The business plan for peace – how to build a world without war [1]

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Introduction

As a social scientist I have had a lifelong interest in peace issues and in offering ways to build peace. I have come to the conclusion that today – in a world of barrel bombs, chlorine gas attacks and unidentifiable fighter planes bombing civilians - there is a widespread popular will to end war, not just with the tortured populations in the war-torn countries but also among many concerned citizens in privileged nations. My longtime work with the Oxford Research Group and a number of high military and Nuclear Weapons decision makers allowed me to discover that many of them were motivated by fear and nearly all of them were driven by a sense of being under threat. A confidential dialogue and trust were key ingredients to start a productive dialogue with them.

This popular yearning to end war could presumably find traction if we could understand the forces that drive and prolong war and the motives people have for fighting. Indeed, the business of war is enormously lucrative, which I will illustrate with some corresponding figures. Indeed, the military-industrial complex, while offering jobs and revenues in a number of western countries, is the major driver of war.

While wars have been fought for centuries and are part of the human experience, I believe that war is no longer necessary. Humanity today knows enough to make wiser decisions and implement them - thereby saving trillions of dollars, which can be used for healthcare, education and for feeding and bringing water to tens of millions of people. What can be done in this regard at national and international level? What can policy makers, business people and manufacturers do to enable peace to take the place war as source of profit? It is my opinion that humanity is fast evolving towards a more awakened, empathic society, due to a rise in citizen readiness to build peaceful environments and prevent violence.

1. Global interests to stop war

According to the 2016 Global Peace Index report the economic impact of all violence (including military, homicide, incarceration etc.) to the global economy was $13.6 trillion in 2015, equivalent to $5 per day for every person on the planet.[2] For war alone some $2 trillion is spent annually. And it is a remarkable fact that over 70% of the economic impact of violence accrues from government spending on the military and internal security. In a peaceful world these resources would be directed elsewhere. The remaining 30% consists of consequential losses from violence and conflict. These significantly outweigh the international community's spending on building peace. In 2015 peace building spending amounted to $6.8 billion and peacekeeping to $8.27 billion, which together represents just 2 per cent of the economic losses engendered by conflict. This indicates a serious under-investment in the activities that build peace. It shows how the international community is spending too much on conflict and too little on peace. This fact in turn seems to be the best argument for more spending on peace[3].

The Movement `World Beyond War' estimates the cost to end starvation and hunger on a global level to be $30 billion per year and a further $11 billion/year to provide the world with clean water. If another $450 billion went into green energy, infrastructure, topsoil preservation, environmental protection, schools, medicine, programmes for cultural exchange and studies of peace and nonviolent action, it would save many lives and stop the counterproductive work of antagonizing the world and generating enemies[4]. Moreover, quite apart from its horrendous costs, militarism can never address a single future threat such as climate change, migration, water shortage and the rich-poor gap. The question may well be posed: is the world becoming more violent or is war inevitable? There are diverging trends, as the Global Peace Index from the Institute for Economics and Peace shows for 2014: in Europe there is a long-term trend of improvement as homicides rates and interpersonal violence continue to drop, whereas in the Middle East there is currently a steep rise in terrorism along with a severe deterioration of peace. In other words, peaceful regions are becoming more peaceful while the most violent ones are becoming more violent.[5] As regards the second question - whether or not war is inevitable - experience and training for conflict prevention and resolution are available in multiple locations, e.g. at the Conflict Prevention Centre at the OSCE [6] and others. 400 colleges and universities worldwide offer peace studies programmes and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute SIPRI have been offering databases on multilateral peace operations since 2000. So the knowledge of how to prevent war and resolve conflict is there and training is available. Today we know enough not to repeat the cycle of atrocity, terror, grief, anger, revenge and retaliation.

