

# Background Guide

## PENTAGON

### OAKMUN 25



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## **I. Letter from the Executive Board**

Greetings Delegates!

It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you all to this simulation of the **Pentagon at ‘Oakridge Model United Nations 2025’**. We look forward to an enriching and rewarding experience.

The agenda for the session is: ***“Deliberation upon the 9/11 crisis with special emphasis on retaliatory measures.”***

This study guide is by no means the end of the research, we would very much appreciate it if the members are able to find new realms in the agenda and bring it forth to the committee. Such research combined with good argumentation and a solid representation of facts is what makes an excellent performance.

In the session, the executive board will encourage you to speak as much as possible, as fluency, diction, or oratory skills have very little importance as opposed to the content you deliver. So prime emphasis on research is recommended.

The Executive Board looks forward to an efficient & progressive committee as the issue is very sensitive. We, therefore, expect you all to play your roles with responsibility. Hopefully, we, as members of the Executive Board, will also have a chance to gain insight from this committee.

All the best!

Regards,

**Aditya Sharma**  
**Chairperson**

**Aditya Sunkara**  
**Vice-Chairperson**

## II. Rules of Procedure

### 1. Roll Call

The Chair calls on each country to declare if they are "Present" or "Present and Voting." It refers to the voting procedure on the Draft Resolution, where a delegate can vote "Yes", "No", or opt to "Abstain".

If "Present and Voting," the delegate cannot abstain from voting. If the delegate chooses to respond with "Present", they may answer with "Present and Voting" on subsequent days, but this is not permissible for "Present and Voting" as this reply must be used consistently from that point forth.

### 2. Setting the Agenda

Delegates motion to set the agenda, followed by a formal debate on which topic to discuss first. This motion requires a simple majority to pass.

### 3. Speakers' List

After passing a motion to enter formal debate, delegates are placed on a speakers' list to make formal speeches. Time limits are set, and the Chair calls on delegates to speak in order.

A delegate must raise their placard if they wish to add their name to this list. They can be on this list only once on any occasion.

### 4. Points

Point of Order: To correct a procedural error by the Chair.

Point of Personal Privilege: For personal discomfort (e.g., if the room is too cold, or if a fellow delegate cannot be heard).

Point of Inquiry: To ask questions about discussion or statements in committee.

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry: To ask questions with regard to the Rules of Procedure.

## 5. Motions

Motion to Suspend the Meeting: To break for caucuses or adjourn the session.

Motion to Close Debate: Ends the discussion on a topic and moves to voting. Requires a two-thirds majority.

Motion to Table the Topic: Postpones debate on a topic. Requires a majority vote.

## 6. Yields

Yield to the Executive Board: A delegate yields their remaining time from their speech to the Executive Board. It is to be used as they see fit.

Yield to Another Delegate: A delegate yields their remaining time for another delegate to speak. (This delegate's permission must be sought beforehand)

Yield to Points of Information: A delegate yields their remaining time to Points of Information to the committee

Yield to Comments: A delegate yields their remaining time to comments from the committee.

## 7. Caucuses

Moderated Caucus: The Chair controls the speaking order with shorter, focused speeches. The topic selected is a narrowed version of the agenda, chosen by the delegate who proposed the moderated caucus.

Unmoderated Caucus: Informal discussion among delegates not under the moderation of the Executive Board.

## 8. Draft Resolutions and Amendments

Delegates collaborate to create draft resolutions, which are formal solutions to the discussed issue.

Friendly Amendments: Accepted by all sponsors without a vote.

Unfriendly Amendments: Need to be voted on to be added.

## 9. Voting

Procedural Votes: Includes motions and amendments; all members must vote.

Substantive Votes: For resolutions and unfriendly amendments; only "Present and Voting" delegates may vote, and abstentions are allowed.



### **III. Suggested Pattern For Researching**

To start researching on the agenda of the committee, participating members should do the following:

1. Start researching your respective portfolios and their political leanings. As no definite document may be found which contains the stance of a person, the delegates must do the tedious yet rewarding work of going through past news clippings/ magazine articles/ government websites/ social media handles/ YouTube videos to understand the portfolio's stance on the said agenda.
2. After gaining knowledge about the portfolios, the delegates must start their research on the agenda at hand. This must be done by researching further upon the agenda using the footnotes and links given in the guide and from other sources such as academic papers, institutional or governmental reports, national reports, news articles, blogs etc.
3. Characterize the agenda into sub-topics and prepare speeches and statements on them. The delegates should also prepare a list of possible solutions and actions the Pentagon can suggest/adopt on the issue.
4. Assemble proof/evidence for any important piece of information/ allegation you are going to use in committee and keep your research updated using various news sources, specifically government studies or data released by the same.
5. To have an edge in the committee in terms of debate, delegates must also research about the other portfolios and try to find their contradictory statements or controversial stands on various issues to raise allegations/ substantial questions in the committee.
6. Lastly, we would expect all the delegates to put in serious efforts in research and preparation for the simulation and work hard to make it a fruitful learning experience for all. Feel free to contact the undersigned if you have any queries or doubts.



