

Ending Wars and Achieving Peace – A Dream or a Reality

Making war history

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Introduction

Thank you Holly, Donald Prentice, and UNYSA, St Andrews for providing me an opportunity to speak today on the important issue of 'Ending Wars and Achieving Peace.' Shanti and myself were here, along with Donald, March of this year, when I spoke on 'How effective is the UN in Peacekeeping and mediating Conflict?' So it's nice to be back and see many familiar faces.

The past century was the most lethal in human history. There were 250 wars, including two world wars and a Cold War, with more dead than in all previous wars of the past two thousands years. Over six million more have died even after the cold war ended, when things should have changed for the better. This situation must not continue into the new century.

At present there are over 30 wars across the globe. The deaths relating to war in Iraq is reaching 100,000 and the cost of the war to the United States and its allies is staggering hundreds of billions of dollars. According to the recently released by the MOD (Ministry of Defence), the cost to the UK alone is over 15 billion pounds.

Organisations who help those affected by the war throughout the World (like UNICEF, Oxfam, ICRC) estimate that 9 out of 10 deaths due to war are civilians, half of these children - that's 9 civilians to every 1 soldier - very different from early last century when civilians accounted for 20% of war deaths.

It is an outrage that the 20th century saw more people killed in wars than all previously recorded time had. An outrage that now witnesses the vast majority of those killed in war are civilians, indeed, women and children. An outrage that poverty reduction, environmental degradation, AIDS, terrorism and WMD's cry out to be addressed, but instead resources are wasted into war and militarism. The ever-increasing lethality of weapons in this century is such that women and children and other living things cannot afford war any more. Now is the time to turn back.

All these deaths with the increased destructive power of today's weapons, is leading us mainly to insist that we work much harder at alternatives to war. To do that we will examine the root causes of war, reasons to avoid war, deligitimisation of war, peace education and dismantling the culture of war. We can turn the situation from war-mongering to a society living for peace, rule of law and respect for human rights. We will also discuss the case study of Northern Ireland. How the prolonged war between sworn enemies, the IRA and the Unionists, came to result in the Good Friday Agreement which led to peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland. How this example can be used as a template for resolving other conflicts around the world.

Root causes of war

The **culture of violence** pervades our society, glorifying war rather than educating for peace, non-violence, and international cooperation.

The continued **military spending** (USD \$1.3 trillion per annum) in our society perpetuates a culture of violence and hostilities. **Small arms and light weapons** (800 million in circulation) both start and prolong conflicts, causing millions of deaths.

Production of new mini nukes, buster bunker bombs and stockpile of **existing 30,000 nuclear warheads**, along with proliferation of nuclear and biological information and technology can result in terrorism, indiscriminate mass killing and destruction.

Economic globalisation has marginalised broad sections of the world's population, further widening the gap between rich and poor. The **use of environmental resources** is neither sustainable nor un-equitable. The world's dominant consumers are overwhelmingly concentrated among the well off, but the environmental damage from it falls most severely on the poor, over consumption of the earth's resources can result in ecological mayhem.

Colonialism and neo-colonialism is evident in indigenous and un-represented people who are suffering from the suppression of their right to self-determination, ethnic and cultural genocide, the violation of their cultural, language and religious freedoms, and the militarisation and nuclearisation of their lives, lands and waters.

Ethnic, religious and racial intolerance, and nationalism are among the principal sources of modern armed conflict. The costs of the **gender injustice and machismo** that still pervades most societies are high for men whose choices are limited by this standard, and for women who experience continual violence both in war and in peace.

Lack of protection and respect for children & youth continue to be exploited and victimized, particularly in violent conflict situations where harming children has become not only a consequence, but frequently a strategy of war.

The **lack of democracy and just global governance** at all levels of society are causing conflicts and replacing the rule of law with the rule of force. It is commonly assumed that **violence and warfare are inherent in human nature**.

Violence in local communities paves the way for conflicts at national and international levels. **Religions** have been a cause of war.

The **role of media** in misrepresenting the facts and flaring conflicts and hostilities.

Reasons to avoid war

There are many good reasons to avoid war - in this context used to include extensive conflicts involving physical violence within countries as well as those between countries, whether or not war has been officially declared.

