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THE REITH LECTURES 2018: THE MARK OF CAIN

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Reith Lecturer: Margaret MacMillan

Lecture 4

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

ANITA ANAND: Welcome to Stormont in Belfast. This is the home of the devolved government in Northern Ireland - although there's hasn't been an administration for a year and a half now. But it was here that the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998 after 30 years of conflict, often referred to as "The Troubles." That violence left more than 3600 dead and thousands more injured. This is the fourth out of five of Professor Margaret Macmillan's Reith Lectures. In her series, called the Mark of Cain. And she's been addressing the impact of war on humanity and exploring the complex relationship between war, culture and the citizen. Now she's going to be assessing how the law and international agreements have attempted to address conflict. Can war really ever be managed? Her lecture is called "*Managing the Unmanageable*." Please welcome the 2018 BBC Reith Lecturer, Professor Margaret Macmillan.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: I want to start by talking about someone that you will probably most of you know and that is Betty Williams. Betty Williams started her journey as an activist – and it's a journey that continued for many years – when she worked with a Protestant priest in the early 70s in an anti-violence campaign.

A key moment for her came in 1976 when she saw three children killed. Betty Williams started to petition for peace and founded what became the Community for Peace People in Northern Ireland. Its goals were to bring peace in Northern Ireland, but also around the world, and its first declaration – and I quote – said:

‘We reject the use of the bomb and the bullet and all the techniques of violence. We dedicate ourselves to working with our neighbours near and far, day in and day out, to build that peaceful society in which the tragedies we have known are a bad memory and a continuing warning’.

In 1977, the following year, Betty Williams and Mairead Maguire won the Nobel Peace Prize for their work. There have been so many attempts by brave and idealistic people over the centuries to end war and, nevertheless, so many wars. I want to talk about another woman as I explore this subject of how we try and control war and perhaps prevent it. She came from a different time and a different place before the First World War: a woman called Bertha von Suttner who came from an aristocratic background. But there was no money and so, as young women did in those days, she took a job that was open to her – which wasn’t much – and became a governess, working in a family in Vienna. And in rather a common story, the son of the household fell in love with her because she was very beautiful and very vivacious. His parents – and that was also common – thought this was a bad match and she was forced to leave.

She went to Paris and became secretary to a businessman, a man who was an engineer who’d made a fortune in developing explosives. His name was Alfred Nobel. He felt guilty that he had made his fortune in explosives - initially they’d been used for mining, but over the years they’d come to be used for increasingly deadly weapons - and he once said to Bertha von Suttner, “I wish I could produce a substance or machine of such frightful efficacy for wholesale devastation that wars should, therefore, become altogether impossible.” Well Bertha kept up that acquaintance for the rest of her life. She did marry her beloved – the parents eventually gave in – and they moved for some reason to the Caucasus. He turned out not to be much of a breadwinner – he taught riding and occasionally gave French lessons – and she really became the person who had to keep the household going. She took up writing and increasingly she devoted her writing to the cause of peace. After seeing the results of a war between Russia and Turkey firsthand, because it had been fought in the Caucasus, she wrote a novel, a very famous novel at the time, called *Lay Down Your Arms* and it was enormously successful. It was an attack on war and the horrors that war can create.

Leo Tolstoy, who was also devoted to the cause of peace, described her as a woman of – and I quote – “deep convictions but untalented.” Nevertheless, she was very, very effective. And among other things she did was persuade Alfred Nobel to dedicate a very large part of his very large fortune to the Nobel Peace Prize which he founded in 1901, the prize that later on Betty Williams was going to win.

She herself was one of the first winners. She lobbied shamelessly for it because she’d run up some rather large debts. She was really (what we’d say in Canada) a piece of work, but a very effective piece of work, and she was part of a long tradition of trying to find ways to prevent war or at least mitigate its worst effects.

And I think it's not entirely a coincidence that a lot of the people who have worked to try and bring about an end to war have been women. Women have long, I think, felt a particular interest in war because it is their sons and their fathers and their husbands, their loved ones who go off and fight. In the 1920s and 1930s women played in English speaking countries a very large part in peace movements. There was a Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and more recently we saw the women's camp at Greenham Common in the UK which was attempting to prevent the deployment of new American weapons.

There have also been those who have said such attempts and such crusades are futile. Was Bertha von Suttner wrong? Was Alfred Nobel wrong? Was Betty Williams wrong? War, which I define very, very briefly as the application of organised violence to gain ends and to force others to do what you want, war is still with us. We have to understand it because it is so much part of the fabric of our society and it continues to be part, alas, of the fabric of many societies.

We look at the world at the moment and we see an increasing capacity for both high level and low level conflicts. There are wars that go on, some of them seeming not to have any end in sight, in places such as Yemen and Afghanistan and Sudan and the Great Lakes area of Africa. At the other extreme we're seeing the continuing development of the weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical, biological – and increasingly we're seeing war move into new dimensions such as cyber; the capacity now of the powers to wage cyberwars is increasing exponentially. And so as an historian, I would say if we're going to try and understand the present and have some hope of dealing with the future, we need to look at the past. We need to try to understand war - how it starts, how it continues, and how it ends.

One of the many paradoxes of war, of course, is that even though it is the application of violence and even though we often see in wars there are no bounds, we keep on trying to set those bounds. We keep on trying to find rules of war, we keep on trying to limit war, we keep on trying to find ways in which we can try and make war less dreadful than it is.

