

Committee: Historical Security Council (HSC)

Issue: 09/11/2001 attacks

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INTRODUCTION

On September 11th 2001, a series of terrorist attacks occurred in the East Coast of the United States of America triggering chaos in the international atmosphere. There were four attacks which were associated to be carried out by the Islamic military group, Al Qaeda. All four incidents took place within a span of several hours causing 2,977 fatalities and over 25,000 injuries.¹ All of the attacks were conducted with the use of airplanes as they were hijacked and crashed onto important buildings in the Northern-Eastern Coast of the USA causing a minimum of 10 million dollars' worth of property damage alongside the humanitarian aspect of the issue.

The attacks were executed by 19 Al Qaeda militants as they hijacked four different flights that day leading them to the designated attack areas. The twin towers of the World Trade center, the Pentagon and a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania were the three attack zones. The militants carried out these suicide missions as a global indicator to their disagreement with several aspects of the United States of America at the time- one of them



being their foreign policy favoring the Israeli state. Suspicion about Al Qaeda planning these incidents was raised right away by the U.S government connecting it to their previous involvement in the Afghan War to depose the Taliban.

The attacks have been characterized as one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in history forcing the United States and the international community to redefine national security and better prepare for threats to their sovereignty and integrity.

¹ Plumer, Brad. "Nine Facts about Terrorism in the United States since 9/11." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 11 Sept. 2013, www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/09/11/nine-facts-about-terrorism-in-the-united-states-since-911/.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Terrorism

Terrorism is a premeditated plan of violence with the intent of enforcing a specific political, religious or economic objective causing great fear amongst a population.²

Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda is a global Islamic terrorist network founded by Osama Bin Laden founded under the intent of supporting the Muslim population against the Soviet Union during the Afghan war.³

The Pentagon

The Pentagon is the headquarters of the United States of America's Ministry of Defense.⁴

Jihad

Jihad or also spelled as Jihad is the literal meaning of struggle or effort. More specifically, it has three meanings such as the struggle to build a Muslim society, the internal struggle to support a Muslim's faith and the struggle to defend Islam.⁵

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the conclusive term for any type of system of buildings, businesses or networks within a given region.⁶

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is an exaggerated fear, hatred and hostility towards the Muslim community and Islam that is followed by stereotypes, discriminatory behavior and violence acts towards such groups of individuals.⁷

² Jenkins, John Philip. *Terrorism*. 10 Feb. 2020, www.britannica.com/topic/terrorism.

³ History.com Editors. "Al Qaeda." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 4 Dec. 2018, www.history.com/topics/21st-century/al-qaeda.

⁴ *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, 2001-2009.state.gov/t/pm/iso/15968.htm.

⁵ "Religions - Islam: Jihad." *BBC*, BBC, 3 Aug. 2009, www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/jihad_1.shtml.

⁶ Chappelow, Jim. "Infrastructure Definition." *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 26 Apr. 2020, www.investopedia.com/terms/i/infrastructure.asp.

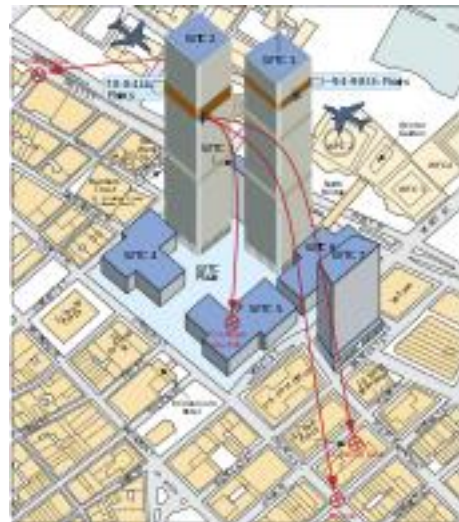
⁷ Gallup. "Islamophobia: Understanding Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the West." *Gallup.com*, Gallup, 8 June 2020, news.gallup.com/poll/157082/islamophobia-understanding-anti-muslim-sentiment-west.aspx.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical proceedings and planning

The attacks, mainly planned by Osama Bin Laden, the founder of the Islamic extremist group Al Qaeda, were under the premature thoughts of the Al Qaeda founder from the 1980s and 1990s concluding that they were a weaker military force than what was thought at the time. This theory originated from an observation of the Beirut attacks forcing the US navy to leave Lebanon. The attack of the Marine barracks in 1983 had 241 fatalities, influencing Osama into believing that they are a “paper tiger”⁸. The US military force was just an image of strength to Osama Bin Laden. His views and beliefs were justified after the withdrawal of the US forces in 1993 from Somalia. Revisiting previous US failed military operations Al Qaeda’s leader created an idea of the holistic military force of the United States of America which influenced him into planning the 9/11 attacks.

