

UNITING for PEACE

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Wars, Militarism and Arms Trade – What Can Peace Activists Do?

9th July – Conference Report : Online Conference

Vijay Mehta and Rita Payne welcomed all the speakers and delegates from UK and other parts of the world to the Uniting for Peace Conference on Wars, Militarism and Arms Trade. Vijay Mehta in his opening remarks said, "Looking at the world around us today, the pertinent question to ask is why there is more insecurity and less humanity, we as humans are one of the few species that kills its own in senseless wars including women and children. The world has grown more dangerous in recent times with NATO and Russia threatening to use nuclear weapons which could trigger World War III. Rita Payne welcome delegates to join the conference and said that during these dark times, there is a glimmer of hope in the change of government in the UK. She also said we need to let people in power know that they will not get our votes if they do not aspire to lead their countries moving towards peace.

Vijay Mehta, Chair of Uniting for Peace and Author of *How Not To Go To War* said, one of the most pressing issues of our time is prevalence of wars, militarism and thriving arms trade, three issues blighting our humanity. So what can we do to contain and eventually abolish war and suffering of the people. Global security depends on us managing global and national risks. With wars in Ukraine and Middle East and recent threat of using nuclear weapons by NATO and Russia, we could be heading for the extinction of our species. Paul Vallery, the French poet said, "War is a massacre of people who don't know each other for the profit of who know each other".

Whether it is a large scale conflict or a smaller one between nations, it leaves behind a trail of devastation that extends far beyond the battlefield. Families are torn apart, communities are shattered and entire generations are robbed of their future. The human cost of war is immeasurable and effects are felt long after the guns fall silent.

David Wine and Theresa Arriola write about the unholy alliance of military, weapon industry and congress which operate a circular economy, perpetuating cycle of legalised corruption and wars. They have analysed how the system works which is below:

"The basic system works like this: First, Congress takes exorbitant sums of money from us taxpayers every year and gives it to the



Online Conference

Pentagon. Second, the Pentagon, at Congress's direction, turns huge chunks of that money over to weapons makers and other corporations via all too lucrative contracts, gifting them tens of billions of dollars in profits. Third, those contractors then use a portion of the profits to lobby Congress for yet more Pentagon contracts, which Congress is generally thrilled to provide, perpetuating a seemingly endless cycle."

Samuel P Huntington described the purpose of military in his book, *The Soldier and the State*. "The mission of the Armed Forces is combat, to deter and defeat enemies of the United States. The military must be recruited, organised, trained and equipped for that purpose alone. A military force is fundamentally anti-humanitarian: its purpose is to kill people in the most efficient way possible.

Compounding the problem of militarism is the thriving arms trade, a big business with billions of dollars in arms sales occurring each year. The consequences of the arms trade are devastating. Weapons flow freely across borders, fuelling conflicts and perpetuating violence in regions already torn apart by war. From assault rifles to fighter jets, these instruments of death and destruction wreak havoc on civilian populations, leaving behind a trail of death and devastation. Moreover, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has fuelled the rise of non-state actors and terrorist organizations, further destabilizing already fragile regions in Africa and other parts of the world.

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World peace is not a utopian dream. It can be realised by overcoming forces of destruction, violence and warmongering. Uniting for Peace, incorporating Action for UN Renewal and World Disarmament Campaign, is a civil society organisation helping to do just that.

Chair: Vijay Mehta * Scotland and Interfaith Secretary: Rev. Brian Cooper

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Editorial : Cultivating a Culture of Peace

We live in a paradoxical world. On one side, wars continue in many parts of the world – Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Palestine, Sudan bringing untold destruction and suffering. At the same time, efforts for ceasefire and peace agreements are initiated by many countries including ruling by International Court of Justice to stop genocide of Palestinians bearing no result. It seems mankind have lost all reasoning and compassion for our own fellow human beings.

Throughout history, humanity has been entangled in conflicts. The reasons for war are complex and multi-faceted, often involving a mix of political, economic, social and psychological factors. Nations have fought over territory, resources, ideological differences and power. Whatever the arguments are, war is an archaic and barbaric practice, that modern society should outgrow and work for peace.

