

# UNITING for PEACE

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Report of 14 November 2024 Annual Conference

Why We Fight Wars?

Can a Culture of Peace Revolution Work Towards its End?

**Rita Payne**, the chair of the meeting and a distinguished journalist, extended gratitude to the organisers and participants while emphasising the importance of hope and collective action. She mentioned the challenges faced by international organisations like the United Nations in maintaining peace, noting their dependency on the political will of member states. Rita introduced the speakers and highlighted the importance of exploring not just the causes of conflict but also actionable solutions and examples of success in peacebuilding.

**Vijay Mehta**, Chair of Uniting for Peace and Author of *How Not To Go To War*, set the stage of the conference by emphasising the importance of peace in a world increasingly torn by war, conflict, and fragmentation. He highlighted the ongoing crises in regions such as Ukraine, the Middle East, and North Africa, noting their devastating toll on humanity and the global economy. Vijay Mehta also raised the provocative question of why, despite progress in other fields, humanity continues to engage in wars that cause senseless suffering. He advocated for rejuvenating the peace movement through a "culture of peace revolution" and underscored the need for systemic changes, including global disarmament and cultural shifts in media and society.

**David Adams**, a former UNESCO Director of Culture of Peace, delved into the transformative potential of fostering a culture of peace at individual, national, and global levels. He shared past successes, including UNESCO-led initiatives in conflict-torn countries like Mozambique and El Salvador. However, he lamented the lack of sustained global leadership in promoting peace and highlights the need for structural changes, such as empowering non-state actors like city leaders to lead peacebuilding efforts. Adams concluded by suggesting a revival of grassroots initiatives like the Manifesto 2000 to mobilise individuals for peace.

**John Gittings**, a former Guardian journalist, reflected on the geopolitical challenges of the current era, drawing parallels with the dystopian world depicted in George Orwell's 1984. He described the competing power blocs of the United States, Russia, and China, noting their shifting alliances and lack of morality in international politics. However, Gittings contrasted this bleak scenario with the potential of the broader global community, including the UN General Assembly, non-aligned



countries, and civil society organisations. He stressed the importance of amplifying global voices for peace and addressing existential risks such as nuclear annihilation and climate change.

**Rivera Sun**, editor of *Nonviolence News* and an author, shared inspiring stories of nonviolent resistance from around the world. She highlighted the effectiveness of nonviolent action in preventing wars, ending conflicts, and addressing injustices. Sun cites examples such as the civil rights movement, the Liberian women's peace movement, and nonviolent resistance during World War II to demonstrate the potential of nonviolent methods. She emphasised the need for education, capacity building, and institutional support to strengthen nonviolent strategies globally.

**Ken Butigan**, a lecturer and peace activist, built on the earlier discussions by emphasising the transformative power of nonviolence. Drawing from his own experiences in campaigns against U.S. interventions in Central America and nuclear testing, he illustrated how collective action can influence even powerful governments. Butigan calls for a concerted effort to build a global movement for peace, rooted in the principles of nonviolence and sustained by the belief in the power of ordinary people to effect change.

After Ken Butigan's insightful remarks, the conference transitioned into its concluding phase. Vijay Mehta returned to summarise the key discussions and reflect on the ideas presented by the speakers. He acknowledged the diverse perspectives shared throughout the event, highlighting the recurring emphasis on the transformative potential of nonviolence, grassroots

*Continue to page 2*

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**

14 CAVELL STREET, LONDON E1 2HP • Tel: 0207-791-1717

144/1 Whitehouse Loan, EDINBURGH EH9 2AN • Tel: 0131-446-9545



[www.unitingforpeace.com](http://www.unitingforpeace.com) | [info@unitingforpeace.com](mailto:info@unitingforpeace.com) | [www.facebook.com/unitingforpeace](https://www.facebook.com/unitingforpeace)

# Editorial

## Bringing Peace to a War-Torn World

From devastating civil wars to international disputes, millions suffer displacement, poverty, and despair. These wars, fuelled by deep-seated political, ethnic, and ideological divides, drain global resources and humanity's collective potential. US-NATO approach implementing death destruction and senseless killing as a deterrent has failed miserably. The growing risk of a major armed conflict between countries is also biggest risk to global economy.

