

What Happened on September 11?

The 9/11 Terrorist Attacks



On September 11, 2001, at 8:45 a.m. on a clear Tuesday morning, an American Airlines Boeing 767 loaded with 20,000 gallons of jet fuel crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Centre in New York City. The impact left a gaping, burning hole near the 80th floor of the 110-story skyscraper, instantly killing hundreds of people and trapping hundreds more in higher floors.

United Airlines Flight 175

As the evacuation of the tower and its twin got underway, television cameras broadcast live images of what initially appeared to be a freak accident. Then, 18 minutes after the first plane hit, a second Boeing 767—United Airlines Flight 175—appeared out of the sky, turned sharply toward the World Trade Centre and sliced into the south tower near the 60th floor! The collision caused a massive explosion that showered burning debris over surrounding buildings and onto the streets below. It immediately became clear that America was under attack.

Al-Qaeda Claims Responsibility

The attackers were Islamic terrorists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations. Reportedly financed by the al-Qaeda terrorist organization of Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden, they were allegedly acting in retaliation for America's support of Israel, its involvement in the Persian Gulf War and its continued military presence in the Middle East.

Some of the terrorists had lived in the United States for more than a year and had taken flying lessons at American commercial flight schools. Others had slipped into the country in the months before September 11 and acted as the "muscle" in the operation. The 19 terrorists smuggled box-cutters and knives through security at three East Coast airports and boarded four early-morning flights bound for California, chosen because the planes were loaded with fuel for the long transcontinental journey. Soon after take-off, the terrorists commandeered the four planes and took the controls, transforming ordinary passenger jets into guided missiles.



American Airlines Flight 77

As millions watched the events unfolding in New York, American Airlines Flight 77 circled over downtown Washington, D.C., before crashing into the west side of the Pentagon military headquarters at 9:45 a.m. Jet fuel from the Boeing 757 caused a devastating inferno that led to the structural collapse of a portion of the giant concrete building, which is the headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defence. All told, 125 military personnel and civilians were killed in the Pentagon, along with all 64 people aboard the airliner.

Twin Towers Collapse

Less than 15 minutes after the terrorists struck the nerve centre of the U.S. military, the horror in New York took a catastrophic turn when the south tower of the World Trade Centre collapsed in a massive cloud of dust and smoke. The structural steel of the skyscraper, built to withstand winds in excess of 200 miles per hour and a large conventional fire, could not withstand the tremendous heat generated by the burning jet fuel. At 10:30 a.m., the north building of the twin towers collapsed. Only six people in the World Trade Centre towers at the time of their collapse survived. Almost 10,000 others were treated for injuries, many severe.

Flight 93

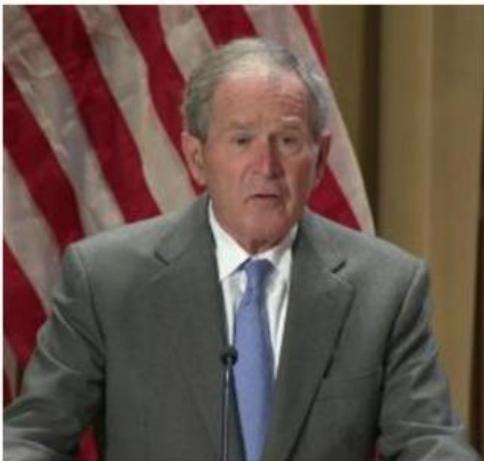
Meanwhile, a fourth California-bound plane—United Flight 93—was hijacked about 40 minutes after leaving Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey. Because the plane had been delayed in taking off, passengers on board learned of events in New York and Washington via cell phone and Airfone calls to the ground. Knowing that the aircraft was not returning to an airport as the hijackers claimed, a group of passengers and flight attendants planned an insurrection.

One of the passengers, Thomas Burnett, Jr., told his wife over the phone that “I know we’re all going to die. There’s three of us who are going to do something about it. I love you, honey.” Another passenger—Todd Beamer—was heard saying “Are you guys ready? Let’s roll” over an open line. Sandy Bradshaw, a flight attendant, called her husband and explained that she had slipped into a galley and was filling pitchers with boiling water. Her last words to him were “Everyone’s running to first class. I’ve got to go. Bye.”