Humanitarian grounds

Civilians, who may have little interest or involvement in the dispute, suffer when conflicts, whether between countries, or between communities within a country, escalate into physical violence and war. They suffer both directly from the violence and indirectly from the disruption to normal life, food supplies, services and physical and social infrastructure.

Economic grounds

War is expensive. The costs of developing increasingly high technology weaponry are escalating. Military spending diverts resources away from combating pollution, environmental destruction and social welfare. By contrast, conflict resolution can offer much better value for money.

Environmental grounds

War can be devastating to the environment, destroying vegetation and habitats, causing pollution and scattering debris, sometimes lethal, including landmines and depleted uranium.

Violent conflict can be prevented

Opportunities to avoid the human suffering and economic costs of war have been missed. There has been a failure to defuse potentially violent situations. On many occasions in the past, war or violent conflict could perhaps have been avoided if more effort and resources had been channeled into tackling the situation and resolving matters at an early stage. There are examples where this has been done successfully but in many others nothing has been done until too late, or what was done was under-resourced and insufficient.

Considerable expertise exists

There are many organisations and individuals with a great deal of expertise in preventing and resolving conflict in a non-violent way and in reconciliation work. Some have a strongly pacifist philosophy but most accept that a diverse range of skills, expertise and activities is

needed to transform violent conflict, rebuild civil society and establish real security. The armed forces have expertise and a role in some situation.

Global Public Opinion

Recent surge in global public opinion has witnessed the power of the people to resist and overcome present oppression as well as age-old prejudices of gender against gender, race against race, religion against religion, and ethnic group against ethnic group.

Desire for Decent Living

The desire for a decent living in recent years have witnessed an explosion of scientific and technical knowledge which make possible a decent life for all who inhabit this planet, the formulation of a set of universal rights which, if taken seriously, would translate that possibility into reality, and the infancy of a system of global governance which, if allowed to grow, could guide this transition.

Delegitimation of war

War must be rejected as a legitimate instrument to resolve disputes. The global community is increasingly concerned about the escalation of use of force and about the legitimization of war. Not only was a high percentage of civil society opposed to the latest US led invasion of Iraq, but also the vast majority of member states of the UN General Assembly.

What makes this voice unique is that it reflects a larger, far more fundamental concern than the apparent illegality of this specific military intervention. The multiplicity of demonstrators across ethnic and country borders, opposition from member states, and the surge in peace activism represent a general opposition to resort to the means of war for solving interstate conflict. When the anti-war concerns of the international community were ignored, the sentiment that under no circumstances should war be legal crystallised. There was increasing concern that even if the UN Security Council had endorsed the military invasion of Iraq, the invasion still would not be legitimate.

This concern has also created a renewed interest in the efficiency of existing structures and the rationale behind specific international norms of conduct, in the need to respect Chapter VI of the UN Charter, in a greater role for the International Court of Justice and in respect for the rule of international law.

We are at a crossroads: The redefinition of 'self-defence' under Article 51 of the UN Charter to legitimise war in Afghanistan and subsequent unilateral assertions of a right of pre-emptive/preventive attack have created the increased potential of escalating war. The stage is set for states to use such policies to legitimize military interventions. Pre-emptive aggression could be the future. Or, efforts of citizens and member states of the UN could, through the UN, be directed toward delegitimising the cause of suffering and destruction.

The notion that war is legitimate is sustained by the insistence of states that they must have substantial levels of military forces and weapons. The world is in especially grave peril when the development of nuclear weapons continues to be a sinister focus of military industries. An estimated \$8 trillion has been spent on nuclear weapons since 1945. There are still around 30,000 nuclear weapons -- equivalent to about 300,000 Hiroshima bombs. This is despite the undertaking in 2000 by the nuclear weapons member states in the review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. And, in spite of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice handed down in July 1996 that the use or threat to use nuclear weapons is contrary to international humanitarian law. The risk of nuclear catastrophe even, omnicide by accident or intent, hangs over us all.

As well, the NPT obliges all its members to pursue general and complete disarmament. Instead, perniciously lethal weaponry continues to seriously flout the NPT and raises grave questions about violations of the Geneva Protocol and the need to expand the category of prohibited weapons.