Addressing the root causes of conflicts. Poverty, inequality, and lack of education often act as breeding grounds for unrest. Redirecting the colossal sums spent on armaments toward creating jobs, improving healthcare, and building robust education systems can transform societies. When people have access to basic rights and opportunities, the allure of conflict diminishes.

Governments must prioritise dialogue over aggression and

recognise that no nation gains from prolonged war. Mediation efforts by neutral parties, supported by international organisations like the United Nations, can play a pivotal role in resolving disputes.

United Nations, Civil society, grassroots movements, advocacy for human rights, and intercultural dialogues can heal divisions between communities.

The cost of war is too high, not just in financial terms but in the immeasurable loss of human lives and potential. To overcome the deadlock of permanent wars, Uniting for Peace is hosting a conference scheduled for Thursday 24 April 2025 at 18:00 – 20:00 (UK Time) where distinguished speakers will explore to find solutions for ending the scourge of war which has brought untold suffering to mankind. All welcome to attend, by visiting this link: <https://ufpspringconference2025.eventbrite.co.uk>

Vijay Mehta, UfP Chair

## Military Expenditures As A Percentage of GDP: A 100% Indefensible and Stupid Idea - that everybody seems to love By Jan Oberg

**Politicians, scholars and the media unthinkingly promote this nonsense, latest President Trump at Davos. Western rational thinking is out; market thinking, hysteria, and emotionalism are in.**

**With intellectual and moral disarmament, the West has become its own worst enemy. It is dangerous. It's self-destructive.**

For years, NATO's capacity goal has been for all its members to spend 2% of their GDP on the military. To many, this would be a ceiling, but according to ex-SG Jens Stoltenberg, from the Madrid Summit in 2022 onwards, it was the floor.

This goal is a splendid indicator of the frighteningly low intellectual level on which the alliance and the Western world, in general, operate today - intellectual and moral disarmament coupled with militarist re-armament.

Why?

A defence budget shall be determined by a serious, multi-dimensional and future-oriented analysis based on a series of more or less likely scenarios: What are we challenged by the next x number of years?

*Continue from page 1*

movements, and institutional reforms to foster a culture of peace.

**Vijay Mehta** reiterated the urgent need for systemic changes to address the root causes of conflict, such as economic inequality, political corruption, and the global arms trade. He emphasised the importance of disarmament, education, and proactive mediation by global and regional organisations. Reflecting on the examples provided by the speakers, Vijay Mehta underscored that achieving peace requires a combination of individual commitment, community-level action, and international cooperation.

Next follows a matching of probability and capacity: Threats that are too big for a country's capacity to do something about – like being hit by nuclear weapons – or threats that are too unlikely are separated and dropped. So are threats/challenges that are too small to worry about.



Then the threat analysis is left with credible, probable future threats within a resource spectrum that the country in question can do something about. It's based on such a detailed analysis that a government presents its threat analysis and seeks to allocate, or re-allocate, its resources to achieve optimal *security given its resources*.

This is the way it was done up until the end of the First Cold War. One could agree or disagree with various governments' threat analyses and priorities, but they were published in studies of hundreds of pages, were put out for public debate and then - as long as the West practised democracy - decisions were made.

*Continue to page 7*

In his closing remarks, he expressed hope for the future, emphasising that peace is not an unattainable ideal but a realistic goal if humanity collectively chooses to prioritise it. He calls on participants to take the insights gained from the conference back to their communities and actively work towards building a more equitable and peaceful world.

The event concluded with a vibrant Q/A session and a note of gratitude from the organisers to the speakers and participants. They reaffirmed their commitment to continuing dialogues and initiatives that promote peace and nonviolence, leaving the audience inspired to act on the ideas shared during the conference.

