In the first decade of our new millennium, war seems as much a part of the human condition as ever. Chronic conflicts plague many nations in Africa, the Middle East, and other parts of the world. Most of these conflicts appear to be self-defeating, with no likely winner but no easy exit either. So what are the patterns of thinking among the general public and the political elite that generate and sustain no-win conflicts? Five ‘languages of war’ are identified, the languages of gain and god, dominance and resistance, good and evil, regrettable necessity, and zealous allegiance. This session explores how the five languages stir deep currents of human thought and feeling and how political figures use them to inflame passions and inspire commitment. The prospects of peace are examined. On the positive side, some features of globalization and the lessons of history help to reduce the impact of the five languages of war. On the other hand, many groups in today's world continue to experience themselves as fundamentally at risk at the hands of others, leading to escalation. Conditions for a more peaceful world are considered.