Argumentation Samples

Assignment Notes

Write an essay taking a stand on a current social, economic, or political issue that is of global importance (i.e. related to or happening throughout the whole world). Select a topic about which you feel strongly—but not so strongly that you cannot deal with it logically. For ideas, consider your own concerns, topics generated in this or other classes, or reading assignments from your textbook.

Your thesis must limit the issue and express an arguable point. Include one body paragraph in which you refute the opposing argument. The emphasis on this topic is on structuring an argument, not on researching a topic. However, so that you may cite facts and statistics, present real-life examples, or quote an authority, you will use at least four periodicals (newspapers, magazines, or journals) as sources. Use TCC databases, not Internet sites. Do not use Wikipedia. Makes copies of these sources for further use and note all the necessary information for documenting them.

Each time you quote, paraphrase or summarize, you must correctly cite your source. The final paper will include correct MLA internal documentation and a Works Cited page.

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The Peril of Cluster Bombs

When countries are involved in war, often people think the danger ends when the conflict ends. Unfortunately that is not the case for hundreds of innocent persons. Frequently, families are forced to flee their homes and farmlands due to the dangers of war. When the war is over and they return to their homes, they are still faced with a deadly enemy. The enemy is a cluster bomb: "Packed into rockets or artillery shells, or dropped from planes in canisters, the bomblets are intended to spread like buckshot and..."
blow up upon impact. In each is 40g of RDX, a high explosive that can penetrate up to four centimeters of steel, or cut through three humans lined up in a row” (Patriquin 2). Hundreds of explosive cluster bomb remnants litter the homes, streets, and farmlands of innocent people who are trying to resume a normal daily routine. For example, a Kosovo family went to swim in a lake near their village. One of the children, a six-year-old, found a metal can on the bank and showed it to his family. It exploded. His father and older brother were killed and the child was gravely wounded. His sister later returned to the lake to collect the family’s belongings, stepped on another cluster bomb, and died (Monbiot 3). This is only one of hundreds of horrifying stories of death and injury to innocent civilians due to cluster bombs. The United Nations should ban the use of cluster bombs because of their reputation for failing to initially detonate but later causing the deaths of innocent civilians and contributing to economic suffering in war-torn countries.

The first reason they are particularly treacherous is the fact that cluster bombs have a reputation of failing to detonate upon impact. The cluster bomb is a complicated, precision-engineered arming mechanism. Unfortunately, this complicated component frequently fails (Fielder 1). What is intended to be an effective weapon against troop formations, heavy armor, and hidden rockets have become deadly weapons against civilians. According to Ben Winston, “During the Vietnam War, the US military dropped more bombs on neighboring Laos than it did worldwide during the Second World War. Up to a third of them failed to explode. Now more than 30 years after the conflict ended, unexploded ordnance kills around 200 annually” (2). Just this last summer Israel dropped over four million cluster bombs over Lebanon, almost all of them during the final
seventy-two hours of conflict. Approximately forty percent of the bombs failed to detonate (Monbiot 2). Due to this enormous amount of explosive debris, the number of human losses has continued to climb daily. Unexploded cluster bombs litter homes and farmlands, causing an additional problem.

Farmers bear the greatest physical danger and economic turmoil from cluster bombs. For instance, Lebanon's tobacco, citrus, banana, and olive crops are still littered with explosive debris preventing farmers from harvesting or preparing for next year's crops. This will be economically devastating for the agriculturally dependent families of southern Lebanon. Also, more than half of this land is still too contaminated to be safely farmed, yet almost sixty percent of the population is malnourished (Winston 4). Therefore, explosive contaminates cause economic suffering for innocent workers and their families.

Furthermore, cluster bombs cause devastating injuries and deaths each day. As one source observes, "Handicap International estimates that around 100,000 people have been killed or wounded by cluster bombs. Of the known casualties, 98 percent are civilians" (Monbiot 1). Most of the civilians were simply trying to resume a normal life. Often children fall victim from simply mistaking the bomb for a toy. One nine-year-old boy found what he thought was a ball. Unfortunately, the ball was a cluster bomb, which exploded and caused burning shrapnel to tear a hole in his skull. He lived but lost the use of his entire left side (Winston 3). Cluster bombs continue maiming and killing innocent victims for years after conflict between countries has ended.

Opponents agree there should be regulations on the use of cluster bombs but strongly disagree on the overall ban of their use. American officials insist that cluster
bombs are "an important military utility, such as attacking artillery positions or runways, armor columns and missile installations" (Klapper 1). In certain situations, these are the most effective weapons. Moreover, the United Kingdom foreign office maintains that "existing humanitarian law is sufficient for the conduct of military operations, including the use of cluster bombs and that no treaty is required" (Monbiot 2). True, Geneva regulations have been in place for years but have been repeatedly ignored by governments:

A protocol of the Geneva Convention prohibits attacks which "are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction" and "which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated." (Monbiot 1)

These Geneva protocols have not been strictly enforced. Unfortunately, the laws have allowed countries to self-regulate. Governments have manipulated the regulations to fit their military purposes. To appear that they are abiding by the Geneva regulations, they claim civilians were told to evacuate certain areas, but that does nothing to guarantee their safety upon returning to their homes. Banning cluster bombs is the only certainty that governments will discontinue their use of these devices.

Banning cluster bombs will save countless lives and aid countries in resuming their economic growth. Why continue to allow history to repeat itself? Even after their wars have ended, Indochina, Laos, Kosovo, and Afghanistan all continue to suffer from the long-lasting effects of cluster bombs. The recent conflict between Israel and Lebanon...
should be the last conflict using cluster bombs. Human injuries and deaths along with the substantial economic losses Lebanon has suffered should finally awaken the United Nations, bringing about a total ban on cluster bombs.

Works Cited