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

# Why We Fight Wars? Can a Culture of Peace Revolution Work Towards its End?

Vijay Mehta – vijay@vmpeace.org

## Introduction

It is painful to see the world in flames as at the moment with Gaza, Lebanon, Ukraine and Sudan where fighting has resulted in deaths of hundreds of thousands of people including women and children and the wars are still raging. Humanity needs a concrete, implementable, and pragmatic plan of action to stop the ongoing armed conflicts and prevent World War III.

The most disheartening is the fact that UN has become powerless and incapable on delivering on its promise of World Peace or as its Charter says, "Saving succeeding generations from the Scourge of War."

One in six of the world population is living in an active conflict zone. Between 7,000 to 21,000 thousand people are likely dying each day from hunger in countries impacted by conflict, 5-15 per minute, according to a new Oxfam report published on World Hunger Day. According to Global Peace Index, as global peace deteriorates, the economic impact of violence and wars is affecting the global economy to the tune of \$19.1 trillion in 2023, or \$2200 per household. The price of war is a lost son, a widowed daughter, an orphaned child, a maimed brother and a broken family.

At the core of the modern world, lies the interconnected a relation of money, power and military might, shaping the policies that govern the world including ongoing wars.

Is war a necessary evil or an organized crime to kill our own human species? Either way, war kills people, bringing untold suffering and misery. It is also a waste of vital resources that could be utilized for healthcare, education, jobs, and boosting the growth of the economy. If this latter argument is valid, replacing war with a culture of peace becomes a logical solution. Today, I invite you to explore why we fight wars and whether a culture of peace revolution can work towards its eradication.

## Root Causes of War and its Evil Affects

"We have got three years to prepare for war," warns UK Army Chief General Sir Robbie Walker in his first speech as Chief of the General Staff. We need to establish credible land force that would deter armaments from heading into battle with the West. He further said, we need three years to prepare for war against Axis of Evil as Russia, China, North Korea and Iran, who increasingly work together. War mongering rhetoric is dangerous, generate tensions and instrumental in starting wars which can lead to genocide as is happening at present in Gaza.

Wars are embedded in nationalism, tribalism, racial and ethnic divisions, endemic injustices, structural violence and political corruption. The role of Military Industrial Complex in stoking tensions in starting wars is well known under the disguise of bringing democracy and freedom. Whatever the reason, war is an archaic and barbaric practice that modern society should outgrow.

Yet, despite these advancements, wars continue to break out. The persistence of war suggests that the root causes are deeply ingrained in our societies. Factors such as nationalism, religious extremism, economic inequality, exploitation, endemic injustice, structural violence and political corruption fuel conflicts. Moreover, the arms industry, which profits immensely from warfare, has a vested interest in perpetuating conflict. This industry wields significant influence over political decisions, making the dismantling of war mechanisms even more challenging.

The impact of wars is devastating. On a human level, war causes immense loss of life, inflicts physical and psychological trauma, displaces populations, and tears apart families. Economically, war disrupts markets, destroys infrastructure, and drains national resources. Socially, it fosters hatred, divides communities, and perpetuates cycles of violence. Culturally, it erases histories, devastates heritages, and diminishes the collective human spirit. Given these far-reaching consequences, it is imperative to ask why we have made war a permanent fixture in our lives.

I have explained this scenario of extraction of resources by the rich from the poor countries in my book, "The Economics of killing" – How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World." It explores economic inequality, political corruption and social injustice which keep poor people poor.

## Seville Statement on Violence

One could argue that war stems from our most primal instincts—the drive to compete for resources and to dominate others. The idea that war is in our genes and violence and war is a part of us is refuted by scientists in their statement on violence and war in Seville. The Seville Statement on Violence is a statement on violence that was adopted by an international meeting of scientists, convened by the Spanish National Commission for UNESCO, in Seville, Spain, on 16 May 1986. It was subsequently adopted by UNESCO at the twenty-fifth session of the General Conference on 16 November 1989. The statement, then known as a 'Statement on Violence', was designed to refute "the notion that organized human violence is biologically determined"

The statement says, "It is scientifically incorrect to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors." "It is scientifically incorrect to say that war or any other violent behaviour is genetically programmed into our human nature."

