

# Year 8 Terrorism



9/11, New York

Mujahidin fighters during the war in Afghanistan against the USSR



Osama bin Laden



**US Embassy Nairobi, Kenya  
August 8, 1998**



**257 killed & 5000 injured**



# Key people

Mujahidin	Conservative Muslim Afghan people, fighting the SU troop when they invaded in 1979.
Al-Qaeda	Extremist Muslim terrorist group. Set up after the end of the Afghan war. They are fighting against western democracies, communism, Jews and the state of Israel, Muslim governments that are not strict enough and worked with al – Qaeda’s enemies (especially the USA). Al – Qaeda has groups across the world.
Taliban	As above, but mainly based in Afghanistan.
Osama bin Laden	A former Mujahidin fighter. Leader of al- Qaeda.
Abdullah Azzam	Radical, extremist Muslim preacher who urged people to join a jihad (holy war) against anything and anyone who doesn’t follow the “true” Islam – including Muslims.
Ayman al-Zawahiri	A leader of al-Qaeda
King Fahd	King of Saudi Arabia
Bill Clinton	President of the USA 1993 - 2001
George W. Bush	President of the USA 2001 - 2009
Barack Obama	President of the USA 2009 - 2017

# Key terms

Jihad	Holy war by Muslims. There is a variety of ways that Muslims interpret this holy war.
Fatwa	A Muslim law.

# Key events

1979 -1986	Afghan war – USSR invades in 1979 and leaves in 1989.
1991	Gulf war
1998	Al - Qaeda attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.
2001	9/11 Al – Qaeda attacks the USA with 4 hijacked planes. Start of the war on terror in November lead by the USA and supported by other countries such as the UK.
2011	Osama bin Laden is killed by US forces



# 4 The roots of al-Qaeda and 9/11 Part 1

## **Background: Conflict In the Middle East**

**Israel:** Israel was founded in 1948 and was made out of the land which had been inhabited by Muslim Arabs for centuries. Most of the Muslim Arab states in the region were hostile to Israel. Probably the only reason for Israel's survival was its close links with the USA. This in turn led to resentment towards the USA among many Muslims.

**Afghanistan:** After the Soviet army withdrew from Afghanistan, civil war broke out between different groups. By the mid-1990s the most powerful group was the radical Muslim organisation the Taliban. They had support from Pakistan and were very suspicious of and hostile towards outside influence. In particular they believed that US cultural influence was a threat to Islam. Many of the Taliban had been in the mujahidin, so they had been armed and trained by the Americans during their involvement in the Soviet war against Afghanistan.

**Iraq and the Gulf War:** Iraq was ruled by Saddam Hussein from 1976. In 1990 he invaded neighbouring Kuwait, an ally of the USA. The USA led a coalition against Iraq and defeated Saddam in the first Gulf War of 1991. The USA stated that it was fighting to defend a country that had been illegally attacked. But most Muslims in the region believed that the USA was trying to control the region and its valuable oil supplies.

**Iran:** Iran had been hostile to the USA since an Islamic revolution overthrew the US supported shah in 1979. The country had also long been a rival with Saudi Arabia as the most important country in the region. Iran was extremely hostile to Israel because Israel was in conflict with Muslim Palestinian Arabs. Both Israel and Saudi Arabia were important allies of the USA.



## **Impact of the Afghan war 1979-89:**

When the Soviets invaded, most people in rural, conservative Afghanistan fought against the Soviets and wanted to join the mujahidin (fighters of God)

The mujahidin were supported by neighbouring Muslim states like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The Saudis saw the war as a *Jihad*, or holy war. Osama bin Laden was one of many young Saudis who joined the Afghan war effort. At first he was involved in fundraising, but he eventually became a Mujahidin fighter.

The USA gave money, supplies, training and political support for the mujahidin.

After defeating the Soviets, the Mujahidin split into several organisations, including Al-Qaeda, (who used their training and equipment from the USA) to promote terrorism across the world.

After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan civil war broke out. The Taliban was the most powerful group to rise up. They disliked American influences and allowed and encouraged terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda to operate in Afghanistan.

# 5 The roots of Al-Qaeda and 9/11 Part 2

## The beliefs and nature of al-Qaeda

- Whilst in Afghanistan, Bin Laden came under the influence of the radical Muslim preacher Abdullah Azzam, who argued that Islam was under threat from enemies everywhere and that it was the responsibility of every Muslim to resist these attacks by taking part in jihad.
- Bin Laden was from an immensely rich family and used his wealth to support the movement. They also had generous funding from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and the drug trade in Afghanistan.
- Al-Qaeda believes that most Muslim leaders are not sufficiently Islamic. They hoped an attack would wake people up to “true” Islam.
- Some Muslim preachers saw America and the west as corrupt, immoral and evil. They feared that many Muslim people would copy American ways.
- In 1998 Bin Laden, with the advice of Al-Zawahari (his deputy in Al-Qaeda) proclaimed a Fatwa saying that every American and every Jew were targets of their campaign.
- Al-Qaeda’s Fatwas of the 1990s stated that they should wage war against western democracies, communism, Jews and the state of Israel, and Muslim governments that were not strict enough or who co-operated in any way with Al-Qaeda’s enemies (the greatest of all was the USA).

## Impact of the Gulf War

By 1990 Saudi Arabia was divided between those who wished to modernise and accept US ideas and values, and those who rejected them and demanded a strict observance of traditional Muslim practices.