To move towards a world without war, it's important to address its root causes. This is where the concept of Culture of Peace

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It is the duty of citizens to stand against warmongers and break free from the cycle of continuing war, militarism and arms proliferation. We need to incorporate idea of non-violence to resolve conflicts – non-violent resistance. We need to prioritise diplomacy over military confrontation, invest in conflict prevention and resolution, challenge the arms trade and work towards disarmament. Most importantly we must cultivate empathy and solidarity, with those who suffer the consequences of war and militarism.

In his book, *How Not To Go To War*, he has explored a radical idea of establishing Departments for Peace in governments around the world, with a Minister for Peace and Disarmament at the Cabinet level who can advocate alternative solutions to war and work for global demilitarisation. He will be responsible for promotion a Culture of Peace – a multicultural environment in which conflicts can be resolved in a respectful and peaceful way. Furthermore, he has also advocated that peace must become institutionalised via infrastructures for peace in the same way war has been institutionalised. He has also called for a Peace Industrial Complex sustained by the same combination of public and private enterprise that keeps the Military Industrial Complex going generation after generation, that way we can make the world less violent. As a species, all our efforts should be to tame and constrain the human capacity for violence and stop repression, slaughter and war.

In conclusion, preparing for war increases the chances of bringing it about: averting war requires global demilitarisation, including reduction and abolition of standing armies and their arsenals. This has been the thinking and prescription of many great thinkers on the subject such as Mahatma Gandhi, Immanuel Kant, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein and number of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates. We need to follow them to get rid of war and live in a peaceful world. We owe this to present and future generations.

Alfred de Zayas, Lawyer, Author of *The Human Rights Industry*, UN Human Rights and International Law Expert, said that it was revealing when participating in the meetings of the inter-governmental working group who stood for peace and who did not. United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, France, Germany etc. are a disgrace and if you see their voting record in the General Assembly of the Security Council of Human Rights as they stop all the progress. As being a US Citizen, I am against the Military Industrial Complex that rules the country whether you vote Republican or Democrat. You are going to get the same

comes into play. The Culture of Peace is an approach that seeks to transform societies by promoting values, attitudes and behaviours that foster harmony, justice, and non-violence. It involves education, dialogue and the active participation of all members of society in pursuit of peace.

To overcome the deadlock of permanent wars, United Nations have announced 2024 as Cultivating a Culture of Peace. To highlight the issue of never ending wars, Uniting for Peace is hosting a conference on **"Why We Fight Wars? Can a culture of Peace Revolution Work Towards Its End?"**

Distinguished speakers will explore different aspects of Culture of Peace to find solutions for ending the scourge of war which has brought untold suffering to mankind. The conference is scheduled for Thursday 14th November, 2024 at 18:00 to 20:00 (UK Time). All welcome to attend, please join us by:

<https://cultureofpeace2024.eventbrite.co.uk>

Vijay Mehta, UfP Chair

thing as both parties are for war. On a positive optimistic note, students at Harvard University and Columbia, Michigan and Berkley have been demonstrating for peace for a ceasefire in the war between Israelis and Palestinians and especially Israel's genocide in Gaza. Basically, it is the youth that is going to save the world. So the fact that so many demonstrations are happening are a witness to that.

United States by definition pretend they are the good guys and they have a mission to export democracy, freedom and human rights to the rest of the world. Which in other words mean oppression, intimidation and persecution of countries for the procurement of resources throughout the world backed by their military bases, CIA toppling regimes who do not agree to their demands.

One last word about NATO celebrating its 75th anniversary at Washington DC, which is a criminal organisation committing to the crimes of aggression and crimes against humanity in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya etc. in total impunity and if you apply the same criteria against the Nazi's, you will have to conclude that NATO is a criminal organisation that should have been disbanded long time ago. My hope is that Latin Americans, Africans and the Asians will demand for its dissolution.

Some of my heroes are Julian Assange, Edward Snowden and the youth in different parts of the world who aspire for peace for themselves, their families and their children. They do not want to see the national riches wasted or squandered in war. That was substantial part of my report contained in my book, *The Human Rights Industry*. In this book, building a just world order requires 25 principles of international order which very much strengthen the UN Charter and the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice.