The long-term disastrous environmental, health and social consequences of war and the preparation for war are also the result of the notion that war is legitimate. Recent studies have shown that armed forces are the single largest polluter on earth and that, often, destruction of the environment has been consciously used as a method of warfare in contravention of the convention related to the prevention of the modification of the environment in conflict.

The costs of war cannot be addressed through reconstruction projects. Hidden costs *to civilians as well as to military personnel* include the effects of destroying societal relationships, the disintegration of the social fabric, trauma, humiliation, confusion and destitution, i.e. the emotional and psychological chaos in the physical chaos instigated by warfare. The logical conclusion to be drawn is that humanity simply cannot afford militarism and war.

The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century, which emerged from a civil society conference of 10,000 people of all ages from many countries, calls for the abolition of war. (Ref A/54/98)

UN Vision of Disarmament and ending war

The seeds for delegitimising war have been planted through the UN Charter and through over 50 years growth of UN instruments. For years, member states have incurred obligations under the Charter, treaties, conventions, and covenants, made commitments under conference action plans, and created expectations through UN General Assembly resolutions that would, if implemented and enforced, give substance to the delegitimation of war, as do numerous statements by civil society.

For example:

- The fundamental purpose of the UN Charter is to prevent the scourge of war. Chapter VI of the Charter provides for means to prevent war, including the application of Article 27.3 -- the requirement for parties to a conflict to abstain in the vote, and the requirement under Article 37 to take potential situations of armed conflict to the International Court of Justice.
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peoples to Peace asserts that peace is a right of all peoples, convinced that life without war, peace with justice, and not just the absence of war serve as the primary international prerequisite for the material well-being, development and progress of countries, and for the full implementation of the rights and fundamental human freedoms. (Resolution 39/12 November 1984)
- Global norms for disarmament are vital to the sustainable development, quality of life, and ultimately the survival of this planet. The need for such norms arises directly from the legacy of the last century of wars and preparations for wars. The costs of such conflicts have been extraordinary and have included the loss of untold millions of innocent civilians. We are convinced that the UN is the place to forge multilateral approaches to alleviate such threats. We also believe this effort requires a focal point within the UN system to integrate these activities and to meet the expectations of Member States

Education for a Culture of Peace

"The Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World" - Given the damage to children caused by violence and armed conflict, this is how the United Nations has designated the years 2001-2010 which open the 21st century. The UN defines a culture of peace as: "all the values, attitudes and forms of behavior that reflect respect for life, for human dignity and for all human rights, the rejection of violence in all its forms, and commitment to the principles of freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance and understanding between people". Every country has been asked to ensure that children receive an education that enables them

"to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and tolerance". These are aspirations to which governments readily pay lip service, but are they prepared for the consequences? The kind of education which might really enable young people to turn around the global culture of violence would also be very challenging to the status quo, and to the kind of values underpinning modern society. So what would a radical approach to peace education involve?

The Peace Education Network of organisations in this field has drawn up some aims of peace education:

* To understand the nature and origins of violence and its effects on both victim and perpetrator.

* To create frameworks for achieving peaceful, creative societies

* To sharpen awareness about the existence of unpeaceful relationships between people and within and between nations

* To investigate the causes of conflicts and violence embedded within perceptions, values and attitudes of individuals as well as within social and political structures of society

* To encourage the search for alternative or possible nonviolent skills

* To equip children and adults with personal conflict resolution skills. Of course peace education is not just for the young. Culture is something that is passed down and learned from one generation to the next. All of us need to acquire the information and skills which will enable us to create and pass on a culture of peace.

As the world begins a new millennium, a **global yearning for peace** clearly shows that the human spirit remains undiminished in the face of multiple conflicts and challenges steeped in all forms of violence and peacelessness. Another long-standing expression of educating and acting for a more peaceful planet is anchored in the concept of human rights. Peace surely also means that human rights, dignities and freedoms inherent in all human beings be respected and promoted.