The organizing planner of these attacks was not Osama but Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. Raised in Kuwait and a later participant soldier at the Afghan war against the Soviet Union in 1979, Khalid followed strong and extremist Muslim beliefs. In 1996 Khalid met with Osama in Tora Bora, Afghanistan to present to him the 9/11 attack plans. At the time Al Qaeda had relocated from Sudan to Afghanistan hence, any major attacks were to be withheld until the organization settled. Two years later, in 1998, Al Qaeda, an Islamic Jihad group attacked two U.S embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. These instances became a turning point for Osama’s plans towards the United States of America.



Late 1998 was the year that Osama gave complete approval to Mohammed to plan the prospective attacks against the United States of America. Planning continued for the next three years, rejecting targets in a great distance between them with the intent of saving time between attacks. Hence, Washington, New York City and Boston became the center points of their operation. The central idea behind their planning was to cause significant

⁸ Bergen, Peter L. “September 11 Attacks.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 13 Mar. 2020, www.britannica.com/event/September-11-attacks.

damage to the United States thus, targeting the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. In continuation to the plans of attack, Osama Bin Laden selected several individuals who were educated, could speak English and could learn how to pilot a plane. Most of which were being tracked by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for their involvement with Al Qaeda.

The designated flight paths were to hit the twin towers of the World Trade center, the Pentagon and the White House. The airplanes were carefully selected as long-flights would mean that they would be full of jet fuel allowing for them to maneuver them appropriately to cause the attacks. The operation took a global scale, having a network of



communicators from Afghanistan to Germany to monitor the attacks and coordinate any necessary command.

World Trade Centre attacks

On September 11th, 2001, at 8:46 a.m. the first attacks transpired having both of the planes of flights American Airlines flight 11 and United Airlines flight 175 crash on the North and the South World Trade towers. The American Airlines plane was loaded with 20,000 gallons of jet fuel causing a hole close to the 80th floor. Immediately, hundreds were killed and trapped in the above 30 floors. The plane originated from Boston, Massachusetts and in the beginning, it was thought that a piloting accident occurred involving a commercial flight. At 9:03 a.m., 17 minutes after the first attack, a second airplane was flown straight to the Southern World Trade tower. The United Airlines flight 175 turned sharply towards the targeted area and crashed onto the 60th floor of the 110-story tower. Killing the workers in the nearby floors, the attack caused a massive explosion

which initiated their collapse. Within the next 48 minutes both towers had collapsed, already resulting in hundreds of deaths, injuries and structural damage. After the collapse of the two towers, it was evident that the United States of America was under attack.

Pentagon and Shanksville attacks

American Airlines Flight 77, at 9:45 a.m., circled over downtown Washington D.C. prior to its crash at the Pentagon. As the plane crashed an inferno was caused leading to the destruction of a great portion of the U.S. Department of Defense headquarters. In total, the casualties reached 189 people with 125 of them being military personnel and civilians. The Pentagon, being the centre of major military operations marking it as a main target to any terrorist attack, saved hundreds of lives due to its structural design. Its shape made it resilient to significant damage in comparison to the World Trade block. Minutes later the Pentagon attacked the National Aviation Authority and ordered a domestic ground stop for all upcoming flights. An hour later the fourth plane crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania after its passengers attempted to overthrow the hijackers, misrouting them away from their designated attack zone.



Motive

There are several motives that initiated the interest in the upcoming terrorist attacks against the United States of America. There are several speculations about

the motives of these attacks but no confirmed reasonings have been provided by the terrorist group itself.

By introducing religion into the conversation of motives we can see that there is a strong divide. Many believe that all of the 9/11 attacks were conducted under religious motives in order to restore moral order and bring the world under the ruling of Islam. Yet, this has not been proven to this day by any source. On the other hand, globalization falls under the religious motives as the Middle East is in constant economic and political cooperation with the western world threatening the extinction of their ethics, morals and cultures as a whole. This can be attributed to a long-term ideological progression dating back to the decline of the Ottoman Empire creating philosophical understandings such as Arab Liberalism, Arab socialism and Arab secularism. As the aforementioned motives are characterized as inferred, there can be only a certain extent of reliability to such intentions.