## IV. Committee Overview

### About the Pentagon

The **Pentagon** serves as the central headquarters of the **United States Department of Defence (DoD)**. Located in **Arlington, Virginia**, just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., the building functions as the primary command center for the planning, coordination, and execution of U.S. military and defense policy. Housing both civilian and military leadership, the Pentagon is the operational and symbolic epicenter of American national security and defense strategy.

### Historical Background

Construction of the Pentagon commenced on **September 11, 1941**, and was completed in **January 1943** during World War II. Its distinctive five-sided design—created for efficiency and rapid construction—was chosen to centralize the War Department's scattered offices in Washington, D.C. The building was designed by **George Bergstrom** and built by **John McShain, Inc.** Today, it remains one of the world's largest office buildings, with approximately **6.5 million square feet** of space.





## Mandate and Core Functions

The Pentagon's primary function is to support the formulation, oversight, and implementation of U.S. defense policy. This includes:

- Strategic military planning and global force deployment
- Defense budgeting, procurement, and acquisitions
- Civil-military coordination and leadership integration
- Oversight of military operations and crisis response
- Intelligence coordination and cybersecurity policy
- Engagement with Congress, allied militaries, and international defense bodies

The Secretary of Defense, a civilian appointed by the President, leads the Department and operates from the Pentagon, reinforcing the U.S. principle of civilian control over the military.

## Composition and Organizational Structure

The Pentagon houses more than **26,000 personnel**, including uniformed members of the armed forces and civilian defense staff. Its primary organizational components include:

- **Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD)**
- **Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)**
- **Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force**
- **Various defense agencies and special operational commands**

The internal layout consists of five concentric rings (A through E), interconnected by radial corridors, facilitating efficient movement despite the building's scale.

## Past Actions and Notable Events

One of the most significant events in the Pentagon's history occurred on September 11, 2001, when it was targeted during a coordinated terrorist attack. A hijacked commercial airliner struck the western side of the building, causing extensive loss of life and damage. The incident led to a rapid restoration project, known as The Phoenix Project, and catalyzed major shifts in U.S. defense posture, including the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and intensified counterterrorism operations.

The Pentagon has also served as the nerve center for coordinating major military operations such as:

- Operation Desert Storm (1991)
- Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (2001–2011)
- Strategic deterrence, intelligence coordination, and rapid response during international crises

### **Strategic Importance**

Beyond its administrative role, the Pentagon holds symbolic and strategic significance as a representation of U.S. military power and commitment to national and international security. It functions as part of the National Military Command System (NMCS) and maintains strategic communication with combatant commands worldwide.

The building is also central to military planning for cyber operations, space defense, nuclear deterrence, and global contingency operations.

### **Contemporary Relevance and Challenges**

In the modern security landscape, the Pentagon has expanded its focus to include non-traditional threats such as:

- Cybersecurity and digital warfare
- Artificial intelligence and autonomous systems in combat
- Space operations (in conjunction with the U.S. Space Force)
- Climate security and infrastructure resilience
- Information warfare and gray-zone conflicts

It also plays a key role in defense diplomacy, overseeing military cooperation with international allies, managing joint training exercises, and facilitating multilateral defense initiatives.

Despite its strengths, the Pentagon faces ongoing challenges, including budgetary scrutiny, institutional modernization, civil-military dynamics, and the need to adapt to rapidly evolving global threats.

## V. Introduction

The 9/11 terrorist attacks irrevocably altered the landscape of global security and directly shaped the foreign and domestic policy of the United States for decades to come. On September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda, a radical Islamist terrorist organization led by Osama bin Laden, executed a series of coordinated attacks using hijacked commercial airliners. These attacks struck the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania (after passengers and crew fought back). The immediate aftermath was one of shock, grief, and a profound sense of vulnerability for the United States. The attacks, which claimed nearly 3,000 lives, necessitated an immediate and comprehensive response from the U.S. government, with the Pentagon at the epicenter of coordinating military and intelligence efforts. The ensuing "War on Terror" redefined international relations, legal frameworks concerning conflict, and the global perception of security.

