

Clash of Cultures

When the Portuguese entered the India Ocean, their competitors were the Arab traders. Admiral Alfonso d' Albuquerque first defeated the Turkish and Indian fleets and established a Portuguese trading post at Goa, India. From there the Portuguese continued to expand their influence, often with great brutality.

To enhance the terror of his name [Albuquerque] always separated Arabs from the other inhabitants of a captured city, and cut off the right hand of the men, and the noses and ears of the women ... At Goa, he outdid himself in cruelty, ordering the massacre of every Arab man, woman, and child, including newborn babies. This massacre occupied the Portuguese soldiers for three days of non-stop slaughter, during which they killed more than 8,000 people.

Questions:

1. Why do you think the Portuguese felt it necessary to act with such brutality?
2. How would you expect the government of Portugal to react upon hearing of this incident? The government of the Arabs?
3. How are acts of brutality (terrorism, invasion, etc.) viewed today?