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R&D and investment in weapons production, can we take these nations seriously when they talk of world peace? Peace is the enemy of the all-powerful “defence” or rather weapons’ lobbies.

The west has yet to realize that its resource-intensive, exploitative, consumerist model of development will ultimately prove universally destructive. The signs are already there but they chose to ignore them, relentlessly researching new ways and systems of expanding capital-intensive production. Machines grow ever more sophisticated, putting more and more people out of work. Unemployment is the dominant problem in these countries. To deal with the growing army of educated and skilled unemployed, they are now dreaming of establishing human settlements on other planets. But unfettered capitalism is a monster that can never be satisfied; it gulps natural resources at a frightening rate, creates a false demand for unnecessary consumer goods, all to feed its lust for more and more profit. With greed, self-interest and individualism as the driving force, the social fabric is ripped apart and social systems collapse as a result.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was intended to usher in an alternative to the capitalist system and bring about the rule of the working classes. In the end, communism proved just as pernicious as the system it sought to replace. The concept of class struggle divided society, turning man against man. Indian tradition teaches us that any system that militates against peaceful co-existence cannot survive for long. So it was with communism, which has failed the test of time.

Independent India opted for a mix of both these de-humanised economic models. The muddled approach did not bear fruit. We have now fiercely embraced liberalisation, which has only widened the gap between the haves and have-nots. This, too, must fail. For any system that undermines peaceful co-existence spawns a whole host of evils. The so-called developed world chooses to ignore this fact.

Once again, I emphasise that there is no need for despair. You, the youth of this country have been presented with a unique opportunity to create a