

A Memorial to the Terrorists. Michael Moore

When the Terrorists Are Us

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Eleven days ago on Veterans Day, while watching the cable news, I learned that our Congress, never missing a chance to ingratiate themselves with what they think Middle America wants — more money for the military, more flags flying everywhere, more fake patriotism and more pandering to the fake patriots — decided it was time to create a brand new national memorial on the already overcrowded National Mall in Washington, D.C., between the Lincoln Memorial and the U.S. Capitol building. The memorial will be called “The Global War on Terrorism Memorial.” I’m not making this up.

And what patriotic politician or red-blooded American wouldn’t be in favor of that!

Well, me. **I’m** not in favor of it. And I hope you won’t be, either.

A memorial to the victims, the brave Americans who’ve died in The Global War on Terrorism. Is this an Onion prank? An Orwell novel? Because my first question is — the victims of **whose** terrorism? The scattered actions of a few crazed Muslims?

Or the massive, organized, government-sponsored terror from a half-crazed Christian nation where half of its people still worship an orange man in a long red tie?

It turns out, this proposed memorial is not to honor those Third World people who’ve been slain by the sword in our hands. It’s for *our* dead! Would anyone mind if I stated an inconvenient fact? Other than the horrific, tragic loss of nearly 3,000 people in just two hours on that one day in September of 2001, the total number of Americans slaughtered by *foreign* terrorists *over the past 50 years*, is perhaps an average grand total of 10-20 people a year.

Every life is precious. But let me give this some perspective. By any means of mathematics, history, or honesty, when it comes to creating terror and killing the innocent, the USA is the modern day Genghis Khan and Bubonic Plague rolled into one. Whether it’s the **four million** we killed invading and bombing Southeast Asia in the 60s and 70s, or the **hundreds of thousands** of civilians killed by the sanctions we’ve imposed on Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, the

former Yugoslavia and Syria over the years, or the **200,000** George W. Bush killed in his 2003 Iraqi invasion, or the **one million** Iranians who died when Bush's Daddy and Reagan backed and armed Saddam in his invasion of Iran in the '80s (and when that killing wasn't enough, we switched and began selling arms to both sides, just for fun).

As D.H. Lawrence once pointed out, "the essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer." Our European ancestors came here and committed an unimaginable genocide of the Native Peoples, and it would not be until the democratically-elected Adolph Hitler came to power that the world would once again see such a level of bloodshed and madness.

While we were killing off the American Indians, our European forefathers also went to Africa to kidnap human beings and bring them in chains to America and force them, under the most brutal conditions, to build this new country for us, to farm it for us, to raise many of our children — all while our white slave masters raped their women on a daily basis and lynched any of them who dared to learn to read. Terror? Oh, ya. We wrote the user's manual on it.

But this new potential National Monument on Global Terror is **not** about the terror *we've* committed. It's to honor *Americans* who've been killed by *foreign* terrorists. And to honor our troops who have killed those terrorists and their innocent families. The irony is so rich and so depressing. A nation that terrorized and slaughtered the people who were already here, and that has been killing Black people from 1619 right up through George Floyd and beyond, a nation populated by numerous white supremacist terrorists who will never see a day in jail (in fact, they now get seats in Congress), and the nearly two million people of color incarcerated, hunted, detained, chained by an ankle bracelet — mostly to terrorize their neighbors and families to prove to them just exactly who it is that runs this damn country.

So now the chief terrorists are planning to build a memorial to themselves, to heap praise on themselves over how valiantly they have fought terrorism. Wow. Talk about hubris! Like the Brits constructing a memorial to themselves for how well they fought off the Catholics in Belfast.

Or the Spanish honoring their vicious Inquisition.

Or the Israelis building a monument to how many Palestinian civilians they've killed.

Or a statue to "Feminist Leader Mitch McConnell" for his work in getting the government to take control over women's reproductive organs.

Please. Let's get our definition of terms straight. It is *terrorism* when thousands of police are hired to contain the poor in slums and trailers. It is *terrorism* to seize a family's home because they can't pay their child's hospital bill. It is *terrorism* to send those children to dilapidated schools ensuring their lifetime of poverty. It is *terrorism* when 40 million people in your country are hungry, 50 million can't read or write above a 5th grade level, and a million others must sleep on the streets or under bridges. Infrastructure! It's all about the optics when terrorizing the poor is the main idea.

And what good terrorist wouldn't want to claim the mantle of the victim instead of being the terrorizer? Of course, many whom we have labeled as "terrorists" are **in fact** the victims of *ours* or others' terror. Is a Palestinian mother whose home has been bulldozed and her

children killed — and then she responds in what we would call the self-defense of her family and country with an act of violence against those who did the killing — is she a terrorist? Or is she a patriot, a colonial, a Yank, a freedom fighter? When we invaded Iraq and killed hundreds of thousands of civilians, and then some of those civilians in turn made IEDs and placed them on the roads to kill our invading troops, were they the “enemy terrorists,” or were they simply trying to defend their homes and save their own lives?

The nation that terrorizes not only the world but its own people (as we do) does not have the moral right to build a memorial to itself as the “victims” of terror and the defenders of the innocents. And to build it right next to the Vietnam War Memorial, a monument that exists to remind us of our own senseless acts of terrorism on the Vietnamese people, a memorial that stands with its nearly 60,000 names as an apology to our young dead, a monument that sorrowfully screams NEVER AGAIN. A granite wall that is inscribed with the names of the nine boys from my high school who were sent there to die. In vain. For nothing. That’s why you honor them with a memorial.

But our current Congress hopes we will stand by and allow a monument to a *Lie* sit beside the World War II memorial to my uncle killed in the Philippines, your grandfather who died on the beach in Normandy, your father who sacrificed his life that day in Pearl Harbor. Let’s not allow this degradation of their lives by those who seek to politicize our National Mall. We already have numerous 9/11 memorials. We need a Wounded Knee memorial. We need restitution (or something similar) to the descendants of slaves. We need a monument to the millions of American women raped by American men, and the hundreds of millions of women who since our beginning have been held back, held down, the door shut in their face, the better job denied, only allowed, to this day, to hold just 26% of the seats in Congress when they are, in fact, the majority gender. We need a Rosa Parks Day.

We need someone to forgive us.

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