The passengers fought the four hijackers and are suspected to have attacked the cockpit with a fire extinguisher. The plane then flipped over and sped toward the ground at upwards of 500 miles per hour, crashing in a rural field near Shanksville in western Pennsylvania at 10:10 a.m. All 44 people aboard were killed. Its intended target is not known, but theories include the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland or one of several nuclear power plants along the eastern seaboard.

How Many People Died in 9/11 Attacks?

A total of 2,996 people were killed in the 9/11 attacks, including the 19 terrorist hijackers aboard the four airplanes. At the World Trade Centre, 2,763 died after the two planes slammed into the twin towers. That figure includes 343 firefighters and paramedics, 23 New York City police officers and 37 Port Authority police officers who were struggling to complete an evacuation of the buildings and save the office workers trapped on higher floors. At the Pentagon, 189 people were killed, including 64 on American Airlines Flight 77, the airliner that struck the building. On Flight 93, 44 people died when the plane crash-landed in Pennsylvania.



America Responds

At 7 p.m., President George W. Bush, who was in Florida at the time of the attacks and had spent the day being shuttled around the country because of security concerns, returned to the White House. At 9 p.m., he delivered a televised address from the Oval Office, declaring, “We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them.”

Operation Enduring Freedom, the American-led international effort to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and destroy Osama bin Laden’s terrorist network based there, began on October 7. Within two months, U.S. forces had effectively removed the Taliban from operational power, but the war continued, as U.S. and coalition forces attempted to defeat a Taliban insurgency campaign based in neighbouring Pakistan. Osama bin Laden, the mastermind behind the September 11th attacks, remained at large until May 2, 2011, when he was finally tracked down and killed by U.S. forces at a hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

Exercise 1: Mark the following statements as True or False according to the text:	True	False
1. On September 11, 2001, a Boeing 767 crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Centre.		
2. After the second plane collision, it became clear that America was under attack.		
3. Some of the terrorists had lived in the United States for more than a decade.		
4. Only six people in the World Trade Centre towers at the time of their collapse survived.		
5. United Flight 93 was hijacked about 20 minutes after leaving New Jersey.		
6. Sandy Bradshaw was a passenger on Flight 93.		
7. The passengers on Flight 93 fought the four hijackers.		
8. A total of 2,996 people were killed in the 9/11 attacks.		
9. On Flight 93, 44 people died when the plane crash-landed in Pennsylvania.		
10. President George W. Bush was in Pennsylvania at the time of the attacks.		
11. At 9 p.m. on Sept 11, 2001, President Bush delivered a televised address from the Oval Office.		
12. Operation Enduring Freedom's aim was to destroy the Taliban regime.		

Exercise 2: Read the text again and answer the questions below:

1. What happened on September 11, 2001, at 8:45 a.m., in NYC?

2. What happened just 18 minutes after the north tower was hit?

3. Who were the attackers?

4. Why did the terrorists carry out these attacks?

5. What did the terrorists smuggle through security at three East Coast airports?

6. What did Flight 93 passenger Thomas Burnett tell his wife?

7. How many people were killed in the 9/11 attacks?

8. What was Operation Enduring Freedom and when did it begin?

Exercise 3: Match the words to their definitions:

<input type="radio"/> collision	1. a place or a state that resembles or suggests hell
<input type="radio"/> massive	2. allegedly
<input type="radio"/> reportedly	3. an act or instance of revolting against civil authority
<input type="radio"/> smuggled	4. causing great damage or harm
<input type="radio"/> transcontinental	5. cave in, tumble,
<input type="radio"/> devastating	6. crash
<input type="radio"/> inferno	7. going across a continent
<input type="radio"/> conventional	8. huge, enormous, very big
<input type="radio"/> collapsed	9. normal, commonplace, ordinary
<input type="radio"/> hijack	10. temporary alliance
<input type="radio"/> insurrection	11. to commandeer a flying airplane especially by coercing the pilot
<input type="radio"/> coalition	12. to import or export something secretly or illegally

Exercise 4: Choose the right answer

1. On September 11, 2001, an American Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the north tower of the World _____ Center.