Taylor O'Connor, Conflict Researcher, Education Specialist and Peace-Building Practitioner said that he has developed a framework, a tool for all kinds of peacebuilders and peace activists, and interactive kind of workshop, a resource which you can download. It will help make a difference as all peace activists have their own different ways to discover their peacebuilding superpower. As everyone has unique skills, abilities and talents to build peace and abolish war. So I started my organisation "Everyday Peace-building" which I call a typology of a peace builder. After my analysis, I have identified 57 types of peace builders or people that build peace in different ways. There are organisations which deal with military recruitment, arms trade, general peace and war issues.

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I have identified 12 different categories of peace and first of them is education. We have peace educators and peace building trainers who train peacebuilders. Within the category there are people who develop curriculum for teachers, system and education policies for academics for people who study peace and conflict resolution. Then there are history networks like anthropologists who research on peaceful societies. Then there are religious networks who often operate separately as interfaith peacebuilders, then there are women organisation who actively participate in peace building. Then there are artists (like Pablo Picasso), musicians and performers who are bringing communities together via music and art in theatre to bring social healing. Then there are tech geeks who use tech within the field of peacebuilding, a lot of emerging ways that people can use technology and digital approaches to build peace. Julian Assange is a good example of using technology to build peace.

Then there are environmental justice organisations which interconnect between environment and peace where you are highlighting effects of militarism and war on environment. Then there is a different approach of highlighting as exemplified by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in the form of Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. There are people who are mediators, dialogue facilitators for restorative justice for forgiveness and reconciliation. This is a whole category of conflict resolution or transformation of social justice and human rights. Then there are non-violent practitioners who often operate separately from peace activists, like pacifists and war abolishers, just to show how each of these categories whole bunch of very specific approaches this is a kind of area we are talking about in today's conference.

Then there is a category of demilitarisation advocates and disarmament mobilisation, non-violent action to resist war profiteers in arms trade, consciences war tax resisters. Then there is a whole movement in itself with a long history of de-nuclearisation of advocates which also divest from war machine and work for gun control and disarmament. Then there are specific organisations dealing with landmines, drones and working for anti-military bases campaign like World Beyond War. Then there are communities who repurpose weapons to turn them into garden tools, jewellery, chairs etc. Then there are organisation in the area of peace infrastructure policy or Department for Peace, structural level policy makers. Then there are professionals and social entrepreneurs dealing with culture of peace. They have their own approaches like people take that is directly related to their culture. There is an example of international network of museums for peace where they host or house hundreds of items dedicated to war abolition or atrocity prevention documenting genocide. Then there are organisations building peace history of peace movement, they create exhibits about peace and war abolition.

If you want to be a peace activist superpower then you can select any three of the above peace activity and apply your skills to build peace. I have a lot of people in my network in over 100 countries who use their unique talents identifying peace and social issues. I hope the discussion was useful and creative for building peace.

A vibrant Q/A session took place which included non-violent civil defence, the genius of Gandhi and Martin Luther King to organise marches and strikes for civil disobedience to succeed in their goals and many other ways to build a peaceful world.

Report by **Vijay Mehta**, UfP Chair, Author, *How Not To Go To War*"

Defence Correspondents: The Journalistic Wing of the UK Military

An analysis of broadcasters' online coverage of defence spending and strategy since Keir Starmer won the election shows that reporting is virtually 100% in line with the government's own priorities.

Critical voices, where they are included, are entirely from the right.

All 20 articles posted under 'defence' since 4 July – 14 from Sky, 5 from the BBC and 1 from ITV – faithfully reproduce the government's agenda.

These include its proposals for a defence review, its promise to increase military spending to 2.5% of GDP, its commitment to Ukraine and NATO (described on the BBC by foreign secretary David Lammy as 'part of Britain's DNA').

Its notion that there is a need to restore confidence in the military in order to face up to "rapidly increasing global threats" (as Sky quoted defence secretary John Healey) also features.

The only critical voices that appear are Conservative shadow ministers, hawkish think tank spokespeople and military 'experts', all speaking about how vital it is to boost defence spending, which currently stands at £64.6bn a year (2.32% of GDP).