## Effective Mechanisms for Peace

Article 1 of the UNESCO Declaration defined a culture of peace as:

"a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life based on: Respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation;

For the fuller development of a culture of peace, UNESCO called for: "(a) Promoting peaceful settlement of conflicts, mutual respect and understanding and international cooperation; (b) Complying with international obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law; (c) Promoting democracy, development and universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; (d) Enabling people at all levels to develop skills of dialogue, negotiation, consensus-building and peaceful resolution of differences..."

More than anything else we need pro-active mediation by the United Nations Secretary General, by regional groups including ASEAN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the African Union, the European Union, the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States, and the Organization of American States.

However, as we have evolved socially and intellectually, we have developed systems of governance, diplomacy, and international cooperation designed to manage conflicts without resorting to

violence. The establishment of the United Nations, the creation of international laws and treaties, and the development of conflict resolution techniques all demonstrate that we possess the tools to mitigate and prevent wars.

To move towards a world where wars are obsolete, we must address these root causes. This is where the concept of a culture of peace comes into play. A 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 the pursuit of peace.

Education is a cornerstone of a culture of peace. By teaching the values of empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect from a young age, we can cultivate generations that view conflict resolution through dialogue rather than aggression. Schools and universities play a crucial role in this by integrating peace education into their curricula. This involves not only teaching about the horrors of war but also about the benefits of peace, the importance of human rights, and the methods of non-violent conflict resolution.

Dialogue is another vital component. Open and honest communication between conflicting parties can prevent misunderstandings and build trust. This is true not only on a personal level but also on a national and international scale. Diplomatic efforts must be prioritized, with leaders willing to engage in negotiations and compromise. International organizations can facilitate these dialogues, providing neutral grounds for discussions and mediations.

Active participation of all members of society is essential in building a culture of peace. This includes governments, civil society organizations, communities, and individuals. Governments must prioritize peace in their policies, ensuring that resources are allocated towards social development rather than military expenditures. Civil society organizations can play a crucial role in advocating for peace, educating the public, and holding leaders accountable. Communities must foster inclusivity and address grievances that could lead to conflict. Individuals, too, have a role to play by promoting peace in their daily lives, standing up against injustice, and supporting peaceful initiatives.

Moreover, economic justice is integral to a culture of peace. Many conflicts arise from economic disparities and the struggle for resources. By addressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic services, we can reduce the conditions that lead to war. Equitable economic policies, fair trade practices, and sustainable development are crucial in this regard. When people's basic needs are met, they are less likely to resort to violence.

In addition, disarmament is a critical step towards ending wars. The arms race and the proliferation of weapons contribute to a climate of fear and distrust. International agreements to abolish arms production and trade can reduce the likelihood of conflict. Countries must work together to promote disarmament and ensure that military budgets are redirected towards social development.

It is also important to address the cultural aspects that glorify war. Media, literature, and entertainment often romanticize conflict, portraying it as a noble endeavour. Changing this narrative is crucial. Media should promote stories of peace, reconciliation, and cooperation. Celebrating peacemakers and highlighting successful non-violent movements can inspire others to follow suit. Art, literature, and film have the power to shape public perception and can be powerful tools in promoting a culture of peace.

Furthermore, fostering international cooperation is essential. Global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and terrorism require collaborative efforts. By working together on these issues, countries can build trust and solidarity, reducing the likelihood of conflicts. International organizations, such as the United Nations, play a vital role in coordinating these efforts and providing platforms for dialogue and cooperation.

The vision of a world without war is not idealistic and it is attainable. Throughout the history of the world, there have been more periods of peace than war, which have been instrumental in the advancement of civilisation, medicine, science and technology. But the books on military history highlight a world which moves from one war to another with small periods of peace.

We have seen examples of successful peace movements and non-violent resistance. The civil rights movement in the United States, led by figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., used non-violent methods to achieve significant social change. The peaceful transition to democracy in South Africa, guided by Nelson Mandela and other leaders, is another testament to the power of non-violence. Gandhi with the help of like-minded Indians, yearning for Indian Independence, together led a vast non-violent movement, which after many struggles and failures, achieved Indian Independence from the most powerful British Empire. These examples show that with determination, courage, and the right strategies, a culture of peace can prevail. By powerful mass campaigning and creating a momentum, we can challenge the opposition of the war industry and can shift the political landscape from war to peace.