In 1990 Iraq invaded the oil rich area of Kuwait. Osama Bin Laden offered the services of his fighters to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, but the king refused. Instead he accepted the support of the USA and its allies to liberate Kuwait. Bin Laden was outraged that US troops would be allowed on sacred Muslim land and publicly criticised King Fahd. As a response, he was stripped of his citizenship and forced into exile in Sudan.

Following his exile, Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda intended to provoke a ‘cowboy response’ from the USA. Following the suicide bomb attacks in Kenya and Tanzania, the USA attacked terrorist forces in Afghanistan and the Sudan. Al-Qaeda believed that if America invaded the middle East then the people of the Middle East would rise up in the name of Islam.

# 6 The roots of Al-Qaeda and 9/11 Part 3

## Terrorist attacks inspired by Al-Qaeda

**In 1993** a Pakistani militant called Ramzi Yousef attacked the World Trade Centre in New York with a truck bomb. The bomb killed six people and caused \$300 million in damage. Yousef claimed to have been inspired by bin Laden's teaching. He was not directly connected to al-Qaeda but did share their views. He had also attended a training camp in Afghanistan.

**4 October, 1993** 18 US servicemen are killed in the Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia. Al-Qaeda fighters are thought to have aided those who shot down the helicopters 1994.

In **Saudi Arabia in 1995** there was an attack on the Saudi National Guard and US troops who were training them. The Saudi security services arrested four men, who claim to have been inspired by Bin Laden. They were later executed.

## Al-Qaeda in action

**1996:** Bin Laden called for his followers to 'launch a guerrilla war against American forces and expel the infidels from the Arabian Peninsula'.

**1998:** Bin Laden announced the formation of the World Islamic Front. He made very clear statements warning of attacks on the USA and hinting at the methods that might be used.

**7 August 1998:** US embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) were hit by truck bombs. The Nairobi attack killed 213 and wounded around 4,600 people. In Dar es Salaam, 11 people died and 85 were wounded.

**October 2000:** suicide bombers drove a boat packed with explosives into the side of the US warship USS *Cole*, killing 17 sailors. Al Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attack.

**September 11, 2001:** 19 militants hijacked four airliners and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States. Two planes were taken over and flew into the World Trade Centre in New York. Another was flown into the Pentagon, the US military headquarters in Washington DC. A fourth was forced to crash land in Pennsylvania. It was believed that the passengers overpowered the hijackers and took back control of the plane. The attacks resulted in the deaths of around 3,000 people.

After 9/11, Islamic militants celebrated what they saw as a great victory. Four weeks later, Bin Laden issued a video praising the attackers. It was broadcast on the Arabic TV station Al-Jazeera, although there were some doubts about whether it was genuine.

# 7 The War on Terror

## Military response

On 20 September the US President George W. Bush issued a demand to the Taliban leader Mullah Omar calling on him to turn over Bin Laden to the US. The Taliban refused.

The US built a coalition of allies and attacked Afghanistan in October 2001. Following a huge bombardment the Taliban and Al-Qaeda bases and training camps were soon destroyed.

The land campaign began in November 2001 by a coalition of US, British and Northern Alliance forces. The Afghan capital, Kabul, fell quickly. Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces fell back to their mountain stronghold. But there was no sign of Bin Laden, who had probably escaped through the mountains into Pakistan.

Osama Bin Laden was finally discovered and killed by US forces in 2011. However, Islamist fundamentalism did not die with Bin Laden. Around the world, large numbers of independent groups and individuals have continued the campaign, most recently the Islamic State group who emerged and took control of significant areas of Syria and Iraq.

## Consequences for Afghanistan

Afghanistan proved very difficult to control. Taliban and al-Qaeda forces continued to mount hit-and-run attacks on western forces .

Innocent Afghans were rounded up and interrogated as suspected militants. This made them reluctant to co-operate with the security forces or provide .

It proved difficult to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. They were often caught in the crossfire between Allied forces and militants.

There were many civilian casualties as well as thousands of refugees from the fighting.

Heroin production had fallen under the Taliban, but it rose again and Afghanistan now supplies 90% of the world's heroin.

## Increasing support for militancy

Some US tactics, such as torture and detention, also undermined sympathy for the USA and increased support for militancy.

The War on Terror has caused tension between the media and the governments in Britain and the USA, who feel that the media has been too quick to criticise US forces and has ignored the actions of the terrorists.

Reactions have been even more extreme on websites that support the War on Terror. Although many governments in Asia and the Middle East allied with the USA, there was also much sympathy for Islamic militancy.

The government of Pakistan struggled to control elements within its army and intelligence services that are sympathetic towards the Taliban.



# Thinking questions

1. How did the end of the Afghan war create Al - Qaeda and the Taliban?
2. What are historical reasons why many people in the Middle East don't like the USA?
3. Give some examples of beliefs and the nature of Al - Qaeda.
4. Give 3 examples of attacks by Al - Qaeda on the USA before 9/11.
5. Why was Osama bin Laden so cross with king Fahd in 1990?
6. Which parts of the USA were attacked on 9/11?
7. Why was killing of Bin Laden not enough to deal with extremist Muslims?
8. Name 3 consequences of the war on terror for the people in Afghanistan.



Pictures of Kabul, capital of Afghanistan