



The U.S. & The World SS.7.CG.4.4
The Significance of September 11th, 2001
VIDEO SCRIPT



Benchmark Clarification One: The History of Global Terrorism

1. On September 11, 2001, members of the Islamic fundamentalist terror group al Qaeda hijacked a number of planes and flew them into the World Trade Center of New York City, the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and into a field in Pennsylvania. The atrocities committed by al Qaeda on that day drew the attention of the world. This attack on American soil was an act of global terrorism, and while it wasn't the first act, it also hasn't been the last, which makes it important to understand what terrorism is and how it has looked.
2. After watching this video, you will be able to
 - recognize the historical context of global terrorism over time.

So let's get started.

3. What exactly IS terrorism? Well, terrorism uses extreme fear and violence to try to achieve a political or ideological goal. This is often against civilian targets. For this discussion, a civilian would be someone who does not represent or work for a government or military in some way.
4. Terrorism has been practiced by political organizations with both rightist and leftist objectives, by nationalistic and religious groups, by revolutionaries, and even by state institutions such as armies, intelligence services, and police.
5. Global terrorism often involves some sort of network that allows different groups of people in different countries or regions to work together to instill violence and fear in target populations. And remember that terrorism is NOT a new thing.
6. During the Cold War, countries like the Soviet Union and East Germany sponsored, or supported, terror groups like the Red Army Faction that launched attacks on pro-capitalist Western targets. This is called 'state sponsored terrorism'.
7. State sponsored terrorism allows countries to use terror groups when they cannot use their own militaries. Keep in mind that state sponsored terrorism, or any sort of terrorism, is considered to be an international crime.

Let's check in. Try to answer the following in your own words.

Q: What is terrorism?

ANSWER

Q: What is meant by the term 'state-sponsored terrorism'?

ANSWER

Great job. Let's look now at more recent history.

8. Near the end of the 20th century, countries like Iran started sponsoring Islamic terror groups that would target the United States and Israel. Researchers suspect, for example, that Iran was behind a truck bombing in 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon that killed 307 people at a military barracks in that city. This included more than 241 US Marines who were there on a peacekeeping mission.

9. By the late 20th and early 21st century, terror groups like al-Qaeda launched attacks on countries all over the world. That includes a truck bomb that was used on the World Trade Center in 1993 and the horrific use of planes that led to the events of September 11th, 2001 in the United States.

10. It's important to remember that there are many other examples of terrorism both in the United States and globally. The Ku Klux Klan, for example, is an American terrorist organization that has used violence against African Americans and others who support civil rights. At one point, the KK had many political leaders and officials as members, but they're much weaker today.

11. The Irish Republican Army in Ireland has used violence, especially bombings of both civilian and military targets, to try and force the British out of Northern Ireland.

12. In the Middle East, groups like the Palestine Liberation Front and related organizations have used acts of terror against Israel and other nations to try and force Israel and its allies out of the region. The PLF, for example, hijacked the cruise liner the Achille Lauro in 1985. They killed a Jewish American, Leon Klinghoffer.

13. Many of these networks work together even though they have little in common and are truly global. The Provisional Irish Republican Army, for example, provided training to terrorists in both Latin America and the Middle East, with completely different objectives.

14. Despite coordinated efforts by these groups, the nations of the world have attempted to thwart their actions through the collection of intelligence and use of military force as efforts to keep their people as safe as possible from the threat of global terrorism. Even today, though, organizations like HAMAS and ISIS and offshoots of the Irish Republican Army continue to threaten global peace and security.

Let's check in:

Q: List two examples of global terrorism.

ANSWER

Let's recap what we learned:

15. Terrorism is the use of extreme fear and violence to try to achieve a goal.

16. Global terrorism involves a network of people in different countries working together.

17. State-sponsored terrorism is organized and supported by specific countries to avoid using their own militaries.

18. Some significant terrorist groups through history are the Ku Klux Klan in the United States, Irish Republican Army in Ireland and Great Britain, and al Qaeda and the Palestine Liberation Front in the Middle East.

19. You've learned something about the historical context of global terrorism over time. Be sure to watch the other videos in this series to get a better understanding of the meaning and significance of the events of September 11th, 2001.