However, achieving this requires a collective effort. It demands a shift in mindset from seeing war as an inevitable part of human existence to viewing it as a problem that can be solved. It requires leaders who are committed to peace, willing to take bold steps towards disarmament, and prioritizing diplomacy over aggression. It necessitates the involvement of civil society, communities, and individuals, all working together to build a more just and peaceful world.

For shifting the political landscape, building an effective opposition, against elites and the Military Industrial Complex. I have explored a radical idea of establishing Departments for Peace in governance with a Minister for Peace and Disarmament at the cabinet level who will see to it that all disputes are settled by dialogue and diplomacy and not by going to war. This is the core idea of my book, "How Not to Go to War: Establishing Departments for Peace and Peace Centres Worldwide".

In conclusion, the answer of why we fight wars is to change our values, attitudes and social structures. Yet, despite the challenges, the possibility of ending wars and replacing them with a culture of peace is within our grasp. By addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting education, fostering dialogue, ensuring economic justice, disarming, changing cultural narratives, and enhancing international cooperation, we can move towards a future where wars are a relic of the past. Slavery, colonialism, apartheid, and gender discrimination in voting, all have been abolished. Let us commit to a vision, working together to create a world where peace is not just a dream but a reality.

Let me finish by three quotations, first one from Gandhi who said, "I believe all war to be wholly wrong. War itself is a wrong act, how can it be worthy of moral support or blessing?"

"War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn to live together in peace by killing each other's children."

- Jimmy Carter, The Nobel Peace Prize Lecture

"Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind"

- John F Kennedy, Former US President

# Book Review – A World Without War – The History, the Politics and Resolution of Conflict. Author: Sundeep Waslekar Published by: Harper Collins, Price: £10 excluding shipping

The world at present is in a state of permanent crisis with wars raging among many countries in several continents, acute climate change crisis, water shortages and resource scarcity, overpopulation, increased urbanisation, disease and mass migration, dangers of misuse of AI and technology, any of the above have the potential of destabilising of the world in the 21st Century. In this atmosphere, the book, A World Without War written by Sundeep Waslekar with cooperation of Ilmas Futehally both founders of thinktank “Strategic Foresight Group” is a welcome arrival.

The book was inspired after a visit to Caen, a picturesque town in the Normandy region of France, which was a theatre of battleground in the 2nd World War. Normandy has witnessed war for thousands of years. It has now a Peace Museum to reflect on the horrors of war and constructing A World Without War, which is the title of the book.

The book “A World Without War” has six chapters. In the first chapter, it discusses the existential threat posed by a cataclysmic Arms Race, the constant increase in the Military Expenditure and the development of new weapons using nuclear, biological, chemical and lethal autonomous technology. It contemplates if a group of leaders, such as Hitler will not emerge, in possession of a ready stockpile of weapons of mass destruction in their hands.

The second chapter examine the risk of future wars from national ego, national interest and leaders spreading hyper nationalism to consolidate their hold on power. It further discusses nationalism in the countries that possess nuclear weapons.

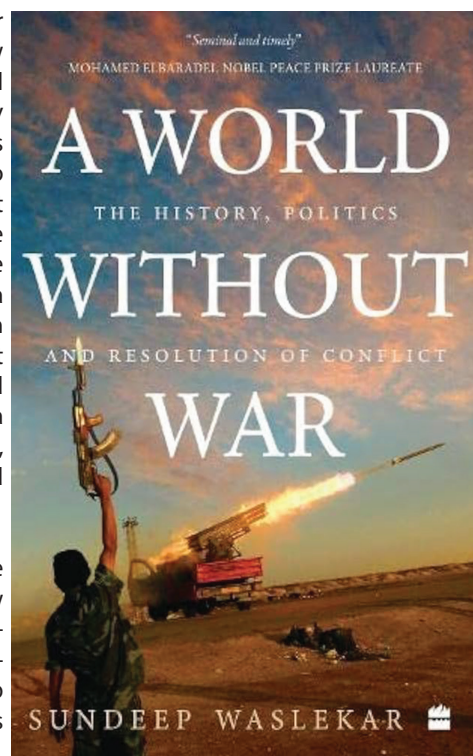
The third chapter explores deep philosophical question concerning the nature of war and of man. It is possible to renounce wars, since war is a matter of choice as proved by historical records of several centuries. If wars can be waged as a choice, they can also be rejected as a choice.

