

IDEAS 85

International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students

International Online
Teachers Society

TEACHERS SOCIETY
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CONTENTS

THE 85th INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

TERRORISM I FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT I Kathlyn Q. Barrozo I 2

TERRORISM I TERRORISM AND ITS VARIOUS FORMS I Kathlyn Q. Barrozo I 3

TERRORISM I TERRORISM - A RAGE WITHIN I Marian Baltazar I 4



FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

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Acts of terrorism always get the greatest condemnations. They inspire many among us to shout to the heavens for retribution on the heinousness and inhumanity that such acts spawn. Unimaginable as they may seem, the anger and condemnation that acts of terrorism incite are proofs of how evil and cruelty will never be accepted by humanity.

Take the September 1, 2001 attacks, otherwise referred to as 9/11, launched by al-Qaeda, an extremist Islamic terrorist group. Four passenger jets were hijacked and flown into targeted buildings in coordinated terrorist attacks. The World Trade Center's North and South Towers in New York City were rendered to rubbles by two planes, while a third plane caused damage to the Pentagon. The fourth plane, originally meant to target the US Capitol in Washington, DC, was crashed into a field. Lives were lost, and along with the toppling down of one of America's greatest symbols of global supremacy, economies all over were shaken down.

Although the 9/11 attacks had been targeted at the very heart of the world's most powerful country, the fact remained that the attacks brought down the whole world to its knees. Mercifully, the United States was able to recover, which brought forth independent efforts by other nations to rise up to the challenge of working towards their own economic redemption. Many countries were soon able to pick up where they had left off, while the US has gradually but surely rebuilt itself as a new nation with fresh hopes and dreams. The terrorists may have plotted the 9/11 attacks as a mission to bring the planet's most powerful nation to its knees. But what those masterminds of the attacks have failed to consider is the ability of people to get up and fight with renewed vigor and greater strength. Fall seven times, get up eight. That's how powerful the human spirit is.

Many of us around the world might still be reeling from the after-effects of the 9/11 attacks till now. We may still have dollar-dependent economies that have been severely affected by what happened on that one fateful day. We may still be feeling the pains of what those terrorist groups inflicted onto our nations' economies. But let us not cease to remember one thing: the human spirit is infinitely more powerful than any act of terrorism that is conceivable by man. The power of prayer and positive thoughts will always win the day and the battle for the greater good will continue. No act conceived through evil means will be a source of triumph for very long.

There is a Higher Being, a Supreme Creator Who will be able to help us pick ourselves up and restructure whatever needs to be rebuilt. This time, what the world will witness are stronger, fiercer and bolder individuals whose one true mission is to thwart further attempts at terrorism. Our relationship with God, once it is built strong enough, will enable us to face down terrorism and all its forms. No more Mr. nice guy!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Describe the events of September 1, 2001. Do research if necessary. Talk about how the attacks affected your own country.
2. Has your country recovered from the 9/11 attacks? Describe the journey that this has taken.
3. Why are acts of terrorism to be condemned at all costs?
4. What are other possible acts of terrorism that extremist groups can do in the world? Is there a way to put an end to them?
5. Why is terrorism so destructive? Cite examples as needed.



TERRORISM AND ITS VARIOUS FORMS

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Terrorism has remained a serious threat to many countries in the world today. It could come from within, as when a certain group within a country decides to launch cyber attacks on government websites. It could come from outside, as what happened during the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the world's most powerful nation: the United States. Unfortunately, terrorist attacks are carried out under cover of secrecy, where only those directly involved are able to know precisely what will happen when. Even those who are still involved, albeit indirectly, often do not have enough information on each and every stage or step in the attack. For them, it is sufficient that they are part of something big, no matter how destructive it may all be in the end.

Then there are those individuals who get involved without their knowing it.