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|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| a. Trade | b. Spade | c. Global | d. Stage |
|----------|----------|-----------|----------|

2. 18 minutes after the first plane hit, a second Boeing 767 sliced into the south tower near the _____ floor!

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|----------|---------|---------|--------|
| a. first | b. 50th | c. 60th | d. top |
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3. The attackers were Islamic _____ from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations.

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|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| a. insurgents | b. thieves | c. warriors | d. terrorists |
|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------|

4. The terrorists were allegedly acting in retaliation for America's support of _____.

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|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| a. England | b. Russia | c. Israel | d. China |
|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|

5. Some of the terrorists had taken flying lessons at American commercial _____ schools.

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|-----------------|---------------|------------|-----------|
| a. martial arts | b. terrorists | c. driving | d. flight |
|-----------------|---------------|------------|-----------|

6. The 19 terrorists _____ box-cutters and knives through security at three East Coast airports

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|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| a. stole | b. smuggled | c. bought | d. exchanged |
|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|

7. American Airlines Flight crashed into the west side of the Pentagon military _____ at 9:45 a.m.

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|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| a. headquarters | b. schools | c. academies | d. offices |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|

8. Less than 15 minutes after the plane crash, the south tower of the World Trade Centre _____.

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|------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| a. was evacuated | b. was put out | c. exploded | d. collapsed |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|

9. United Flight 93 was _____ about 40 minutes after leaving Newark Liberty International Airport.

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|------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| a. crashed | b. stolen | c. hijacked | d. recovered |
|------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|

10. A group of passengers and flight attendants planned an _____ in United Flight 93.

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|-----------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| a. attack | b. insurrection | c. evacuation | d. escape |
|-----------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|

11. United Flight 93 _____ in a rural field near Shanksville in western Pennsylvania at 10:10 a.m.

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|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| a. skipped | b. exploded | c. landed | d. crashed |
|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|

12. A total of 2,996 people were _____ in the 9/11 attacks and more than 10,000 were injured.

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|-----------|----------|--------------|------------|
| a. killed | b. saved | c. evacuated | d. injured |
|-----------|----------|--------------|------------|

13. At 7 p.m., President George W. _____ returned to the White House.

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| a. Bush | b. Obama | c. Washington | d. Kennedy |
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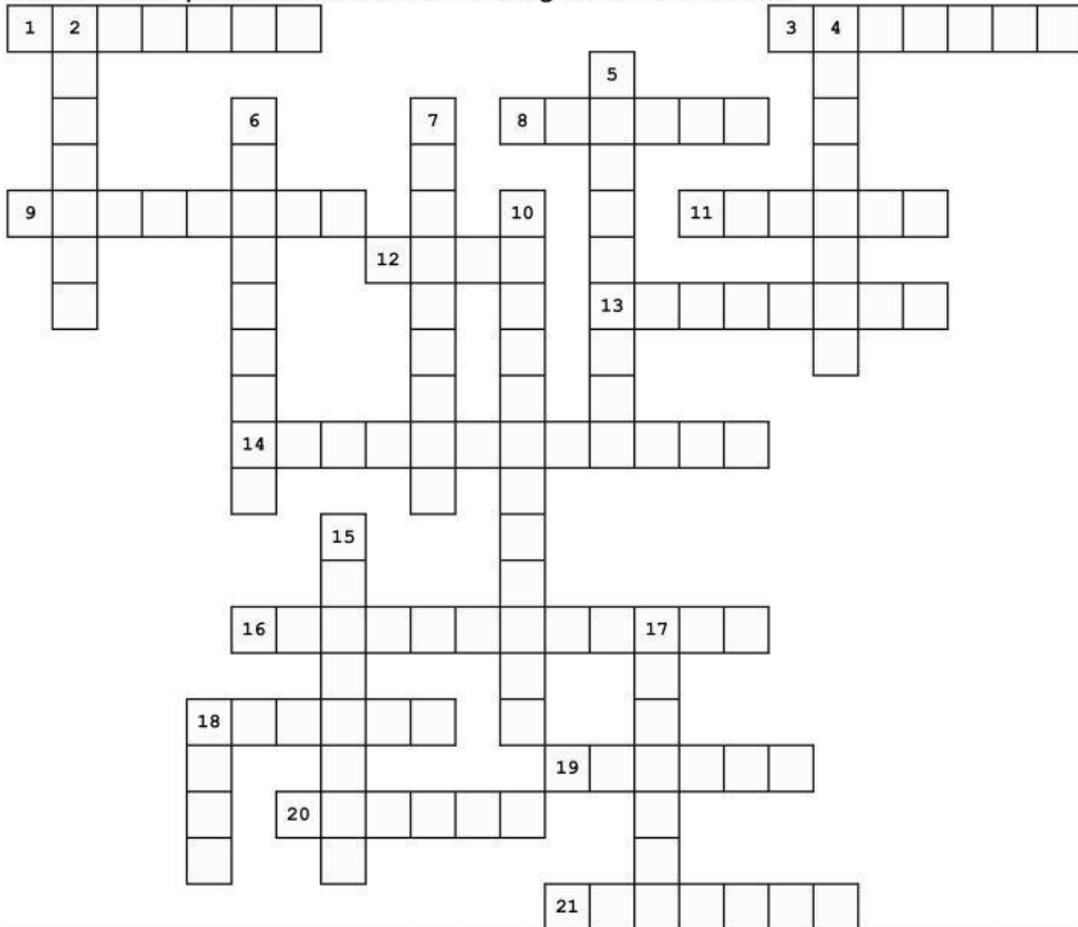
14. At 9 p.m., W. Bush delivered a televised _____ from the Oval Office