Chapter 4 examines how transformation for peace takes place. Enlightened leaders, courageous military officials and people’s movements worked tirelessly in the cold war to bring down the stockpiles of nuclear weapons. It was the dedication of many men and women. What lessons can we learn from their exceptional contribution to the history of the past century?

Chapter 5 explores the historical discourse of the past several hundred years. Scholars have proposed, for over 500 years, federation of states in different forms to resolve conflicts peacefully and prevent wars. The United Nations is the most successful expression of these efforts in its universal acceptance. Although UN has made significant contribution to socio-economic problems ranging from eradicating polio to raising awareness of climate change. But the UN does not have the capacity to resolve conflicts between big powers, abolish weapons of mass destruction and end the scourge of war. We need to reform the UN or develop an alternative to address its limitations.

The last chapter propose a new global / social contract, whereby a mechanism is developed to address issues that threaten the survival of the humankind. Such a transformation can be brought about by leaders and citizens alike with a new philosophy, new politics and new activism.

The pioneers to the design of this new initiative Normandy for Peace framework are Sundeep Waslekar and Ilmas Futehally.



Normandy for Peace Framework is a new global, social contract for building a just and lasting world peace. It calls on the people’s and their leaders’ to commit and follow the action plan which is based on five priorities which are below:

1. A time-bound action plan for the phased elimination of nuclear weapons, commencing with no first-use and agreements initiated by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and endorsed by all nuclear powers, on nuclear risk reduction measures
2. The adoption of an international convention prohibiting the use of artificial intelligence systems and any other emerging technologies with regards to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.
3. The conclusion of an international agreement, including by major military powers, on the progressive reduction of military spending and its reallocation to fund public policies addressing the common challenges facing human civilization.
4. A robust mechanism to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to resolve and prevent conflicts where the provisions of Chapter VI of the UN Charter prove ineffective, to enhance the collective security of all nations.
5. The development of a global social contract to provide civilizational response to civilizational crises based on respect for human rights and international law.

If such an action plan is adopted and acted upon by warmongering countries of the world, there is a real chance of peace prevailing in our universe.

# Prevention of the War Psychosis

## A Psychiatric approach to Current Wars

Dr Richard Lawson, 25 October 2024

“War is madness” is a cliché, but a true cliché, so it is not unreasonable for a psychiatrist to take a medical approach to the problem of war. Faced with the problem of chaotically disordered emotions, behaviour and thought that constitutes a bout of individual insanity, the first task of the psychiatrist is to take an objective view of the presenting symptoms, to diagnose what kind of problem exists, to decide on the best treatment, and finally to offer the best means of preventing relapses in future.

There are at present some 21 wars raging in the modern world. Each one is unique, with a large number of causative factors, but at the same time, it is possible to pick out salient causative factors that can be sorted out into some eleven categories.

This approach may present a fresh insight compared to existing approaches to the causation of war, which tend to offer more generic answers along the lines of “All war is caused by human nature / evolution / capitalism / religion / the arms industry / power addiction” etc. If we look at the diversity of causation, we may be able to come up with more specific measures to prevent them.

As far as treatment goes, apart from diplomatic efforts and calls for ceasefire, which clearly should never stop, the only means available is to try to starve belligerents of their arms and ammunition. At present there is a loud chorus of calls for the UK to stop supplying Netanyahu with weaponry for his insane orgy of violence in Gaza and Lebanon, but at present it is falling on deaf ears.

