



[ Keynote Speech ]

## Being Civilized Means Making Peace Not War

**Mahathir bin MOHAMAD** Former Prime Minister of Malaysia

Firstly, I would like to thank the organizers for this invitation to speak in this forum. We regard this forum as one of those forums which are working towards the world peace.

Peace means the absence of war, but war is still with us. We are still killing each other in order to resolve conflicts between us. Somehow there is a conflict. It is contradictory in that we find killing one person is a crime. You cannot murder a person. For whatever reason, it is a crime.

But, on the other hand, we think that war is not a crime, that it is all right to kill even a million people. In the last great war, we successfully kill seventy million people. Somehow there is a great contradiction here. If we regard killing one person as a crime, surely if you kill more, it is a greater crime.

But we accept war as legitimate. That is why, in Malaysia, there is a movement today to make war a crime, to criminalize war. War should not be resulted to in finding solutions to conflicts.

There are other ways of solving our conflicts between nations. But sadly war in our age does not seem to be sure that we have made progress in terms of what is crime and what is not. That is why we have this movement in Malaysia where we aim to make war a crime.

Now a lot of people think this is ridiculous. You cannot make war a crime. We have been fighting wars for seven thousand years. But today we are still fighting wars. Yet, if you look at the history of slavery, there was a time when slavery was accepted throughout the world. Every country, every nation, and every community would accept slavery as a normal thing.

It is not criminal until someone begins to campaign to make slavery a crime. And today slavery is indeed a crime, although there maybe some slavery in other forms carried out in some countries. It took years for the world to accept slavery as a crime. But will the world accept that war too is a crime because war is worse than slavery?

You can see the effects of war on the TV every day. Not only were people killed, but whole country would be devastated. And yet, we still accept that if there is a conflict



between nations, one solution is to go to war. I think that is almost inhuman. Human being should avoid killing each other.

If killing one person considered a crime, surely killing more people would be a greater crime. But if you don't have war, what do we have? We have other means of settling disputes between nations. We can have negotiation between the nations' concerns. We can have a third party settlement, arbitration. We can also go to an international court of law, and try and seek a solution through these three processes.

Malaysia is in the middle of the Southeast Asian countries now organized as ASEAN countries. This concept of working together among ASEAN countries, among the Southeast Asian countries was not because of trade. It is not like the European Union. It is because we wanted to avoid war in Southeast Asia.

Malaysia had problems with all her neighbors. This is quite natural. There would be overlapping claims between neighbors. But to settle these claims, to find out who owns what, we did not go to war. That is why we form ASEAN, so that the leaders of ASEAN countries will know each other and we respect each other.

In the case of Malaysia we had conflicting claims in the sea between Thailand and Malaysia. We settled that. After long time, we settled that through negotiation, in which both countries agreed that anything that you produce in that area should belong equally to both countries, fifty-fifty division. In effect, the joint development area within Thailand and Malaysia is already producing gas and the gas is shared within Malaysia equally with Thailand.

Then we had conflicts with Indonesia over two islands off the coast of North Borneo of Sabah. After long negotiations, both countries decided that we should go to

the world court to find settlement. And we agreed that if the world court rules on any settlement, we will respect the rule made by the world court. And in the dispute that was with Indonesia, the world court decided that the two islands belong to Malaysia. There's no war as we accepted the findings of the world court.

Then there was a dispute with Singapore over a tiny rock found in the seas between Malaysia and Singapore. Again we went to the world court after long negotiations and failing. We went to the world court and the world court decided that this rock belongs to Singapore. We did not dispute the findings of the world court.

Then we had a dispute with the Philippines. We decided that it should not be brought up as a major issue in our relations. Initially, we had no diplomatic relations, but diplomatic relations have been restored.

So there are other ways of settling disputes than going to war. War is very primitive because war means killing people. And if we consider ourselves as having achieved civilized status, we should avoid war in the solution of any dispute between us.

We have the United Nations. If, in the United Nations, settlement is not met by one of the five who are permanent members, but indeed it is settled by the majority of the members of the United Nations. Then probably we would be having less conflict between us. And we would resolve the problems that we face due to the availability or due to the choosing of war as a means of solving our conflicts.

Today much money is being spent on improving the power of weapons. We come to the stage when we now have in our hands weapons that can wipe out the whole human race. Should that be a nuclear war, the whole human race might vanish from the earth.

Even if it is conventional weapon, a lot of people are going to be killed when they swarm. And it is not confined only to the combatants, but also to the ordinary, non-combatants in any country. Surely we must regard killing on the scale as a greater crime than a single case of murder in our own countries.

It will take a long time before our mindset can be changed. But as with slavery it took almost two hundred years before slavery is universally accepted as a crime, and then we should not have slaves. Maybe the struggle to criminalize war will take even longer time.

But the journey of thousand miles begins with the first step. We believe that if everyone especially in democratic countries insists that candidates buying for places in the election should vow to disregard war through avoiding war as a means of settling dispute between nations.

If that happens, then we can claim that we can be truly civilized. Today I think it is only half civilized because we still believe in killing people in order to resolve problems and conflicts between us.

## [ Keynote Speech ]

# Reducing Nuclear Weapons down to Zero

**Jim BOLGER** Former Prime Minister of New Zealand



Thank the organisers of the Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity for their generous invitation for me to attend and speak to this prestigious gathering. I want to acknowledge my fellow speakers.

In the language of New Zealand's indigenous people: He aha te mea nui o te ao, He tangata he tangata he tangata.

"What is the most important thing in the world? It is the people, it is the people, it is the people."

I have started with that proverb of New Zealand's indigenous Maori people to give focus to our discussions and remind us that we are not discussing the latest technology or even the grandeur and mysteries of outer space. No, we are talking about people and their needs and their hope to live in peace and security.

The Maori people over the centuries made their way across the vast Pacific to reach New Zealand about 1000 years, Polynesian people, distant decedents of the original people of Taiwan.

On every visit to South Korea I have been impressed by the dynamism of the country and its people but I know the pain of a divided country still lingers 72 years after the end of World War II. My parents were from Ireland so I know a little of the pain the division of a country can cause.

In the case of Ireland it happened because of colonisation and religion and in the case of Korea the division was caused by different ideologies driving world politics.

I know that no two situations are ever the same and the history of Ireland and that of the Korean Peninsula are very different but I am certain that the Korean people north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel would welcome a more open and prosperous society similar to the south.

It would be easy, and perhaps expected, that I will add, and I do, to the condemnations often made of the policies of North Korea but I have chosen, under the conference theme; "Asia's New Order and Cooperative Leadership," to suggest an alternative approach rather than just to restate the problem as has been done many times before, instead I want to talk about possible solutions.

I suggest it is not too idealistic to seek a resolution perhaps similar to the so called