## VI. Historical Background

While the 9/11 attacks were unprecedented in their scale on American soil, the threat of Islamic extremism and al-Qaeda was not entirely new. Prior to 2001, al-Qaeda had demonstrated its capabilities through attacks such as the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, and the 2000 USS Cole bombing. These incidents, while significant, did not provoke the same scale of integrated governmental response as 9/11. Various intelligence failures and a fragmented understanding of the evolving terrorist threat contributed to the lack of preparedness. Osama bin Laden's motivations were rooted in his opposition to U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, particularly the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, sanctions against Iraq, and support for Israel. The 9/11 attacks were conceived as a way to force a change in U.S. policy through a spectacular act of violence that would inflict massive casualties and economic damage.

## VII. 9/11 Terror Attack

On the morning of September 11, 2001, nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four commercial airliners.

- **American Airlines Flight 11** and **United Airlines Flight 175** were deliberately crashed into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, respectively, leading to their catastrophic collapse.

- **American Airlines Flight 77** crashed into the western side of the Pentagon, causing a partial collapse of the building and a massive fire. A total of 125 people inside the Pentagon were killed, along with all 64 people on board the aircraft.
- **United Airlines Flight 93**, believed to be heading for the U.S. Capitol or the White House, crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after passengers and crew valiantly fought back against the hijackers.

The attacks resulted in 2,977 deaths, not including the 19 hijackers, and caused billions of dollars in infrastructure and property damage. The immediate response involved widespread emergency services deployment, the grounding of all civilian aircraft in U.S. airspace, and a rapid mobilisation of military and intelligence assets.

## VIII. Global Intervention

The 9/11 attacks triggered an immediate and widespread international condemnation and a global coalition against terrorism.

- **NATO invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty** for the first and only time in its history, declaring that an armed attack against one member state (the U.S.) was an attack against all, signaling collective defense and solidarity.
- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1368 and 1373** were passed, condemning the attacks and calling on all states to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorism and deny safe haven to those who plan, facilitate, or commit terrorist acts.
- The **"Global War on Terror" (GWOT)** was launched by the U.S. under President George W. Bush.
  - **Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)**: Launched in October 2001, the primary objective was to dismantle al-Qaeda and overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which had provided sanctuary to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. This involved sustained military operations, including air strikes and the deployment of special forces alongside Afghan Northern Alliance fighters.
  - **Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)**: Launched in March 2003, this invasion aimed to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq, based on the U.S. assertion that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and had ties to al-Qaeda. While Saddam Hussein was overthrown, WMDs were never found, and the link to al-Qaeda was widely disputed.
- Numerous countries joined the U.S. in counterterrorism efforts, providing intelligence, logistical support, and military deployments. This global intervention led to significant shifts in international alliances and counterterrorism cooperation.



## IX. Legal Aspect of the Conflict

The 9/11 attacks and the subsequent "War on Terror" raised complex legal questions regarding the nature of the conflict, the use of force, and the rights of detainees.

**Self-Defense and International Law:** The U.S. justified its military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq under the right to self-defense (Article 51 of the UN Charter), citing the attacks as an armed attack on its territory.

**Non-State Actors and the Laws of War:** The attacks by a non-state actor (al-Qaeda) challenged traditional interpretations of international armed conflict, which typically involved states. This led to debates about whether terrorists should be treated as criminals under civilian law or as "enemy combatants" under the laws of armed conflict.

**Detention and Due Process:** The detention of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay and other sites, often without trial or access to civilian courts, sparked widespread criticism regarding human rights and due process. The Patriot Act, passed in the U.S. shortly after 9/11, expanded government surveillance powers, raising civil liberties concerns.

**Targeted Killings and Drone Warfare:** The increased reliance on targeted killings, often through drone strikes, raised questions about extrajudicial killings, collateral damage, and the legality of such actions outside traditional battlefields.

**Evidentiary Challenges in Terrorism Prosecutions:** Prosecuting terrorists posed significant evidentiary challenges, often involving classified intelligence. Debates ensued over the use of military commissions versus civilian courts for these trials.

