

PEACE OF MIND

If man does find the solution for world peace it will be the most revolutionary reversal of his record we have ever known. George Catlett Marshall

Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste. John Milton

His enemies called for peace, but he brought them death. Saki

Only a peace between equals can last. Woodrow Wilson

Peace is indivisible. Maxim Maximovich Litvinov

Mark! Where his carnage and his conquests cease! He makes a solitude, and calls it peace. Lord Byron

The deliberate aim at Peace very easily passes into its bastard substitute, Anesthesia. A general definition of civilization: a civilized society is exhibiting the five qualities of truth, beauty, adventure, art, peace. Alfred North Whitehead

No one really knows who I am. That is just as well since I would probably be assassinated if the public could identify and find me. I have been given a number of appellations. I am dismayed that none are complimentary. I have been called the Devil, Satan, Beelzebub, Old Scratch, Lucifer, a Demon, a Fiend, Prince of Darkness and a host of other names each asserting that I am 'Evil Incarnate'. The general ignorance of my true nature has always puzzled me. I am the "Prince of Peace".

First of all, I am a graduate computer and robotic engineer. I have anonymously toiled in this area all my professional life without ever getting any kudos. Curiously, these technical endeavors were not my major interest. I had become obsessed with the notion of 'Peace'. I could never understand why humanity never achieved any long lasting accord between its various factions. I became a keen student of the history of violence and wars, endeavoring to discern whether there was a method that once implemented would overcome the obstacles to 'Peace and Good Order'. During these studies I was constantly reminded of the old Pogo comic strip adage, "I recognize de enemy and dey is us." In other words, humanity's biggest enemy was humanity. How to deal with this conundrum was the problem that did not appear to have a solution.

Our history is replete with violence of all sorts and of wars of diverse durations. We have also had periods of relative serenity. The one hundred year war between France and England is an example of the former and the period between 1814 and 1914 exemplifies the latter. There are a variety of presumed reasons for conflict, ranging from religion, to economic, to national pride, to the desire to impose a tyranny, to the need to resist evil and the banal, and to revolutionary causes propelled by certain ideologies. It appears that one can get an exacting understanding of human history by simply noting all the recorded wars and the conditions that led to them. There were 'peaceniks' whose message was always applauded but never heeded. The best example was Gandhi's passive resistance approach. Too bad! It is an irony that one of Gandhi's most fervent

followers, Martin Luther King, as well as Gandhi were victims of the very violence that they deplored.

The relative peace between 1814 and 1914 was built upon a balance of power amongst the great European nations. In other words, war became a no win situation for any of them. Similarly a major conflict did not break out between the Western powers and the USSR after WW2 because both sides were equipped with armaments of such destructive capability that both would have suffered totally unacceptable losses. I wondered whether a global balance of power approach was feasible and whether it could lead to a lasting peace. I came to the conclusion, the human condition being what it is, that it would provide only a relative short term solution. It is akin to a sealed pot of boiling water building up a head of steam with ever increasing internal pressure leading to an inevitable explosion. Two examples are WW1 and the American Civil War.

After much further pondering, I wondered: what if the balance of power situation were replaced by a 'balance of no power'?. In other words no country, religious sect, ethnic group, the wealthy, or any other assemblage could muster enough power to dominate the world. Could it lead us to a state of permanent peace? This was a fascinating speculation. The trick was how to achieve this state of affairs. After much musing I fantasized that this could possibly be attained if very advanced aliens from another world with the means to conquer and destroy us all would turn up and pose a threat to our existence. Universal fear could be the catalyst and bromide to bring to an end our eternal conflicts and live in harmony with one another. Of course, it was nothing more than wishful thinking. Yet I could not get that notion out of my mind.

I was fixated on it for a number of years until I was hit by a brainstorm. As previously mentioned, I am a robotic/computer engineer. One day, while working on a programming problem, a thought occurred to me. What if I could program a robot to eradicate violent behavior by eliminating those guilty of it or by modifying their atrocious conduct? It would have to have to look human to ensure that it was not identified and therefore did not become the victim of violent action. Without going into how, and after testing, I realized that I had succeeded in creating such a being. It became apparent that one was not enough. It took about ten years for me to populate the world with about ten thousand of my humanoid robots. They were in constant contact with each other and the one I had labeled 'Number One' was in continuous communication with me, allowing me to monitor the results on an hourly basis.

At the onset, the consequences were dramatically positive. Violence was reduced by orders of magnitude. Universal peace seemed reachable. I was very hopeful that I had succeeded where no one else had ever. I had become "the Prince Of Peace." Unfortunately, a state of equilibrium between the forces of peace and violence arose. This could not last. The peaceniks had no choice but to resort to violence to overcome those violent ones that my robots had not eliminated because they had successfully gone underground. This situation seemed to reach a stalemate, when the former peaceniks were co-opted by their earlier enemies.

I was deeply dejected by my apparent failure. I went into a state of depression, wanting to be left alone. I hibernated in a lonely cabin on top of an isolated mountain range. The only one who knew how to find me was "Number One". Much to my surprise, about a year later, he personally showed up to provide me with what turned out to be his final report.

"Sir, I have news of great import. As you know, we have been programmed to eliminate all violence. We have done so. I am not sure that the results of our actions will be satisfactory. These measures were based upon a careful study of the biology of this world, both historically and of recent vintage. We came to a startling conclusion and acted upon it. Biological organic life and violence are inextricably linked. Thus they cannot be separated. The only way to eliminate violence in this world is to eliminate all organic life. This we have accomplished. This planet is now barren of all organic life. Violence is no more.

You are the exception. Since you are currently alone you are incapable of violence except to yourself. It is your decision as to whether you will self destruct and if so how. We have created a synthetic 'Garden of Eden' which will allow you to live comfortably. The world outside this haven is still there with no living thing inhabiting it. We did not destroy the records of man's accomplishments both in the Arts and Sciences, so that you will have things of interest to occupy your time. They too will disappear once you do. Since our purpose has been fulfilled, we see no reason for our continued existence. I am the last of our type. I will shortly disappear unless you feel that we have not accomplished what we were supposed to. By your silence I take it that you have nothing more for us to do. I now take my leave."

For the next six months, I contemplated what had occurred. Since the planet is now totally devoid of any life and once I die, all records will vanish, this planet will have no history. The fact that I could be considered the greatest mass murderer of all time will never be appreciated. Also, while my life has become rather serene, I find that I am dying of boredom.

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