



The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks greatly changed history and the world. Known as 9/11, these events marked the start of a different era in global relations. They also changed worldwide security, policy-making, and our viewpoint of the world. We'll break down the events of that day, starting with the peaceful morning that was disrupted by the first plane hitting the World Trade Center. We'll continue through the bold attack on the Pentagon and finish with the horrific crash in Pennsylvania. Each of these moments is significant in the 9/11 timeline and helps us grasp the scale of this disaster. To truly understand the enormity of this carefully planned and executed terrorist act, we must closely review these events.

## **Pre-9/11: The Birth of Al-Qaeda and Rising Tensions**

Before 9/11, an extremist group called Al-Qaeda was formed under the leadership of Osama Bin Laden. Al-Qaeda, translated as "The Base," arose out of the Mujahideen groups who were fighting against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. During the 1980s, U.S. intelligence supported these fighters as they viewed the Soviet Union as a bigger threat. This support provided training and resources to many who would later join Al-Qaeda. In the late 1990s, Osama Bin Laden declared a holy war against the U.S. Tensions heightened with two U.S. embassy bombings in Africa committed by Al-Qaeda and an attack on the USS Cole. Little did the world know, these acts were a prelude to the 9/11 attacks, one of the deadliest incidents in U.S. history.

### **The Emergence and Formation of Al-Qaeda**

They formed this group from Mujahideen fighters who resisted the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, with the US providing funding and support. The main goal of Al-Qaeda was to get foreign military powers out of Islamic countries, which they showed by carrying out terrorist acts like the 9/11 attacks. During the 1990s, Al-Qaeda set up training camps for terrorists and carried out many attacks, which made them known worldwide and started a global fight against terror. The height of their power was the 9/11 attacks, where 19 Al-Qaeda members hijacked four planes and crashed them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania, killing almost 3000 people.

### **Escalating Tensions and Threat Perception Before 9/11**

Various international incidents, like the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, made the US more alert to global terrorism. See this attack as the first sign of the destructive power and evil plans of violent radicals. Another important event was Osama bin Laden's 1996 'Declaration of War on Americans.' His extremist group, Al-Qaeda, carried out bombings of American embassies in Africa and the USS Cole, an American Navy ship, in 2000. These events increased the US's sense of danger, confirming Al-Qaeda as a serious threat to national safety. Because the people involved in terrorism, their plans, and the unpredictability of attacks are hard to understand, the task posed a tough challenge to American intelligence and defense.

## **Moment by Moment: The Attacks of September 11, 2001**

The day started like any other, but by the end, America had changed forever. The events began early in the morning. At 7:59 a.m., the first plane, American Airlines Flight 11, left Boston. Just fifteen minutes later, another plane, United Airlines Flight 175, flew out from Boston. American Airlines Flight 77 left Washington D.C. at 8:20 a.m., and United Airlines Flight 93 took off from Newark at 8:42 a.m. At 8:46 a.m., the first attack happened. American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center, causing fear and confusion. It wasn't until 9:03 a.m., when United Airlines Flight 175 hit the South Tower, that people realized America was being attacked. Remember the terror of watching the dreadful

scenes unfold. American Airlines Flight 77 hit the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m. Back in New York, at 9:59 a.m., the South Tower of the World Trade Center fell, then the North Tower at 10:28 a.m.

## Responses to the Attacks: Immediate Reactions and Rescue Efforts

The quick response and rescue actions showed the strength and togetherness of the Americans. Take immediate action in times of crisis! Soon after the planes hit the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, first responders like firefighters, police officers, and medical teams jumped into action. Firefighters from all over New York City went to the World Trade Center to fight the intense fires and save as many people as they could from the burning towers. Many sacrificed their lives when the towers fell. Likewise, medical teams worked non-stop to help the injured, taking them to hospitals and setting up quick-treatment centers. Volunteers from nearby areas came to form human chains to clear debris and start early search-and-rescue actions. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reacted by closing all American airspace, an action never done before, grounding over 4,000 commercial planes. This fast decision possibly stopped more hijackings. The military also reacted quickly. Jets were sent to watch the skies and were ready to shoot down any other possible threats, a reflection of the disorder and fear of the day. At the Pentagon, the first actions were focused on saving those trapped inside the burning building and making the area safe. From everyday people to the top levels of the government, the reaction was instant and significant. The U.S.

## The Aftermath: Impact on U.S. Politics and Policy

politics and policies. The main focus shifted to boosting national security and improving intelligence gathering. United by the fight against terrorism, our country underwent a significant political transformation. This togetherness crossed political divides, leading to the approval of the Patriot Act in October 2001 by both parties. This law gave much more power to intelligence agencies, allowing them to do a better job of spotting and stopping terrorism threats. However, this caused fears about personal freedom since it meant that American citizens could be watched more closely. In 2002, a new government body, the Department of Homeland Security, was formed. It brought together many agencies, such as Immigration, Customs, and Emergency Management, to work together to stop further terror attacks in the U.S. U.S. foreign policy also became more aggressive after 9/11. Under President George W. Bush, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and Iraq. These actions were said to be aimed at removing Al Qaeda, the group behind 9/11, and dealing with Iraq's suspected weapons of mass destruction. Yet, the legitimacy of the Iraq war was widely debated, causing a divide in political and public opinion. Take a more assertive role in foreign affairs! The 9/11 events also triggered changes to immigration policy. The government made it harder to get a U.S. visa, especially for individuals from predominantly Muslim countries. This impacted the U.S.'s relationships with other nations.

## Long-Term Consequences and the Global War on Terror

On September 11, 2001, terrorists used four planes to attack the U.S., leading the world into a time of fear and conflict. One significant impact was the start of the worldwide terrorism fight. Under President George W. Bush, the U.S. began a global effort to stop terrorism. This led to two major wars—in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Afghanistan war in 2001 aimed to destroy Al-Qaeda, who did the 9/11 attacks, and take down the Taliban regime. Likewise, the controversial 2003 invasion of Iraq was said to fight terrorism. The terrorism fight led to many big changes. These included shifts in global politics, spending, and lost lives. The U.S. spent billions on these wars. The wars deeply affected the Middle Eastern countries, causing more instability and the rise of extremist groups like ISIS. Learn about how this fight against terrorism changed views on issues like security, immigration, and human rights. Policies became stricter, impacting millions of people worldwide.

## **The End Note**

The terrorist acts aimed to scare, divide, and push hurried, one-sided actions. Even with tremendous losses, these attacks led to a worldwide response that gathered countries together to fight against terrorism. The detailed series of happenings on the morning of September 11, 2001, is deeply remembered in many societies globally. We continuously try to understand 9/11 and often deal with difficult topics of power, politics, religion, and humanity. Understand the sequence of these occurrences. This will give you a strong base for more detailed investigation and analysis and encourage us to think and learn from our past.

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