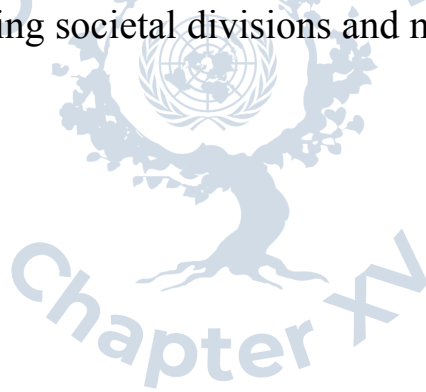
## X. Global Repercussions

The 9/11 attacks and the U.S. response had profound global repercussions, transforming the geopolitical landscape:

- **Rise of the "War on Terror" Paradigm:** Counterterrorism became a central focus of international security policy, leading to increased intelligence sharing, enhanced border security measures, and the formation of specialized counterterrorism units worldwide.
- **Impact on Civil Liberties and Surveillance:** Many nations, following the U.S. lead, enacted stricter anti-terrorism laws, often leading to increased government surveillance, racial profiling, and restrictions on civil liberties.



- **Geopolitical Instability in the Middle East:** The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq destabilized the region, contributing to prolonged conflicts, the rise of new terrorist groups (e.g., ISIS), and humanitarian crises.
- **Economic Impacts:** The attacks and subsequent wars had significant economic costs, including direct damage, increased defense spending, and disruptions to global markets and international travel.
- **Shifts in International Relations:** While initial global solidarity with the U.S. was strong, the unilateral nature of some U.S. actions (particularly the Iraq War) strained alliances and fueled anti-American sentiment in certain parts of the world.
- **Islamophobia and Cultural Clashes:** The attacks unfortunately led to a rise in Islamophobia and xenophobia in some Western countries, fostering societal divisions and misperceptions about Islam.



## **I. Introduction to the Agenda**

### **The 9/11 Crisis**

On September 11, 2001, the United States faced one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in US history. Nineteen terrorist operatives hijacked four commercial airliners, crashing them into the World Trade Center towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., while the fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, was brought down by passengers in Pennsylvania before reaching its target. The

attacks resulted in nearly 3,000 civilian deaths and had dramatic effects on global counter-terrorism efforts and matters of national security.

### **The Nature of Terrorism**

Terrorism is defined to be the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims. The September 11 attacks came to highlight the growing necessity to address terrorism, not only as sporadic violence, but as a coordinated threat with the capacity to destabilize states. The attack also underscored the ideological and operational capabilities of extremist networks operating beyond traditional borders, highlighting a change in the nature of terrorism.

### **Considering Retaliatory Measures**

In the immediate aftermath, a wide range of retaliatory measures began to be proposed. Military retaliation was swift, with the U.S. launching operations in Afghanistan to dismantle al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban regime that harbored them. However, these measures also required careful deliberation—balancing justice with legality, international and long-term stability.

## II. 9/11 Terror Attack

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the United States experienced one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in its history, orchestrated by the Islamist extremist group al-Qaeda. Four commercial airliners were hijacked by 19 terrorists and used as weapons in a coordinated terror attack.

The attacks were planned in an effort to retaliate against the U.S. for its presence in the Middle East, support for Israel, and actions in Muslim-majority countries.

### Timeline of Events:

- 8:46 a.m. (Flight 11): American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York City.
- 9:03 a.m. (Flight 175): United Airlines Flight 175 struck the South Tower of the WTC.
- 9:37 a.m. (Flight 77): American Airlines Flight 77 hit the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, killing 125 people in the building and all passengers aboard.
- 9:59 a.m.: The South Tower collapsed after burning for 56 minutes.
- 10:03 a.m. (Flight 93): United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after passengers attempted to retake control. It is believed the hijackers intended to strike either the White House or U.S. Capitol.
- 10:28 a.m.: The North Tower collapsed.

### **III. Global Intervention**

#### **United Nations Response**

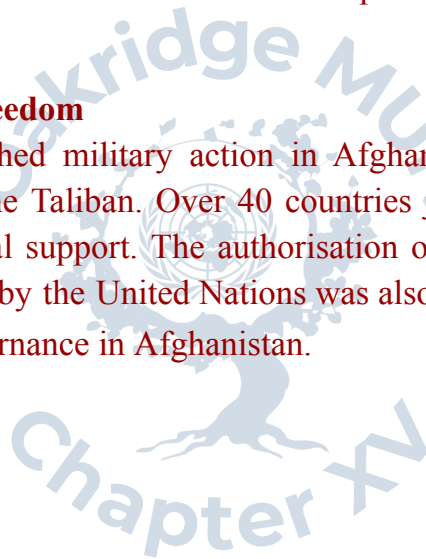
The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1368 that affirmed the U.S. right to self-defense and went further to call on states to combat terrorism. Legally, the resolution required all member states to freeze terrorist assets, while improving intelligence sharing, and denying safe haven to terrorists.

