

## Technology Initiatives For Peace by N.S. Sridharan ("Sri")

I am a former technologist, computer and software specialist, now retired and dedicated to peace initiatives. Pondering how to bring my tech expertise to bear upon peace efforts, I have been contemplating a framework of sponsored research on Technology Initiatives for Peace. I am conceiving of this an antidote to the fact that in the last 100 years, much of technology has been spawned to serve the cause of war - aircraft, radar, laser, even the Internet.

Now the tide is turning - initiatives like Google, Blogger and Friendster are serving to bring people together, to make information open and transparent. New technologies for promoting freedom, cooperation, human dignity, understanding and mutual trust are needed. Research in Information Technology, Biotechnology and Nanotechnology - needs the guiding hand of humanity striving for peace and harmony. I am envisioning a series of research initiatives that would spawn a new generation of technologies that serve our mutual cause. Eventually I would like to enable entrepreneurship and special investment funds for a broad range of technology initiatives.

I am searching both for ideas and for a home institution to base these research efforts. I would be delighted to hear back from you.

### **Vision**

A recently made streaming video by Italian Telecomm won the Epica award for creative achievement. <http://www.epica-awards.org/epica/2004/winners/cat11.htm> It is a moving and compelling testament to how much technologies of connectivity and communication have changed the world and how much is made possible. The film starts out with Gandhi (actual historical clip) walking into his hut in Sabarmati. It then, cuts over to his face talking to people about one world, uplift for all. We see soldiers in WW2 looking at his talk on television, a couple in Italy sitting on a park bench and viewing it on their cell phone, people gathered in Moscow looking at it in big screen, executives looking at it on their desktops in London and in New York, trains screaming through wilderness of Canada and native Indians viewing his talk on a laptop. It paints a compelling and redeeming vision of what is possible with technology when it is applied to peaceful purposes. The tag line is "Imagine the world today if he could have communicated like this."

After a brief visit to Bodh Gaya, visiting the Mahabodhi Shrine, meditating at the lotus pond and under the Bodhi Tree, I remember sitting down at my laptop back at the hotel and penning a journal entry: "What would Buddha have done if he was born in the 21st Century?" I felt he would have embraced technologies of communication, neurobiology, genetics and transportation - and would have created something other than monasteries and Bhikkus with

shaven heads walking with begging bowls to develop humility and compassion. What is that other vision? What would Buddha do?

In the last 70 years or 100 years, there has been a lot of advancement in the areas of technology (communication, computation, transportation, medicine, ecology) During that time the war machine has enslaved much of the technology - resulting in nuclear missiles, precision guided bombs, faster than sound planes, night vision, geographical positioning systems, satellite based communication and CBCW and WMD). The list is endless.

The peace movement can bring itself up to date and begin to embrace these advanced technologies. That would be not enough. We need to channel innovation and entrepreneurship, and breakthrough technologies to the cause of peace and sustainable development. There are numerous examples of the peace movement and nonviolent action utilizing technologies (fax machines in the 80s, Internet and email in the nineties) - but most are serendipitous. Time has come to DRIVE new technologies..

Action: Let us start with a two-semester graduate research seminar on the role of technology in war and peace. {Appendix A1} Let us use that course as a means for charting a pathway for the future when technology truly serves the cause of peace, love and nonviolent means of action.

**Grand Plan:** The course would lead next to the formation of Industry-University consortium - a collective of organization that collectively strives to drive technology that brings greater peace and economic prosperity to mankind. Since entrepreneurship is the hallmark of the global technology industries, we expect to attract investors and venture capital firms that wish to play a strong role in the shaping of our own future. Eventually we envision that there would be dozens of startup companies that produce the technologies according to the roadmap delivered via the consortium.

### **Expected outcomes**

a. Synthesis of a needs-framework driven by peace, economic prosperity, local and regional civic freedom, sustainable living, emergency management and social justice.

Using a worldwide perspective, the needs-framework would be the driver for the technology roadmap below. {Appendix A2}

b. Formulation of Technology roadmaps - 5 years, 20 year, and 100 year - anticipated functionalities, needed infrastructure development, and research priorities

Moore's Law guided the semiconductor industry - Sematech was the coordinating agency that executed the roadmap for that industry. Similarly the technology roadmap will include tactical, strategic and visionary new developments in all areas that affect society. See

[http://www.tfi.com/rescon/five\\_views.html](http://www.tfi.com/rescon/five_views.html) for roadmap methods.

c. Capability identification - Roster of research centers that have the needed technology research capabilities and those who subscribe to the values expressed in the needs-framework

Based on direct contact and site visits, research centers will be positioned as Centers of Excellence, Centers of Development and Centers for deployment

d. Identification of public funding methods to promote research and basic technology development and private equity processes to support entrepreneurship in bringing basic technology to pilot stage, application and deployment.

A variety of private and public research funding sources will be collected. Compare Micro-Electronics and Computer Research Center in Austin in the 80's which marshaled both DoD and Corporate funds and then spun off technology using Venture Capital.

e. Initiation of a Coordination Office within the scope of the UN or the US government and EU government to drive the roadmap and to keep it updated. Unlike the prior examples mentioned above, our scope is worldwide, not the US. Hence our positioning also needs to be through various world-wide or regional multi-country agencies.

f. In addition to the Coordination Office we would create a self-regulating community to refine and drive the roadmap, along the lines of the open source model. A peer-to-peer community that keeps all the resulting technology open, common and shared property. [Open source is about how to build a system for the world's people. - CK Prahlad at the World Economic Forum]

Here are some interesting websites related to this proposal of Technology Initiatives for Peace.

[http://www.evolve.org/pub/doc/synergy\\_sectors.html](http://www.evolve.org/pub/doc/synergy_sectors.html)

[http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/human\\_needs.jsp](http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/human_needs.jsp)

[http://www.tfi.com/rescon/five\\_views.html](http://www.tfi.com/rescon/five_views.html) for roadmap methods.