Understanding all of the expected motives behind these attacks we can revisit previous U.S international operations and motives under regions that may affect Muslim communities such as the Middle East and Northern Africa. It is believed that Osama Bin Laden wanted to bring out the wrongful policies the U.S.A empowered such as trading with their sole economic interest, their immoral habits and actions such as homosexuality, gambling and impurity. Yet, geopolitical and economic reasonings had a far greater influence on the attacks. On August 6th, 1990 after the Iraqi invasion in Kuwait, the U.S.A supported and proposed the imposition of sanctions on Iraq. A full trade embargo was implemented excluding humanitarian assistance and medical supplies. Iraq at the time had a devastating conflict in Kuwait leading to around 1 million injured and killed therefore, making the U.S.A's sanctions a devastating after-shock to the state. In the Middle East the profound number of nations are under a coalition of Islam. The U.S.A international affairs policies strongly support the nation of Israel, a Jewish state. Israel's conflict with the Palestinian population has been long undergone yet, since its geopolitical expansion is seen by Osama as one of the biggest crimes in history as it caused the displacement of thousands of Palestinians in the region and overtook a large region of Jerusalem. A religion landmark for both Judaism and Islam it was seen as a criminal act as it was authorized and justified by several nations, one of them being the U.S.A.

In 1991 the Gulf war came to an end yet, the U.S military force was still present in Saudi Arabia with an approximate number of 5,000 troops. U.S presence in the region was great, forcing a no-fly zone over southern Iraq and the control of oil shipping

lanes in the Persian Gulf by a military base in Bahrain. Those operations, in addition to the U.S military presence in Saudi Arabia, are believed to be an incentive for the Al Qaeda group. Saudi Arabia has two of the most religiously profound cities to Islam Medina and Mecca hence, marking any foreign military presence unwanted. Lastly, the accumulation of several actions by the United States of America also influenced Osama Bin Laden. Somalia, Chechnya, Kashmir, Philippines and Lebanon have all been regions of military presence of the United States. Support against the Muslim opposition in those disputed areas polarized their relations and infuriated Osama and his followers.⁹

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America (USA)

The United States of America underwent the 9/11 attacks such as the Pentagon, the Shanksville and the World Trade center attacks. From the havoc created several organizations took place monitoring for any new attacks at the time, conducting investigations and issuing possible suspects for the attacks.

Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda is the main operating power behind the attacks, yet, it has not been formally accused by the United States of America as the leading operator. The leading officer of CIA confirmed that Al Qaeda was the operational force behind such attacks on 9/11 at 9:30 pm. Lead by Osama Bin Laden their attacks were carefully planned and were justified by several motives such as religion and the conceptual dislike by the U.S.A foreign policies towards the Muslim populations along the Middle Eastern block and Central Asia.

Center Intelligence Agency (CIA)

The CIA expanded their departments of investigation and introduced terrorism as a main issue addressed by the agency. At the time they criticized their lack of infrastructure in identifying possible threats to the nation and conducting investigations in terrorist organizations, threatening individuals and monitoring their operations.

⁹ André Gagné Associate Professor specializing in Politico-Religious Extremism and Violence. *9/11 Anniversary: Understanding Extremist Motives Could Stop Further Violence*. 20 July 2020, theconversation.com/9-11-anniversary-understanding-extremist-motives-could-stop-further-violence-83773.

German Intelligence Agencies

Several German Intelligence Agencies such as the Military Counterintelligence Service and the Federal Intelligence Service helped identify the sources of communication within the Al Qaeda group alongside the CIA. As one of the operating units was in Germany it allowed the agencies to track communication lines and the location of possible suspects. Their most considerable influence of these agencies happened during the day of the attacks as a communication operator of Al Qaeda operated from Germany hence, these agencies helped identify the operator's location.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

The NIST conducted specialized investigations regarding the collapse of the twin towers of the World Trade complex. Their collapse raised several concerns to the construction industry raising questions about the security of fire protection systems and building integrity. They concluded that the reason behind the buildings erupting into flames was that the initial impacts of each plane crash dismantled the fire protection system allowing for thermal insulation to become non-existent. They also reached the conclusion that if the fire hadn't destroyed the steel infrastructure then the building would not have fallen.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
8 April, 1993	The United Nations Security Council resolution which forces the Iraqi government to comply with a series of economic sanctions.
September 11 th , 2001, 8:46 am	The American Airlines flight 11 crashed on the Northern World Trade tower.
September 11 th , 2001, 9:03 am	The United Airlines flight 175 crashed on the Southern World Trade tower.
September 11 th , 2001, 9:30am	The CIA head officer informed the White house that the operating force behind those attacks was Al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden.
September 11 th , 2001, 9:45 am	The fourth plane crashed at a field close to Shanksville tower.
September 12th, 2001	The UNSC has passed a resolution regarding the terrorist attacks.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

S/RES/687 - April 3, 1991 : The resolution reevaluates the proposed sanctions and measures that were to be introduced to Iraq and Kuwait after the defeat of the Iraqi government. In this resolution there is a reaffirmation of all previous resolutions on the matter since 1990 and 1991. More specifically it demands that Iraq acknowledges its defeat in the Iraq-Kuwait dispute and complies under the measures stated in the resolution. Iraq accepted the measures of the resolution hence, undergoing a complete trade embargo proposed by the United States of America as well as demilitarizing a specific zone.

