

# **Maharishi's Vedic Science and Technology— The Basis for Economic Development and World Peace**

**by Ken Cavanaugh, Ph.D.**

In discussing the relationship between economic development and peace, how we measure economic development, and how to resolve economic imbalance between nations, I will be applying the perspective of Maharishi's Vedic Science and Technology to illuminate these issues from the perspective of a different paradigm.

## **The Relationship between Economic Development and Peace**

There is an obvious connection between economic development and peace. If we look at the incidence of violent conflict in the world, we see that of the more than 300 wars that have occurred in the world since 1945, virtually 99% have been fought in the lesser developed countries. That is not to say that developed, industrialized countries are not involved in those conflicts. Often they are in a very major way, as we have seen in the Gulf conflict and the Vietnam war. Nevertheless, the developing world has been the site of most of the wars that have been fought in the world within the last 45 years.

It is a self-evident truth that the destruction and disruption caused by conflict, in particular civil conflict, in the developing world can be devastating to the prospects of promoting greater prosperity and improving the quality of life in society. We only have to think of situations such as Cambodia—the poorest country in the world—suffering under a long civil conflict and Afghanistan—also one of the poorest countries in the world—beset with conflict. We can look to Ethiopia, Sudan, and a number of Third World countries that are involved in major conflicts at the present time. In most cases, these are countries experiencing a lack of both positive and negative peace.

## **Positive and Negative Peace**

In peace studies, the term "peace" is differentiated as either negative peace or positive peace. Negative peace refers to the absence of violence or conflict, which is obviously an important goal of those who seek to be peace-keepers in the world. The absence of war and conflict is also an important condition for creating positive peace. Positive peace refers to developing the quality of life in society by promoting economic growth, a more just society, and ecological balance, thereby improving life in a holistic way. It is obvious that negative peace can contribute to positive peace. If we have absence of violence and conflict then the chance of creating a better quality of life is enhanced. One can say also that the relationship is reciprocal, that positive peace, or economic development, may contribute to negative peace.

However, if the resources of a nation are devoted to armament and war, those resources are diverted from promoting progress in society and in meeting human needs. This is a very great concern in developing countries where in some cases as much as 60% of the government budget is devoted to military preparations and armaments. This is a tremendous drain of resources, where energy and creativity are devoted to enhancing the power of destruction as opposed to enhancing economic development and structuring positive peace in society.

Second, we cannot measure development, or positive peace, in purely economic terms. Dr. Liebenthal very wisely suggests that we need to be concerned with wider dimensions in

analyzing economic growth. He also points out that we need to be concerned with personal growth, a dimension which I think is paramount. (See Liebenthal article, this issue.)

### **An Enlightened Perspective on the Goal of Economics**

From the perspective of his Vedic Science and Technology, Maharishi has suggested that the very purpose of economics is the promotion of the happiness, contentment, and fulfillment of the individual, and that unless this goal is reached, economic growth and development will be defeated in its purpose. We can see this very clearly looking at the examples of the lives of very wealthy individuals in society, many of whom, if they do not have a means of promoting their own personal growth and happiness, do not derive any fulfillment from their great wealth. This is also true of the wealthiest nations of the world, many of whom are beset by serious social problems. Even if we could raise the material standard of living in the poorer countries of the world to a level equivalent to those in the industrialized countries, it is not clear that this would promote what could be seen as the ultimate goal of economics: the promotion of happiness, contentment, and fulfillment in society—the unfoldment of full human potential.

From the perspective of Maharishi’s Vedic Science and Technology, this is the central goal of economics: to promote the unfoldment of the full potential of man. The technologies of consciousness from the Vedic tradition provide a means of directly contacting the field of contentment, fulfillment, and peace within, enlivening these qualities in individual awareness, and through individuals, in turn, enlivening these qualities throughout society, thereby promoting the growth of fulfillment throughout society and improving the quality of life.

This perspective has been lacking in economics. Economics has long had a very materialistic focus and has not questioned the purpose and value of material affluence without inner abundance. Without the growth of inner contentment and the development of full potential, even the greatest outer affluence will be ultimately empty and unfulfilling.