Those attempts go back of course as far as war itself and war goes back, I think, right into the very beginnings of the organisation of human society. We try to justify it, we try to control the manners of fighting, we try to set up rules to protect civilians, we try to have rules for prisoners of war. We try of course to prevent it, we try to stop it, and if we're being very optimistic we try to outlaw it altogether.

I'd like to start, as I look at our attempts to control war, by looking at how we have tried to justify it. Thucydides, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of war in the Peloponnesian War, said: "The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must." Centuries later Machiavelli said something very similar. He said: "War is just, when it is necessary." And who of course defines the necessary can vary from culture to culture, but when people want to fight they usually find some reason for doing it.

But even powerful nations and powerful people have tended to look for justifications for war, which suggests to me that there is something so appalling about war and such a denial of our common humanity that people do need to find reasons why they should fight and why those reasons might be just. And that is true I think of all societies.

In 1122 BC in what later on was going to become China, there was a ruler called the Duke of Zhou who conquered a much more sophisticated and advanced neighbour, and he argued that the reason he had waged war on his neighbour – the kingdom of Shang – was that the King of Shang was a drunkard, he oppressed his subjects and that, therefore, he no longer deserved to be a king. Heaven had withdrawn its mandate and the Duke of Zhou, therefore, was justified in attacking and overthrowing that king and annexing his territory.

Religion or heaven has often been used in justifying war - we think of the Crusades – but it has also over the centuries tried to limit it. Christianity made many attempts to define what were just and unjust wars, and again these are not just confined to Christianity, they are from around the world.

When Plato, who was growing up in the Peloponnesian Wars, was thinking about the just society, he said “Wars should be fought knowing that the two sides will eventually have to be reconciled, so that as you fight a war you should not do things that make reconciliation impossible.”

That idea was taken up by St Augustine in the 4th and 5th centuries AD who reluctantly accepted war as part of the human situation, but he said at least it should be limited in its cruelty and it should aim for peace. And I quote from one of the many things he said about war: “It makes a great difference by which causes under which authorities men undertake the wars that must be waged” and he said – again I quote – “Peace as has often been repeated is the end of war.” And so how you end wars is as important in determining how you fight them.

We have over time developed principles, often more honoured of course in the breach than in the observance, about war; that war should be a last resort, not a first resort; that it should be waged by a properly constituted authority and then of course we disagree deeply about what a properly constituted authority is. There should be clear grounds for war. It should be about perhaps redressing rights that have been violated or defence against unjust demands. But again those can be twisted to suit anyone. In the First World War every participant declared that it was fighting only to defend itself against unjust demands and unjust attacks.

Wars should also, we've tried to at least in our principles believe, wars should be proportionate to the ends - that you should not use excessive force to win a war when you can win it with less means; and there have been attempts, many of them, to distinguish between those who are actually doing the fighting and those who are the non-combatants. But the expansion of war has tended to bring more and more of us in and the idea that there is something called the nation of which we're all a part has tended to mean that when nations fight, they are fighting not just the soldiers and the airmen and the sailors on the other side, but they are in fact fighting the whole of the other society.

We've also tried, in addition to looking at proper grounds for wars and proper reasons for fighting wars, we've tried to limit war once it is fought and there have been many rules about what happens during a war.

There has been a long tradition in human society of truces during war, some of them official. In classical Greece there were truces during the Olympic Games, which were more often than not deserved. In the Middle Ages, the church, the Christian church of the West tried to limit local wars partly to prevent misery but also because it preferred that their warriors concentrate on the crusades, which it was also trying to promote. But it did institute a number of practices, which again were mostly observed. From the 11th century onwards, the church sponsored and encouraged something called 'the truce of god' saying that there should be no fighting at specific times: for example, from Saturday evening through Sunday, through to Monday morning there should be no fighting so that people could concentrate on more spiritual matters. Other days were added as time went by – religious holidays, holy holidays – when there should be no fighting. It tried, with limited success, to get rid of tournaments which it saw as simple, brutal applications of violence as the knights fought each other. And such truces have been observed, sometimes unofficially, right up into the present age.

You've probably all heard the stories of the Christmas truce in 1914 in the first year of the Great War, the First World War, when on large parts of the Western Front the soldiers stopped firing out at each other and in some cases climbed out of their trenches and met in No Man's Land and exchanged Christmas presents, sang hymns together, and apparently on one occasion played a football game together. That the authorities didn't like – they felt it undermined the fighting spirit - and so such truces were discontinued. But there is plenty of evidence that during the First World War - and it seems to have happened in other wars as well - that at certain times on certain parts of the trenches both sides had a live and let live understanding: they would not fire at each other unless someone started it, and when people went out from their trenches to bury their dead the other side more often than not would respect it. And there's evidence that quite often soldiers do not willingly fire at those on the other side unless they're actually forced to do so.

There was also an attempt to limit those who could be attacked and killed in war. In the Middle Ages again, the church had something called 'the peace of god' which protected certain types of people and things: the churches were to be protected and not destroyed; olive trees were not to be cut down; the poor, the farmers or the merchants who helped to make life possible should not be killed and should not be attacked. And later centuries saw renewed attempts to try and limit those who could properly be attacked in war.

One of the most unfortunate things I think that happened was that such attempts, certainly in European history, were confined to other Europeans. The uncivilised parts of the world, as they talked about it in those days, the uncivilised parts of the world were not subject to the same rules and that was something that was going to continue up into the present age. And there were rules about how civilians in occupied territory should be treated, rules about surrender, rules about how prisoners of war should be treated, complex rules about how you would exchange prisoners of war, even shopping lists with prices if you wanted to buy back a prisoner of war. In 1675, for example, France and Spain had an agreement setting the rates. Officers of course cost more than ordinary soldiers.

