The War on Terrorism Begins

On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the United States killing over 3,000 people. The attacks united the nation as Americans worked to help the survivors. President George W. Bush and Congress launched a war on terrorism to prevent such attacks in the future.

September 11, 2001

**MAIN IDEA** The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon shocked and alarmed Americans; almost immediately, combating terrorism became the nation’s top priority.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Do you recall learning about the 1919 bombings that triggered government raids and roundups of foreigners? Read on to learn how the United States reacted to the more deadly attacks of 2001.

At 8:45 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time on September 11, 2001, a Boeing 767 passenger jet slammed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. As people below gazed in horror, a second plane collided with the South Tower. Soon afterward, a third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. At 9:50 A.M., the South Tower collapsed in a billowing cloud of dust and debris. The North Tower fell about 40 minutes later. The falling towers killed thousands of people, burying them beneath a vast mound of rubble.

The airplanes did not crash accidentally. Hijackers deliberately crashed them into the buildings. Hijackers also seized a fourth airplane, United Airlines Flight 93, probably hoping to crash it into the White House or the Capitol. Many passengers on Flight 93 had cell phones. After hearing about the World Trade Center, four passengers—Todd Beamer, Thomas Burnett, Jeremy Glick, and Mark Bingham—decided to do something. An operator listening over a cell phone heard Todd Beamer’s voice: “Are you ready guys? Let’s roll.”

Soon afterward, Flight 93 crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. At that moment, Vice President Dick Cheney was in a bunker under the White House. After hearing Flight 93 had crashed, he turned to the others in the room, and said: “I think an act of heroism just took place on that plane.”

A National Emergency

The attacks of 9/11, as the day came to be called, killed all 266 passengers and crewmembers on the four hijacked planes. Another 125 people died in the Pentagon. In New York City, nearly 3,000 people died. More Americans were killed in the attacks of September 11,
The Attacks of September 11, 2001

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, altered the lives of millions of Americans and shifted the priorities of the federal government. At home the United States launched a new war against terrorists and their supporters. Globally, the United States took aggressive and pre-emptive steps to stop terrorism. At home, the balance between civil liberties and national security shifted, with passage of the USA Patriot Act which gave broad new powers to the federal government.

MAKING CONNECTIONS How are the terrorist attacks and their aftermath still affecting American society and foreign policy?

Above, the South Tower of the World Trade Center bursts into flames after being struck by an airliner while the North Tower burns from an attack a few minutes earlier. At left, one side of the Pentagon was badly damaged. Part of the building later collapsed. At right, after the World Trade Center towers collapsed, the resulting debris coated the city with dust.

2001, than died at Pearl Harbor or on D-Day in World War II.

The attacks shocked Americans, but they responded rapidly to the crisis. Medical workers and firefighters from other cities raced to New York to help. Across the nation, Americans donated blood and collected food, blankets, and other supplies. Within weeks, Americans also donated over $1 billion. From around the world came sympathy. “We are all Americans!” wrote one French journalist.

Everywhere across the nation, Americans put up flags to show their unity and resolve. They held candlelight vigils and prayer services as they searched for ways to help. If the terrorists had hoped to divide Americans, they failed. As the Reverend Billy Graham noted at a memorial service, “A tragedy like this could have torn our country apart. But instead it has united us and we have become a family.”

The American government also responded quickly to the crisis. All civilian airplanes were grounded. The armed forces were put on high alert. Across the nation, Americans in the National Guard left their civilian jobs and reported for duty. The Air National Guard began patrolling the skies over major cities, and Army National Guard troops were deployed to airports to strengthen security.

On September 14, President Bush declared a national emergency. Congress authorized the use of force to fight whoever had attacked the United States. Intelligence sources and the FBI quickly identified the attacks as the work of a man named Osama bin Laden and his organization, al-Qaeda (al KY-duh).
Middle East Terrorism and the United States

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were acts of terrorism. Terrorism is the use of violence by nongovernmental groups against civilians to achieve a political goal. Terrorist acts are intended to instill fear in people and to force governments into changing their policies.