Such spending is apparently necessary to confront what the army's chief Sir Roland Walker has described as an "axis of upheaval" composed of Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

Sky quoted Walker without comment on 23 July as saying that "there was an 'urgent need' for the British Army to rebuild its ability to deter future wars with credible fighting power".

Much of the coverage feels like a press release from the Ministry of Defence, which is hardly surprising given that MoD statements are liberally incorporated – without challenge – into news reports.

None of these pieces featured comments about the huge political and economic risks of increasing defence spending and a possible acceleration, not reduction, of instability.

This isn't just a matter of excluding voices from the left arguing for a completely different set of priorities. There isn't even room for mainstream economists like Paul Johnson from the Institute for Fiscal Studies, criticising the way recent governments have presented the proposed hike and making the obvious, if important, point that "[m]ore money for defence means less for everything else".

Remember that public service broadcasters are required to respect "due impartiality". This involves, as the BBC's editorial guidelines put it, "ensuring that the existence of a range of views is appropriately reflected".

True, this is formally applicable only to their broadcast coverage but when was the last time you heard someone on TV challenge the idea that we need to spend more on defence when our schools, hospitals and mental health services are suffering?

Instead, security minister Dan Jarvis went totally unchallenged on GMTV on 11 July selling Labour's defence review and further insisting that it is "absolutely fundamental that we stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies in NATO to support Ukraine".

The tone of recent coverage is, however, entirely in line with what has gone on before where news broadcasters have acted more as cheerleaders of the UK government's strategic defence priorities than impartial journalists.

For example, following a widely reported speech in January by then defence secretary Grant Shapps, committing the UK to spending 2.5% of GDP on defence, Sky News launched a series called "Prepared for War?" in April.

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Book Review – How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything Tales from the Pentagon

Author – Rosa Brooks

Published by – Simon and Schuster, 2017

Price - £15.99 (Amazon)

One ordinary day in 2010, I sat in an anonymous Pentagon conference room with a dozen other people, listening as briefers from Military Special Operation Command went over plans of an impending strike against a terrorist operative. Sending Special Operation Forces would be too risky, they said. Pentagon would therefore most likely strike the target using missiles via Unmanned Aerial Vehicle. They showed the face of the fugitive, the kind of person you might see on any street in Karachi, New York or London. They said he is involved in numerous terror plots and as soon as the target move in an isolated location, reducing the danger of an innocent bystander, we would strike. Everyone on the table nodded gravely. A day or two later I was home eating dinner with my 6-year-old daughter when the telephone rang and I was informed the young man whose photo I had studied now is dead. That night I dreamed about death: someone I loved murdered. I woke up panicky and sweaty. I knew already that I was part of a vast death dealing enterprise.

The author Rosa Brooks a former top Pentagon official and the daughter of anti-war protesters and human rights activists made the above observation of the day to day work at the Pentagon's command centres where military official everyday make life and death decisions and how USA wages war which are now of a permanent nature.

Clausewitz wrote, "War is simply the continuation of policy by other means." Today those other means have expanded beyond recognition – and at the same time, the increasing complexity of the world we live in have made American policy goals ever more confrontational and warlike. The book highlights many aspects of modern American way of war including technological, political and legal which overrides global rules and institutions. It makes the world more unstable leading to more violence and violations of basic human rights.

The book offers a brief tour through the strange world of the modern American military from Afghan prisons, drone cockpits, special operators to cyber warriors, to strategic communicators, killer robots and emerging science of nonlethal weapons.

The book looks at the war throughout history to define, contain and tame wars. It tells the stories of modern wars and institutions like United Nations arose from the carnage of 19th and 20th century conflicts. The post World War II era saw an explosion of international law making – human rights and humanitarian norms which were codified into treaties and given life through global courts and other institutions.

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Despite their statutory responsibility to inform the public, broadcasters have failed to highlight the fact that British troops are operating secretly in the Middle East and are protecting the Saudis' disastrous war on Yemen which, according to the BBC, has resulted in over 377,000 deaths (although this story obviously makes no mention of UK military involvement).

As always, an uncritical embrace of the UK's strategic geopolitical interests comes before any commitment to transparency and even to exploring the claim that increasing military spending might not be the best way of de-escalating rising tensions across the globe.