In sum, it is advocated here that a holistic paradigm of peace education is meaningfully built on the insights, analysis, practices and role-models that can be drawn from the diverse and increasingly convergent or at least consensus-building fields or movements of local, national and global transformation. A conception of the goals and purposes of peace education that is underpinned by the preferential option of "unity in diversity" may therefore be stated as follows;

Recognising the interrelatedness, interconnectedness of the concept of peace, peace education seeks through appropriate educational processes to:

- promote a critical understanding of the root causes of conflicts, violence and peacelessness in the world across the full diversity of issues and problems and from macro (national, regional, international, global) to micro (local, interpersonal, personal) levels of life;
- and simultaneously develop an empowered commitment to values, attitudes and skills for translating that understanding into individual and societal action to transform selves, families, communities, institutions, nations and world from a culture of war, violence and peacelessness to a culture of peace and active nonviolence.

Dismantling the culture of war

In the post-Cold War era, where a "peace dividend" was supposedly to be reaped from the reduction in superpower tensions and arms race, nevertheless tragic symptoms of a culture of war abound yielding untold suffering, hardships, pain and death . Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, Chechnya, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Liberia, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland, Peru, Columbia, and again Cambodia, are but some grim reminders of the willingness and ease by which nations and especially groups within nations resort to armed violence to settle conflicts and disputes.

A recent UN Human Development Report noted, such predominantly internally-based armed conflicts (civil wars, guerrilla wars, separatist movements, ethnic violence over government or territory) have caused the deaths of one million people in the past five years and of some 2 million children in the past decade, and hundreds of millions of displaced peoples (46 million in 1995, including 16 million refugees). Furthermore, 110 million deadly landmines remain undetonated in 68 countries. Slowly, some societies are also painfully recovering from the ravages of internal wars and armed conflicts settled through negotiation and political settlement, although the troubled Middle East peace process illustrates the difficulties of attaining sustainable peace.

Building a culture of peace means that we begin educating our young children on personal, local, national and international issues of conflict and violence. As Gandhi said *'If we are to teach real peace in the world, we shall have to begin with children.'* All too often, education and dialogue is reserved for undergraduate, post-graduate and professional circles, ignoring the vast resource of youthful enthusiasm and exploration which high school-aged students can provide. The institutions of government, military, and popular media wage educational campaigns to inundate young people's lives with violent images and wasteful propaganda. If a culture of peace is what we want to provide for the future generations, then we must begin to explicitly teach peace. This may mean restructuring the academic curriculum to make learning at school more permanent rather than seasonal, and it may mean challenging our system of "accountability" where we are teaching our kids to test rather than teaching them to learn and think.

Furthermore, kids learn by example. So if we want them to learn nonviolence and healthy conflict management, we as a nation must become more vigilant in creating compassionate policies for education, healthcare, foreign countries, immigration, nuclear energy and weapons of mass destruction. Students should know where their priorities are, they should track where they spend their money. Students should also see where their governments' priorities are when they learn of the disparity between the defense budget and the education budget.

Lessons from the Northern Ireland Peace Process

Let us see if we can connect what we have just said with the Irish Peace Process. I am taking material from a recent lecture by Dr. Harold Good and Father Alec Reid, delivered at the annual Gandhi Foundation. After thirty and more years of violence, the people of Ireland, North and South, Nationalist and Unionist, Catholic and Protestant, were weary of war. None more so than the victims and survivors of the conflict who would resonate with the words of Gandhi when he spoke of the awfulness and the futility of violence.

For Republicans, with their long history, the painful reality was that their political aspiration would not and could not be achieved through a never-ending armed and bloody struggle. Why does it take so long to learn from the lessons of history? But within those realities were other realities. None of which came easily to a people entrenched in history and engulfed in violence. For Unionists it was the acceptance of the right of Nationalists to equal rights of citizenship as well as their legitimate political aspiration. The ultimate reality was that this part of Ireland was home to people of both traditions, Nationalist and Unionist, Catholic and Protestant, who must finally find a way to live together.

