

**The Criminalisation of War**  
**CheDet.co.cc**  
**May 29, 2008**  
**By Dr. Mahathir Mohamad**

When I was in Japan recently I had the opportunity to explain about Malaysia's Non-Governmental Organisation's campaign to make war a punishable crime.

The Japanese had been guilty of perpetrating brutalities during their Manchurian Incident and war against China and also during the Pacific War.

On the other hand they were the only people in the world to experience the first ever nuclear war, of having their citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki reduced to ashes by atomic bombs, with the loss of 200,000 lives and thousands more struck down by radiation sickness later.

For the Japanese the realities of war and the killings have been fully understood from their experience. I believe they can be expected to support a campaign to make war a crime.

I spoke about the horrors of war to three separate groups i.e. the Nikkei Future of Asia Forum, breakfast meeting with the head of Nikkei and his senior staff and before a full audience at the Foreign Correspondent's Club, Tokyo.

While in England in April I was invited by the Ramadhan Foundation to speak about the Criminalisation of War at the Imperial College in London.

An interesting incident was the attempt by Jewish students to stop me from speaking at the Imperial College because I am regarded as being anti-Semitic. The authorities were embarrassed by this demand and almost decided to stop me.

I was waiting for them to do so. Then I could go there to see if they would stop me. If they did I would be able to say that there is no freedom of speech in England.

However, the authorities decided that only students from the Imperial College would be allowed to attend. Still the hall was full with standing room only.

At all these meetings I was able to explain why war should be regarded as a crime. I pointed out that it is ridiculous to regard murder as a crime punishable with the most extreme penalty yet the deliberate killings of thousands of people, mostly innocent men, women and children are regarded as proper and legal.

There is a contradiction here which does not fit in with human values in a civilised world.

Today trillions of dollars are being expended on the development and production of ever more lethal weapons of mass destruction. Poor countries are forced to buy these weapons by playing on their false sense of pride. They buy these expensive weapons so as not to be less well-equipped than their neighbours. Yet these weapons are often not used at all. Still they have to be upgraded or replaced with newer versions at

tremendous cost.

Malaysia has been drawn into this game. We have bought two submarines costing over RM3 billion. When are we going to use them? Are we contemplating going to war with our neighbours? I can think of other ways of spending RM3 billion in Malaysia.

We need a defence force to preserve our independence. But do we have to be involved in an arms race? Only the suppliers of arms would benefit from an arms race.

War is not a solution for our foreign policy agenda. A stiff backbone is far more important. Unfortunately at the moment we don't have that.

The campaign against war and the criminalisation of war has gained momentum. This is going to be a long-drawn struggle. But it has to begin somewhere if we are going to achieve this radical change in the mindsets of people. God-willing insya'allah this struggle will eventually succeed.

Via this blog I would like to appeal to all Malaysians to support this campaign. We may feel safe from war now. But we must remember and think about all those people who now face the prospect of being bombed and rocketed, of having their heads and limbs torn from their bodies, of being killed. That they are non-combatants and have done no one any harm does not seem to matter to the warmongers. They will suffer all the same.

When war broke out in Europe in 1939 we in Malaysia thought we were safe. But we were not. In a world war we too will be subjected to attack. Our forces will not be able to do much.

We don't foresee this happening to us. But it can happen if war is still regarded as a way to settle conflicts between nations.

That is why I believe that it is important to make war a crime and so to stop it from being the way to settle conflicts between nations.

## 7 Comments

1. [AZIZ MOHAMMAD](#)

March 9, 2010 at 4:54 pm | [Permalink](#)

Dear Tun,

I refer to your 3 relatively recent articles on your website, which directly or

indirectly reflects your views on the Japanese:

1) The East Asian Economic Community – a Japanese initiative, to a certain extent; 27.9.2009

2) The Lesson from Japan – on being grateful and political survival; 11.9.2009

3) The Criminalisation of War – the double standards; 29.5.2008

(A) At this juncture, and now that you are not the PM, I (and probably many others) would be very grateful if you could share your personal assessment of the 'Look East Policy'.

(B) Should the depressed victims of war in the middle east and Africa suffer quietly like the Japanese and hope for recovery several decades later, since whether they like it or not, might is always right?

2. *udayraj*

February 8, 2010 at 1:14 pm | [Permalink](#)

Yes, war=crime but what to do when hitler like people go to war? then war against them is a necessary war.

3. *moderato*

October 19, 2008 at 9:59 pm | [Permalink](#)

Dearest Tun,

Regarding the nuclear (atom bom) in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, my eldest boy (Form 5 in Sekolah Kebangsaan) told me that it was because USA needed to test the atom bomb, so they used the Pearl Harbour attack as the reason to test (bomb) them on Hiroshima. The damages were huge and unexpected. Thus when Japan insisted not to surrender, they bombed Nagasaki, but tis time, a smaller amount was used, so the impact was lesser. Because of these bombing, US felt sorry and assisted Japan to develop its nation. Today, Japan is one of the powerful country in the world because they worked hard and learned from these terrible mistakes.

