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Dream a weaponless world

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“If the world had no weapons, what would have been positive and negative today?” I asked a few of my close friends. A Swiss friend, Herve Luquiens, replied, “Hello Sen, your question reminds me of my youth! My grandfather was a socialist leader in Switzerland, Mayor of Lausanne. He insisted I never play with military dinky toys. I was unhappy, but that was his political belief! Seriously, I’m not comfortable with your idea. Talking about the real world, I’m scared about bad guys holding weapons and good guys not. In France, many military weapons were left after World War II. At some stage it was asked to declare them, a few years later, to give them to the police. You did that or you could go to prison. But today whoever wants to rob a bank or kill innocent people can get a Kalashnikov on the Internet for as little as 1500 Euros. Also, Nazis had weapons when the Jews were unarmed... So I love your dream, but I don’t believe it works in real life. Too bad!” Just imagine, 70 million Kalashnikovs sold to date, plus millions of other weapons to destroy people. To what purpose?

A Parisian friend responded: “It’s a trap question! But yes, a great wish.” Clearly a Utopian dream, yet for a few hours last Sunday, 11 January 2015, it became reality in Paris. Amazingly, State leaders from 44 countries were queuing to catch the bus from French President’s Elysee Palace to Place de la Republique to

attend an International Unity Rally for freedom of expression. This republican call by French President made people forget their political or religious divisions. An ocean of humanity, over 1.5 million, inched silently through Paris streets. Simultaneously, another 2.5 million marched in different parts of France, and across Europe, the Americas and Australia people paid street rally tributes to the 17 victims of 1-789-15 terrorist attacks. Such solidarity to condemn senseless killings has no parallel.

I’ll never forget the incredible weaponless union between 2 arch enemies, Palestinian Authority President and Israeli Prime Minister. Leaving aside religious and political problems, they marched together to endorse “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” human rights the French had installed since 1789. Leading the rally, all arm-in-arm, were the King and Queen of Jordan, German Chancellor, British and Italian Prime Ministers, President of Mali, among other leaders. Their peaceful protest was against terrorism killing innocent people, 10 French artists of *Charlie Hebdo*, a publication illustrating satirical opinion irrespective of religion and politics that French liberty allows, 3 security personnel and 4 Jewish shoppers. These statespersons made no speech, but showed terrorists that their vile acts instead brought people of all religions together. Paris Grand Mosque Imam Boubakeur attended mourning prayers at the Jewish synagogue with Catholic President Hollande and Jewish Israeli PM Netanyahu. This strong symbolic expression of peace showed the power to win without weapons. Can the world become weaponless? I’m not enamored of non-violence where the opposition is armed; it’s unnatural, inhuman, exposing weakness. My dream is a non-violent,

weaponless world where both sides have no weapons.

Hate, jealousy and power exist in our DNA, characteristics that cannot be erased. Weapons feed and empower hate, jealousy and power to become explosive, to endlessly kill people. When somebody commits an unsocial violent act, society sends a force to kill the killer. Doing so, have we stopped violence? Revenge will come from numerous quarters starting a domino effect of violence, and making us live in perpetual terror, insecurity and violence everywhere in the world. If we actually had no weapons, social beings would challenge one another through intellectual weapons expressed in various media. We'd experience creativity wars that kill nobody. Styles of expression in different societies would be extraordinary, replacing the physical punishing world we know now. A 6-year-old boy at the French rally was asking, "Why will I be killed for making a funny drawing?"

Unfortunately, all of France is in limbo now in spite of the rally's success in symbolizing unity. French Muslims are wary of Catholics and Jews, and vice versa. Ironically, all 3 religions are often referred to as Abrahamic, tracing their history to Abraham in the Hebrew Bible. Judaism and Christianity were founded in Palestine, Islam in nearby Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Since prehistoric times, Palestine has been ruled by Hebrews, Egyptians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks and now warred over by Israel and Arab Palestine. Jews believe it's their Promised Holy Land, it's significant for Christians as Jesus spent time there, and as per Muslim tradition, the Prophet's ascent to heaven was from Jerusalem. I don't know if this close connection is what makes the 3 religions passionately love and hate one another. Liberal French democracy has welcomed the largest Muslim (8 million) and Jewish populations (half a million) in Europe to France (total population 63 million), but this does not mean that France has to change its high secular value system and freedom of expression. "We are French first" is the feeling the Unity March hoped to ignite amongst French minorities, just as US values are successfully implemented on immigrants who say, "I'm American before anything else." French Jews migrating to Israel for fear is a new phenomenon that's shocked me: 12,000 since 2012 anti-

Semitic terrorism struck France, and 15,000 estimated in 2015. I'd never before heard my French Jewish friends, clients and artists express alienation. Personally, I've always received great affection in my adopted homeland so never understood what racism is.

That last Sunday's Unity March displayed no turbulence means we want to live under a beautiful sky with strong fraternity, mixing with different people, different religions, different world cultures. Switzerland with 35% population with migration background and high priority on education, has never faced trouble. Shouldn't we invest in education instead of weapons to protect ourselves? My question to you, my valuable reader, is: "What if the world had no weapons?"

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