

THE INTENTION EXPERIMENT

The Peace Intention Experiment: September 14-21, 2009

Peace Intention Experiment

After all these small-scale studies of leaves and seeds and water, The Intention Experiment decided to take a giant leap, to examine whether 'group mind' has the power to lower violence and restore peace. The plan was to have readers all over the world join forces on our website to send peace to a particular war-torn area.

For eight days beginning September 14, The Intention Experiment carried out its first Peace Intention Experiment. As this was a pilot, testing the entire idea and the technology, we deliberately attempted to keep numbers low by carrying out no publicity or advertising. Nevertheless, the idea of a mass intention for peace under scientific conditions caught the public imagination, creating a huge buzz virally on the web and attracting tens of thousands of sign ups in just a few weeks.

We enjoyed participation from more than 65 countries and every continent but Antarctica – even many far-flung quarters such as Mongolia, Nepal, Indonesia and China.

Sri Lanka chosen

We decided on an obscure target — one where no one in the west would be sending prayer or intention to — so that any change there would more likely be the results of our intentions.

Eventually we chose the Wannu (or north) section of Sri Lanka. This area of the world has suffered a civil war for 25 years, with more suicide bombings than anywhere on earth. The Wannu section is the stronghold of the rebel Tamil Tigers, the well-armed and trained rebel forces, and the center of terrorist activities.

Noted peace advocate Dr. Kumar Rupesinghe and his colleagues from the Foundation for Co-existence in Colombo, Sri Lanka, supplied us weekly violence data from the past two years for both the North and Eastern sections of Sri Lanka, the two parts of the country with the worse and next worse levels of violence, and continued to monitor both areas for daily rates of killings and violence for some months after our intention week.

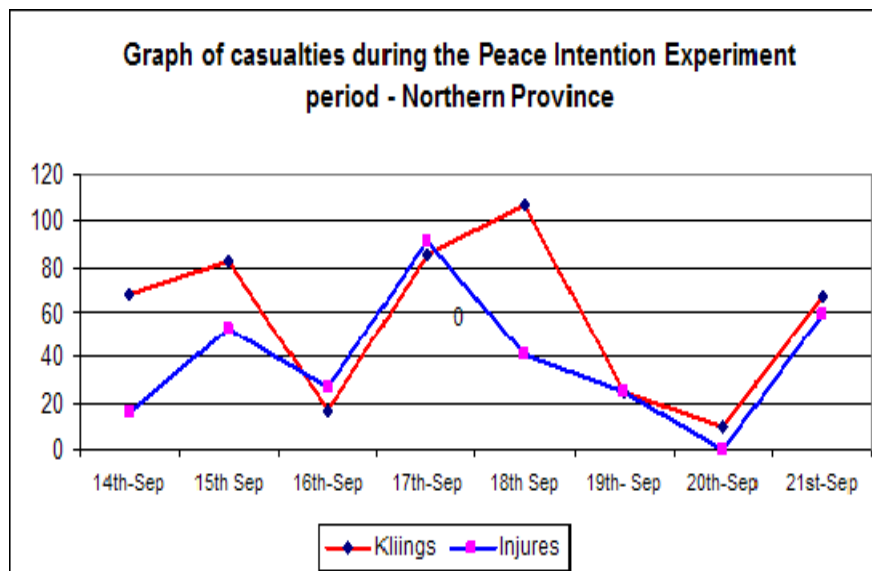
From these statistics, Dr. Jessica Utts, professor of Statistics at University of California at Irvine, modeled a prediction of the likely average violence levels we should have expected in October, if the fighting carried on as normal. We then compared this model of what should happen to what did happen over a month.

A pivotal week

The results of Dr. Utts's preliminary report are extraordinary – suggesting that our Peace Intention Experiment may have been pivotal in helping to hasten the end of the war, which now appears imminent.

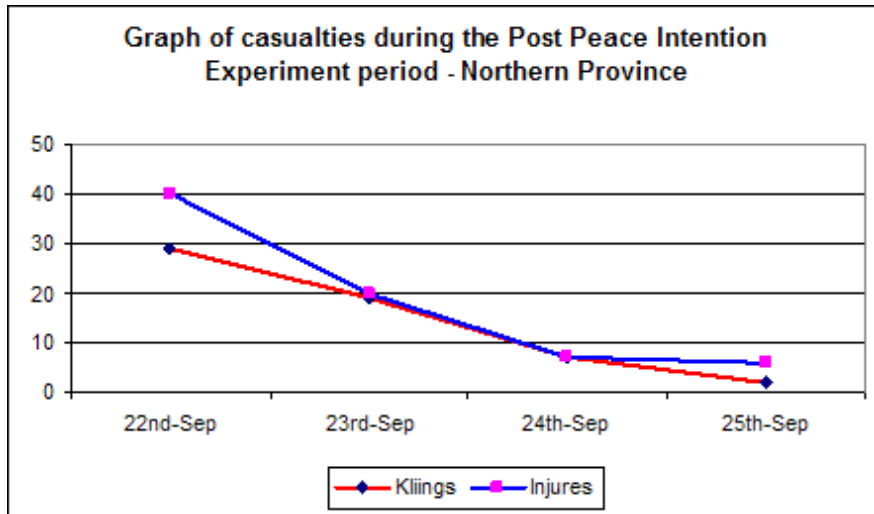
In order to show whether an effect is higher or lower than predicted, statisticians often use a trend-analysis plot.

