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## GLOBAL UNION OF SCIENTISTS FOR PEACE

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# A SCIENTIFIC SOLUTION TO TERRORISM AND CONFLICT

An open letter to President Hollande, President Obama, President Putin, the leaders of all nations, and the philanthropic peace-loving citizens of the world

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The Global Union of Scientists for Peace is a coalition of leading scientists and experts, founded to prevent war, terrorism and nuclear proliferation and to promote safe, scientifically proven technologies for national security and global peace.

The leaders of Europe, Russia, and the U.S. have been struggling to find appropriate and effective responses to the terrorist attacks in France—and to the ongoing conflicts in Syria and elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the options available to our military and political leaders to resolve these crises are poor. Economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure are ineffective against terrorism. And military responses can further antagonize and inflame an already volatile population, leading to retaliation and greater terrorism—the inevitable consequence of attempting to create peace through violence. How, then, can such dangerous and complex threats be resolved?

Fortunately, there is a better solution—an innovative, peaceful, proven approach with a superior track record.

#### Defusing Conflict at Its Source

Research shows that war and social conflict are fueled by acute societal stress—mounting political, ethnic, and religious tensions among rival factions that, if unchecked, inevitably erupt as social violence. Research similarly shows that it is possible to effectively defuse such acute societal tensions through the use of powerful, stress-reducing, peace-promoting technologies by a small fraction of the population, most commonly within the military or in universities.

On the individual level, published research has shown that certain powerful stress-reducing methods can neutralize even severe stress, including post-traumatic stress (PTS), within days—calming hyperactivity in the amygdala (“fear center” of the brain) and restoring balanced brain functioning in servicemen and -women, veterans, and victims of violence in war-torn areas.

On a societal scale, the approach of restoring calm and quelling social violence through the use of similar techniques by small embedded groups in society has been extensively field tested—in the Middle East and throughout the world. The consistent result has been marked reductions in terrorism, war, and social violence in the affected populations. These findings have been replicated in more than 50 studies, published in leading peer-reviewed scientific journals, and endorsed by hundreds of leading scientists and scholars. The efficacy of this approach is scientifically beyond question.

Achieving societal peace in a nation or a region torn by deep-seated political and religious tensions is historically difficult—especially given the underlying physiological root cause of social violence: acute and pervasive societal stress. Without addressing the buildup of acute societal stress, standard approaches to conflict resolution are unlikely to succeed. However, once such tensions have been substantially defused, achieving and maintaining societal peace becomes comparatively easy.

Extensive published research on prior conflicts in the Middle East has confirmed that war and violence can be swiftly defused, and a negotiated settlement quickly reached—if the acute societal tensions have been alleviated. This outcome can be achieved with the cooperation of even a small group within the Middle East, or any other area of conflict.

#### Research Confirms Effectiveness

The initial experimental verification of this new approach took place during the 1982 Lebanon war. A day-by-day study of an embedded group of peace-

creating experts in 1983 showed that, on days when the number of participants was high, war deaths dropped by 76% ( $p < 10^{-7}$ ). In addition, crime, traffic accidents, fires, and other indicators of social stress all decreased significantly. Other possible causes were statistically controlled for (*Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32: 776–812, 1988).

These results were subsequently replicated in seven consecutive experiments over a two-year period during the peak of the Lebanon war. The results of these interventions included:

- war-related fatalities decreased by 71% ( $p < 10^{-10}$ )
- war-related injuries fell by 68% ( $p < 10^{-6}$ )
- the level of conflict dropped by 48% ( $p < 10^{-8}$ )
- cooperation among antagonists increased by 66% ( $p < 10^{-6}$ )

The likelihood that these combined results were due to chance is less than one part in  $10^{19}$ , making this effect of reducing societal stress and conflict the most rigorously established phenomenon in the history of the social sciences (*Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 17(1): 285–338, 2005).

In addition, the global influence on terrorism of three large assemblies of peace-creating experts (USA, 1983–84; Netherlands, 1984–85; USA, 1985) was studied retrospectively through an analysis of data compiled by the Rand Corporation. The data revealed a 72% reduction in worldwide terrorism during the three assemblies taken together, as compared to all other weeks during a two-year period. Each assembly had approached or exceeded the participation threshold (8,000) predicted to create a global influence of peace. The study ruled out the possibility that this reduction in terrorism was due to cycles, trends, or drifts in the measures used, or to seasonal changes (*Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 36 (1-4): 283–302, 2003).

#### Global Application

Now that a scientifically confirmed solution to regional and global conflict is available, it should be implemented immediately—ideally by establishing one permanent group of 16,000 peace-creating professionals to create a sufficiently powerful influence of coherence to neutralize the buildup of social stress on a global scale. The cost to train and maintain such a group is infinitesimal compared to the cost of war. The Syrian conflict alone is costing outside countries at least \$10 million per day, or \$3.6 billion per year. In total, the cost of maintaining a group of 16,000 peace-creating professionals is less than that of a single stealth bomber.

The Global Union of Scientists for Peace (GUSP) stands ready to provide the requisite training in the relevant brain-based, peace-promoting technologies to designated members of the military, to students in large universities, or to employees at a sizable company in any conflict-torn country or region. The techniques, which include the Transcendental Meditation technique and related advanced programs, are systematic, easily learned, devoid of religious or philosophical content, and immediately effective. They are already being used to combat PTS by a growing number of militaries and have been incorporated into military training—and are already widely used in schools and businesses around the world.

#### World's Wealthy Invited to Lead

If governments are slow to implement this scientific solution, then we invite the wealthy to take responsibility for doing so.

The wealthy have a parental responsibility: they are not subject to the whims and pressures of electoral politics, yet have the resources and capacity to safeguard and nourish the whole society.

Now is the time to establish an Endowment Fund for Permanent World Peace in response to the urgent global demand. The income from this Fund will be used for one purpose alone: the training and maintaining of a permanent force of 16,000 peace-creating professionals to neutralize societal stress, and thereby create an immediate and demonstrable influence of harmony, peace, and positivity for the entire world.

We invite all peace-loving, well-to-do citizens to collectively—or even single-handedly—endow this Fund and create permanent world peace on a practical and demonstrable basis, for their own good and for the good of all.

#### Nothing to Lose

The prospect of ending tragic violence around the world in an expeditious way through a scientifically proven approach may seem too good to be true. Fortunately, the scientific method has strict empirical criteria for assessing the truth or falsehood of any hypothesis. By the strictest standards of modern science, this approach has been rigorously verified.

There is nothing to lose and potentially much to gain by applying this approach. The costs are negligible: for less than the cost of a military foray, enough troops or policemen can be trained—or factory workers, civil servants, or students at one or more universities—that a marked and demonstrable effect of peace will be seen immediately.

To address the immediate crisis in Europe, all that is needed is that a government or military leader of any European country designates an appropriately sized group of participants (approximately the square root of 1% of the national population—800 people for France, for example) who could be trained in the relevant, brain-based, peace-promoting technologies. Then GUSP will organize to provide the necessary training.

Once implemented, the results will be:

- a demonstrable, marked reduction in terrorism and social violence within 60 days;
- growth of harmonious relations among all parts of the country or region;
- with restored order, improved economic and social trends within the country or region; and
- as an added side benefit, improved health, readiness, and resilience of all those participating in the project.

To ensure long-term peace in the European Union, every nation in the EU should create and maintain a coherence-creating group of the appropriate size.

The time to act is now.

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