The same approach could be taken with the many smaller wars, primarily in Africa, where ethnic rivalries and quarrels flare up into lethal conflict, fed by small arms and ammunition delivered by truck, ship and aircraft. Between 10 and 14 billion bullets are manufactured every year and of this enormous quantity, there is an official trace for only 17%. There is a huge opportunity for the use of detector dogs at strategic points in transport routes. A lorry carrying ammunition can be identified in seconds by one small “sniffer dog”, and given the right back up, these canines could make great inroad into denying access to firepower for the militias and gangs operating in the area. Detector dogs are an effective and well understood method of control; their role just needs to be expanded and supported.

Apart from ammunition deprivation, there is generally no effective cure for a war once it has started; we just have to wait for both sides to become exhausted. If there is no cure for a disease, prevention is paramount. Prevention of future wars is clearly the best option available to mankind.

Even in the case of religion, which is a causative factor in nearly half of current wars there is an opportunity for amelioration. In 1999, the Muslim Religious Council of North America issued a Fatwa against Terrorism, and in 2011, a prominent Islamic scholar, Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, produced a book that absolutely condemns terrorism as un-Islamic. The interesting part for peace activists is that Governments may not demand that Muslims issue a fatwa - the request has to come from civil society,

so there is an opportunity for peace activists to approach our local mullahs to discuss a local fatwa on terrorism. For balance, we should approach local Christian leaders to request that they pass an equivalent condemnation on the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, which can accurately be described as deferred terrorism.



There are other specific moves that can be requested of local theologians to get them to act as peacemakers which we will not go in to here.

Authoritarians and dictators are the second largest causal factor in wars in 2024. What can be done about them?

The Global Human Rights Index is a policy that has been adopted by Green Parties worldwide. They would have the UN publish annually a league table showing the democratic and human rights (HR) credentials of every country in the UN. This would generate a continual, gentle uplift in HR performance of every country. It would act slowly, admittedly, but the current war in Syria shows what happens of dictators are asked to change too rapidly.

The UN also has a useful role to take up in preventing wars resulting from separatist or secessionist movements. If a special UN Agency on Secession is set up, it can scan the world for secessionist sentiment, and offer its services in hosting negotiations between the secessionists and the Government. The Agency will be prepared for negotiations to last for years or decades, but the UN, and the opposed parties can take a long view. Jawing is better than warring, as Churchill said.

Some wars are fuelled by the control of resources. Diamond mines used to provide income for militias, and the Kimberley Certification Process was created to ensure that diamonds brought to market could be traced back to their source. Although somewhat flawed, the Kimberley Process offers a model for identifying other minerals that may be coming from conflict areas.

These are just a few of the possibilities that exist in the arena of international relations which is an extensive field of research where good ideas are often buried in rabbit holes of academic detail and counter detail. To offset this, peace activists have to draw out the ideas of the professors, make them intelligible, and bring them somehow into the mainstream.

*Continue to page 7*

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The vested interest in the case of war is of course the arms industry, which was estimated in 2024 to have a global value of \$2.4 trillion. For comparison the fossil fuel market in 2021 was \$6.3 trillion. We can therefore expect a pushback from the arms industry on a par with the fossil fuel corporations' climate denial campaign of the last 40 years. We have to accept from the outset that as soon as effective movements towards peace become mainstream, the arms industry is going to behave like other mega-corporations - fossil fuel, tobacco, pesticides - did and are still doing. They will generate major campaigns, using legacy and social media, to obfuscate, oppose, deny and derail the case for peace. We need therefore to learn from previous campaigns to identify and refute the arguments they put forward.

We can and must win. The commonest objection to calls for peace by the man in the street comes in the phrase "You can't change human nature". This attitude has been described as the "Hydraulic Theory of Violence", where pressure builds up and expresses itself periodically without any external stimulus.

Nothing comes of nihilism, and if we do nothing about wars, there may be nothing left of human civilisation, or indeed, of the human species.

There is evidence that over the centuries, humans have become less violent. The cognitive psychologist Dr Steven Pinker has pointed to the decrease in signs of violent death in archaeological specimens, and more recently to the growth in empathy. Pinker's work has been confirmed by Fagan et al., mathematicians at the University of York, who used a statistical method to conclude that battle deaths have decreased since the end of the Napoleonic wars.