Take for instance the recent news report that told of a group of foreign nationals who put up a call center in my country. The unsuspecting agents at the call center were instructed to make cold calls on credit card owners in the country where the foreign nationals originated from. Important information on the credit card owners were extracted, later to be used in credit card scams and frauds. The agents had to pretend that they were calling to prevent just such schemes, when all they were doing was actually setting the environment for evil acts of economic terrorism.

Then there are the spiritual terrorists, like those who instigated the Video The Innocence of Muslims. Although the video sharing site where the offensive video was posted has issued a warning as to the inappropriateness and offensiveness of the video's content, the said video still exists. In a world where freedom of speech and expression continue to be a mantra among freethinking people, the video is severely lacking in respect and proper perspective. Despite the fact that Muslims and Christians have long been at odds with one another, there's still no acceptable reason to empower those who hate one group to play around with the religion of the other group. To poke fun at another group's uniqueness is nothing less than religious or spiritual terrorism.

Nuclear and verbal terrorism, such as the one being waged by a communist country in Asia, is also not to be simply overlooked. Although that nation's generations of leaders have been known to engage in malevolent threats and saber-rattling just to get their points across to the world, the kind of terrorism they inflict on their neighbors is not going to be amusing for very long.

Terrorism only makes losers out of people. Terrorists may derive great pleasure at inciting fear. But the anger that their acts bring out will most likely be like a force that could crush them someday.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What other acts of terrorism can you think of? Cite examples, if you must.
2. How can terrorism be defeated?
3. How can someone be a terrorist without their knowing it?
4. Why is terrorism to be condemned unconditionally?
5. If you had the chance to interview a terrorist leader, what would you say to him/her to change his/her thinking?



TERRORISM - A RAGE WITHIN

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A lot of people believe that terrorism is a rage within a person that cannot just wait to burst out in the open. That rage can also be described as one of the deep unforgivable circumstances that foster terrorism. It is that something inside the people's heart and minds which resort them to go directly to terrorism. There are several conditions and reasons why people give in to this kind of violence. But of course, it has been a fact that people can have a choice on whether they should resort to violence or not.

Some people believe that religious fanaticism causes terrorism although we know very well that it is not true. There might be some truth to this considering that it creates conditions that are favorable for terrorism. Apparently, religious fanatics do not really choose terrorism or any form of violence. Therefore, there should be more conditions that adhere to it making people see the great changes that terrorism can bring about. Do we really then see that terrorism is an effective way of changing the world?

Terrorism can be called a complex phenomenon. We can speak more of it as a particular kind of political violence committed by people who doesn't really have a legitimate army (in the truest sense of it) which is ready for their disposal. Most of the time, the underlying circumstances surrounding the people are what makes violence against civilians inevitable. And this is what even makes it a necessary option for people. But I must say that the death of the innocents and the destruction of property are not the goals of terrorism.

In reality, the demise of different kinds of people can be attributed to terrorism. We also begin to think what really motivates these terrorist acts. People choose terrorism because of social and political injustice. When they want to iron out or straighten out some things which they believe are wrong and depriving them of their rights, they resort to terrorism. They strongly believe that somewhere along the line, there is something wrong going on somewhere.

Terrorism might sound easy but it's the other way around. Launching the attack may seem easy but pulling out the resources or pulling the people together is the hardest part. When we talk of terrorism, it is tantamount to saying; it is a conspiracy, for it is just like putting up a plot and gathering materials too for it to work out. What actually slips into our mind is what this act of terrorism does to people. This is intended for the victims who are supposed to be terrorized as an end result and it is for their allies and potential allies who are supposed to fund them and be their supporters in their efforts.

The fact still remains that terrorism does not only bring about great material cost, but at the same time it also brings great material loss. Even if to some people, terrorism may seem to be so easy or it is just maybe putting out that rage within you, it still poses a great threat to every nation.

Questions for discussion:

1. When does terrorism occur?
2. Can you try to avoid a terrorist act? Why or why not?
3. Can you say that terrorism is an effective way of changing the world? How?
4. What do you think is the goal of terrorism? Justify your answer.
5. Give a very good reason on why terrorist acts are present in some nations.



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