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8. Required Essays

Essay A: Describe your personal goals, challenges or commitments and how you can draw on what you've learned about Michael Rothberg's legacy to inspire your own.

To me, there are two truly astonishing facts about 9/11. The first is that nearly 3,000 civilians like Michael Rothberg—not soldiers who volunteered to risk their lives for freedom—were killed because of hate and extremism. The second, detailed in the *9/11 Commission Report*, is the conclusion that communication between government agencies could have prevented it.

Michael was a charitable, intellectually curious individual whose death was unnecessary. His story inspires me to be a better person and prevent future deaths through policy.

First, like Michael, I believe people make differences in their communities. Throughout high school, I have promoted social justice and community. I am in the Gay Straight Alliance, which advocates for equality. Every week, I help special needs students in the school improve social skills. I also tutor students and founded a club that combines art and service. I plan to continue to help others in college.

Second, I am interested in preventing and solving real-world problems through policy. I spend much of my time leading my school's debate team, where I research controversial policies, such as whether the US should suspend aid to Pakistan. In college, I hope to study politics or science policy further and possibly become a lawyer so that I can initiate change. I want to prevent tragedies like 9/11 by creating better laws.

I am committed to bettering policy, my community, and myself. With this scholarship, I will continue Michael's legacy of simultaneously positively impacting the world and preventing future conflict.

Essay B: What would you recommend to our government to prevent terrorism in our country or anywhere in the world?

In the aftermath of President Obama's failed drone strike that killed two hostages in January, the United States should re-evaluate its policies to combat international terrorism. As Brenda Ong of *Policy Mic* explains, current drones strikes are extremely ineffective: "The strikes themselves do not address why individuals turn to terrorism, the deeper root causes of it." Instead of increasing anti-American sentiment and killing innocents through drones, the US government should mitigate the causes of terrorism.

In *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward*, Alex P. Schmid argues that terrorists often recruit "uncommitted members of the local community." As *The New York Times* points out, they are successful because recruits feel that "...they lack the political power to effect change without violence."

Therefore, if America truly wants to avoid another tragedy similar to 9/11, it should increase political stability so that people will not be as easily swayed to join extremist causes. Japan International Cooperation Agency finds that stabilization could be achieved by developing the region. Rand Review adds that increasing trade could reduce terrorism, and The Brookings Institute reports that improving education, in addition to providing humanitarian assistance, could decrease terrorist recruits.

Terrorism is a complicated issue, and there should be a multi-faceted approach to it. However, to the extent that drones fail to combat terrorism long-term, America should look for alternatives. Thus, the US should invest in infrastructure, increase trade, improve education, and send other humanitarian assistance to these countries to prevent terrorism in the future.