The problem of world peace from the perspective of economic development is how to promote both negative and positive peace by simultaneously decreasing violence and conflict in all parts of the world and promoting economic growth and development. Improving the quality of life in a holistic manner is the contribution that one of Maharishi’s technologies of consciousness, the TM and TM-Sidhi program, offers toward a solution to this problem.

### **Fulfilling the Maddening Pursuit of Wealth**

Maharishi has spoken recently about what he feels is a great overemphasis on the search for material affluence in all parts of the world, both in developing and developed countries. He has referred to what he calls “a maddening pursuit of wealth,” in that the focus on economic betterment has become so intense that life is sacrificed for living, that all individual energy and creativity is focused on promoting personal affluence at the cost of promoting satisfaction and fulfillment and a more balanced growth in life.

In Maharishi’s analysis, this “maddening pursuit of wealth” is an indication of lack of inner fulfillment in life. This lack of inner fulfillment stimulates an almost frantic search for fulfillment through material objects, through augmenting one’s standard of living by accumulating as many material goods as possible. All of one’s energies become absorbed in the search for greater material satisfaction. But ultimately, material wealth does not give inner fulfillment and the more one pursues material wealth without gaining the fulfillment that is sought, the more stressful is the pursuit.

The solution is to reconnect human life with the source of inner fulfillment, which is the basis not only of peace within the individual, but which can be enlivened to produce peace throughout society. By enlivening the field of pure consciousness in individual and collective consciousness, we can promote peace and harmony while simultaneously promoting greater affluence and economic development in all parts of the world.

### **The Development of Human Resources**

Now I would like to turn to the discussion of the issue of the growing absolute gap between developing and developed countries, even under fairly ideal conditions of growth. (See Liebenthal article.) The key to lessening economic imbalance and thereby contributing to the reduction of tension in the world, is the enlivenment of the full potential of human resources. Since the 1960s, it has become almost a truism in economics to talk about the central role of human resources as the true wealth of nations. This perspective, which was stimulated by theoretical developments known as the growth of human capital theory in economics, led to an emphasis on education and on improving the quality of human resources as a means of raising productivity and promoting economic development, particularly in developing countries.

Formal education was expanded greatly in developing countries as a result of this emphasis on the role of human resources. Tremendous resources flowed into educational systems and, to a lesser degree, into the health sector. However, the allocation of large resources to education of human resources did not produce the desired results. This led to a reevaluation of the role of human resources and to a greater emphasis on the role of investment in physical capital, i.e. factories, equipment, etc. In other words, disappointment with the results of expanded educational investments led to a reemphasis on traditional approaches to promoting development.

From the perspective of Maharishi's Vedic Science and Technology, focusing on improving human resources is not a fundamentally flawed strategy. However, the traditional approach to education is incomplete because it fails to incorporate effective technologies for enlivening the full potential of human resources. This is a very important part of our mission here at this university—to provide a “demonstration project” of an education which is complete and holistic and develops not only traditional intellectual knowledge of the disciplines, but also the full potential of the individual. Thus from the perspective of Maharishi's Vedic Science and Technology, the solution to the problem of development of human capital is to extend our concept of human resources to include the ultimate resource, which is the field of pure consciousness deep within every individual, and to promote technologies that are effective in developing the full creative potential of the individual.

### **Pure Consciousness—the Basis of all Forms of Capital**

In the late 1960s, a well-known economist by the name of Harry Johnson at the University of Chicago suggested that economic development could be viewed as a “generalized process of capital accumulation,” including both physical and human capital. Until the advent of human capital theory in the 1960s, the accumulation of physical capital, i.e. investments in factories, roads, infrastructure, etc., was generally seen as the key to promoting economic growth. With the human capital revolution, it was realized that investment in education and health, in improving the skills and quality of the work force, could also be seen as productive investments that had economic value in addition to the intrinsic value of education in broadening the individual's horizons and bringing greater fulfillment.

Johnson suggested that viewing economic development as a generalized process of capital accumulation provides a more unified perspective on the process of economic development. We can take this one step further and provide a fully unified approach to promoting peace, economic development, and improved quality of life by connecting all the various forms of capital to what can be considered as the most fundamental form of capital—the infinite resource which lies at the very basis of our thinking, feeling, and activity.