The treatment of prisoners of war is also something which has attracted a huge body of practice in law. In the 19th and 20th centuries there have been a series of agreements about how prisoners of war should be treated and the relatively new institution founded in the middle of the 19th

century, the Red Cross, was given authority by many participants, participating powers, to do such things as transmitting letters and parcels for prisoners.

Again, the trouble is we can always set the rules, but it's how they're observed and there has to be a willingness to observe them. And it was striking in a very dreadful way in the Second World War that the forces of Nazi Germany did observe the rules about prisoners of war in the West because they thought the prisoners in the West came from comparable racial groups, but in the East where their prisoners came from the Russians, from the Ukrainians, from the Slavic peoples, they treated them appallingly because they saw such people as sub-human.

Of course sometimes more ambitiously we've tried to get rid of war altogether, we've tried to find ways of settling international disputes, and that has usually happened after a major crisis. As human beings, we tend to focus better when something dreadful has just happened and we tend to worry about how to settle issues once something appalling has happened.

Much of the thought of Confucius in ancient China came because he lived through a period called "the warring states" period where different governments waged war on each other and life was miserable for ordinary people. After 1648, when the Thirty Years' War in the centre of Europe finally came to an end, there was an attempt to set up an international system by which states did not meddle within each other's affairs, in which they dealt with each other on an equal basis. After the Napoleonic Wars, which caused such devastation in Europe, again there were attempts to set up peace organisations, ways of outlawing war. In 1816, just after the war had ended, just after The Battle of Waterloo, a group of British dissenters and religious people established a society for the promotion of permanent and universal peace, and there were all sorts of local peace societies – often staffed and organised and encouraged by particular church groups such as The Quakers and the Mennonites.

In the 19th century, in Europe in particular, there was considerable optimism that the world might be moving away from war or at least what they called again the civilised parts of the war. There was fear because war was getting bigger, it was getting more deadly, it was possible now to put much bigger armies into the field. The economies of Western Europe particularly were now so rich they could sustain wars for a very long time, they could keep the soldiers in the field, and the weapons of course – thanks to people like Mr Alfred Nobel – were getting much more deadly.

But what was also happening was there was a much more informed public opinion: people were becoming more literate, they were beginning to take more of an interest in the affairs of their own countries. Now that could sometimes lead to war. Sometimes public opinion would push their own governments in the direction of war, but not necessarily. The growing interest in peace in Europe was also fed by the growing sophistication, if you like, of European publics by their growing literacy. And a lot of Europeans looked at what was happening to Europe in the 19th century, particularly as the century wore on, and said we are making such extraordinary progress, we are developing such extraordinary economic power, we dominate so much of the world – which of course Europe did in those days either directly through its empires or indirectly through informal empires - we have made such advances in science, in technology, we don't need to do war anymore; war is something that less civilised people do.

There's a wonderful Austrian writer called Stefan Zweig who wrote a memoir as the Second World War was starting, and he was in exile because he was a Jew and he was a liberal and had to leave Nazi Germany when it annexed Austria. And he wrote his memoir of the world of his youth and he said in it, among things, 'People – this was before 1914 – 'People', he said, 'no more believed in the possibility of barbaric relapses such as wars between the nations of Europe than they believed in ghosts and witches.' When he finished his memoir, he committed suicide because he could not bear to see what had happened to his beloved Europe. But that was the view before 1914 – that Europe was so advanced, so progressive, things had changed so much – that war was no longer sensible or possible or likely.

People also looked at the economic interlocking, the ways in which the economies of Europe and the world were interlocking - and this was the great age of globalisation just before the First World War – and they said countries that trade with each other won't fight each other and European countries will realise that they've all got so much more to gain by trading than by fighting. One of the great ironies of the First World War was that Germany and Great Britain were each other's largest trading partners. It did not alas stop them from going to war with each other, but that was the hope before 1914. And there were also fears – and fear played a very important part in this – that war was now so dreadful and could be fought on such a scale and could be fought for so long that it would destroy or severely damage the societies that fought it.

There was a fascinating man called Ivan Bloch, a Polish Jew who had moved to Russia before the First World War and made a fortune in financing, had built many of the Russian railways, and rather like Alfred Nobel he became worried about the state of the world and he turned his considerable fortune and his considerable intellect to looking at war and he wrote a massive six-volume book on the future of war. And in it, he said 'The European societies now have the capacity to fight wars on a very large scale.' The European powers now have the capacity to fight wars on a very large scale for a very long time and what they will do is end up with a stalemate because both sides are so evenly balanced that neither can defeat the other but both can hold the other off, prevent victory.' He foresaw really in a very clear way what was going to happen in the First World War. He predicted it and by and large he was absolutely right.

He believed that if he pointed this out to people, that if he kept telling people that they were running the risk of such a war, that they were going to destroy themselves and their own societies if they got into a conflict which could not be resolved easily, that they would get into a conflict that could last for years - he believed if he told people this that they would listen and they would believe him. "There will be no war in the future", he told his British publisher, "for it has become impossible now that it is clear that war means suicide." And so there were hopeful signs before 1914 and certainly many Europeans believed that war was something they would no longer do.

And there were in fact developments in international thinking. The very word 'internationalism' begins to be used in this period: the development of international NGOs, Non-Governmental Organisations like the Red Cross, which becomes a very important international organisation, and there was faith that eventually, eventually international law would develop.