2. The drivers of war

War is driven by aggression, greed, fanaticism, ambition, fear or threat. But in particular, war serves the interests of corporations, governments and strategists and makes a few people very rich. In fact, five of the world's six largest arms sellers are the five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, with the US and UK being numbers one and two. This obviously relates directly to the employment situation in any of these countries and criticism accordingly provokes instant defence.

In the context of this publication we can single out the situation regarding nuclear weapons. Based on the 2018 "Don't bank on the bomb report" [7] a total of $525 billion (an increase of $81 billion) was made available to companies producing nuclear weapons, of which $110 billion came from just three companies: Capital Group, BlackRock and Vanguard. 329 banks, insurance companies, pension funds and asset managers from 24 countries invested significantly in nuclear weapons. The top 20 nuclear weapon producing companies stand to benefit the most from this increased nuclear threat, and most of these have dedicated significant lobbying resources in Washington DC. On a positive note, since the adoption of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in July 2017 30 companies and two of the top five largest pension funds in the world have ceased investing in nuclear weapons.

Further major reasons for war are the two Muslim sects, the Sunni and Shia. They have lived together peacefully for centuries and have a shared faith in the Quran. However, they differ in doctrine, theology, ritual law, organization, and today they struggle openly over the supposed killing of Husayn, the Prophet Mohammed's grandson in the seventh century. A further reason is the long marginalization of the Shia by the Sunni majority. These differences between Sunni and Shia forces have

been one major reason for the continuing civil war in the Middle East. Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran are using this sectarian divide to further their ambitions and the ongoing fighting will likely shape the political future of the region. Another driver of the war are different sectors of the media, which influence our lives relentlessly, thereby feeding the public feeling of helplessness, anxiety and subsequent apathy, the effects which are especially alarming in young people.

It is significant that decisions on war and strategy are made by those sharing similar values, and by the belief that security is achieved through dominance. Having worked for many years with different military establishments, generals, admirals and senior officials and politicians, I noted that these people consistently assume that they know what is right and that issues of defence and security are too complex for ordinary people to decide on. If in such discussions we do not take a stand for what we know and believe in, then they assume power because we hand it to them. However, my experience is that everyone I talked with turned out to be a very human being, tackling/facing the life problems that we all have. Participation in the security discourse therefore frequently appears to be restricted to privileged men. It is they who champion the view that military power and alliances of strategic dominance will deliver security and status.

The voices of those who suffer in war are not being heard at the peace table, nor are their needs taken into account in peace agreements. Women seem to make up only 2.5 per cent of signatories to peace agreements. However, a report by the International Crisis Group concluded in 2006 that peace building cannot succeed if half the population is excluded from the process. And a peace agreement is 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years if women participate in its creation.[8]

A hardware approach to solving conflicts through war is based on advanced technological weapons, espionage and security domes in the sky. It comes at a high economic cost as violence destroys infrastructure, forces banks and shops to close and scares investors away from potential and existing markets. On the other hand, a software approach means dealing with people, developing trust, finding common ground - this is what the best of our global leaders do. For example, when he came out of prison Nelson Mandela opened a dialogue and displayed patience, flexibility and wisdom, which allowed the avoidance of civil war in South Africa.

For thousands of years, those making decisions on armaments and war have been schooled in the notion that it is heroic to fight, and that men have a duty to defend their families and territory using whatever force is necessary. Two major changes have taken place during the last seventy years: the first is the development of weapons of such destructive power that their use would terminate human and other life on the planet. The second is that half of the human race that has had little to say in decision-making is now slowly finding its voice, its place in public life, and is taking a stand on better methods of preventing and resolving conflict.

3. The basic principles – dialogue, prevention and early intervention

The major threats to our security now emanate from issues that cannot be dealt with by weaponry: namely global warming, migration, the rich-poor gap and cyber attack. Our security now depends on our ability to co-operate with nations who might previously have been our enemies, and on our ability to use the skills and knowledge

gained in the past century that enable us to avoid the catastrophic consequences of recent wars. These include three basic principles: dialogue, prevention and early intervention.