These new developments helped reduce interstate conflicts for some period of time. However, it has failed to place many constraints on violence and war both domestically and globally. And as a result, we have the ongoing wars in Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and now Ukraine, Gaza some part of the Middle East. Today it's ever so difficult to find peace, protect human rights and dignity and prevent abuses of power. In many ways the book is a personal story of someone who went from a childhood of antiwar

demonstrations and an early career in Human Rights to a job at the Pentagon and life as army wife. It seems she has lived many of the contradictions that brought US to the current state of permanent war.

The book shows, in many ways how USA is addicted to continuous wars for profit from the weapon industry, hegemony, enforced by its military power and extraction of resources from different countries to keep its industrial growth. If your number one export is military arsenal then winning or losing do not matter as long as you remain in a continuous state of warfare.

The book fails to explore the fact that you cannot shape a peaceful world order by permanent wars, spreading evil and suffering around the world.

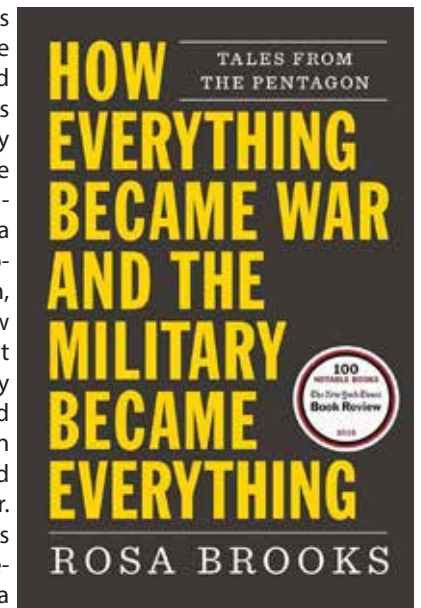
Review by **Vijay Mehta**

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed"

from The first sentence of the Preamble to UNESCO's Constitution

Declassified UK has run several stories examining this question and revealing the preferential treatment of favoured journalists, sanctions against those who ask tough questions, the close contacts between correspondents and defence and security-related officials and indeed the existence of a revolving door between journalism and military PR.

When it comes to reporting on defence and security, '[d]eference, as much as secrecy, remains the English disease', notes Norton-Taylor.



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The Importance of Empowering Women for Peace

Would the world be a different place if women had had more power and influence in the past? That is a question that has kept me busy thinking for years as an ambassador for peace and human rights for several organizations.

I strongly believe in a world that has peace and inclusion and abundance available for every human being. And although there are now powers that do not run the world as we would like them to do, I am convinced that there are also opposing forces at work. And I believe that it is truly possible that the world will once again look like it once did in advanced and intelligent civilizations such as the earthly paradise Eden and Hyperborea; the island where, according to Greek mythology, the sun always shines and where community spirit, and happiness reign.

Feminine energies symbolize gentleness, peace, fertility, inclusion, and the sharing of abundance. The well-known "Make Love, Not War" chimpanzees, the Bonobos, which of all primates is the most closely related to humans, have a matriarchal society. This means that women have a higher social status than men. Women are the drivers in the world of the Bonobos. They have a reputation for being gentle, kind, and peaceful. Bonobos are only found in the heart of the Congo Basin, the second largest rainforest on Earth. Because of their caring and harmonious society, Bonobos serve as a powerful symbol of peace and cooperation.

Peace begins at home and on the street and is about kindness and about communicating lovingly with each other. Feminine energy is necessary for humanity to achieve harmony, peace and balance on this earth. Today, the masculine energy still predominates and the powers of women worldwide are often forcibly restricted and suppressed. Universal Human Rights as enshrined in the UN Charter, and especially for women, must be protected much more strongly, because violence against women is one of the most systematic violations of human rights. It is time to put an end to this.

The empowerment of women towards an equal balance with men is the key for humanity to be able to evolve into the stage of eternal peace. Therefore, our feminine energies must now be released globally, as they are needed to rebalance, transform, heal and restore the earth. True transformation needs the fusion of proportionate masculine and feminine energies. We will then be able to understand how to begin to realign ourselves with the world.