One thing that was beginning to really make a difference in international relations was arbitration where two powers who have a dispute agree to go to an impartial arbiter and agree that they will be bound by the decision of that arbiter. And a number of arbitrations took place in the 19th century. There were some 300 arbitrations – these voluntary submissions of your dispute to a third party and an agreement to abide by the decision – some 300 between 1794 and 1914. More than half of those were after 1890. And so Europeans and others around the world could see, they thought, a trend developing that more and more nations were prepared to submit their disputes.

There were also other laws being made – Geneva conventions on the treatment of the wounded in battle – but again they didn't apply, and this was a terrible defect, to what were called 'uncivilised nations'. Let me just quote from the British Manual of Military Law in 1914 which puts this very clearly. He said, 'When there are wars between the civilised and uncivilised, there are no rules. What happens is at the discretion of the civilised commander.' And I will quote from the final rather chilling bit. 'And, they said, 'such rules of justice and humanity as recommend themselves in the particular circumstances of the case.' In other words, the less civilised people don't have the rules. If the civilised commander who happens to be there decides to treat them well, then it's his decision, but he will decide on the merits of the case.

There were also peace movements in the period before 1914: a large middle class peace movement and then of course a large working class peace movement in the Second International, which was an association which grew in size year by year of international labour organisations and international and national socialist parties. And they had the capacity, they thought, in the Second International to stop war because they represented so many of the working classes and what they talked about was if a war came not fighting. And if they had actually persuaded their members not to fight those massive European armies couldn't have formed because the men would not have come back from the reserves to fight. The railways wouldn't have run, the factories wouldn't have run, the ships couldn't have been loaded and unloaded. And so there was hope that now finally ordinary people had it within their capacity to actually stop war.

And under that pressure – and partly because they feared it – the powers did agree to meet in two conferences at the Hague before 1914. The first one met in 1899 and it was summoned at the wish of the young Russian tsar, Nicholas II, who was worried about the high costs of an arms race, knew that his country needed development, feared that Russia would not be able to keep up with its neighbours if it got into a deadly arms race, and he persuaded the other heads of state to come or to send representatives to the Hague. The trouble was they came in the wrong spirit: his uncle, Edward VII of Britain, said "The conference is the greatest nonsense and rubbish I ever heard of", and the Germans sent in their delegation a professor who'd just published a very forceful polemic against the idea of peace movements altogether. And so those who came, I think were not really dedicated to making a lasting attempt to outlaw war, to moderate war.

That first conference made a few advances: they agreed not to develop asphyxiating gas - that of course was thrown out the window as soon as the First World War started; they agreed to ban the dum-dum bullet, which was a particularly dreadful type of bullet invented by the British which exploded after it had entered your body and caused dreadful exit wounds; and they agreed that

you couldn't throw projectiles out of balloons. And so peace was not actually moving ahead very much.

They did agree finally at a second Hague conference in 1907 to set up a permanent court of arbitration, which was progress. There was a third conference scheduled for 1915 which, for obvious reasons, didn't take place. And the trouble was that in Europe, as there are today in the world, there were still people who thought we could use war as a weapon. The military planners, some of the statesmen, still thought that war was something they could use, still thought that war was something that could be managed, still thought that they could fight a short, quick war. The Germans had a wonderful war plan which if it had worked would have defeated France in 40 days and then Russia, they thought, France's ally, would have capitulated. They continued to think in terms of the attack even though the evidence increasingly was that attacking was hideously costly and probably was not going to succeed. There were wars – the American Civil War, the Russo-Japanese War, the wars in the Balkans in 1912 and 1913 – which showed that war was becoming almost unbearably costly. Well of course the First World War showed exactly what war had become and, as with all great catastrophes, again there were renewed attempts after that war to try and find ways of, if not outlawing war, at least trying to bring it under some sort of control, trying to prevent some of the more ghastly effects.

Woodrow Wilson, the American president, brought his idea of a League of Nations to Europe and a number of Europeans enthusiastically supported that idea – a league which would provide collective security for its members and use its collective powers to deal with those who attacked members of the league. The idea was that it would become difficult, if not possible, for nations to attack each other because the league would step in and prevent it. And there were disarmament conferences between the two world wars – a massive naval conference in Washington, a big disarmament conference in Geneva – and in 1928 there was a highly idealistic agreement among many nations, most of them signed it – the Briand-Kellogg Pact – which outlawed war altogether as a means of dealing between nations. Well we know what all those attempts amounted to.

And again after the Second World War, another great catastrophe in human affairs, we – and I say collectively humanity – we looked again at how we might outlaw war: we set up the United Nations; we set up the Bretton Woods organisation to try and create economic well-being among the peoples of the world, knit them more closely together so that they would not feel like going to war with each other; we had trials of those who had been guilty of making war (or so it was argued) in Nuremberg and Tokyo, and those indictments included at those trials crimes against peace and crimes against humanity. And since 1945 we have seen a whole series of conventions: more Geneva conventions dealing with the treatment of civilians and prisoners, abolition or attempts to abolish certain kinds of weapon, a 1977 Ottawa convention on anti-personnel mines. And I think there have been attempts not to just bring war under control but to make us think of each other as human beings and treat each other better - in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, for example, or in the Genocide Convention.

There have been repeated attempts at arms limitations, as there were during the Cold War, but in the end I suspect what really kept the peace in the Cold War was mutually assured destruction: the knowledge that both sides had if they started anything, they would end up being destroyed as well.