Dialogue as a means of systematically building trust is one of the best ways to overcome the forces of fear, aggression, competition, greed and negative emotions. The most essential skill for constructive dialogue is to insist on mutual listening, not only to the words being said, but also to the feelings behind them. This demonstrates respect, and respect is the most powerful antidote to humiliation. An example: for a few crucial moments in September 1983, the Russian officer Stanislav Petrov held the fate of the world in his hands. When an alarm suddenly went off at the Soviet nuclear early warning centre Serpukhov-15, Stanislav was responsible for reacting to a report that five American nuclear missiles were heading towards the Soviet Union. Rather than inform his superiors, who he knew would decide to retaliate, Stanislav followed his gut feeling and went against protocol, convincing the armed forces that it was a false alarm. His decision saved the world from a potentially devastating nuclear holocaust.[9] It took me some years to discover that many nuclear decision makers were motivated by fear and nearly all of them were driven by a sense of being under threat. A confidential dialogue and trust were key ingredients to start a productive dialogue with them. No peace agreement, however painstakingly negotiated, will last for long without trust being built: *trust is in fact the foundation of security.*

Prevention of armed conflict, coordinated with dialogue and early intervention requires a coordinated strategy for peace. And the keys to successful prevention of war are respect, speed of reaction and developing an understanding of how power works. In my 35 years experience the main cause of fighting is humiliation.
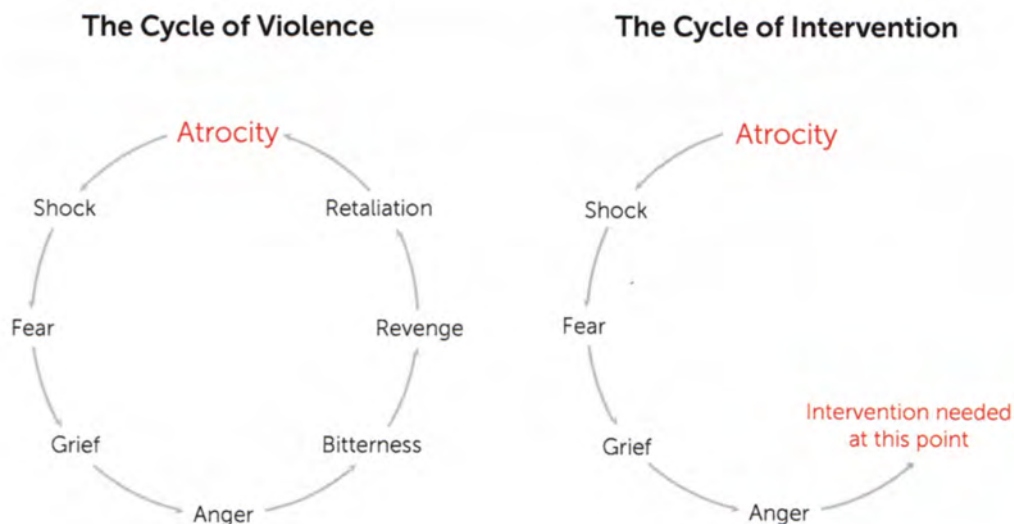Senior military officers from the UK and six other countries produced a major report in 2014, Understand to Prevent (U2P) [10]**,** which seeks a shift of military effort from crisis response to "upstream" engagement in positive conflict management, prevention of violence and building peace. The U2P concept proposes establishing a forum to bring together various stakeholders to help a host nation with a "prevention" task.

Early Intervention is essential in order for prevention to be effective. With no early warning system in place, the result can be lack of action, resulting even in genocide - as in the Rwandan case. Or delays can result in a local conflict exploding as in Syria, with fanatical elements exacerbating a chaotic situation. This has caused the deaths of about half a million people and the displacement of over 12 million, as well as the emergence of extremist groups like ISIS. Most people understand power as power over - hierarchy, authority, rule, physical strength and ultimately military force (domination power). However, there is also another kind of power, power with others, power which co-operates rather than competes (partnership power). It is creative and has an extraordinary energy because it comes from within a person (inner power). It may be invisible to the objective eye but it is immediately obvious to the senses and can hold the balance between life and death.

