

Religious terrorism and its global effects politics essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Religious terrorism is terrorism by those whose motivations and aims have a predominant religious character or influence. In the modern age, after the decline of ideas such as the divine right of kings and with the rise of nationalism, terrorism more often involved anarchism, nihilism and revolutionary politics, but since 1980 there has been an increase in activity motivated by religion. Former United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher said that terrorist acts in the name of religion and ethnic identity have become “ one of the most important security challenges we face in the wake of the Cold War. Steven Weinberg has argued that religion is the most important factor, famously saying “ for good people to do evil things that take religion”. (Arquilla, 1999)

In the wake of the tragic events of September 11, and as evidence mounted that Islamic extremists committed the acts, the Muslim community in the United States quickly moved to distance itself from the terrorists. In stark contrast, Muslims in many parts of the Middle East could be seen on television news programs wildly cheering the attack on America. Those unfamiliar with Islam suddenly had a deep interest in knowing which of these really represented Islam. In the first days after the attack, uncertainty bred fear and contempt in some Americans who lashed out at an innocent Muslim community. Many Muslims, fearing for their safety, would no longer go out in public. Political leaders and the media joined Muslim leaders in trying to educate the general public about the differences between “ true” Muslims and those who committed these terrible crimes. (Arquilla)

U. S. officials believe that at least 19 Islamic men orchestrated the suicidal hijacking of four Boeing jets who had connections to the fanatical religious

<https://assignbuster.com/religious-terrorism-and-its-global-effects-politics-essay/>

leader, Osama bin Laden. At least one of the hijackers owned a copy of the Koran, which authorities found in a bag that didn't make the flight. They also found pages of spiritual instructions which contained statements such as: "You're doing a job which is loved by God, and you will end your day in heavens where you will join the virgins," and "I pray to you God to forgive me from all my sins, to allow me to glorify you in every possible way." The Koran, their faith and their will to die for their beliefs provide important clues as to the reason for their actions. Apparently these clues have yet to affect the minds of our military and political leaders.

Long before September 11, 2001, Muslims in the U. S. realized that Islam was associated with terrorism and they set about to distinguish "moderate" Islam from that of Muslim "extremists," "fundamentalists" and terrorists. Moderates claim Muslim extremists have given the wrong impression of Islam and contend that to equate religious terrorism and ethnic cleansing with Islam is like defining Christianity by David Koresh or Timothy McVeigh. The truth probably lies somewhere in between, for both history and fundamentalist theology present functional problems for Muslims to explain. (Hoffman, 1999)

Despite these assurances and having moved several months past the attacks, the debate continues as to whether Islam is a "religion of peace" or does, in fact, support the terrorist actions that have taken so many innocent lives in America and throughout the world, in the name of Allah. This debate will no doubt continue for some time. Our purpose here is not to resolve that issue but to try and better understand the beliefs of our Muslim neighbors and our responsibility as Christians to reach out to them with the gospel.

<https://assignbuster.com/religious-terrorism-and-its-global-effects-politics-essay/>

Muslims believe there are two types of jihad: a “ lesser” and a “ greater.” Muhammad is said to have taught that warfare to destroy the infidel is actually a “ lesser” jihad. Instead the Muslim should practice the “ greater” jihad, which is the war every man must wage within himself to follow Allah and do what is right. In Middle Eastern countries the emphasis certainly seems to be on the “ lesser” jihad. However, Muslims in democratic countries, and Western Muslims in particular, currently tend to interpret jihad as the “ greater” jihad.

Causes of Terrorism

Social and political injustice, these people choose terrorism when they are trying to right what they perceive to be a social or political or historical wrong. This may happen if they have been stripped of their land or rights, or denied these. The belief that violence or its threat will be effective, and move in change. Many terrorists in history said that they chose violence after long deliberation; because they felt they have no choice. Here are some stories where these two elements are basic in their story.

Zionists who bombed British targets in 1930's mandate Palestine felt they must do so in order to create a Jewish state.

The IRA (Irish Republican Army) bombed English targets in the 1980's to make the point that their land was colonized by British imperialists.

In the 1960's and 1970's, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine felt that armed attacks in Israel were a justifiable response to the usurpation of their land.

Osama bin Laden's war on American interests in the 1990's stemmed from his belief that U. S. troops stationed in Saudi Arabia represented an abomination to the kind of Islamic state he believed should exist in the Arabian Peninsula.

Uighur separatists In China felt the Chinese religious repression justifies their terrorist tactics.

In some cases, people choose terrorist tactics based on a cause whose righteousness they believe in to the exclusion of nearly all else. Abortion clinic bombers in the 1990's and groups such as the Animal Liberation Front believe zealously in their causes. (Richard, 1998)

Most that choose terrorism are persuaded that by violence or threats of violence is effective. So the question " what causes terrorism?" we probably will not be able to answer. Although many people today believe that that religious fanaticism " causes" terrorism, it isn't true. It may be true that religious fanaticism creates conditions that are favorable for terrorism. But we know that religious zealotry does not 'cause' terrorism because there are many religious fanatics who do not choose terrorism or any form of violence. So there must also be other conditions that in combination provoke some people to see terrorism as an effective way of creating change in their world.

There are two more reasons why asking, " What conditions create a favorable climate for terrorism?" is better than asking about causes The first is, it makes it easy to remember that there are always at least several conditions. Terrorism is a complex phenomenon; it is a specific kind of

political violence committed by people who do not have legitimate army at <https://assignbuster.com/religious-terrorism-and-its-global-effects-politics-essay/>

their disposal. A second reason that has been useful for me, as I ask questions about terrorism, is that thinking in terms of ‘ conditions’ helps I remember that people have a choice about whether to use violence.

There is nothing inside any person or in their circumstances that sends them – like a monopoly piece headed directly to “ Go” directly to terrorism.

Instead, there are certain conditions, some of which make violence against civilians seem like a reasonable and even necessary option. Despite this, and some of the deeply unforgivable circumstances that foster terrorism, people always have the free will to seek another course of action.

The Effects of Terrorism

Terrorism has occurred throughout history, but today the world is experiencing a global rebirth of attacks. Today it no longer affects only small societies, such as isolated third world countries who fall victim to regular terrorist attacks, but the whole world is becoming more familiar with Arab and Muslim names. The terrorist violence that is on the rise today has informed citizen all over the world about different types of terrorism. Also with the resurgence the world is experiencing of terrorism, the Nation’s have been to do what they can to eliminate terrorism.

Terrorism is a major problem that is reoccurring over the globe in many different forms. The US alone spends about \$5 billion dollars a year combating terrorists. The treats of bio-chemical, Suicide or psychological warfare, and information warfare are on the rise in today’s societies as more political argument and groups emerge. Along with the rise of terrorism is also the increase in Counter-Terrorism acts. Even though most counter

terrorist groups are kept secret, the increase of terrorism has also countered balanced. Throughout the years many radical and reactionary groups have been the cause for terrorist attacks throughout the world, but the ones that will always remain the most important to you are the ones that happen in your home nation.