IF the acceptance of REALITY is the first step in the search for peace . . . the second is the need for DIALOGUE. They continued that dialogue in Protestant parsonages and Catholic monasteries; in private homes and grass-roots movements where people of goodwill came together to share their fears and their frustration. The time had come for dialogue to include historic enemies. Yitzhak Rabin, former Prime Minister of Israel, made relentless efforts to make peace with Palestine. During the peace talks, he was pictured shaking the hand of his arch enemy, Yassar Arafat. Not many would understand Gandhi's approach to dialogue with an opponent. Gandhi's word for this was "SATYAGRAHA" (force of truth). There were three levels at which people talked, which can be described as

1. Back-stage
2. Off-stage
3. On-stage

Firstly, BACK STAGE. Opportunities for people from all sides of this conflict to hear one another, some for the very first time. As it had to be an HONEST dialogue it was not always an easy dialogue. For honest dialogue there must be mutual trust... a trust which is sacred and must never be betrayed.

For Father Alec Reid there was the remarkable back-stage dialogue which led to the ground-breaking Hume-Adams talks resulting in the IRA cease-fire of 1994. Father Alec was one who did the back stage dialogue. Having accepted reality, both sides knew that the only way out of this conflict would be through negotiation and dialogue. This is but one example of "off stage" dialogue where issues and potential are explored in private before arriving on the public stage.

The second level of dialogue is that which we describe as "OFF-STAGE"

For those involved this was difficult, potentially politically dangerous and full of risk, for there is no definite outcome. In the 1980s an IRA re-armed by Libya intensified its violent campaign and the state was accused of "shoot to kill". There seemed to be no end to the "Long War". But behind those violent images was a secret 'backchannel' involving the British Security Services, a facilitator, Derry businessman Brendan Duddy, and Martin McGuinness. Having accepted reality, both sides knew that the only way out of this conflict would be through negotiation and dialogue. This is but one example of "off stage" dialogue where issues and potential are explored in private before arriving on the public stage.

The third level of dialogue we describe as "ON STAGE".

We remember most by name, if not in detail. The 'Anglo-Irish Agreement'; the 'Sunningdale Agreement'; the 'Downing Street Declaration'. An important lesson from our history is that to have any chance of success, dialogue must be inclusive. Father Alec's simple but profoundly important image is of a 'table' around which all parties to a conflict are invited to sit, as equals. This was the basis of the talks chaired by Senator George Mitchell which led to the Good Friday Agreement. While Ian Paisley's party and lesser known Bob McCartney chose to leave the table when Sinn Fein took their seats, their seats were kept for them while others sat through long days and nights until they arrived at agreement.

To achieve consensus, there is an inevitable need for COMPROMISE.

Those who would argue that 'compromise' is a doubtful if not 'dirty' word will know that no marriage or any meaningful relationship would survive without it! It is not without significance that the words 'compromise' and 'accommodation' share a common root. Therefore compromise, like accommodation, is about making space for one another.

In the Good Friday Agreement there was much that was mutually acceptable to all of the parties. "Don't speak or think of this as justice" said Brian. In addition to 'reality'; 'dialogue'; 'consensus' and 'compromise', every peace process needs visible 'SIGNS AND SYMBOLS'. This was what lay behind the demand of Unionists, and of both governments, for the complete de-commissioning of the weapons of the IRA. For Unionists, they would not contemplate sharing government with Republicans until there was evidence of 'deeds not words'.

It speaks highly of the patience of Gen. John de Chastelain and his colleagues on the International Commission on De-commissioning that they were able to agree a process with the leadership of the IRA whereby their weapons would be put permanently 'beyond use' and 'beyond reach.' Father Alec and Harold Good were entrusted with that task. Other visible confidence-building measures included the implementation of the Patten Report on policing. We could go on to speak of the need for 'HOPE'. Without that dogged and at times stubborn quality of hope, every peace process would fall victim to despair.

Many years ago, during the darkest days and nights of our troubles, a local newspaper invited children to write of their hopes for Northern Ireland. One little girl who wrote, *'I want to grow up in a Northern Ireland where you can look at a sunset without wondering what are they bombing tonight.'*

Today's children see sunsets instead of bombs. As a community they have faced and accepted realities; engaged in dialogue; achieved consensus; accepted compromise and witnessed the signs and symbols of peace. Rolf Meyer, former Minister for Security in the discredited Apartheid Government of South Africa, who later became the chief negotiator in a peace process with the African National Congress, outlined ten steps in the peace process. Number 9 was the need for a 'CHANGE OF MIND'. Number 10 was the need for 'A CHANGE OF HEART.'

