

IN A FREE SOCIETY, IT IS GOOD TO DISCUSS FRESH IDEAS AND LISTEN TO EACH OTHER.

Are you an American Indian (Native American)? If not, you or your ancestors came to the U.S. as immigrants – or perhaps as refugees from persecution or severe poverty. Other people experience that now.

These words are engraved on the Statue of Liberty:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

America's tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees has made our nation more strong and vibrant.

When Nazi violence against Jews increased in 1938 and 1939, many endangered Jewish refugees sought safety in other countries. Many nations – including the U.S. – refused, so many of these people died because nations refused to help these refugees. Instead of repeating that mistake, let's show real compassion and welcome people who are in danger.

German Nazis were white Europeans (and mostly Christians). Were all white European Christians Nazis? No. Let's not blame entire nationalities, entire ethnic groups, or entire religions for the bad behavior of a few of their members.

Nearly all religions have their own extreme factions that believe things that other people see as bizarre, and some of these religious factions use violence against unbelievers and their own members who are not as "pure" as these extremists are. Over the years we have seen such extremists in Christianity and other religions, so what is happening now with ISIS is not unique to Islam.

ISIS is an extreme faction within Islam that believes the "end times" are coming and will result in an apocalyptic war in their geographical area. ISIS believes it is the key to saving true believers from people who are fighting a war against Islam.

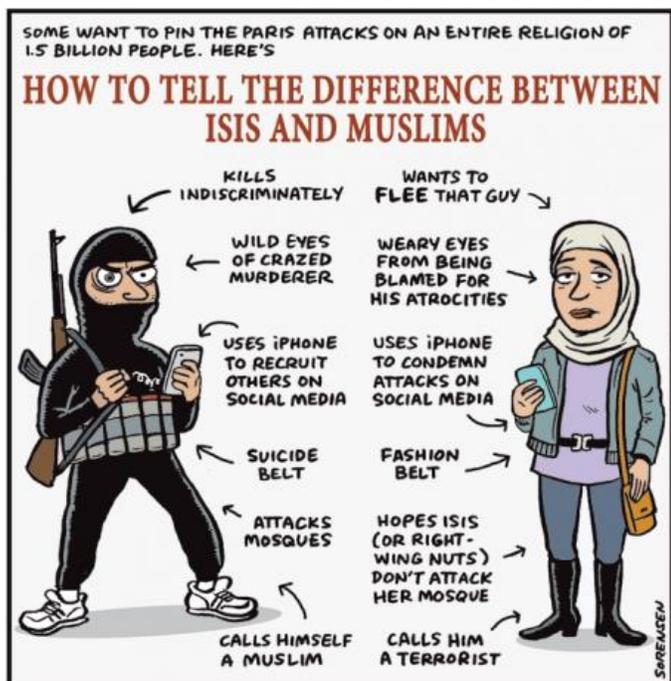
When the U.S. and other Western nations conduct a "war on terror" that seems very much like a "war on Islam," we are actually feeding into ISIS's narrative and provoking them into more extremism!

When the U.S. and other Western nations refuse to accept refugees from chaos, we are actually reinforcing ISIS' claim that we hate Muslims and only ISIS can save them.

If we really want to oppose ISIS, we should reverse our policies, stop our military violence, welcome refugees, honestly understand what real Islam is (not the negative propaganda about it), and engage in honest conversations and cooperation with many diverse nations and people around the world.

Some knowledgeable, respected persons recommend six practical, effective ways to deal with ISIS:

- 1) Freeze the bank accounts of ISIS funders.
- 2) Negotiate partnerships with villages where oil pipelines run to cut ISIS oil revenues.
- 3) Work with partners in Europe and Turkey to stem the flow of Western recruits.
- 4) In Syria, convene rebel groups, the regime, civil society activists, and regional players like Turkey, Iran, Russia, and the Gulf States to restart negotiations for a political solution to the war.
- 5) In Iraq, condition all further assistance on the development of a more inclusive political order that protects the country's minorities.
- 6) Dramatically increase support for the United Nations' badly underfunded humanitarian assistance programs for both Syrian and Iraqi refugees.



All people are one human family. All religions teach compassion. In the 1800s, the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote, "If we could read the secret history of our 'enemies,' we should find in each person's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility."