give my support to Ministry of Peace whose responsibility would include being a consistent voice for nonviolent means of settling disputes ’

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Nobel Peace Laureate

‘In the ministerial appointments we may well be appointing in the future a Minister for Peace and Disarmament’

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party