Although there have been many acts of terrorism in American history, most terrorist attacks on Americans since World War II have been carried out by Middle Eastern groups. The reason Middle Eastern terrorists have targeted Americans can be traced back to events early in the twentieth century.

As oil became important to the American economy in the 1920s, the United States invested heavily in the Middle East oil industry. This industry brought great wealth to the ruling families in some Middle Eastern kingdoms, but most people remained poor. Some became angry at the United States for supporting the wealthy kingdoms and families.

The rise of the oil industry also led to the spread of Western ideas in the region, and many Muslims feared that their traditional values were being weakened. New movements arose calling for a strict interpretation of the Quran—the Muslim holy book—and a return to traditional Muslim religious laws. These Muslim movements wanted to overthrow pro-Western governments in the Middle East and create a pure Islamic society. Muslims who support these movements are referred to as fundamentalist militants. Some militants began using terrorism to achieve their goals.

American support of Israel also angered many in the Middle East. In 1947 the UN divided British-controlled Palestine into two territories to provide a home for Jews. One part became Israel. The other part was to become a state for Palestinian Arabs, but fighting between Israel and the Arab states in 1948 left this territory under the control of Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. In
the 1950s, Palestinians began staging guerrilla raids and terrorist attacks against Israel. Since the United States gave aid to Israel, it became the target of Muslim hostility. In the 1970s, several Middle East nations realized they could fight Israel and the United States by providing terrorists with money, weapons, and training. This is called state-sponsored terrorism. The governments of Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Iran have all sponsored terrorists.

The Rise of Al-Qaeda

In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. In response, Muslims from across the world headed to Afghanistan to help fight the Soviets. Among them was a 22-year-old named Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden came from one of Saudi Arabia’s wealthiest families. He used his wealth to support the Afghan resistance. In 1988 he founded an organization called al-Qaeda or “the Base.” Al-Qaeda recruited Muslims and channeled money and arms to the Afghan resistance.

Bin Laden’s experience in Afghanistan convinced him that superpowers could be beaten. He also believed that Western ideas had contaminated Muslim society and was outraged by Saudi Arabia’s decision to allow American troops to be based on Saudi soil after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

At first, bin Laden ran al-Qaeda from camps in Sudan, but in 1996, he moved back to Afghanistan after the Taliban, a militant Muslim fundamentalist group, took power there. Bin Laden dedicated himself to driving Westerners out of the Middle East. In 1998 he called on Muslims to kill Americans. Soon afterward, his followers set off bombs at the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

After these bombings, President Clinton ordered cruise missiles fired at terrorist camps in Afghanistan and Sudan, but bin Laden was not deterred. In 1999, al-Qaeda terrorists were arrested while trying to smuggle explosives into the United States in an attempt to bomb Seattle. In October 2000, al-Qaeda terrorists crashed a boat loaded with explosives into the USS Cole, an American warship, while it was docked in Yemen. Then, on September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda struck again, hijacking four American passenger planes and executing the most devastating terrorist attack in history.

Reading Check: Why was Osama bin Laden able to create a terrorist organization?

A New War Begins

Main Idea: The war on terrorism involved halting terrorists’ access to funding and launching a war in Afghanistan.

History and You: Does your school have plans for coping with an emergency? Read on to learn about the national response to the terrorist attacks.

In an address to Congress on September 20, 2001, President Bush demanded the Taliban regime in Afghanistan turn over bin Laden and his supporters and shut down all terrorist camps. The president then made it clear that although the war on terrorism would start by targeting al-Qaeda, it would not stop there. “It will not end,” the president announced, “until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.” While Secretary of State Colin Powell began building an international coalition to support the United States, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld began deploying troops, aircraft, and warships to the Middle East.