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|--------------|------------|----------------|---------------|
| a. interview | b. address | c. performance | d. propaganda |
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15. Operation Enduring Freedom removed the _____ from operational power.

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| a. Hamas | b. al-Qaeda | c. Isis | d. Taliban |
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Exercise 5: Complete the crossword below using words from the text



Down

2. The attackers were _____ terrorists from Saudi Arabia reportedly financed by al-Qaeda.
4. Almost 10,000 people were treated for _____, after the September 11 attacks.
5. A total of 2,996 people were killed in the 9/11 attacks, including the 19 terrorist hijackers aboard the four _____.
6. At 10:30 a.m., the north building of the twin towers _____.
7. All told, 125 military personnel and _____ were killed in the Pentagon, along with all 64 people aboard the airliner.
10. American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the west side of the Pentagon military _____ at 9:45 a.m.
15. Soon after take-off, the terrorists took the controls, transforming ordinary passenger jets into guided _____.
17. Jet fuel from the Boeing 757 caused a devastating _____ at the Pentagon military headquarters.
18. Four early-morning flights were, chosen because the planes were loaded with _____.

Across

1. Osama bin Laden was finally tracked down and killed by U.S. forces at a _____ in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2, 2011.
3. United Flight 93 was hijacked about 40 minutes after leaving Newark _____ International Airport in New Jersey.
8. 18 minutes after the first plane hit, a second Boeing 767 _____ into the south tower near the 60th floor!
9. The 19 terrorists _____ box-cutters and knives through security at three East Coast airports
11. The collision caused a massive explosion that showered burning _____ onto the streets below.
12. One of the passengers on United Flight 93 Thomas Burnett, Jr., called his _____.
13. As the evacuation of the towers, television broadcast live images of what initially appeared to be a freak _____.
14. The passengers on United Flight 93 are suspected to have attacked the cockpit with a fire _____.
16. A group of passengers on United Flight 93 and flight attendants planned an _____.
18. Some of the terrorists had lived in the United States for more than a year and had taken _____ lessons.
19. On September 11, an American Airlines _____ 767 crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Centre.
20. Operation Enduring Freedom aim was to oust the Taliban _____ in Afghanistan.
21. President George W. Bush was in _____ at the time of the attacks.

