



INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

6935 Laurel Avenue, Suite 201
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Phone: (301) 270-5500
FAX: (301) 270-3029
e-mail: ieer@ieer.org
<http://www.ieer.org>

Sample Letters to the Editor for Gandhi's Birthday, October 2

Sample Letter to the Editor #1

This Tuesday, October 2, is the 132nd anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. In his exemplary nonviolent struggle against injustice and for peace, Gandhi recognized violence to be an unending downward spiral, for nations as well as individuals. "An eye for an eye," he famously said, "leaves the whole world blind."

Gandhi's work was in part inspired by an American - Henry David Thoreau - and it in turn inspired the U.S. civil rights struggle. As a society and as individuals we would be wise to consider Gandhi's advice at this time of national tragedy and crisis. Anger has stirred many cries for revenge and retaliation, but what will that get us?

The challenge is to get world cooperation to apprehend the suspects without harming people. An even bigger challenge is to look at the injustices in the world and ask how Americans might work together with people around the world to reduce the terrible injustices and violence that continue to take a terrible toll on the human life and spirit all over the globe, of which the terrible tragedy of September 11 was one very grim and tragic example.

Sample Letter to the Editor #2

In the process of responding to the terrorist attacks of September 11, President Bush has said that we are beginning a war to "rid the world of evil." It is important to remember the example of Mahatma Gandhi, whose 132nd birthday is this Tuesday, October 2, in this context. Even as he fought to rid his country of colonialism, violence, and injustice, he always refused to label his adversaries as evil.

Gandhi maintained this position even though his people suffered acts of mass murder. In Amritsar in 1919, for instance, British troops fired on unarmed men, women and children meeting in an enclosed courtyard, until they ran out of bullets, killing hundreds. Yet Gandhi continued to insist that the struggle of Indians for independence should be non-violent no matter how much violence the British used.

How to adapt Gandhi's vision to the struggle terrorism is a major challenge, but it is well worth the effort. A continuation of the politics of raw military power will only lead to a repetition of the experience of the last century, the most violent the world has known, with mass murder by

terrorism added in.

Sample Letter to the Editor #3

The birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of nonviolent struggle, is this Tuesday, October 2, and it gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect on our current drive to war.

Gandhi believed that "hatred can only be overcome by love," a truth espoused by spiritual leaders throughout the ages, and a truth that he practiced successfully through nonviolent action. As we struggle to understand the hatred directed toward the United States in the horrific terrorist acts of September 11, are we responding with love, or in ways that will only breed more hatred?

In our drive to control the region's oil, we have overthrown governments, armed dictators, and bombed many countries. Would it not be better to respond with humanitarian aid, even as we try to get world cooperation to apprehend the suspects? To reduce our oil consumption? To stop supporting repressive dictators? Would this not be a more effective way to dry up the swamps of violence and inequality that breed terrorists? Gandhi clearly understood that violence only begets more violence. Ultimately, that will be the surer guide to eliminating terrorism.