So where are we today? Well, I think we're in some ways as we were in the period before 1914. We have challenges internationally, we have low level continuing conflicts –some of the ones I mentioned earlier – and we still I think face the possibility of state to state war; there are still those who talk as if states can fight each other and somehow hope to win. And war is moving into new dimensions. As I said, it's moving into cyberspace. We have new types of weapons developing. We have now killer robots, which I've just discovered. We're still trying to control war, we're still planning for it, we're still hoping to prevent it. And I wonder – and it's a question for us all – are we any closer to that peaceful society? And I quote again the words of that first declaration of the Northern Ireland peace people; 'In which the tragedies we have known are bad memory and a continuing warning.' Let's all think about that as we think about what we face in the next decades. Thank you.

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

ANITA ANAND: Margaret thank you very much indeed for that very thought provoking speech. I know there'll be a lot of questions from the audience. Let's start over here at the front please.

ANNE DEVLIN: My name is Anne Devlin. I'm a playwright. We have emerged from 30 years of war here and we haven't actually, according to our present circumstances, really got the benefits of the peace. And it seems to me that in your analysis, that perhaps I wondered if you would consider the resources that might be used to create the benefits of the peace which are to do with when there are two sides in a conflict you need to know what the stories from both sides are and perhaps money could be spent on the resources to allow people to share in the peace?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Peace is so elusive in some ways and so difficult to build, and you would know I think in this country perhaps better than many of us firsthand what that means because I think peace, to begin with, you have to have an end to the fighting. I mean you have to bring about an end to the violence and that often takes political will from within but also, in the case of the Good Friday Agreement, support from outside. And that at least provides the structure within which other things can happen, but it's only – and I would agree with you – the first step.

It seems to me that what is needed is what has happened, and is happening in many countries, and that is that very difficult process of truth and reconciliation, and I think we have no hope of building peaces that work unless we understand the others. We have to understand ourselves as well, but I think we have to understand what others are thinking and feeling. And that seems to me something that can only be done incrementally, very slowly, and has to be a grassroots effort. And I think that did happen quite successfully in South Africa but it's always a question of timing and knowing when to do it because if you do it too soon, you just open what can be very fresh wounds. But I do think ... My own feeling is, but many would disagree with me, that pushing it underground and never talking about it is not a good idea; that sooner or later that if

you want to build a lasting peace what you have to do is build that capacity for understanding and a willingness to reach across your own preconceptions and your own assumptions to understand what others are thinking and feeling. It seems to me that is the only way to build a lasting peace..

ANITA ANAND: Can I ask both of you? Have we had enough truth and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and do you, both of you, believe there should be more?

ANNE DEVLIN: Actually there was an opportunity here in December 2013 when Richard Haass suggested in dealing with contending with the past that they set up an archive; that this archive was to establish a means of us all sharing in the untold stories. Our lives will not change until we have those stories.

ANITA ANAND: What do you think, Margaret?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Well I'm an historian and I tend to think history should be something that illuminates and helps people to live together, not drives them apart, and history is so often used for the wrong ends, I think. You know, the one-sided histories, the narratives which only tell one side of the story can be very powerful and I think can be very dangerous. And I think Richard Haass, for whom I have a great deal of respect, is right: that it's necessary to preserve these stories and keep them and others may be able to use them in the future. You may not be able to use them right away, but I think to keep them and to have an archive and to make it possible for people to research. And it has happened and I think you know you do get examples. I mean I was very struck that the Germans and the French have written a school textbook together in which they talk about their common history, and we know how difficult that history has been but it seems to me this is a very positive step forward. There was an attempt to do something between Israel-Palestine which alas has failed because the divisions now are too deep and too bitter, but the attempt in itself I think was a good thing.

MARIE FITSTELF: My name is Marie Fitstelf and I'm the director of an international programme for professionals in Boston dealing with issues of conflict in about sixty different countries. And I'm beginning to wonder perhaps we're looking at it not very productively. Most of the senior militarists, both legal and illegal that I talk to, actually think they're creating peace and that the only way they can do it is actually through the use of methods of war. What if we took seriously that that was what they were trying to do and reversed the amount of money that we spend on military budgets, which as we know well is nearly 50 per cent of the budget of many developing countries? It's approximately I think 98 per cent that goes to military methods and 2 per cent to learning about how we prevent wars, how we manage them, how do we include people, how do we create laws, etcetera. So what if we stopped putting the money, follow the money – the 98 per cent into military methods of creating peace - and put them into more productive ways of creating peace? Almost every war we have today could have been prevented by better methods.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: , I agree with you it's the question of how to do it, and I think one of the more appalling statistics is that Africa has received much less in aid than it has spent on weapons from outside the country and those profits have gone to factories and governments

outside Africa. But as long as people feel that they need the weapons and as long as the other institutions aren't there ... I mean I think if we could get rid of the weapons magically people would still find ways to use violence to get what they want out of other people. I mean in Rwanda a lot of the violence was done not by high tech weapons at all; it was done by machetes and hoes, simply things that people picked up from the fields they were using. And I think the only hope for societies in the long run and the only hope of preventing the strong man (or the strong woman in some cases) from dominating that society simply because they have more weapons and are more ruthless, is to build the institutions and to build the ways of thinking because people have to want to work with each other and they have to have a respect for law. And I think sometimes in the West we are really rather arrogant because we say why can't these countries just be like us immediately. It took us several hundred years to develop the rule of law, to develop constitutional institutions, and we're not always doing that well ourselves. But I mean it has taken a long time and I think these things often are incremental. But with you, I would love to see an end to weapons but I don't see it happening any time soon.