ANSWER KEY:

Exercise 1: True or False key

1. T	7. T
2. T	8. T
3. F	9. T
4. T	10. F
5. F	11. T
6. F	12. T

Exercise 2: Answer key

1. On September 11, 2001, at 8:45 a.m. on a clear Tuesday morning, an American Airlines Boeing 767 loaded with 20,000 gallons of jet fuel crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Centre in New York City.
2. 18 minutes after the first plane hit the north tower, a second Boeing 767—United Airlines Flight 175—appeared out of the sky, turned sharply toward the World Trade Centre and sliced into the south tower near the 60th floor!
3. The attackers were Islamic terrorists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations.
4. The terrorists were allegedly acting in retaliation for America's support of Israel, its involvement in the Persian Gulf War and its continued military presence in the Middle East.
5. The 19 terrorists smuggled box-cutters and knives through security at three East Coast airports and boarded four early-morning flights bound for California.
6. Thomas Burnett, Jr., told his wife over the phone that he knew they were all going to die and that three of them would do something about it.
7. A total of 2,996 people were killed in the 9/11 attacks, including the 19 terrorist hijackers aboard the four airplanes.
8. Operation Enduring Freedom, the American-led international effort to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and destroy Osama bin Laden's terrorist network based there, began on October 7.

Exercise 3: Match the words to their definitions:

collision = crash

massive = huge, enormous, very big

reportedly = allegedly

smuggled = to import or export something secretly or illegally

transcontinental = going across a continent

devastating = causing great damage or harm

inferno = a place or a state that resembles or suggests hell

conventional = normal, commonplace, ordinary

collapsed = cave in, tumble,

hijack = to commandeer a flying airplane especially by coercing the pilot

insurrection = an act or instance of revolting against civil authority

coalition = temporary alliance

Exercise 4: Choose the right answer

14. On September 11, 2001, an American Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the north tower of the World a.Trade Center.

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| c. Trade | d. Spade | c. Global | d. Stage |
|----------|----------|-----------|----------|

15. 18 minutes after the first plane hit, a second Boeing 767 sliced into the south tower near the c.60th floor!

- | | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|--------|
| a. first | b. 50th | c. 60th | d. top |
|----------|---------|---------|--------|

16. The attackers were Islamic d.terrorists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations.

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|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| a. insurgents | b. thieves | c. warriors | d. terrorists |
|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------|

17. The terrorists were allegedly acting in retaliation for America's support of c.Israel.

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|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| a. England | b. Russia | c. Israel | d. China |
|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|

18. Some of the terrorists had taken flying lessons at American commercial d.flight schools.

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|-----------------|---------------|------------|-----------|
| a. martial arts | b. terrorists | c. driving | d. flight |
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19. The 19 terrorists b.smuggled box-cutters and knives through security at three East Coast airports

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|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| a. stole | b. smuggled | c. bought | d. exchanged |
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20. American Airlines Flight crashed into the west side of the Pentagon military a.headquarters at 9:45 a.m.

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|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| a. headquarters | b. schools | c. academies | d. offices |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|

21. Less than 15 minutes after the plane crash, the south tower of the World Trade Centre d.collapsed.

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|------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| a. was evacuated | b. was put out | c. exploded | d. collapsed |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|

22. United Flight 93 was c.hijacked about 40 minutes after leaving Newark Liberty International Airport.

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|------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| a. crashed | b. stolen | c. hijacked | d. recovered |
|------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|

23. A group of passengers and flight attendants planned an b.insurrection in United Flight 93.

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|-----------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| a. attack | b. insurrection | c. evacuation | d. escape |
|-----------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|

24. United Flight 93 d.crashed in a rural field near Shanksville in western Pennsylvania at 10:10 a.m.

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|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| a. skipped | b. exploded | c. landed | d. crashed |
|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|

25. A total of 2,996 people were a.killed in the 9/11 attacks and more than 10,000 were injured.

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|-----------|----------|--------------|------------|
| a. killed | b. saved | c. evacuated | d. injured |
|-----------|----------|--------------|------------|

26. At 7 p.m., President George W. a.Bush returned to the White House.

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|---------|----------|---------------|------------|
| a. Bush | b. Obama | c. Washington | d. Kennedy |
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14. At 9 p.m., W. Bush delivered a televised b.address from the Oval Office

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|--------------|------------|----------------|---------------|
| a. interview | b. address | c. performance | d. propaganda |
|--------------|------------|----------------|---------------|

15. Operation Enduring Freedom removed the d.Taliban from operational power.

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|----------|----------|---------|------------|
| a. Hamas | b. Jihad | c. Isis | d. Taliban |
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