As we observed the relationship between First Minister Ian Paisley, the man who consistently said "No" and "Never", and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, self-confessed commander of the IRA, there was clearly something more than a change of mind! Churches must accept responsibility for their part in Northern Ireland's tragic history. But if they were part of the problem, they must now be part of the solution.

Like Gandhi, we too are on an unfinished journey. None must be left behind, not least those victims on every side who have not yet found healing. Like Gandhi we too have our deep disappointments as we see what he called "wasted opportunity through the scramble for power and diversion of political energy"

But from the lessons of history, this is a journey from which we dare not turn back, not least for the sake of the child who wrote that letter and her children and theirs. So thank you for taking time to try and understand us, and please be patient with us as we continue our journey and share our story.

Conclusion

It is a time for a dose of practical optimism. Social change is always at first dismissed as impossible. The abolition of the slave trade, the creation of an old age pension, votes for women, were all in their turn described as utopian. The realistic optimist points to history. The UK is dotted with castles - once military fortresses but now tourist attractions. Some one-time enemies, for instance Germany and France, or Norway and Sweden, have so changed their political and economic relationships that war between them is simply unthinkable.

Consigning war to history means taking practical steps to build a culture of peace, to reject "peace" resting on threats of massive retaliation, to end the arms trade, source of so much destruction and so much debt, to create a public conviction that killing people is a barbaric way of resolving conflict.

For such changes to come about we need to build a global society in which the rule of law is paramount. There has been some progress in that direction. We even have a working International Criminal Court, though its jurisdiction is not accepted by the remaining superpower. In Interpol we have the start of an international police force. Changing attitudes is not easy but it does happen. The war nostalgia of the entertainment media can be redirected. The anti-poverty agencies can make practical and financial links with the peace movements. Remembrance Sunday can honour the dead in the one way that they would want to be honoured, by working towards the abolition of war itself. War must cease to be an admissible human institution. Let us reaffirm our faith in the **Preamble to the UN Charter** and work towards its implementation.

We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice

and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

And for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

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.

Thank you for listening.

Some of the materials in the discussion paper have been taken from the following sources:

Movement for the Abolition of War	www.abolishwar.org
Quaker Peace and Social Witness	www.quaker.org.uk
Peace Pledge Union	www.ppu.org.uk
Global Action to prevent war	www.globalactionpw.org
Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict	www.gppac.net
UN's Department for Disarmament Affairs	www.disarmament.un.org
VM Centre for Peace	www.vmpeace.org

2008 Annual Remembrance Day Lecture, Kathy Galloway, 'Hope in the time of war: A religious perspective on peacemaking.' 9 November 2008

2008 Peace Award Acceptance Speech & Annual Lecture, Dr. Harold Good, Gandhi Foundation.

The full version of this speech can be downloaded from:

- VM Centre for Peace www.vmpeace.org
- Action for UN Renewal www.action-for-un-renewal.org.uk

Vijay Mehta is an author and global activist for peace, development, human rights and the environment. Some of his notable books are *The Fortune Forum Summit: For a Sustainable Future*, *Arms No More*, and *The United Nations and Its Future in the 21st Century*. He is president of VM Centre for Peace (www.vmpeace.org), co-founder of Fortune Forum Charity, Chair of Action for UN Renewal, and co-Chair of World Disarmament Campaign.

He along with his daughter Renu Mehta founder of Fortune Forum charity (www.fortuneforum.org) held two summits in London in 2006 and 2007. The summits raised over a million pounds for charity and attracted a worldwide audience of 1.3 billion people (one fifth of humanity) including print and media coverage. The keynote speakers for the first and second summit were Bill Clinton, former US President and Al Gore, former US vice-President, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize 2007.

Vijay Mehta has appeared in various TV programmes including BBC World, Press TV, Aftak-24 hour Indian news channel, and Think Peace documentary, Canada, among others. The 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.

He has written a book, called 'Climate Change 365,' which will be soon available to download free of charge in electronic form from the website www.climatechange365.eu.