The president also announced that the United States would no longer tolerate states that aided terrorists. “From this day forward,” the president proclaimed, “any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.” The war would not end quickly, but it was a war the nation had to fight.

Primary Source

“Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment .... Our Nation—this generation—will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future.”

—President George W. Bush, Address to Joint Session of Congress, September 20, 2001

In a letter to the New York Times, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld warned Americans that “this will be a war like none other our nation has faced.” The enemy, he explained, “is a global network of terrorist organizations and their state sponsors, committed to denying free people the opportunity to live as they choose.” Fighting terrorism would not be easy. Military force would be used, but terrorism had to be fought by other means as well.
Cutting Terrorist Funding One effective way to fight terrorist groups is to cut off their funding. On September 24, President Bush issued an executive order freezing the financial assets of several individuals and groups suspected of terrorism. As information about terrorist groups increased, more names and organizations were added to the list. President Bush asked other nations to help, and within weeks, some 80 nations had issued orders freezing the assets of the organizations and individuals on the American list.

Homeland Security and the Patriot Act
As part of the effort to protect the American people from further terrorist attacks, President Bush created a new federal agency—the Office of Homeland Security—to coordinate the dozens of federal agencies and departments working to prevent terrorism. He then appointed Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge to serve as the agency's director.

The president also asked Congress to pass legislation to help law enforcement agencies track down terrorist suspects. Drafting the legislation took time. Congress had to balance Americans' Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure with the need to increase security. President Bush signed the antiterrorist bill—known as the USA Patriot Act—into law in October 2001. In cases involving terrorism, the law permitted secret searches to avoid tipping off suspects and allowed authorities to obtain a nationwide search warrant usable in any jurisdiction. The law also made it easier to wiretap suspects and allowed authorities to track Internet communications and seize voice mail.

In the months following the attack, the Office of Homeland Security struggled to coordinate all of the federal agencies fighting terrorism. In June 2002, President Bush asked Congress to combine all of the agencies responsible for the public's safety into a new...
department called the Department of Homeland Security. The plan called for the largest reorganization of the federal government since 1947, when Congress created the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and the CIA.

The president’s proposal led to an intense debate in Congress, and it did not pass until after the midterm elections in November 2002. The new Department of Homeland Security controls the Coast Guard, the Border Patrol, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Customs Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and many other agencies. It also analyzes information collected by the FBI, the CIA, and other intelligence agencies.

Bioterrorism Strikes the United States As the nation struggled to cope with the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, another terrorist attack began. On October 5, 2001, a newspaper editor in Florida died from an anthrax infection. Anthrax is a type of bacteria. Several nations, including the United States, Russia, and Iraq, have used anthrax to create biological weapons. Antibiotics can cure anthrax, but if left untreated, it can quickly become lethal.

Soon after its appearance in Florida, anthrax was found at the offices of news organizations in New York City. In Washington, D.C., a letter containing anthrax arrived at Senator Tom Daschle’s office. It was now clear that terrorists were using the mail to spread anthrax. Traces of anthrax were found at several government buildings. Several postal workers who had handled letters containing anthrax contracted the disease, and two workers died. The FBI began investigating the attack, but no suspects were arrested.

The War in Afghanistan Begins

On October 7, 2001, the United States began bombing al-Qaeda’s camps and the Taliban’s military forces in Afghanistan. In an address to the nation, President Bush explained that Islam and the Afghan people were not the enemy, and that the United States would send food, medicine, and other supplies to Afghan refugees. The president also explained that the attack on the Taliban was only the beginning. The war on terrorism would continue until victory was achieved:

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

"Today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader. Every nation has a choice to make. In this conflict, there is no neutral ground. If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers themselves. And they will take that lonely path at their own peril. . . . The battle is now joined on many fronts: We will not waver; we will not tire; we will not falter; and we will not fail. Peace and freedom will prevail. Thank you. May God continue to bless America."

