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December 11, 2015

Tragedy in San Bernardino & Women in Combat Roles

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

Lyric: A radicalized couple killed 14



San Bernardino, California, was the sight of a deadly terrorist attack.

On December 2, two people opened fire in San Bernardino, California, killing 14 and wounding 21. The shooting took place at a company holiday party. After fleeing the scene, the suspects led police

on a manhunt that eventually left them both dead. The killers have now been identified as a husband and wife, Sayed Farook and Tashfeen Malik. Farook born in the US. Tashfeen Malik was born in Pakistan and had spent time in Saudi Arabia. The FBI has interviewed hundreds of people with connections to the couple. It is believed that Farook and Malik were inspired by ISIS. Malik had announced her loyalty to ISIS on Facebook shortly before the shooting. But it is unlikely that the two were operating under direction from ISIS itself. According to the FBI, the couple had started to radicalize—or take on an extremist position—as early as 2013. The shooting is the deadliest terrorist attack in the US since September 11, 2001. This attack has increased fears about self-radicalized individuals, or people who have adopted violent, extremist views on their own without direct ties to a terrorist group. Farook and Malik were not on any watch list of suspected militants.

In what ways do you think self-radicalized individuals would present a new threat to US security?

Lyric: Obama made a speech in response



Obama addressed the nation from the Oval Office following the San Bernardino attack.

On Sunday, President Obama made a televised speech from the Oval Office. It was only the third time Obama has addressed the nation from the Oval Office, a setting used to highlight a very

serious subject. Obama discussed the threat of terror and tried to calm the nation after the terrorist attack in San Bernardino, CA. In his speech, he referred to the shooting as an act of terror. He promised that the US would intensify airstrikes against ISIS in Syria. He called for tougher screenings for people entering the US without visas and called on Congress to pass restrictions on guns and assault weapons. President Obama also spoke of what he did not want the country to do in response. He asked for national unity and urged the public not to "turn against one another by letting this fight be defined as a war between America and Islam." He repeated his stance that the US should not send ground troops to Iraq or Syria. In his speech, Obama asked Congress to ban gun sales to people on no-fly lists. Last week, a similar bill in Senate was blocked by a vote of 45-54.

Lyric: Trump said to ban Muslims from coming in



Republican candidate Donald Trump called for the US to bar Muslims from entering the country.

After the terrorist attacks in Paris, Donald Trump called for a database to track Muslims in America. On Monday, he made an even more extreme proposal,

calling for the US to ban Muslims from entering the country at all. Almost immediately, politicians from both parties criticized the proposal. Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio, fellow Republican candidates for president, expressed complete disapproval of the proposal. Jeb Bush called Mr. Trump "unhinged," and Marco Rubio called the ban "offensive and outlandish." Religious groups representing Jews, Christians and Muslims, as well as many experts on law and policy also rejected the plan. While the response among politicians and experts has been negative, it is unclear how Trump's proposal will affect voters.

What do you think the US government can do or say to reassure the nation about terrorism?

How do you think Trump's proposal will affect his campaign?

Lyric: For women, all combat roles are now open



Women will have the ability to hold combat positions in the US military.

Before this month, women were not allowed to hold combat positions in the American military, though they were allowed to fight in combat zones. These restrictions prevented them from

advancing their careers in the military. Last week, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced that all combat roles in the American military will be open to women. Carter said that now, "there will be no exceptions." Women will be allowed to "drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat." They'll be able to hold positions such as Army Rangers, Green Berets, Marine Corps infantry and Navy SEALs, as long as they meet the physical requirements for the roles. Carter said that the inclusion of women in combat roles is necessary to ensure that the US military remains the world's most powerful. However, others say that this change will make the military less effective. The change likely won't lead to an even split between men and women in the military. Some units will remain dominated by males because fewer women will be able to meet the physical requirements, like carrying a 100-pound load for a long time.

Why do you think women were previously prevented from holding combat roles?

Lyric: To ban any edits to the human genome That could be inherited, the dangers that we know

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Example of a genome found in human males

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Genes are pieces of DNA. DNA is the material that carries the instructions for the development of every organism.

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Genes determine a person's traits, or characteristics, like what color their eyes are or how tall they are. Genes get

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passed down from parents to children. Sometimes, genes can also cause a person to get a certain disease. Traits and diseases that are passed through genes are called **heritable**.

A few years ago, scientists invented a technique called Crispr-Cas9 for editing, or changing, genes. Any changes made using Crispr-Cas9 are heritable. So, the technique could result in permanent changes to the human gene pool and potentially alter the nature of the human species. It could allow doctors to cure genetic diseases or replace genes for undesirable traits. Crispr-Cas9 would be useful for preventing certain kinds of heritable diseases that can only be stopped through gene editing. Some scientists are in favor of using Crispr-Cas9, while others think that making heritable changes to the human genome should be banned. An international group of scientists met in Washington last week to discuss the use of this technique. They called for a temporary ban on using it to make changes until the risks are fully considered and society agrees on each change. The group has no official power to prohibit the use of Crispr-Cas9, but its recommendation will likely be followed by most scientists.

Do you think people should be allowed to make heritable changes to the human genome? Why or why not?

Lyric: The smog's so thick people there can barely see a thing. The government declared a red alert



Smog levels in Beijing have reached a dangerous level.

China has seen a lot of economic growth in recent years. They achieved this economic growth by boosting industry. That means they produced a lot of goods to be sold. But the energy that China

uses to produce these goods is created by burning coal. Burning coal creates air pollution. Now, Chinese cities are feeling the effects of all that pollution. China created a color-coded emergency response plan to deal with the toxic air. Red is the color that signals the most danger. This week, poisonous air quality in Beijing caused the government declare a "red alert" for the first time. The goal is to warn people to take precaution with their health. They closed schools, shut down factories and told drivers to stay off roads.

Lyric: They say that meal plan contracts are absurd. They include more than the costs of food



Students are paying for more than what they eat in college dining halls.

At colleges across the nation, students are often required to get meal plans, or pay a specific amount for dining services offered by the school. This cost is in addition to the tuition they pay to

attend school. The costs of meal plans can be high, and many colleges require students to pay for food even if they don't normally eat their meals on campus or live on campus. This is a result of agreements that many colleges have made with the large food vendors that provide the food to the campus. If the schools signs long contracts with these vendors, the vendors will help pay for things like campus renovations and academic programs. The costs of the contracts are passed on to the students when the cost of meal plans increases. Some schools use the money from meal plans for things other than individual students' food, such as construction, academic programs and scholarships and special dining services for athletes.

What, if anything, should the Chinese government do about air quality in Chinese cities?

Do you think that meal plans should be required for all students at colleges?