#### **NATO Intervention**

For the first time in its history, NATO invoked Article 5 of its charter proclaiming the 9/11 attacks to be an attack on all members. It deployed AWACS aircraft to the U.S. and launched Operation Active Endeavour to patrol the Mediterranean against terrorist threats.

#### **Operation Enduring Freedom**

The United States launched military action in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, targeting al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Over 40 countries joined, contributing troops, intelligence, and logistical support. The authorisation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) by the United Nations was also done in December 2001 to support security and governance in Afghanistan.



#### **IV. National and International Repercussions**

The attacks on September 11 killed nearly 3,000 people and injured over 6,000 people, becoming the most fatal terrorist attack in the United States' history. The hijacking of four commercial airliners resulted in the destruction of the World Trade Center towers in New York City, damage to the Pentagon, and the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 in Pennsylvania. This impact also included economic damage, with losses in various sectors, and the largest one-day drop in the NYSE at the time.

Thus, immediate repercussions were visible within the nation itself. As a result of the attacks, the United States underwent a National Security and Intelligence overhaul, with the establishment of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002 under the Bush administration. The department consolidated twenty-two federal agencies, advancing domestic security efforts to “safeguard the American people”.

The attack also led to several legislative changes, with the enactment of the USA PATRIOT (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act (2001), that increased surveillance capabilities, strengthened border controls, and provided new tools and resources for border control.

However, on an international scale, the primary consequence of the September 11 attacks was the global war on terrorism. The U.S. launched Operation Enduring Freedom with NATO support (having invoked Article 5 - collective defense) to dismantle al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Foreign involvement in Afghanistan also led to the expansion of counterterrorism measures globally, and the proliferation of these networks, through actions such as intelligence sharing and the establishment of military bases.

## **V. Pentagon's Role**

### **1. Immediate Operational Command During Crisis**

Despite being directly hit during the attacks, the Pentagon resumed its regular functioning almost immediately. With emergency protocols being engaged and followed in the crisis situation, top officials, including then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and military leaders, remained at the Pentagon and established it as the central command post to assess the attack's scope and prevent further threats. In times of crisis, it is at the core of national security.

### **2. Processing of Intelligence & Threat Assessment**

Post the attack, the Pentagon worked with intelligence agencies like the CIA and NSA, in order to rapidly analyze available data, and attempt to work towards conclusions. The Pentagon's intelligence branches, including the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the Joint Staff J-2 (intelligence directorate), collaborated to map out the leadership, training camps, and operational strongholds of al-Qaeda, in Afghanistan. The Pentagon provided the intelligence needed to guide early strategic discussions.

### **3. Deliberation on Retaliatory Frameworks**

The Pentagon also played a central role in deliberating the structure and scope of a military response. These deliberations factor in logistical feasibility, regional diplomacy, rules of engagement, and long-term strategic goals. Such decisions are taken through the consultation of high-ranking officials that occurs within the Pentagon during times of crisis.

### **4. Planning and Execution of Operation Enduring Freedom**

Following these deliberations, the Pentagon led the planning and execution of Operation Enduring Freedom, launched on October 7, 2001. This involved the rapid mobilization of troops, airpower, and special operations forces to target al-Qaeda training camps and Taliban command centers. The operation also relied on logistics hubs and regional bases coordinated under Pentagon leadership.

### **5. Coordination with NATO and International Military Allies**

Following NATO's invocation of Article 5, for the first time in its history, the Pentagon became the coordinator of contributions to the U.S.-led mission. It played a large role in intelligence sharing, joint military planning, and deployment of resources from more than 40 countries. The Pentagon also took part in establishing the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under the authorisation of the UN, ensuring international cooperation for the Afghanistan campaign.



## **VI. Questions A Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)**

- 1) How will gaps in intelligence, agency coordination, and surveillance that allowed the 9/11 attacks to occur undetected be reduced?
- 2) What immediate measures should be taken to improve national security?
- 3) What changes should be brought to federal or military agencies based on the findings of the 9/11 Commission?
- 4) What forms of military retaliation should be explored that are proportionate, effective, and in line with domestic and international law?
- 5) What degree of multilateral cooperation should be sought in retaliation efforts?

## **VII. List of Valid Sources**

1. United Nations Digital Library
2. UN Official Website
3. UN Organs' Websites
4. Past UN Resolutions
5. Government Websites of various Countries
6. The 9/11 Commission Report (published by US government)