Wow, a Form 5 student can interpret and create such story from the information through internet. Anak-anak muda Malaysia zaman ini are so much knowledgeable than I were at their age. It is the multisuper corridor (MSC) initiated by Tun that anak-anak muda Malaysia dapat memahirkan diri dgn melayari pelbagai maklumat dalam internet.

Once again, I thank Tun for leading us towards WAWASAN 2020. Thank you so much Tun.

4. *dal*

August 31, 2008 at 11:45 am | [Permalink](#)

Salaam Tun; Salaam semua.

Apa yang orang tua ni buat termasuk juga kedalam amar maaruf nahi munkar; ringkasnya termasuk IBADAH ... ibadah besar.

Manusia diturunkan ke bumi berbekalkan benih kebintangan, kebuasan, keiblisian dan ketuhanan (Ihya Ulumuddin)

Kebintangan: itu seperti sifat nak senang, nak malas-malas, kelamin bebas (nafsu shahwat) dll.

Kebuasan: itu seperti sadistik, menguasai, kehancuran, kezaliman dll.

Keiblisian: itu seperti licik bermuslihat jahat, tipu fitnah tepat di luar lincung di dalam, haq dikatakan salah batil dipaparkan benar, dll

Ketuhanan: itu keruhanian, roh; (itu sahaja)

Dengan mengharamkan peperangan, dengan memulakan gerakannya, dengan membelokkan atau membentuk minda dunia ke arah ini (haramkan perang),

dengan melabur tenaga kedalam usaha ini, dengan sekurang-kurangnya bersetuju kepada kefahaman ini; itu sudah menjadi satu ibadah kifayah.

Amar maaruf: melarang dari berbunuhan itu kerja suruhan ketuhanan keruhanian; mengajak kepada segala kebaikan.

Tiga sifat lagi itu: hanya mengajak kepada kerusakan dan kebinasaan.

Sungguh. Memang peperangan mesti diharamkan. Criminalise war. Ayuh kita.

5. *DelimaMasamManis*

August 19, 2008 at 1:00 pm | [Permalink](#)

Asalamualaikum wbt,

Hanya sekadar renungan bersama:-

Saya dahulu suka menonton tv cerita gusti (WWF) Pada masa itu saya masih budak, pada pandangan saya masa itu pengusti2 itu sangat hebat kerana mereka tahan dipukul dan dihempas. (Termasuk ahli keluarga percaya dengan apa yang mereka lihat itu).

Bila dewasa pada suatu hari saya ikut bersama keluarga menonton tv cerita gusti (WWF) saya dapati bahawa pengusti2 tersebut telah tersilap langkah dalam pergerakan mereka. (Mereka hanya berlakon)

Apa yang saya lihat itu saya sampaikan kepada ahli keluarga.. saya terangkan kepada mereka tentang lakonan pengusti2 itu akhirnya kami sekeluarga sudah tidak minat menonton cerita gusti itu lagi sampai sekarang.

Malangnya saya telah terpedaya selama 20 tahun kerana percaya dengan pengusti itu (kehebatan mereka). Saya percaya kehebatan2 yang mereka tunjukan ini semuanya adalah kebanyakannya palsu.

Semoga ada kebaikan dari cerita saya ini untuk pengajaran.. semua

sekian,

terima kasih

6. *DelimaMasamManis*

July 15, 2008 at 2:49 pm | [Permalink](#)

Asalamualaikum wbt,  
Apa khabar hari ni..? sihat...  
Saya setuju dengan pandangan tun tentang perkara ini.  
adalah amat menyedihkan bila kebenaran & keadilan tidak dapat ditegakkan..  
bagi yang telah menjadi mangsa peperangan.  
manakala keamanan di jadikan modal oleh pihak tertentu bagi mencapai  
objectif mereka.  
Masa kini peperangan bukan hanya menggunakan senjata semata2 tetapi  
zaman ini peperangan sudah masuk bersekala besar.. contoh maksud saya  
ialah dari segi ekonomi dengan menyerang menggunakan mata wang.. yang  
kita tidak jangka boleh berlaku..saya yakin ada banyak cara lagi yang akan  
mereka boleh buat.  
sekian,  
terima kasih

7. *noriyati*

June 24, 2008 at 11:26 pm | [Permalink](#)

Assalamualaikum Tun,  
Via this blog I would like to vow that I support Tun. I want peace not war.  
And I plead to all Malaysians to support this campaign.  
“We may feel safe from war now. But we must remember and think about all  
those people who now face the prospect of being bombed and rocketed, of  
having their heads and limbs torn from their bodies, of being killed. That they  
are non-combatants and have done no one any harm does not seem to matter to  
the warmongers. They will suffer all the same.” – Tun

Source: <http://chedet.cc/blog/?p=25>