Figure 1 shows the traditional forms of capital discussed by economics. At the most fundamental level is “Knowledge Capital,” the stock of existing knowledge in society. Knowledge capital is embodied in human beings through education, and when it becomes lively in human minds it gives rise to improvement of the human capital, as we discussed previously. Investment in health is another way of augmenting human capital. (Insert Fig. 1 around here.)

Capital is a term that economists use to describe that which is used in the production of goods and services, so it can take many forms. We have already discussed physical capital, i.e. plants, factories, equipment, computers, etc. “Natural Capital” refers to the natural resources of the country, which can play an important role in a country’s development, although there is not, in fact, a consistent correlation between the rate of economic growth of a country and the extent of its natural resources. In addition to these other forms of capital we can also talk about “Social Overhead Capital,” which is the infrastructure, bridges, roads, ports, etc. that are necessary for commerce to proceed smoothly.

At the basis of all these forms of capital resources is human capital, which, in turn, is based on a more abstract value of knowledge. It is obvious, for example, how physical capital is based on human capital. A computer, for example, can be described as “congealed” knowledge or intelligence. The same with an automobile—there is much greater creativity and knowledge embodied in the automobile of today than 20 years ago. It is obvious, therefore, that physical capital is a concentrated expression of human intelligence and creativity.

Let us take the example of oil resources to illustrate the relationship of natural capital and human capital. The puddles of black liquid lying on the surface of the ground in oil rich countries were long viewed as a nuisance. For example, in Western Pennsylvania oil puddles interfered with agriculture when cattle ate grass contaminated by oil. It required human knowledge, intelligence, and creativity to find a use for that resource, to find a way to extract it, process it, and use it, which in turn has given rise to a worldwide petroleum industry.

From the perspective of Maharishi’s Vedic Science and Technology, at the basis of all forms of capital is the most fundamental form of capital which is pure consciousness, or the unified field of natural law from the point of view of physics. This is an inexhaustible resource that is accessible to everyone, and when fully developed, raises the quality of the human capital of the country to the maximum possible degree. This enables creativity to be fully lively in that society and hence contributes to maximum progress on the material level.

### **Research on Maharishi’s Vedic Science and Technology in the Domain of Economic Development**

This perspective from Maharishi’s Vedic Science and Technology offers a new paradigm, a unified perspective on how to promote positive peace by enlivening the infinite resource within us all. Some research has been done on the contribution of this technology

to economic progress and the studies that have been done so far are encouraging. Although they involve only developed countries, they generalize to all societies. The research has shown that through creating greater coherence in national consciousness it is possible to improve the economic functioning of that society. For example, during the 1970s and 1980s, North America was experiencing high inflation and unemployment as measured by an index of economic problems called the Misery Index, which is the sum of the inflation and unemployment rate. The Misery Index is important, because these two dimensions are the two principle concerns of the economic policy of virtually every government. Public opinion surveys during the 1970s and early 1980s consistently showed that either inflation or unemployment or both were ranked as the most important problems facing the nation ahead of such things as the threat of nuclear war and environmental concerns. So the Misery Index captures an important economic aspect of the quality of life.

The studies found that a sufficiently large creating coherence group had a positive impact on the economic quality of life in terms of reducing the Misery Index. When the size of the group reached 1500-1600 practitioners of the TM and TM-Sidhi program there was a very sharp decline in the Misery Index, and an even sharper decline for over 1700. These declines are significant as compared with levels of the index when the group numbered below 1500, which approximately was the square root of 1% of the U.S. population during this period (See Figure 2). Consequently, a similar effect was found in Canada. These time series results were significant when controlling for other economic variables which could explain movements in inflation and unemployment such as the monetary policy, business cycle fluctuations, and movements in oil and other crude materials prices.