*Continue from page 2*

But what are NATO countries doing today?

They drop all this – intellectually demanding – analytical work based on numerous types of civilian and military expertise and simply set off X% of their GDP *no matter what kinds of threats there are in the real world.*

Mindbogglingly, they tie *their military expenditures to their economic performance*: If GDP increases, then military spending grows proportionately! If the GDP slides down, defence expenditures will do so, too, regardless of the perceived or actual threat environment.

NATO's original *Military Expenditures As Percentage of GDP* idea is a reflection of the Western delusional idea applied in many other fields that, when there is a problem, we set off funds to solve it and pump those funds into a system, whether or not that system is functioning, functioning optimally – or not at all.

In other words, *money has become the measure of problem-solving capacity and quality; changes, reforms or completely new thinking and structural reform don't even enter the equation*

*Qualities are expressed in quantitative terms. And it is the end of thinking and common sense.*

*The 2% goal was meaningless from Day One- Intellectual dwarfs bought it and used it again and again over the last decade or so.*

Threats to a country do not move up and down according to that country's economy. Such thinking points to the intellectual inside-the-box stagnation of an old organisation.

President Trump has just increased it to 5%. When will it be 10% in this incredibly unproductive and parasitic sector that I call the *Military-Industrial-Media-Academic Complex, MIMAC?* It is the

Humanity faces a number of serious challenges in the twenty first century - man-made climate change, the loss of biodiversity, many forms of pollution, nuclear war, and conventional war. We exist within a disordered system - each part of this poly-crisis exacerbates the whole, and the whole makes each component worse. At present, we are all in a greater or lesser sense degree of denial. Sooner or later the veil of denial will disintegrate, so that the flood of misinformation and disinformation from social and legacy media will become apparent, and we will all begin to become serious about our responsibilities in caring for each other and for the global environment. At that point, part of our task will be to prevent mankind's occasional lapse into the war psychosis.

For a more detailed treatment of this subject, with links and references, go to Google docs here : <https://tinyurl.com/4fnxbyka>

**Dr Richard Lawson is a retired GP and psychiatrist, a past Speaker of the Green Party of England and Wales, and one of the first Greens to be elected to a District Council**

Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.

**Albert Einstein**

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.

**Nelson Mandela**

cancer that eats up civilian creativity, innovation and socio-economic development and militarises us to death - while the rest of the world is whizzing along and surpassing the West.

Be sure that the higher the percentage figure gets, the faster NATO countries' civilian economy will sink into an even deeper crisis - because the economist's First Law is that you cannot eat the cake and have it too.

The fact that no one - except this author - has addressed this *Military Expenditures As % of GDP* as intellectual BS - is, in and of itself, a threat to world security. Where rational, intelligent thinking goes out, militarism and war seep in.

With Trump in the White House, the decline of the West will go even faster. That's why he wants a Greater American from Panama to the largest possible part of Scandinavia (with 47 US bases) and Arctic.

There may come a day when Europe sees fit to open up to Russia, China, and all the other 'bad' guys - if they want to have anything to do with Europe. I mean, with friends like Trump and his greater America - perhaps out of NATO and 5% of economic wealth wasted completely - who will need to point to old enemies in the future?

By **Jan Oberg** - Peace & future researcher + Art Photographer  
This article has been taken from TFF – Transnational Foundation for Peace & Future Research

[https://thetransnational.substack.com/p/military-expenditures-as-a-percentage?utm\\_source=post-email-title&publication\\_id=1655621&post\\_id=155680780&utm\\_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=2aswpk&triedRedirect=true&utm\\_medium=email](https://thetransnational.substack.com/p/military-expenditures-as-a-percentage?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=1655621&post_id=155680780&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=2aswpk&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email)

📅 Thursday, 24 April, 2025

🕒 18:00 - 20:00

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**Enquiries: Uniting for Peace, 14 Cavell Street, London E1 2HP • 0207 791 1717 • [vijay@vmpeace.org](mailto:vijay@vmpeace.org)  
& 144/1 Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh EH9 2AN • 0131 446 9545**