According to our chart, our intentions may have had the initial effect, it seemed, of vastly increasing violence. The week of the Peace Intention Experiments experienced a sudden surge of attacks and killings, largely brought on by the Sri Lankan government, which sought a last full-on effort to quash the Tamil Tiger rebels in the Northern stronghold, once and for all. Here is a chart assembled by Rupesinge's organization, showing an increase in violence.



The Sri Lankan navy sank two Tamil Tiger boats, a sea battle broke out off the northeast coast and the government also brought the battle to the rebel center of the North.

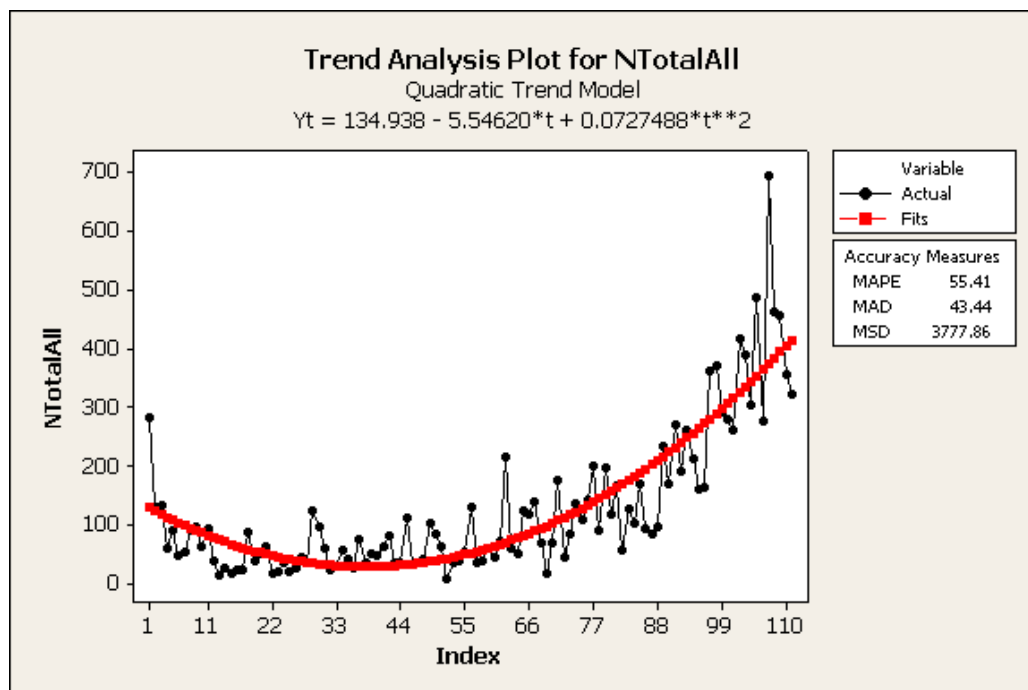
But in the immediate aftermath of the experiment, both deaths and numbers of people injured fell dramatically. The death rate suddenly fell by 74 per cent and injuries by 48 per cent, as this chart shows.



Dr. Utts' time analysis reveals that the violence vastly increased to levels far higher than predicted during the week of our experiment and for a few weeks afterward, and then plummeted to below what was expected.

In fact, the violence was the highest it had ever been over the entire two-year period during the very week of our experiment.

In this graph, you'll see the analysis. The red line represents the average of predicted levels.



The fifth point from the end - the every high one - is the week of our experiment, and the four points afterward are the after effects.

As you can see, the violence levels are far than predicted, sharply drop after the high week of the experiment and then fall below what is expected.

From the perspective of these two-plus years, our week of intention may have proved pivotal. During that week, the Sri Lankan army won a number of strategically important battles, which enabled them to turn around the war.