— President George W. Bush, Address to the Nation, October 7, 2001

**Reading Check** Outlining What steps did the president take in response to the terrorist attacks?
The Invasion of Iraq

Guide to Reading
Big Ideas
Trade, War, and Migration In an effort to fight terrorism, the United States launched attacks in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Content Vocabulary
• weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (p. 1044)

Academic Vocabulary
• inspector (p. 1045)
• significantly (p. 1046)
• eliminate (p. 1047)

People and Events to Identify
• Northern Alliance (p. 1042)
• Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (p. 1043)
• “axis of evil” (p. 1044)
• Saddam Hussein (p. 1045)

Reading Strategy
As you read this section on the Invasion of Iraq, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below to show the different groups in Iraq.

The War on Terror Continues

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States invaded Afghanistan, the Central Asian nation that had sheltered many al-Qaeda members. In March 2003, the United States invaded Iraq and toppled the regime of Saddam Hussein.

MAIN IDEA
After forcing Taliban leaders in Afghanistan to flee, the United States and its allies sent more troops as peacekeepers and worked to create a stable and democratic government.

HISTORY AND YOU Can you think of a nation or region today where peacekeepers are stationed while a new government is established? Read on to learn about the role of peacekeepers in Afghanistan.

Less than a month after the September 11 attacks, the United States launched a war in Afghanistan with the goal of bringing down the Taliban regime that had sheltered Osama bin Laden and other members of al-Qaeda. Americans also hoped that bin Laden would be captured and brought back for trial in the United States.

While American warplanes bombed the Taliban’s forces, the United States began sending military aid to the Northern Alliance, a coalition of Afghan groups that had been fighting the Taliban for several years. U.S. Special Forces also entered Afghanistan to advise the Northern Alliance and identify targets for American aircraft. The American bombing campaign quickly shattered the Taliban’s defenses. The Northern Alliance then launched a massive attack. In December 2001, the Taliban government collapsed, and surviving Taliban fled to the mountains of Afghanistan.

Rebuilding Afghanistan

After the Taliban fled, the United States and its allies helped local Afghan leaders create a new government. Meanwhile, thousands of American and allied troops arrived to act as peacekeepers. In 2003 NATO took command of peacekeeping in Afghanistan.

Since 2002 Afghanistan has begun to slowly recover from decades of war. The economy has grown rapidly, although the people remain very poor. The United States and its allies have donated some $24 billion to help rebuild the country. In December 2004, Afghanistan held its first nationwide democratic election, and Hamid Karzai was elected president. One year later, the Afghan people elected a National Assembly. Despite these successes, Afghanistan continues to suffer from violence. Taliban insurgents have staged guerrilla
The United States invaded Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban regime. Helping to establish a democratic government was the next step.

American soldiers were sent to act as peacekeepers while the new Afghan government tried to establish order in the mountainous country.

The new Afghan constitution granted equal rights to women, including the right to vote.

Hamid Karzai was elected president in 2004.

**Analyzing VISUALS**

1. **Speculating** What part of their duties do you think these soldiers find most difficult?
2. **Predicting** How may voting rights for women affect the development of the new Afghan government?

attacks and suicide bombings. The Afghan government has little control over the mountainous regions of southern Afghanistan and fighting continues between NATO and Taliban forces in the south.

**Bin Laden Goes Into Hiding**

According to news reports, American intelligence agencies believe Osama bin Laden crossed into Pakistan to hide in the mountainous region of Warizistan where the local people were friendly to al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Between 2002 and 2006, bin Laden released a number of audiotapes and one videotape urging his followers to continue the fight.

Pakistan has not officially allowed American troops to enter its territory to find bin Laden, although news reports suggest U.S. Special Forces may be operating in the area. Pakistan has itself launched several military operations in Warizistan in search of al-Qaeda and Taliban forces. Although many al-Qaeda operatives have been arrested in Pakistan, Osama bin Laden remains at large.