ANITA ANAND: One of the most interesting things you said there, and probably this is true - I don't know whether it's true here and I'd love to hear from people who were involved in The Troubles - some people believe that they are fighting for peace. So I mean if you were fighting, I'd love to know whether was that your motivation? So let's first of all take this question over here.

PETER TAYLOR: Peter Taylor, BBC Panorama. Professor, the theme of your lectures has been war and the various aspects of war and I think your thesis is that it's something that we've always lived with and will continue to live with. The question I'd like to ask is how you define the conflict that has wracked the society in Northern Ireland for three decades? Successive British governments refused to call it a war at the height of the conflict because to do so would give a degree of credibility to those people on the other side or sides who were fighting it. So I would like to know how you would define this particular conflict. Was it a war?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Because I'm not the British government, I can call it what I want, I think, and I would call it a war. And I would call it a civil war. It seemed to me to have all the marks of a civil war: two sides living often very close to each other and often sharing a great deal in common, but divided by a very different concept of what society they would like and both attempting to claim authority over that society. I mean it seems to me a civil war is either about secession - we want out of this particular country and we have reasons for wanting out like the Biafran Civil War - or it's a war saying that my authority is superior to yours or I want a different type of government. And this war here I think had all the hallmarks of a civil war. It was organised, organised violence on both sides; communities divided; civil wars are often more awful if possible to have a scale of awful wars, but civil wars it seems to me are often the most vicious of all because they are family wars and because you cannot believe that the other side doesn't see it the way you do.

ANITA ANAND: does anyone disagree with that? Peter, you want to come back?

(42.34) MARGARET MACMILLAN: I think he may disagree, yes.

ANITA ANAND: Yeah.

PETER TAYLOR: Just to say so you are defining it as a war?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: I would, yeah.

ANITA ANAND: Does anyone reject that definition? Put your hand up if you ... there's a gentleman there at the back. Just tell me why you don't accept that Northern Ireland went through a civil war?

BEN LOWRY: My name is Ben Lowry from *The Belfast News Letter*. It's almost 300 years old. It's the oldest English language daily newspaper in the world. The reason I don't reject it, but I question it, it's very important to remember that Northern Ireland, the scale was very small. It was very vicious, as you say, but there was only one year in which more people died in The Troubles than died in road deaths. The 3600 figure that you cited at the beginning, there were 7500 people killed on the road. So I'm just saying that there's something to be said for the British government's view of Northern Ireland.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yes and I think the British government would have had very good reasons for doing it – partly because various things would have come into play if it had recognised as a war.

But what I think distinguishes a civil war from say gang violence is gangs are fighting over territory, they're fighting over manipulation of drugs or whatever in their particular regions, but in civil wars both sides have – whether or not you agree with it – but they have a concept of what sort of society they would like. They are fighting for something rather than just for advantage. Now those lines often get blurred. I mean if you look at civil wars, they run the gamut from banditry and criminality to this idea that we are somehow fighting for something. And often the same people, like the Bolsheviks, could be both criminal bandits but were also fighting for something. So civil war I think is different from other types of low level violence because there is some project there whether or not you agree with it.

ANITA ANAND: The gentleman said look he doesn't accept it because, I mean to put it brutally, there wasn't a high enough body count for it to count as a war, right? That's what you're saying. Is there something in that?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: I think we may have to disagree on this one because I think once you start doing it on numbers of deaths then it becomes very mechanical and you can say well they haven't reached the 3,000 mark so they're not really a civil war. And I think you can have civil wars often in very small communities. I mean civil wars ... there's a civil war raging at the moment in New Guinea where the deaths are not yet that high, but it seems to me there is these are the wars that tear apart societies and these are the wars about what that society should look like.

ANITA ANAND: Gentleman over there.

RICHARD O'RAWE: Hello, my name is Richard O'Rawe. I am an author and I'm a former member of the IRA. In relation to was it a war or was it not, it most definitely was, and I think all the participants who fought in that war actually believed they were fighting eventually for peace to bring about a more fair, decent society. I was an IRA prisoner and I spent three and a half years on what was called the 'blanket protest'. That was a protest wherein we, the republican prisoners, were locked up in our cells for 24 hours a day, and I spent three and a half years like that. We also had a 'dirty protest' in which we soiled ourselves, and we did so specifically to prove that we were prisoners of war. And the reason we were in that position was that the British government overnight decided that republican prisoners had prisoner of war status up until 1st March 1976. On 1st March 1976, the British government decided everyone's a criminal. So there's a facetious argument to this business of was it a war or was it not. It was a war. The British government recognised that it was a war in a sort of subterranean way, but I mean that's the reality of the situation.

ANITA ANAND: Was it worth it?

RICHARD O'RAWE: No it wasn't. It wasn't worth one life, it wasn't worth one minute in jail.

ANITA ANAND: Thank you very much.

