

I adapted this story from a science fiction comic book that I read around summer, 1957. As in any fiction story, if you are too critical, you cannot enjoy it. I am hoping that someone will make a movie or a novel on the theme you see here.

## The Challenge

A space ship visited our planet. The crew quickly learned humans' history and did not like what they saw. Half the people on the planet live in poverty, there are 21,000 nuclear weapons that could end civilization in an afternoon and there is constant war.

The ship's captain and officers shook their heads and agreed that humans would go on to develop technologies that could destroy the universe. There were many good people but they had no say-so on what went on. Some countries have formal democracies but the rich bought and paid for the politicians and media.

The ship's captain announced that he would destroy the humans and attempt to keep the animals and vegetation unharmed. World leaders gathered at the United Nations. They issued a challenge to come out and fight in an uninhabited area. The best place was the South Pacific, between Chile and New Zealand.

Since the space ship showed its military capabilities, namely a ray gun that would vaporize any naval ship in one blast, military leaders on Earth knew that there would be few if any survivors in the upcoming battle.

Earth's military leaders and the ship's captain agreed to the date, July 26, 9 AM local time, which was six weeks off. For the ships coming the longest distance, the crews had a final week to be with their families for the last time. Then, it would be off to the battle zone, never to come back.

On July 26, the space ship arrived at the battle zone at 7:55 AM. At 8 PM, the crew performed a radar scan to find the zone to be empty. No freighters, no fishing boats, nothing. The ship's captain remarked what selfish the earthlings were. Each nation was willing for someone else to fight while their navy stayed at home.

At 8:01 AM, the crew identified a British cruiser that entered the zone. At 8:02 AM, the entire French fleet arrived. At 8:03 AM, 97 Russian ships entered the zone. At 8:04 AM, 53 American ships arrived. At 8:05 AM, 73 Chinese and Japanese ships approached from the southeast. At every

minute after that, a new swarm would appear. At 8:55 AM, a widened radar scan showed that every naval ship on the planet that weighted more than 2,000 tons was in the zone or an hour's sailing distance away.

The captain and the officers met to assess this unexpected cooperation. At 9:15 AM, the captain issued the announcement that he would postpone military action for one year to give time to reform.

Military cooperation was the incentive for political cooperation. In the six weeks, when military activities were being organized, nation's political and business leaders stayed at the United Nations making plans for abolishing poverty, war and injustice. Facing certain annihilation made the leaders consider and carry out actions that would have been considered radical or crazy before the ultimatum. Some funds to the poor actually started flowing and defense contractors started examining products that would reduce poverty and humans' environmental footprint.

In the comic book, lasting world peace was achieved for the first time in human history.

It was Arthur C. Clarke or someone like him who thought that a perceived threat would solidify humans and a real one would be even better.