Bertha von Suttner was one of the advocates of the first Hague Peace Conference, although as a woman she was not allowed to be present at this conference, she vigorously organized her own conference with women at the same time. By 1900, everyone knew who she was; an Austrian pacifist, a key figure in the Peace Movement that arose at a time of great tensions between the European states. She outlined her aversion to war in her novel 'Die waffen nieder' ('Put your arms down'). When I think of her, I see her walking around The Hague perkily but above all steadfastly during the Peace Conferences. She was not allowed to talk to all those men, but her presence was felt everywhere. She became one of the founders of the Peace Palace and encouraged Alfred Nobel to establish a Peace Prize. In 1905, she became the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1915 another Peace Conference was held in The Hague, for and organized by women. Just as I do, they admired Bertha. Bertha surrounded herself with statesmen and pacifists, and she discussed the role of women with Aletta Jacobs, who was the first woman to study at the University and who also worked tirelessly and effectively for women's rights, such as women's suffrage

Berta and Aletta; two special role models who have been of great significance for important efforts for peace and for women's rights today. In my roles for peace and human rights, I will also always be committed to this. Shouldn't we stand up together now? Wherever in the world where war is being waged and women's rights are being violated, let us bring women together and let's create a powerful unity of female voices.



Photo credit: Caecilia J. van Peski

Catharina van Staveren is an Executive Board Member and Ambassador to Uniting for Peace also Ambassador for Amsterdam as International City for Peace and an International Peace leader to the International Institute of Peace leaders in Pakistan. She also is Activity Coordinator for UNA NL and Communications Manager for the association for Academic Educated Women (VVAO). Note: Aletta Jacobs was also a VVAO member.

Note: The Hague is celebrating the 125th anniversary of the first conference in 1899, see <https://thehague.com/partners/en/news/125th-anniversary-the-city-peace-and-justice> and also <https://justpeacethehague.com/en/events> There is a whole range of events and activities spread throughout this year, and several are connected to the anniversary. Hopefully in 2025 there will be another Hague Peace Conference and his time with men and women included. Diplomat and writer Benjamin Duerr wrote a book about this wish called 'the Dream of the Hague, City of Peace and Justice.

Wars, Militarism and Arms Trade – What Peace Activists Can Do

Vijay Mehta – vijay@vmpeace.org

9th July 2024

Introduction:

Dear Friends, one of the most pressing issues of our time - is the prevalence of wars, militarism and thriving arms trade three scourges blighting our humanity. What can we do to contain and eventually abolish war and suffering of people?

Global security depends on us managing global and national risks. We as humans are one of the few species who kill their own including children and women in warfare. With the recent threat of using nuclear weapons by NATO and Russia, we may be heading for the extinction of our species.

War is an organised use of violence and a crime against humanity. After 9/11, the world was ushered in a unbounded war which became a permanent war from Afghanistan to Iraq and now Russia – Ukraine and Israel – Palestine in the Middle East, with the worst cycle of war and violence ever witnessed in Gaza. Moreover, the global war on terror by nature have no boundaries, no limits on who could be targeted and killed.

There is large scale decline of morality and Rule of Law as witnessed in the recent continuing attacks of Israeli on Palestinians at Gaza. All efforts by international institutions like the United Nations, International Criminal Court, International Court of Justice who have given judgement ordering Israel to stop killing innocent Palestinians have been of no avail. The problem lies that these institutions have no power of enforcement or implementation mechanism to stop warmongering of rogue states. That shows in the present world, like the primitive times, might is right principle is the only one prevailing and countries carry on warmongering for exploitation of resources and hegemony.

Today's leaders, with a very few exceptions, are gangsters driven by power, cronyism and corruption spreading fear all over the globe. No wonder wars in the Middle East, Ukraine and Sudan continue without any end in sight. Since its creation, in 1947 the CIA has toppled foreign regimes all over the world, perpetrating mass atrocities and genocide.

We live in a world where the powerful commit their evil deeds right out in the open. These include leaders, military, corporations and media who have a common agenda of continuing permanent wars. We need to challenge politicians and their right wing prejudices, mainstream neo-liberal media especially covering of the Israeli genocide against the Palestinians, the false cold war rhetoric of Ukraine's war with Russia or absurd claims that Taiwan requires US protection against mainland China. It seems the real journalism is dead and dissent is forbidden. Instead of international law, mafia law prevails.

