After the Victory

Assessing goals and decisions in Afghanistan and Iraq

USH.C.9.2.B "Assess the goals and management of military engagements (e.g., wars in Afghanistan and Iraq)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a goal for each war, circle two choices about how each war was managed, and put a star beside one later outcome for each war. Use your marks to judge whether early victories led to lasting results.

What Came After the Invasions?

1. After the September 11, 2001, attacks, the United States invaded Afghanistan to disrupt al-Qaeda, which had planned the attacks, and remove the Taliban government that sheltered it. U.S. forces and Afghan allies drove the Taliban from major cities within weeks. But capturing territory did not end the war: Taliban fighters regrouped and attacked the new Afghan government. NATO allies joined a long mission that expanded to training Afghan forces and supporting a stable government. In 2009, President Obama sent additional U.S. troops to weaken the insurgency, then planned to transfer security duties to Afghan forces.

2. In 2003, the United States invaded Iraq. President George W. Bush's administration argued that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and posed a serious threat. U.S. forces quickly toppled Saddam Hussein, but investigators later found no stockpiles of the alleged weapons. U.S. officials then dissolved Iraq's army, leaving many armed men without jobs and weakening security. An insurgency and sectarian violence made governing difficult. In 2007, the United States increased troop numbers and worked with Iraqi groups fighting insurgents. Violence declined, but Iraq's political divisions remained. Most U.S. troops left Iraq in 2011.

3. Neither war can be assessed by its opening battles alone. In Afghanistan, the removal of Taliban leaders met an immediate goal, but rebuilding state institutions proved harder than winning battles. U.S. troops withdrew in 2021; the Taliban rapidly took control as the Afghan government collapsed. In Iraq, overthrowing Hussein met one goal, yet the missing weapons undercut the invasion's central justification. The decision to dissolve the army complicated the occupation, while the 2007 troop increase helped reduce violence without settling political rivalries. U.S. troops returned in 2014 to help Iraqi forces fight the Islamic State group.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the mission in Afghanistan expand beyond its first goals, and what later event raises doubts about the expanded mission's success?

2. How did the decision to dissolve Iraq's army affect efforts to govern after Hussein was removed?

3. How did troop increases fit each war's management, and what do the later outcomes suggest about the limits of adding troops?

4. Which war shows a larger gap between an early military victory and a lasting result? Use one detail from each war to defend your judgment.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise U.S. leaders just after the initial invasion of either Afghanistan or Iraq. In one paragraph, propose a different way to manage the next phase, use two details from the passage to justify it, and explain one possible drawback and one sign that your plan worked.

ANSWER KEY

After the Victory

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.9.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a goal for each war, circle two choices about how each war was managed, and put a star beside one later outcome for each war. Use your marks to judge whether early victories led to lasting results. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the mission in Afghanistan expand beyond its first goals, and what later event raises doubts about the expanded mission's success?	**The mission expanded from disrupting al-Qaeda and removing the Taliban to training Afghan forces and supporting a stable government. The Afghan government collapsed when U.S. troops withdrew in 2021.**
2	How did the decision to dissolve Iraq's army affect efforts to govern after Hussein was removed?	**It left many armed men without jobs and weakened security during an occupation already challenged by insurgency and sectarian violence.**
3	How did troop increases fit each war's management, and what do the later outcomes suggest about the limits of adding troops?	**In Afghanistan, additional troops were sent to weaken the insurgency before transferring security duties to Afghan forces, but the government later collapsed. In Iraq, a troop increase and cooperation with Iraqi groups were followed by less violence, but political divisions remained. The passage does not show that troop numbers alone caused either outcome.**
4	Which war shows a larger gap between an early military victory and a lasting result? Use one detail from each war to defend your judgment.	**One defensible judgment is Afghanistan: U.S. forces drove the Taliban from major cities, but the Taliban regained control in 2021. Iraq also had a gap: Hussein was toppled quickly, but violence and political divisions continued. Accept a well-supported judgment favoring either war.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would screen members of Iraq's army and retain those not implicated in abuses to help maintain security. U.S. forces toppled Hussein quickly, but dissolving the army left many armed men without jobs and weakened security. Keeping screened soldiers could help protect communities while a new Iraqi government formed. Some former soldiers might still support Hussein or abuse civilians, so close oversight would be necessary. I would look for fewer attacks without an increase in abuses by security forces as a sign that the plan worked.

For the comparison question, accept either war if the student uses an accurate detail about each. For the open task, look for a specific management choice, two relevant passage details, a plausible drawback, and a measurable sign of success.