Choices and Consequences

Motives, responses, and the War on Terror

9-12.US2.43 "Evaluate the motivations behind domestic and non-state aligned terrorism, assess governmental responses including those after September 11, 2001, and analyze the causes, progression..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline stated motives for attacks, circle government responses, and write 1 beside a cause, 2 beside a major development, and 3 beside an aftermath for each war.

From Attacks to Long Wars

1 In 1995, Timothy McVeigh bombed a federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people. He claimed the attack answered federal actions he viewed as tyrannical. His anti-government motive did not justify the murder of civilians. Six years later, al-Qaeda, a non-state extremist network, attacked the United States on September 11, killing nearly 3,000 people. Its leaders opposed U.S. military presence and influence in Muslim-majority countries and sought to draw the United States into costly conflict. These cases show different political motives, not a single cause of terrorism. Neither attack represented the beliefs of an entire religion or political movement.

2 After September 11, the U.S. government tightened airport security, created the Department of Homeland Security, and expanded surveillance powers under the USA PATRIOT Act. Supporters argued these measures could disrupt plots; critics warned that broad surveillance could threaten privacy and civil liberties. The United States also demanded that Afghanistan's Taliban rulers surrender al-Qaeda leaders, including Osama bin Laden. After the Taliban did not surrender them, U.S. forces and Afghan allies invaded in October 2001, toppling the Taliban government. Al-Qaeda leaders escaped, and the war became a long campaign against a Taliban insurgency. Bin Laden was killed in Pakistan in 2011.

3 In 2003, the United States invaded Iraq, arguing that Saddam Hussein's government possessed weapons of mass destruction. No such stockpiles were found, and investigations found no operational link between Iraq and the September 11 attacks. U.S. forces toppled Hussein, but occupation was followed by insurgency and sectarian violence. U.S. troops withdrew in 2011; later, the Islamic State seized Iraqi territory, prompting renewed U.S. military action. In Afghanistan, the Taliban regained power after U.S. forces withdrew in 2021. These outcomes raise a difficult question: when might military force reduce a threat, and when might it fuel further instability?

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did McVeigh's stated motive differ from al-Qaeda's stated motives? What does the comparison suggest about the causes of terrorism?

2. Assess one possible benefit and one possible cost of the U.S. government's security measures after September 11.

3. Explain why the United States invaded Afghanistan, how the war changed, and one result after U.S. forces withdrew.

4. How did the stated reason for invading Iraq differ from the reason for invading Afghanistan? Use one later outcome to assess the Iraq invasion.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are advising Congress in 2022. Write 90 to 110 words recommending when the United States should use military force against terrorist groups, using evidence from both wars and addressing one civil-liberties tradeoff of a nonmilitary response.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.US2.43

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline stated motives for attacks, circle government responses, and write 1 beside a cause, 2 beside a major development, and 3 beside an aftermath for each war. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did McVeigh's stated motive differ from al-Qaeda's stated motives? What does the comparison suggest about the causes of terrorism?	**McVeigh opposed actions of the U.S. federal government that he saw as tyrannical. Al-Qaeda opposed U.S. military presence and influence in Muslim-majority countries and sought costly conflict. Terrorism does not have a single political cause.**
2	Assess one possible benefit and one possible cost of the U.S. government's security measures after September 11.	**Tighter security and expanded surveillance might disrupt plots, but broad surveillance could threaten privacy and civil liberties.**
3	Explain why the United States invaded Afghanistan, how the war changed, and one result after U.S. forces withdrew.	**The United States invaded after the Taliban did not surrender al-Qaeda leaders. The invasion toppled the Taliban government, but the war became a long campaign against a Taliban insurgency. The Taliban regained power after U.S. forces withdrew in 2021.**
4	How did the stated reason for invading Iraq differ from the reason for invading Afghanistan? Use one later outcome to assess the Iraq invasion.	**The Afghanistan invasion followed the Taliban's failure to surrender al-Qaeda leaders after September 11; the Iraq invasion rested on claims about weapons of mass destruction. No such stockpiles were found, and Iraq faced insurgency and sectarian violence after Hussein was toppled.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress should require strong evidence of a direct threat before authorizing force against a terrorist group. In Afghanistan, al-Qaeda attacked the United States, and Taliban rulers did not surrender its leaders, so military action had a clear initial target. Yet the long Taliban insurgency and the group's return to power in 2021 show that toppling a government does not secure lasting peace. Iraq offers a warning against acting on claims that prove false: no weapons stockpiles were found, and Iraq had no operational link to September 11. Expanded surveillance might help disrupt plots without invasion, but Congress should limit it to protect privacy.

Accept different recommendations if they use accurate evidence from both wars and explain a civil-liberties tradeoff. Do not accept a claim that Iraq carried out the September 11 attacks.