S/RES/1368: The resolution was formed on September 12th, 2001 with the intent to address immediately the disasters of the attacks. It states to pass several anti-terrorist laws for domestic and international operations, seize terrorist financing and asset power, as well as monitor and identifying possible terrorist suspects.¹⁰

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Since a terrorist attack of such a magnitude has not been a repeated phenomenon there are no previous attempts to solve the issue. Taking into account the September 12th, 2001 UNSC resolution we can evaluate these measures to and distinguish any loopholes or inefficient planning.

The resolution is a specific resolution regarding only the 9/11 attacks yet, at the time it had been understood by the international community that terrorist attacks have become a present threat in our modern society. The resolution clarifies the status of the attacks and shows sympathy towards the victims. It reconsiders resolutions that revolve around anti-terrorist operations and encourages better preparedness and awareness of the nation under attack. The resolution does not explain or elaborate upon measures to solve terrorist attacks, help with humanitarian aid in the conflicted zone as well as how to predict future operations.

¹⁰ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Security Council Resolution 1368 (2001) [Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts]*. www.refworld.org/docid/3c4e94557.html.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The possible solutions to the matter at hand can be categorized into several aspects of the issue. First and foremost, there must be a holistic preparatory system for such attacks. Respectfully, better building infrastructure with up-to-date technologies to be able to withstand most hazardous situations. In addition, improved escape systems must be present in most buildings of great importance to be able to allow for individuals to safely leave the enclosed situation taking as an example the World Trade center twin towers. To achieve a holistic preparatory system the military and government must be able to provide immediate solutions to the issue with minimal response time. In order for this to be accomplished, better tracking of possible threats and attacks is necessary to have an understanding of any conceivable aggression. Proper training and information sessions about possible invasions and ways to face them is an important measure.

Intelligence Agencies have a vital role in tracking and monitoring terrorist aggressions yet, their improvement is a key factor in gaining complete preparedness. Apprehending world-class terrorist operations, their transaction and interactions with other groups and nations as well as understanding their beliefs, morals and goals can help predict any future threats. In this way the government or organization will be able to map out any possible threat and prepare for it.

An international terrorism action plan that included global cooperation between nations with the intention of maintaining international peace and security. The plan must include a way to financially destabilize the terrorist groups. This can be achieved by identifying all monetary sources and then minimizing the groups influence over them. Furthermore, by introducing sanctions or by freezing the geopolitical assets of such an organization. Minimizing their cultural, political and religious dominance over specific regions will decrease the threat the organization poses to the international and the local community, all of which are aspects that provide these groups with regional power. Likewise, many terrorist groups rely on weaponry to enforce dominance hence, limiting or eliminating any weapon supply to these individuals through national legislation such as laws, governmental control and security. All these measures will help limit the overall power terrorist organizations have on a local, domestic and international level.¹¹ When considering

¹¹ *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001 ...*
www.un.org/sc/ctc/resources/databases/recommended-international-practices-codes-and-standards/united-nations-security-council-resolution-1373-2001/.

these measures, we must be aware that countries under terrorist influence may have the financial means to address the instability but not the proper intelligence or political stability to enact this plan. By including financial or intelligence UN organizations this issue could be resolved but, as delegates, you must carefully introduce the appropriate organizations. To have a holistic approach to this measure the Security Council must allow organizations to utilize any necessary asset for any anti-terrorist operation. In the September 12th resolution this was not mentioned hence, actions of those organizations are limited thus, not being able to have conclusive results. Keeping all of these points in mind it is necessary to have a holistic approach to any measure that includes international cooperation.

Lastly, when national and international organizations seek the dismantling of terrorist groups, we can see that human rights violations take place. More specifically, when international security organizations and nations take actions to minimize the influence of terrorist groups, they do not consider the human rights of the local people who are not associated with the terrorist organization. Therefore, civilians are negatively affected by those operations, leading to human rights violations. In order, to resolve previous human rights violations as well as any future occurrences you must conduct research and investigations.

When forming these measures, several aspects of a problem must be taken into consideration. From national security and preparedness to the disarmament of military groups, all are angles of the issue that every delegate must consider in order to create a feasible and applicable international security plan.

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