BILLY HUTCHINSON: My name's Billy Hutchinson. I'm a former UVF combatant and spent 16 years in Long Kesh. And obviously from what's been said before me, we were always told that we were fighting a war to bring about peace; it was never about anything else. In terms of Richard, Richard was trying to get a united Ireland, and we were trying to stay part of the United Kingdom, and in terms of Richard we obviously were fighting against each other but we also had to recognise that these people who were fighting against us had a legitimacy to do that. Because we always felt that in war you need to recognise your enemy. We were always told that this was what it was about – that politicians created wars and the soldiers actually fought them. And you know whenever I came here – I'm the leader of the Progressive Unionist Party, which now only has councillors, we don't have anybody in here - but our late leader David Ervine was actually asked this question by NBC about The Troubles here and his question ... or he asked a question back saying: "What became ... what came first: the politics or the war?" You know we need to recognise, you know, that this thing just didn't come about.

ANITA ANAND: *(over)* Can I ... Can I ask you ... Can I ask you the same ...

(48.20) BILLY HUTCHINSON: *(over)* Sorry, I just want to ...

ANITA ANAND: Yeah.

BILLY HUTCHINSON: ... I just want to finish the thing about you know if we're talking about it was more about deaths, you know, the reality is there was a million and a half people here and 3,000 people dead ... died extrapolate that to a population of 250 million and tell us how many people would have been dead.

ANITA ANAND: Right, I take your point, but let me please ask you just the same question that I asked the gentleman over here who was with the IRA. Was it worth it? Do you ...

BILLY HUTCHINSON: I don't ...

ANITA ANAND: Do you ... Do you now look back on that and just think that ... that was ... that was a battle worth fighting?

BILLY HUTCHINSON: Well the point about it is that Richard's organisation didn't achieve anything in terms of their goal of a united Ireland. We remain part of Britain. My view is that all of the deaths in the society you know are regrettable, they shouldn't have happened but they did, but we have to ask the question: what brought it about and why has it prolonged for us?? Because you know like this went on well you know to 94 and we can argue when it started. I mean ...

ANITA ANAND: Okay. Have you ever met each other, both of you? Billy, are you ha...

BILLY HUTCHINSON: No. We know ... Well, yeah.

ANITA ANAND: Richard, do you want to come back on what Billy just said?

RICHARD O'RAWE: You could argue forever I was right or the loyalist guys were right or the republicans were right. The fact of the matter is that the war was fought for nationalist reasons principally. And Billy's right: the IRA were defeated, the IRA did not win this war, and because of that there my view is that the whole thing, as I say, was a waste of time, a waste of life, waste of energy. And funny enough, I had a talk with Peter just prior to the lecture starting and something came into my head and it was about Bobby Sands. Bobby Sands was the first of the hunger ten hunger strikers to die at Long Kesh, a very good friend of mine. Bobby Sands would not have died for the settlement that we ended up with – i.e. The Good Friday Agreement. He was a republican. He died believing that a United Ireland was going to come about and I don't think he'd have done a minute in jail for where we are today.

ANITA ANAND: Let's take some more questions.

CONNOR STENTON POLAN: I'm Connor Stenton Polan. I'm a priest, a Catholic priest, and I'm also the son of an RUC man which means I'd a very balanced upbringing because nobody liked me. (*laughter*)

I was literally spat upon by loyalists and my house was attacked by republicans and I live now and work in England because it was impossible for me to work here as a Catholic priest. But I come from that generation which bears the mark of Cain because that was all we knew - was that violence. And I remember the day I looked and I wept when I saw the authority here and the people who were starting as first minister and deputy first minister and sitting laughing and having a jolly good time together, who were the people who had been instrumental in causing the violence that had marked my life. And I sit here tonight and I hear two other fellas from that

history disagreeing whether it was called a war or not and I wonder do you not think that one of the important things about getting over war is to have those who kept it going maybe learn to just step back, shut up and let a new generation take over?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Very good point and I think ... (*audience applause*)

You know someone asked, someone made the comment earlier on – I think you, sir – that is it the politicians or the people who fight who make the wars, and I think there are those who want to make wars and they often have a great deal of influence and sometimes I think they want to keep the conflict going because that is who they are and that gives them status. I mean I think you see it in a number of countries. I mean I think Putin wants to keep conflict going around Russia because it shows him as the great defender of Russia and the great leader of Russia. And I think there's always something to be said for letting people, encouraging people to step back, but will they do it?

JUDITH THOMPSON: Thank you. My name's Judith Thompson and I'm the Victims' Commissioner. I was really interested in what you said during your lecture about the justification for war and I have some observations that I'd just be keen to hear your views on around how victims and survivors – I include ex-combatants of all parties in that definition – how they are affected by the kind of ongoing debate that we still have, which is (a lot of it) about justification for war and those people who were harmed, who served in our armed forces. And those people who were harmed who had nothing to do with it are caught up in a narrative which is about competing views of the world and competing justifications for what happened in a way that I think is incredibly unhelpful and I do believe the victims and survivors have a big place to play in peace process and in reconciliation. And I think what we're seeing here in Northern Ireland at the moment very often is different individuals who've suffered harm sort of metaphorically nailed to the wall of different strong narratives in a way that obscures their shared needs, makes it harder to meet their needs and maybe hampers their ability to be part of actually a moving forward process that we all need.

ANITA ANAND: Without saying any names, can you just give an example of what you mean? I mean that's a very powerful statement but what do you mean by that?

JUDITH THOMPSON: I wouldn't want to say any names, but I mean there are within a kind of a dialogue that's around a republican narrative, if you like, there will be people who died serving that cause who are very much remembered as a reason why that war was fought; and equally on the other side there will be those who died and were harmed who fought on the other side, who'll be remembered as a reason for understanding and holding that narrative and not giving up on that political perspective. And in the middle of it you have the fact that people who are harmed need mental health trauma services, people who are harmed need recognition, people who are harmed want to see truth and acknowledgement and yet they get used against each other.