Wars

Paul Vallery, French poet and essayist said, "War is a massacre of people who don't know each other for the profit of who know each other."

Wars, whether they be large-scale conflicts between nations or smaller, more localized battles within states, leave behind a trail of devastation that extends far beyond the battlefield. Families are torn apart, communities are shattered, and entire generations are robbed of their futures. The human cost of war is immeasurable, and its effects are felt long after the guns fall silent.

But what drives nations and individuals to engage in war? The answer is often multifaceted, rooted in a complex web of political, cultural, economic, and social factors. Historically, territorial disputes, ideological differences, and struggles for power have been common triggers for conflict. In recent years, issues such as resource scarcity, ethnic tensions, and religious extremism have also played significant roles in fuelling violence.

David Wine and Theresa Arriola write about the unholy alliance of military, weapon industry and congress which operate a circular economy, perpetuating cycle of legalised corruption and wars. They have analysed how the system works which is below:

"The basic system works like this: First, Congress takes exorbitant sums of money from us taxpayers every year and gives it to the Pentagon. Second, the Pentagon, at Congress's direction, turns huge chunks of that money over to weapons makers and other corporations via all too lucrative contracts, gifting them tens of billions of dollars in profits. Third, those contractors then use a portion of the profits to lobby Congress for yet more Pentagon contracts, which Congress is generally thrilled to provide, perpetuating a seemingly endless cycle."

Militarism

Samuel P Huntington described the purpose of military in his book, *The Soldier and the State*. "The mission of the Armed Forces is combat, to deter and defeat enemies of the United States. The military must be recruited, organised, trained and equipped for that purpose alone. A military force is fundamentally anti-humanitarian: its purpose is to kill people in the most efficient way possible."

However, perhaps one of the most insidious drivers of war is the perpetuation of militarism – the glorification and pursuit of military power. Militarism fosters a culture of aggression and competition, where diplomacy takes a backseat to the rhetoric of strength and dominance. It encourages nations to prioritize military solutions over peaceful negotiations, leading to an escalation of tensions and an increased likelihood of conflict.

Furthermore, militarism perpetuates a cycle of fear and insecurity, where nations feel compelled to continuously bolster their military capabilities in order to deter potential adversaries. This arms race mentality not only drains resources away from much-needed social programs, but it also exacerbate existing conflicts and creates new ones. As military budgets swell (over \$2 trillion), so too does the potential for armed confrontation, leading to a dangerous and unsustainable cycle of violence.

Selling weapons is the number one export of USA. The United States, unlike any other nation, maintains a massive network of foreign military bases around the world, over 900 bases in more than 90 countries and territories, stoking tensions and ready for combat including orchestrating overthrow and regime change in many countries.

Arms Trade

Compounding the problem of militarism is the thriving arms trade – an industry built on the manufacture and sale of weapons of war. The global arms trade is big business, with billions of dollars in arms sales occurring each year. Arms dealers and manufacturers profit handsomely from the sale of weapons, often at

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the expense of human lives and global security. At present, global military spending is over 2 trillion with USA, China, Russia, India, UK, EU and Saudi Arabia being the biggest spenders among them. Governments and banks fund armed companies who sell weapons as for example to Israel in serious violation of International Human Rights law.

According to the Small Arms Survey, it is estimated that one billion firearms are in global circulation as of 2017. Gun violence is on the rise with American citizens over armed with 400 million guns. According to gun violence archive, weaponry has killed 24,000 people this year alone.

The consequences of the arms trade are devastating. Weapons flow freely across borders, fuelling conflicts and perpetuating violence in regions already torn apart by war. From assault rifles to fighter jets, these instruments of death and destruction wreak havoc on civilian populations, leaving behind a trail of death and devastation. Moreover, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has fuelled the rise of non-state actors and terrorist organizations, further destabilizing already fragile regions in Africa and other parts of the world.

