

BMAT ESSAY

2016, Q1



TIMING ⌚ 30m

RESISTING ARMIES + IDEAS

‘You can resist an invading army; you cannot resist an idea whose time has come’ (Victor Hugo).

Explain the reasoning behind this statement. Argue that, on the contrary, any idea can be suppressed with sufficient force. What do you think gives power to an idea?



ESSAY PLAN

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ARMIES + IDEAS**

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EXPLAIN WHAT IS MEANT BY THE STATEMENT

- The author is evaluating the benefit of approaching a situation with either a physical approach e.g. with brute force or with an intellectual approach e.g. using written text and thinking tactically - brains v brawn.
- Quote leans towards the idea that an intellectual approach can be superior and more difficult to defeat under the important premise that the conditions and timing are adequate for this to be the case



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ARGUE TO THE CONTRARY

- Armies have been defeated throughout history in many battles such as Roman soldiers in the Battle of Cannae
- The quote is not clear on what exactly is an ‘idea whose time has come’ - Vague and affects the validity of the argument
- An invading army cannot always be resisted by citizens of a country - e.g. in North Korea the army can threaten individuals if they do not meet the law
- Governments still use military action when necessary and when they feel ‘ideas’ such as sanctions and warnings do not work - shows the mindset of humanity today



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WHAT GIVES POWER TO AN IDEA

- Alan Turing - In WW2 he played a pivotal role in cracking intercepted coded messages that enabled the Allies to defeat the Nazis - estimated saved more than 14m lives and shortened the war by two years
- Mahatma Ghandi - ‘an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind’. Believed in concept of ahimsa and non-violence. Timing was perfect as it enabled independence from UK
- Alexander the Great - "An army of sheep led by a lion is better than an army of lions led by a sheep" - A leader with good ideas is better than a strong army
- Arab Spring - Colonel Gaddafi and other leaders were defeated due to the power of social media