MARGARET MACMILLAN : It's such a complicated process and I don't think there are any easy answers. But I suppose dealing with mental health issues, you have to treat every patient, every person as a different sort of person, but encouraging them not to embrace what happened to them in such a way that they can't then move on from it or they can't then begin to distance

themselves from it, I think seems to me very important. Not letting them become trapped in the particular narrative and encouraging people to recognise – and this must be the most difficult of all – is that people who were on the other side suffered too.

And this has happened. I mean there were some very, very moving I thought reconciliations at the commemoration of the First World War, certainly the early ones where German and French and British soldiers sometimes would get together and talk, and it's happened also with veterans from the Second World War where Japanese soldiers have talked often to make apologies to those they held in prison camps in Japan. And I think, from what I gather, this has – if they are willing – has helped both sides; that they've come to get beyond their shared trauma and their hatred of each other and begun to understand that they are both human beings. But I think it depends very much on the individual and on the level of support they get.

KENNY GRANT: My name's Kenny Grant. I had two uncles who were captured at Saint-Valery-en-Caux as members of the 51st highland division in 1940 and spent five years in prisoner of war camps. Within 10 years of the Second World War Germany had been largely reconciled with the rest of Europe, and I wonder if you think that for today's statesmen and politicians there may be lessons to be learned about the way in which that reconciliation was achieved?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yes I wish.., I'm not sure I have much faith in some of our political leaders at the moment learning lessons from the past, but I do think what happened in Germany I think were perhaps two things and I'm thinking more of West Germany than the East, which ... which was treated in a very different way. To begin with Germany was utterly defeated, so there could be no mistake among the Germans about what had happened to them, and I think gradually as they came out of the Nazi period they realised just how dreadfully it had served Germany and what destruction it had led Germany to. But I think West German society was also put under tremendous pressure from outside to examine its past and to deal with it.

And the results I think are very similar to Japan and the results I think have been extraordinary. And I would hesitate to say that dreadful defeat is the way to do this, but when you look at both Japan and Germany - both of which had I think a fairly strong warrior ethos, certainly among those who led them before the Second World War - they have both become very peaceable societies, and when they do public opinion surveys in Germany and in Japan the number of people who say war is a thing we should be prepared to do is much less than it is in somewhere like the United States. And so it's a very, very interesting examples of sometimes a combination of recognition from within that you have gone down a dead end, dead in many ways, and pressure from outside that can make societies change. And I find that very encouraging.

LYNNE WEBBER: My name's Lynne Webber. We signed the Good Friday Agreement with lots of hope and I think we're at the stage now where a lot of us feel quite despairing. Would you think would you think there'd be any point in tearing it up and starting afresh?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: I don't know if it's because I'm an historian, but I tend to think that starting afresh can often be a very bad idea. I sometimes think it's better to muddle along with what you have and try and improve it unless it is beyond hope. I mean you know

revolutions often start afresh and look what they get themselves into and look what they do to their people.

But if it's so bad then perhaps it does need a fresh start. But what made the Good Friday Agreement work before, it seems to me, was not just the willingness of those actually here to talk to each other - and that was absolutely important - but it was the external pressures and the external involvement. The British government was prepared to put a considerable amount of effort into it. The British government at the moment is so preoccupied with Brexit, it doesn't seem to have much energy for anything else. And the United States was prepared and the European Union were prepared to put a great deal of effort into it. I don't think at the moment the United States is interested in many countries outside the borders of the United States. And so whether that constellation could come again to try and get a workable and lasting agreement, I think is a big question mark.

ANITA ANAND: And the final question from the gentleman over there.

JOHN DUNLOP: My name is John Dunlop. Some months before he died, I said to Martin McGuinness: "Martin, I choose not to be interested in what you did or what you didn't do in the past. I'm interested in what you're doing now." What do you think about that?

MARGARET MACMILLAN : Well you, you ... I think forgiveness is a very good ... I don't know if you were talking in terms of forgiveness, but I think being prepared to accept the past as the past and deal with the person here in the present is an admirable human quality, but it's not easy and I admire you for being able to do it because I think sometimes if you know - and I'm not talking about Martin McGuinness particularly - but if you know the things that people have done before, it's very difficult to separate the person in the present from that.

And that's why I think, when I think internationally, it's very difficult for us sometimes. And it was very difficult for my father's generation to accept that the Germans or the Japanese were people that we could deal with. He never really wanted to go to Germany again, although he'd gone there before the Second World War, he never wanted to go to Japan, and I think that was partly because it was very difficult for him to disassociate those memories from the people he saw in front of them.

But I think if we're to have any hope of moving on then we do have to deal with people as they are in the here and now and, as we know, sometimes people who have committed great cruelties in the past, who have been very, very difficult to each other can make peace. I mean de Klerk and Nelson Mandela, in spite of everything de Klerk had done, were able to talk to each other, and Mandela was able to put the past behind him and build something that did move South Africa a long way into a better place.

ANITA ANAND: That is unfortunately all that we have time for. Next time, for her fifth and final lecture, we're in Margaret's homeland: Ottawa, Canada. And she's going to be looking at how war is represented in art. Can we really create beauty from horror and from death?

In the meantime, do look at the Reith site via the Radio 4 website. There's lots of information there about this series and also past lectures. But for now a big thanks to our hosts and audience here at Stormont in Belfast and of course to our Reith Lecturer: Professor Margaret MacMillan.

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