

## Policy Brief on How to Respond to Today's Attacks (9/11/2001)

As the National Security Advisor, my primary role is to give advice to the President of the United States on national security issues. Therefore I am responsible to provide the latest update to the President in a crisis situation, such as this. My focus is action in the international arena.

After today's devastating events we have to reevaluate our security and develop a plan how to ensure the short and long term security for the nation. The question we need to answer is what can and should we do to avoid future attacks.

We know that the perpetrators were all Arab men in their 20s and 30s, associated with the small, militant, fringe Islamicist group, Al-Qaeda. Its leader Osama bin Laden issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) in 1988 listing his grievances. These issues are their real motivations: military (opposition to US army basis in Saudi Arabia), political (US support for Israel, not Palestine), economic (US exploitation of resources, i.e. oil), and cultural (US hegemony of popular culture). These issues are more important in their eyes than harming, destroying the US itself. If we manage to placate them in these issues the possibility of future attacks can significantly decrease. In Al-Qaeda's religious worldview "Islam is felt to be at war with the surrounding secular forces of modern society." (Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, p.12) We have to address their feelings, but not by engaging with them, or sharing their Cosmic War view. Finally, it is also important to understand that those who attacked us do not represent the majority of their countries. A significant portion of those populations may share some of the above sentiments.

Our options are:

1. Locate the network of people behind the attacks (possibly in Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan) and **destroy them at any costs**, including invading these countries, if necessary.  
**Pro:** If successful, we may be able eliminate immediate danger  
**Con:** People we kill will be considered martyrs and provide ideological fuel for new wave of terrorists. We may alienate our current and potential allies in the region as well. This does not provide long term solutions for their problems, therefore the motivation for future acts would not be removed. Costs may also be prohibitive.
2. Ask impartial, international, peacekeeping forces, like the **UN** to find the organizers of these crimes and get them charged in the International Court in The Hague with crimes against humanity.  
**Pro:** Our direct involvement in the region would be minimal. We couldn't be charged with being vengeful. This option would be the most cost effective.  
**Con:** Success could not be guaranteed and the process would take a long time. This does not remove motivation for future attacks. It may introduce further instability in the region.
3. **Negotiate with the governments** of the countries where the terrorists came from. Entice them to search, prosecute, and take the potential future attackers out of circulation. We need to convince them that it is in their best interest to do so.  
**Pro:** We would build alliances. Our reputation in the region would not decrease; we would be less likely to be looked upon as intruders.  
**Con:** The reliability of our potential allies needs to be tested. In case of government changes these connections would have to be rebuilt. In exchange for their help we'd need to give concessions in the military and economic areas.

I propose to follow the last option. Conflicts between societies happen "when rich and more powerful countries attempt to conquer and colonize poor and more traditional societies." (Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, p.33) This effect or the perception thereof is what we need to change. If we 1) remove our military bases, 2) do not push our cultural values and products, and 3) remove our involvement in the Israel/Palestine conflict then we would have removed the reasons for the attacks. The first two of these points could serve as incentives for the Egyptian, Afghani and Saudi governments to remove the elements from their countries that threatens us and makes them volatile too. We need to pay attention though whom we select as our allies and partners, so continuity could be ensured in case of political changes too.

#### HOW TO WRITE A ONE PAGE POLICY BRIEF

1. State your role (National Security Advisor)
2. State the problem-- ie, what issue is the decision-maker trying to decide? (It is the evening of 9/11/2001. You need to advise the president on what do.)
3. Give a brief background to the issue. Mention the major things that the decision-maker will have to keep in mind when he or she is going over the options and trying to decide what to do.
4. Give several options. These are different responses that the government (or some other decision-making agency) can take in dealing with the problem. In each case you should show the positive and negative arguments for choosing this option.
5. Propose a course of action. You can choose one of the options that you have already presented, or a combination of a couple of them. If you have not already done so, you should point out the positive and negative arguments for the options presented, and explain why the one that you are proposing is better than the others.

#### FORMAT

The policy briefs can ONLY BE ONE PAGE-- one side of a regular 8 1/2 by 11 inch piece of paper. You can use single spacing, but keep 1 inch margins and type font that is no smaller than 10pt. You can use bullet points and headings to make your ideas clear. If you refer to something in the reading you don't need to have a full citation, but can simply put the name of the author, short version of the title and page in parentheses, like this: (Huntington, Clash of Civilizations, p.42).

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These were the written instructions. In addition the professor set the topic this way. We are supposed to write the policy brief on the evening of 9/11/2001 from the position of the National Security Advisor to the president on what do.