**Tracking Down Al-Qaeda**

Since 2001, the United States and its allies have continued their worldwide hunt for al-Qaeda members. Hundreds of people have been captured or killed, including several top leaders of al-Qaeda. In November 2002, the CIA used an unmanned remote-controlled flying drone to fire a missile at a car in Yemen killing everyone in the vehicle. The car had been carrying top al-Qaeda leaders who had planned the attack on the USS Cole in 1998.

In 2003, Pakistan and the United States captured **Khalid Shaikh Mohammed**—one of the highest ranking members of al-Qaeda, and the man suspected of planning the September 11 attacks. Between 2002 and 2006, the American government believes that at least 10 major attacks by al-Qaeda, including at least three attacks on the United States and two on Great Britain, have been prevented.

**Reading Check** **Describing** What strategy has the United States used to prevent the Taliban from regaining power?
Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction

MAIN Idea Concern that Iraq might be producing WMDs that could be given to terrorists led to an ultimatum.

HISTORY AND YOU Do you think the UN is an effective mediator of world affairs? Read on to learn about UN actions before the Iraq War.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 showed that groups such as al-Qaeda were determined to kill as many Americans as possible. President Bush and his advisers were deeply concerned that terrorist groups might acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Weapons of mass destruction can kill large numbers of people all at once. Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons are all examples of weapons of mass destruction.

During the Cold War, very few nations had weapons of mass destruction, and the United States relied upon a policy of deterrence to prevent their use. The United States announced that if any nation used weapons of mass destruction against the United States, the United States would counterattack with its own weapons of mass destruction. Deterrence worked during the Cold War, but the rise of state-sponsored terrorism created a new problem. If a nation secretly gave weapons of mass destruction to terrorists who then used them against the United States, the American military might not know where the weapons came from, or whom to attack in response.

The “Axis of Evil”

In his State of the Union speech in 2002, President Bush warned that an “axis of evil” made up of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea posed a grave threat to the world. Each of these nations had been known to sponsor terrorism, and was suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction. The president warned that “The United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.”

Of the three nations in the “axis of evil,” the president and his advisers believed Iraq to be the most immediate danger. It had used chem-
ical weapons against the Kurds, an ethnic group in northern Iraq, and after the 1991 Gulf War, UN inspectors had also found evidence that Iraq had developed biological weapons and had been working on a nuclear bomb.

Between 1991 and 1998, Iraq appeared to be hiding its weapons of mass destruction from UN inspectors. In 1998 the Iraqi government ordered the inspectors to leave the country. In response, President Clinton ordered a massive bombing attack on Iraq to destroy its ability to make such weapons. Despite the attack, intelligence agencies continued to believe Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction.

**An Ultimatum to Iraq**

In 2002 President Bush decided the time had come to deal with Iraq. On September 12, he delivered a speech to the United Nations asking for a new resolution against Iraq. If Iraq’s dictator, Saddam Hussein, wanted peace he would have to give up Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, readmit the UN weapons inspectors, stop supporting terrorism, and stop oppressing his people. Although he was asking the UN to pass a resolution, the president made it clear that the United States would act with or without UN support.

While the UN Security Council debated a new resolution, President Bush asked Congress to authorize the use of force against Iraq, which it did. With the midterm elections only weeks away, Democrats wanted to focus on the nation’s high unemployment rate and the slow economy. Instead, President Bush successfully kept the focus on national security issues. In 2002 Republicans picked up seats in the House of Representatives and regained control of the Senate.

Soon after the American elections, the UN approved a new resolution setting a deadline for Iraq to readmit weapons inspectors. It also required Iraq to declare its weapons of mass destruction, to stop supporting terrorism, and to stop oppressing its people. It threatened “serious consequences” if Iraq did not comply.

**Reading Check**

Analyzing Why did the United States think stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction was linked to the war on terror?