Solutions and Way Forward

So where do we go from here? I believe when any government or a ruler becomes destructive and destroy rights of its people, it becomes duty of citizens to stand up against the oppression. How do we break free from the cycle of continuing war, militarism, and arms proliferation? The answer lies in a multifaceted approach that addresses the root causes of conflict while promoting peace, diplomacy, and disarmament.

We need to incorporate ideas of non-violence in individuals and society at large, dedicated to the elimination of wars, arms race and poverty including the implementation of Human Rights. The way to resolve conflicts and achieving change through peaceful means – nonviolent resistance.

First and foremost, we must prioritize diplomacy over military confrontation. Diplomacy is the art of negotiation and compromise, and it offers a peaceful alternative to armed conflict. By engaging in dialogue and negotiation, nations can resolve their differences through peaceful means, avoiding the human and economic costs of war. Moreover, diplomacy fosters mutual understanding and cooperation, paving the way for lasting peace and stability.

In addition to diplomacy, we must invest in conflict prevention and resolution. This means addressing the root causes of conflict – such as poverty, inequality, and political instability – before they escalate into violence. By addressing these underlying issues, we can help to build more resilient societies that are less susceptible to the lure of war and militarism. This includes investing in education, healthcare, and economic development, as well as promoting good governance and respect for human rights.

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Indeed, all too often, it's not a specific strategy so much as ideological congruence between the defence establishment and defence journalists about what is understood to be protecting the "national interest".

That means that while the UK ramps up its support for Ukraine and continues to stand by Israel in defending it from possible attacks from Iran, British broadcast journalists are operating effectively as part of a coordinated effort to boost defence spending.

Furthermore, we must challenge the arms trade and work towards disarmament. It also means reducing military spending and reallocating resources towards development, education, and healthcare – investments that enhance security and promote human flourishing. But perhaps most importantly, we must cultivate empathy and solidarity. We must recognize the humanity in all people, regardless of nationality, religion, or ideology. We must stand in solidarity with those who suffer the consequences of war and militarism, and we must work together to build a world where peace and justice prevail.

The path to peace is an uphill struggle. But it is a path worth pursuing. By prioritizing diplomacy over military confrontation, investing in conflict prevention and resolution, challenging the arms trade, and cultivating empathy and solidarity, we can build a more peaceful and secure world for future generations. The choice is ours to make – let us choose wisely, for the sake of our children, our communities, and our shared future.

In my book, *How Not To Go To War*, I have explored a radical idea of establishing Departments for Peace in governments around the world, with a Minister for Peace and Disarmament at the Cabinet level who can advocate alternative solutions to war and work for global demilitarisation. He will be responsible for promotion a Culture of Peace – a multicultural environment in which conflicts can be resolved in a respectful and peaceful way. Furthermore, I have also advocated that peace must become institutionalised via infrastructures for peace in the same way war has been institutionalised. I have also called for a Peace Industrial Complex sustained by the same combination of public and private enterprise that keeps the Military Industrial Complex going generation after generation, that way we can make the world less violent. As a species, all our efforts should be to tame and constrain the human capacity for violence and stop repression, slaughter and war.

In conclusion, preparing for war increases the chances of bringing it about: averting war requires global demilitarisation, including reduction and abolition of standing armies and their arsenals. This has been the thinking and prescription of many great thinkers of the subject such as Mahatma Gandhi, Immanuel Kant, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein and number of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates. We need to follow them to get rid of war and live in a peaceful world. We owe this to present and future generations.

Vijay Mehta

World Peace Prayer

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth;
lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust;
lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.
from Hindu Upanishad

Their silence on stories such as the training of Israeli troops inside the UK or the number of UK military flights from Cyprus to Israel is just as troubling as their more visible and uncritical amplification of successive UK governments' defence priorities. This isn't journalism but public relations.

*This article was originally published on Transcend Media Service (TMS). Written by **Des Freedman**, Professor of Media & Communications at Goldsmiths, University of London*

📅 Thursday, 14 November, 2024

🕒 18:00 - 20:00

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Vijay Mehta, Chair, Uniting for Peace, Author, *How Not To Go To War*

David Adams, Former UNESCO Director, Unit for the International Year for the Culture of Peace, Coordinator, The Culture of Peace News Network

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