### **Improving Economic Climate through Improving the Relations of the Superpowers**

Any discussion of economic development and peace needs to consider the relations between the superpowers, which are a crucial element in creating or maintaining a peaceful climate in the world. Research indicates a relationship between the size of the coherence creating group here at MIU and the state of U.S.-Soviet relations. Our study looked in particular at Soviet behavior towards the U.S. and found an upward shift in the positivity of Soviet foreign policy statements and actions towards the U.S following the Taste of Utopia conference in 1983. In this period the size of the coherence creating group at MIU rose to levels consistently exceeding 1600, approximately the square root of 1% for North America.

Now the question is whether these improvements in U.S.-Soviet relations are statistically significant. Controlling for the ongoing dynamic interaction between U.S. statements with regard to the Soviet Union and Soviet statements towards the U.S., it was found that when the U.S. reached the square root of 1% threshold, there was a dramatic and significant improvement in the harmony and positivity of U.S. actions towards the Soviet Union. We began to hear less talk about "the evil Soviet empire" that was prominent in the rhetoric early in the 1980's and a move towards a more constructive dialogue and a search for solutions to common problems, as seen in the progress towards the intermediate nuclear forces treaty, progress in arms control negotiations, and other outstanding issues. When the group was even larger, exceeding 1700, there was an even more dramatic and positive effect on U.S. actions towards the Soviet Union. Likewise, there was a very significant improvement in Soviet actions towards the U.S.

These effects, taken together, were highly statistically significant, and large in magnitude. An effect size of about .35 standard deviations is considered to be a very large effect in social science research. The effect size in the improvement in Soviet statements towards the U.S. was about 1.5 standard deviations. The improvement in U.S. actions towards the Soviet Union was about .9 standard deviations.

One could argue that the improvement of U.S.-Soviet relationship had to do with the coming to power of a new leadership in the Soviet Union in March of 1985, when President Gorbachev came to power. In our analysis we took that explicitly into account, and were able to show that even when this factor is formally incorporated into statistical analysis, there continues to be a significant effect of the coherence creating group on U.S.-Soviet relations.

### **Understanding the Effect of Coherence Creating Groups**

The key to understanding the creation of coherence in collective consciousness is that pure consciousness, as described by Maharishi's Vedic Science and Technology, is the basis of both the subjective and objective aspects of life, of both the mind and the environment. When individuals transcend and enliven the field of pure consciousness through the practice of the TM and TM-Sidhi program, the effect is to enliven pure consciousness not only in individual awareness but throughout the entire environment. This is a non-localized effect because pure consciousness, the unified field of natural law, is omnipresent. It is the most fundamental field of life and if we enliven that, any aspect of creation, both in human activity and in nature, will be enlivened, because we are enlivening the very basis of all activity. Maharishi uses an analogy to describe this effect. He says that when the individual awareness goes to that fundamental level of pure consciousness, it is like dropping a small pebble in a pond on a windless day. Maharishi (1975) explains:

If the attention reaches that level, what happens is like the small pebble falling on the silent bed of the water. A small pebble falls, creating impulses. Those impulses reach all the far places and all the water. Just like that, when the conscious mind of one single individual transcends, we can imagine the thrills being created on that silent level of consciousness, which is the omnipresent reality. This pulsating consciousness of the individual creates impulses of life all over, and because this is the very fundamental level of everyone, everyone's thinking, everyone's consciousness is influenced by that. It is very easy to understand.

Maharishi goes on to say that the awareness of the whole population is influenced tremendously by single individuals transcending. The whole trend of thinking in society becomes more positive, more in tune with nature, more in tune with the full potential of natural law. This effect is amplified when larger groups practice together, particularly with the more powerful TM-Sidhi program.

Thus, the key to promoting both positive and negative peace in society is take the awareness to that fundamental field of life, the unified field of natural law, and nourish all aspects of life just as one nourishes all the leaves and branches of the tree by watering the root.

This new paradigm offers fulfillment to the discipline of peace studies in its search for a science of peace which is capable of not only providing an understanding of the basis of peace, but also offers a practical program to bring to fruition all the various, worthwhile approaches to creating a more peaceful, just, prosperous, and happy world.

#### References:

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1975). *Inauguration of the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment*. Rheinweiler, Germany: Maharishi International University Press.