Guerrillas expelled

On January 2, 2009, the army finally expelled the separatist guerrillas from their capital of Kilinochchi. On January 9, the army recaptured the strategic Elephant pass, opening up the entire northern Jaffna Peninsula – where mainland Sri Lanka connects with the northern peninsula – for the first time in nine years, liberating the entire Wanni district – the very target of our intention.

Those of the Tiger Tamil terrorists that remain have been wedged into a tiny corner of northeastern Sri Lanka of about 330 square km.

So was this down to us and our intention?

Certainly, in September, the rebels had a tight grip on the north. Although the army had made some inroads in August, even as recently as May commentators believed that peace talks were out of the question.

Now, after all the decisive wins in September and January, many political analysts have laid down predictions that the 25-year-civil war will end in 2009.

Coincidence or intention?

This could have been entirely coincidental – or it could be the result of intention. Only more Peace Intention Experiments will give us the answer.

But why did the violence initially increase before drastically falling? We don't know the answer to that yet. It could be

- coincidence
- our intention to lower violence had the effect of accelerating the army's victories over the rebels so that further violence would end
- our intention made things worse before they got better

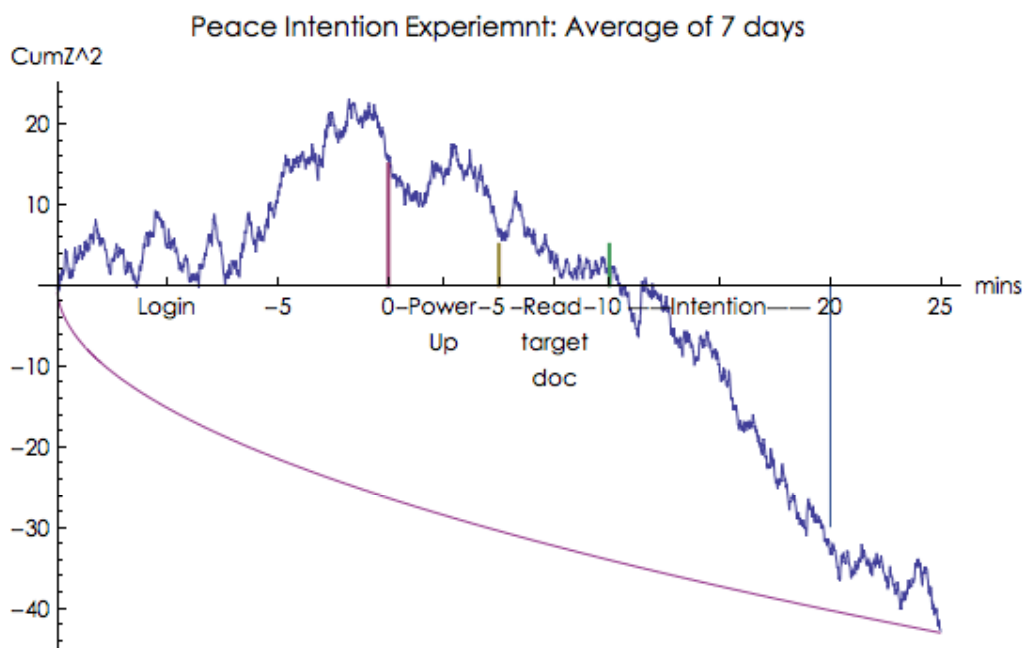
Until we run another Peace Intention Experiment, we won't know the answer. But as Jessica succinctly put it, when noting that the highest weekly total for violence in the entire 26-month period was our very week: "Weird, huh?"

REG machines change too

Roger Nelson, architect of Global Consciousness Project and a member of our scientific team, also analyzed the effect of our Peace Intention Experiment on the random event generators he continuously runs all over the world for the GCP.

Several analyses reveal that the REG machines were affected within a 40-minute window of meditations during the eight days of our Peace Intention Experiment, and that these changes were similar to those that occurred during moments of mass meditation in areas attempting to lower violence.

The effect was most striking during the actual 10 minutes of our experiment, when we were sending intention.



Intention healed the healers

Most interesting of all was the long-term effect of the experiments on our participants. Some 44 per cent of our participants noticed changes in their relationships with others during the experiment, notably between parents and children, in-laws of every variety or siblings. Intention apparently helped them to feel more love in general, whether they knew the recipient or not.

Although more than a quarter either felt more love for their loved ones or for people they normally dislike or argue with, 41 per cent felt more love for anyone with whom they came into contact, and 19 per cent found they were getting along better with perfect strangers.

In fact, when I asked with whom relationships most improved, the largest group - 38 per cent – said they noticed the biggest change in their relationships with strangers. The experience of working together with thousands of strangers gave many people the ability to bond with or be more accepting of people they don't personally know.