4. The basic strategy for building peace: how it works

Priority for building peace is given to a "bottom-up" approach. Strategy starts with methods found to be effective at local levels, followed by options for national governments, concluding with the systems that work best at a global level. Only a few good examples can be given here:

a) Breaking the cycle of violence: any atrocity creates shock, fear, grief, anger and bitterness and can lead to revenge and retaliation, leading again to atrocities. This cycle of violence may be perpetuated over generations and even centuries. The cycle can be broken providing physical, political and psychological security through methods of conflict prevention.[11]

The Cycle of Violence

Atrocity
Shock
Retaliation
Fear
Revenge
Grief
Bitterness
Anger

The Cycle of Intervention

Atrocity
Shock
Fear
Grief
Intervention needed at this point
Anger

b) Building infrastructures for peace: this concept was pioneered in South Africa by Nelson Mandela. It develops Peace Councils at national, regional and even village levels, in which relevant stakeholders can cooperate in systemically building peace and preventing violent conflicts, and this at mostly very small costs. Countries as Costa Rica and Nepal now have even Ministries of Peace.[12]

c) Enable qualified women to fill policy-making roles on peace and security: women are the most effective and tenacious peace-builders, yet more than 90 per cent of negotiators and those in policy making positions are male. This leads to the suffering and trauma for women and children in war and is frequently not taken into account at the peace table. Worldwide, there exists a network of 1,000 trained women leaders from more than 30 conflicts. Their partnership with key international women's organizations would ensure their acceptance in policymaking positions and peace negotiations. Women in areas of violent extremism have become the most effective antidote to terror. Pro-peace and pro-plurality women-led organizations that are locally rooted yet transnational have the credibility and authenticity to counter rising extremism and offer an alternative vision of the future in which people can feel a sense of belonging and purpose.

d) Re-vamp national budgets for prevention of conflict: Only when funds have been set aside by a government specifically for the prevention of conflict can progress be made as compared with the expense of intervening once armed violence has already taken place. Thus the UN and NATO should set standards for all member nations to establish Conflict Prevention funds, with the requirement that these funds amount to a specific percent of their defence budget, just as NATO guidelines

encourage members to spend 2 per cent of their respective countries GDP on their military defense.

e) Cut government support for arms trading and switch investments from arms production to renewable energies: one way to reduce arms exports is to remove government support and funding. In doing so it is necessary to persuade governments to divest from arms trade and invest instead in socially useful products and services such as green technology. In this regard one of the most famous diversification projects was the Lucas Aerospace Corporate Plan in 1976, which spelt out detailed plans for solar and fuel cells, windmills and flexible power packs as well as a road-rail public transportation vehicle, hybrid power packs for motor vehicles and airships. In one paper it is estimated that such transitions would provide twice as many science and engineering jobs as arms exports do now.[13]

f) Engage Corporate Leaders in the business of peace: private business needs to realize, that it has public role, in peace and in war. Corporate Social Responsibility nowadays can no longer confine itself to recycling, fair trade and ethical sourcing for products, because armed conflicts are increasingly affecting trading operations. There are now obvious moral and ethical reasons for business leaders to wake up to their potential role in peace-building. The Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative at the Harvard JFK School of Government [14], drawing on examples from over 30 countries and a variety of industry sectors, addresses both the positive and negative roles than business can play in situation of conflict. Business leaders need to be alerted to the practical actions that their companies can take to improve peaceful relations in the areas where they operate.

5. Costing the business plan for peace

As far as I know, no one has previously produced a Business Plan for Peace, based on systems that effectively prevent conflict and build peace. The plan presented here is underpinned by different assumptions from those underlying current Government decisions. The first new assumption concerns the power and cost effectiveness of the prevention of armed conflict; the second concerns the potential to use a tax on arms trading to pay for the building of peace at local, national and international levels.

