

30. How do we stop our governments from going to war?

Statement:	Agree = (+) Disagree = (-)
<p><i>Esther Mwaura-Muiru (Kenya):</i> First of all, we must demand to understand the amount of resources our governments are using to go to war. And we must not just understand our own governments, and we must understand the governments of the world. We must have the figures put on the table. Figures are not enough. I think there should be a way to take up actions, and the best way to vote out most of the governments in the world and only bring into power individuals and people who have values in human. I think for me, my radical approach on how to stop all governments to go to power, bring more women in power. A woman, whether she's from north, south, west and east, will not go on the front line to kill, because she will remember about her own children. Men do. I think we need to bring many, many women. At the minimum, if we did have at least 50 percent of all the governments composed of women, I am convinced, and I would want to be held accountable if this does not happen, that we are going to have no war. Governments full of women cannot war. We must bring women into the positions of power, to determine the priorities of where development should go. And I insist that women must be in the political spaces so that the war can stop.</p>	
<p><i>Mayank Mehta (India):</i> I have to continue with my previous line of answers to this, rather thoughts to this. The reason there is war is the first question that you have to address. Why are the governments going to war? Why are they getting involved? And, why human beings? At the end the government and things, that whenever there are wars, human beings are involved. Why are they going to war? And I think that is where the solution has to come from, you can't just say, that the government should stop and we should [agitate impairment], it's easy to say. And I believe that's the short-term solution, when you see some, whichever country belongs to, you are going to about to indulge or engage in war. It's easy to say, "Okay, let's protest" and you should not go to war and so on. And at the same time people come up with, and I can come up with some scenario when we can say, what you do if the war is inflicted on you and we have to defend, and so on and so forth. So, the answer to that lies in education, which we start very early. Everybody should be taught right from the school, that war, we should be not thinking in terms of war. We should be thinking of these things in terms of, how many people are being injured? How many people are being forced to suffer? When we start thinking of people being forced to suffer, people who are put in harms away, when you think on those terms then we'll figure out naturally about preventing wars and preventing governments from going to war. It's like saying, imagine all of us have such strong desire to prevent wars, as we have desire to eat. There's no need to convince ourselves that we should eat, we just go for it. Same thing we should educate ourselves to that level where the first reaction in us to any situation involve in violence is to say, "No," just prevent that. When that is in our blood, lack of violence and peace is in our blood, its immediate reaction is not to be violent but to be peaceful, this question will resolve very naturally because governments are after all made up of people.</p>	
<p><i>Avi Primor (Israel):</i> It is quite an interesting fact that there has never been a war between two democracies. One can think about it for a long time and try to find some counter evidence, but there has been no war between two democracies. There have been wars between two dictatorships, or between a dictatorship and a democracy, but never between two democracies. That means we need democracy. This is a means to avoid war. But why have there been no wars between democracies? Because democracies are influenced by the public opinion. And the public does not want war. The public opinion in a democracy cannot so easily be influenced by official propaganda as the public in dictatorships. In a democracy where everything is open, where you have freedom of speech, where you can follow the world news, can read newspapers, can listen to opinions, can be of different opinions, it is not easy to create effective propaganda, especially when this propaganda is to lead into a catastrophic war. That is why the population in democracies is able to prevent wars, and why it has been impossible for two democracies to wage war against each other. Thus, if we have really democratic governments, and this only depends on us, we will probably be able to prevent war.</p>	

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<p><i>Anuradha Mittal (USA):</i> Well, when we saw the aggression in Iraq started with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, millions of people marched around the world to the extent that even New York Times and Kofi Annan called this anti-war movement or actually the peace movement, basically the other superpower. And this superpower in some ways, one could say, did not stop the war. But at the same time, when millions of people marched on the day in February, we sent a very clear signal that this war is not just, that this war does not have the approval of humanity. It is an unjust war, it's an act of aggression, it's an immoral invasion and today an immoral colonization of a country. But in terms of other ways that we can also stop the war not just by taking away the credibility, we have to gain over the credibility from the Bush administrations by denouncing its actions in Afghanistan and in Iraq. But we do know that war has become a way of oiling the wheels of this economic system, which -- the invasion of Iraq is really about the interest of the Bush administration. And I feel one way to deal with it is also through a preemptive strike. No, I am not talking about Bush's idea of a preemptive strike; but if it is the way to grease the wheels of an economic system, what if each one of use refuse to go to work that day? What if we bring the economy to a standstill? What if teachers say we will not be teaching in the classrooms, but we will be out in the streets with our children, with the school students? That can say no to this war. What if the people who run the railways say, "Well, no train is going to move which is going to allow further movement of goods?" What if the truckers say that no truck is going to cross the border till this war stops? What if our soldiers walk away saying, "We will not fight this unjust war." So I feel like what we have to do is launch a preemptive strike around the world when the powers and the superpowers decide that they want to go and launch war so that they can continue and build their empires further.</p>	
<p><i>Michael P. Totten (USA):</i> We need to be proactive about peace and build trust relationships. In the absence of being positively engaged with each other, we leave open the opportunity for dissention and conflicts to occur. We need to have continuous sharing and exchanging of ideas. We need to promote a supportive -- encourage diversity in the world rather than moving towards a sense of a homogenized world, and those who disagree with the homogenization are considered to be conflict promoters. There is too many positive ways that we can build relationships, and it seems that the lack of conversation and sharing and exchange of ideas, it allows for too few of the leaders to shape the dialogue in black and white terms. A diversity of view is allowed for teasing out the shades of complexity that require much more sophisticated responses than simply moving to war as a solution. It simply has been -- or certainly as the world has continued to technologically spend more on weaponry, has become more vulnerable in using that weaponry, when in fact we should be spending our time developing more sophisticated ways of transparently sharing our concerns so that we can resolve those conflicts in a way that nurtures and grows that trust, rather than undermines it.</p>	
<p><i>Lesego Rampolokeng (South Africa):</i> As long as humans are creatures of aggression, there is no stopping any government from going to war. Human beings have this definite rotten need to fill themselves and power at the expense of others. And as long as you recognize a government as your own and you are yourself a creature of violence, you're a creature that deems itself fit to stand on the shoulders of others that deems itself fit to bathe in other people's blood, there is no stopping of government from going to war. The only way to stop that government from going to war is a total destruction of that government, the total absolute overhaul of structures that make it possible to have governments that are in a position to wage war in the first place. If a government is emasculated, if a government has its knees cut out underneath it, if it is unable to engage in acts of aggression against others, then there is no need to stop it from going to war because it'll never go to war, it's unable to go to war. As soon as we make it possible for governments to wield military power over first their citizens and on the citizens of the world, then there is no way anybody is going to stop their government from going to war. What we need is governments that do not have the need for war in the first place. And, there never is a need for war if the situation is one of harmony of human dignity, of respect for human life, if we all of us could be able and this is a very romantic dream. If all of us can be able to be in a position where is all existing on one solo plane, then there will never be any need for war and there is no need to have a government that wages war. So, there is no need to stop that government from going to war, because the government will not be able to engage in the war in first place.</p>	