

What is a terrorist and is terrorism ever acceptable?

[Business](#)



This essay will cover what terrorism is and if it is ever acceptable. It will also touch upon ideas as to whether it works. The thesis statement of this paper is that terrorism seems to be a very subjective term, dependent upon whom is making the claim.

About.com claims that terrorism is a very complex term that is loaded with different meanings and history. They also claim that the word and its meaning differs depending upon the people whom use it and the context in which they do. So complex are the words and their meanings, that the about.com website has a glossary of 69 terrorism meanings, based upon their articles and related terms. (About.com, 2012) Narrowing the term down to its most basic and bare bones level, one could say that terrorism is the systematic use of intimidation and violence to achieve a goal. The term systematic comes in through the fact that if it were one incident, then it would simply be a contravention of the law. A terrorist is a person who commits the act of terrorizing and leaves people in the state of being terrorized. (APA, 2012), (CMS, 2012), (MLA, 2012), (IEEE, 2012), (BibTeX, 2012). The line between terrorism and criminal acts that are not terrorism is very fine. For example, people who commit multiple home invasions are using violence and intimidation.

They are doing it systematically and doing it with the goal of theft. Yet, this is rarely known as terrorism in the classical sense. Once the lawbreakers are apprehended, they are charged with the crimes of bodily harm, intimidation, home invasions and theft, but are not charged with terrorism offences, nor are they called terrorists by the press. On the other side of the coin, a youth with a paint gun who shoots it at passing cars and neighbor's houses would

be described as terrorizing the neighborhood and yet not described as a terrorist by the legal system or media. This leads onto the fact that the act of causing terror does not make the perpetrator a terrorist.

On the other hand, a person may still be called a terrorist if they are not causing actual terror. For example, threatening to plant a bomb in a mall would result in the threatening party being labeled as terrorists. The mall may continue with business as usual, indicating that little if any terror was caused. Yet the group who made the threat are called terrorists. If a threat is made and nobody is terrorized, or a terrorist act is completed and yet people's behavior does not change. Does this mean terrorism does not work? Terrorism does work on some occasions.

America is the richest country on earth and pride themselves on the freedom of expression; however, the rules no longer apply. Terrorism has actually scared America into not expressing themselves. In Denmark, in 2006, the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, published cartoons/comics satirizing Muhammad. (Itzkoff, 2010). According the BBC news channel " Muslims consider any physical representation of their prophet to be blasphemous.

The caricatures published in Denmark sparked mass protests worldwide", (BBC News, 2012). This altered the way that American TV shows are allowed to express themselves. The TV show South Park were no longer allowed to show visual representations of Muhammad. This was unfair since they had already aired visual representations of Muhammad in one of their earlier episodes, where he was one of the " super best friends" (Itzkoff, 2010). One of the creators Matt Stone said, " It was before the Danish cartoon

controversy, so it somehow is fine”, and went on to say, “...now censorship is the new normal. We lost.

Something that was okay is now not okay.” (BBC News, 2012). In this case, terrorism scared TV producers into restricting the TV show’s creators Matt Stone and Tray Parker from expressing their constitutional rights to freedom of expression. So is terrorism ever acceptable? Every form of terrorism, in every context, to label every situation is not morally correct, however, it happens so often without sufficient negative recourse that it can only be concluded that it is acceptable in every society. From the Americans terrorizing another non-militarized zone in Japan with the nuclear bomb during the Second World War (Truman, 1946), to the small child pulling legs off a frog. So very little is done in retaliation of terrorist acts, that one can only conclude that they are acceptable in modern society.

This, however, does not mean that the “ will” to react to terrorism against does not exist. Nor does it mean that people are not working against terrorism, nor does it mean that they do not wish terrorism did not exist. (Dear, 2005). It simply means that terrorism is so commonplace in its many forms, that it must be deemed acceptable by society. The same argument can be made for foul language.

It has stronger and weaker forms. Some words are more offensive than others are, and some words are considered swearing by one group but not another. People do not like it, and they are working against it, however, it is so commonplace that it is hard to deny that there is a certain amount of acceptance by society, with regards to its use. Many believe that the “

terrorism” of terrorism is a socially acceptable action (Kapitan, 2003), where the known perpetrators are intimidated into not committing terrorism. This involves showing the potential consequences of their actions, backed up with violent acts when terrorism is still perpetrated (after the warnings, etc). There are very few people who believe that terrorism as a result of religious extremism is ever acceptable.

Attacking and intimidating another group because of a religious belief is condemned by every religion on the planet. It is only people who misunderstand religious texts who would disagree that all religions in the world are peaceful by nature, and does not wish harm to others. Terrorism may be more acceptable to modern society as more and more people understand that it is the final recourse of desperate people. (Saul, 2006). For example, one person may have part of his homeland destroyed by a seemingly uncaring foreign country. This person goes through all legal channels in order to help to change the situation, but the destruction continues unabated.

Then comes a group who offer an answer, but it is violent. When all other peaceful options have been eliminated, then a violent or terrorist act may be the only other recourse, other than doing nothing. In conclusion, the term terrorism seems to be a very subjective term. Its meaning and people’s subsequent reaction to it are varied depending upon the context in which the word is used. Terrorism is an accepted fact in modern society, and its use is viewed with condemnation by most people, but is seen as acceptable in a wide range of cases.

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