Systems that prevent conflict and build peace: I propose a list of 25 measures at local, national/regional and international levels funding at least 1,400 effective locally led existing peace-building organizations. These would recruit community leaders to join peace councils, enable qualified women to fill policy-making positions on peace and security, and establish truth and reconciliation commissions in given countries, that have undergone historic or recent extreme human rights violations; they would also produce and implement strategies for diversification, establish a major campaign to persuade pension funds to divest from arms production. These and other measures have all been recently listed in detail[1].

b) All local, national and international measures globally for a 10-year period added up to $1.94 billion or $194 million per year. These are the costs of addressing the root causes of conflict – climate change, the rich-poor divide, migration, overpopulation and terrorism. In comparison the decommissioning of the Fukushima reactors will top $105 Billion and the yearly amount spent on ice cream worldwide is $59 Billion. And again, these $194 million need to be compared with the military

expenditures per year of $1,686 billion, which with a world population of 7.6 billion [15]amounts to $221.8 for every person on the planet. 3 cents for every person on the planet for peace building is an extremely small amount compared with the expenditures for war.

Where could the funds come from? Levying a 2.5 per cent tax on the global arms sales per year of some $100 billion, would yield some $2.5 billion, which would cover all or some 25 listed peace enhancing plans, some of which are listed above. It would appear that if a country like Japan can finance $105 billion for efforts to clean up the Fukushima disaster, the country could certainly contribute 1 per cent - $4.2 million of its defense budget of $42 billion in 2015.

6. The rise in citizen action

Political leaders too often say that the complex decisions involved in armed conflict require skilled professional diplomacy and make painful compromise inevitable. In the world of realpolitik, the arguments runs, pragmatism will always trump idealism. For those working for peace worldwide, this opinion just looks like a failure of imagination. "Lasting resolutions require more effort than just a politician's signature on a treaty, the peace processes that work are founded on a broad spectrum of initiatives in which citizens play a full part".[16] So something different is required and indeed is already happening: locally led initiatives to prevent conflict in the most violent parts of the world have increased four-fold. At the same time, the largest social movement in the world has come into being, organized from the bottom-up - it is emerging as an extraordinary and creative expression of people's needs worldwide. As an example the so-called "Transition Movement", founded by Hawken in 2006 is now present in 43 countries across the world and comprises more than 1,200 Transition Towns in the the UK alone. Transition initiatives refer to grass root community projects that aim to increase self-sufficiency so as to reduce the potential effects of peak oil, climate destruction and economic instability.

Furthermore, by 2020 those born between 1980 and 2000 will form 50 per cent of the global workforce and will be the largest consumer class. So attracting and keeping Millennials is important. Yet these have different priorities from our older generations: an enormous number of them worldwide consider environmental protection, climate change, resource scarcity and biodiversity loss as their No. 1 priority. Inequality of income and wealth and unemployment are the next Millennial concerns. Furthermore, personal and professional development and learning are important for more than fifty per cent of this group, and lastly they prefer to work with organizations that are ethical, transparent and investing in their staff. Profit is the lowest priority for most of the Millennials globally. These changes to be expected in social behaviour among many Millennials worldwide are promising, as they care less about how much they have and more about how much they can offer - they want to improve things for others, rather than to impress. In this regard my book[1] could be like a toolbox and could guide many activists among its readers.

Lastly, perhaps more profound and far-reaching than any other current phenomena is the shift from a paternalistic "top down" approach to a laterally organized "bottom up" series of initiatives springing up all over the globe. Rising Women Rising World is a vibrant community of women on all continents who take responsibility for building a world that works for ALL. [17] So this rise in local initiatives and feminine intelligence

will benefit human coexistence and contribute more to building peace in the future than was ever possible before in history.

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