

## Policy Options

*NOTE: These policy options were developed following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001. They were posted to the web in mid-September, 2001.*

In the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, we are in a new world. The stakes are higher and the rules are different. What follows is a framework of alternative policy "Options" that are designed to help you think about a range of possible responses to the attacks and the ramifications of each. The Options are not intended as a menu of choices. Rather they are framed in stark terms to highlight very different policy approaches and the values that underlie them. Each Option includes a set of arguments against it. These are designed to help you think carefully about the trade-offs of each. After you have had a chance to consider each of the options presented, we encourage you to articulate your own considered judgment on this question. You may want to borrow heavily from one of the Options presented or combine ideas from several. Or you may take a new approach altogether. As you frame your "Option 5," think about the following questions:

- What was the purpose of the terrorist attacks on September 11?
- How do the events of September 11 threaten the United States?
- What should our long-term goals be? What values are important to us?
- What steps should we take in the coming weeks and months?
- How important is international cooperation? Who needs to be involved? Why?
- What role should the military play?
- What role should intelligence play?
- What role should the financial world play?
- What kind of world will we be shaping by the policies we adopt today?
- What are the pros and cons of this approach?

### **OPTION 1: ACT NOW TO SECURE OUR NATION**

The United States will not tolerate acts of terrorism, those who perpetrate them, or those nations who harbor terrorists. The attacks of September 11 require an immediate and decisive military response. We welcome the support and assistance of other nations, but time and resolve are of the essence, and we are willing and able to act alone if it is necessary or expedient. We cannot allow the disease of terrorism to plague our nation. It is our responsibility and duty to protect ourselves. Swift action will not only punish those who were behind this attack but will help deter future attacks as well. Looking ahead, we must devote more resources to our military and intelligence forces. The U.S. must be prepared to fight terrorism wherever and whenever it threatens. Nothing less than our freedom is at stake.

#### **Arguments Against Option 1**

- An overly rapid response that is not targeted directly at the perpetrators of the crimes committed on September 11, 2001, threatens to lose the support the United States has gained from other nations in the struggle against terrorism
- If we engage in indiscriminate attacks against innocent people in places such as Afghanistan, we may make martyrs of the dead and encourage the survivors to become terrorists themselves. A response that feeds terrorism will inevitably be felt at home as the cycle of violence increases. The United States cannot defend itself against all possible means that terrorists have at their disposal.

- Multilateral cooperation will be necessary to address international terrorism. It will require the help of many nations to break up the decentralized network of terrorist cells that currently exist around the world.
- This response fails to address the underlying causes of terrorism, including a deep-seeded resentment of the United States, and will instead only lead to a continuing cycle of violence and more deaths of innocent people.
- A response that indiscriminately takes the lives of innocent civilians anywhere in the world would bring the United States down to the moral level of the terrorists. Our country must respond to terrorism in ways that preserve our national ethics and democratic traditions.

## **OPTION 2: BUILD A U.S. LED COALITION**

The attacks of September 11 were heinous crimes that all of the civilized world has condemned. The United States must work swiftly to build a coalition of nations prepared to act. This coalition must bring the full measure of its diplomatic, financial, intelligence, and military resources to bear to identify, hunt out, and stop those who were the perpetrators of these vicious attacks. Consultations should be held with all countries that could be of assistance to the United States. We will need to join the vast intelligence resources of other nations with those of the U.S. in order to identify positively the individuals, organizations, or states responsible for the attacks. Full diplomatic pressure must be brought to bear on any countries that may be reluctant to cooperate with this effort, and if some countries continue to harbor terrorists, they must understand that they run a serious risk of becoming involved in military action directed against terrorists on their soil. Finally, military cooperation with other nations will be necessary if the United States must launch a military operation in a remote corner of the world. The world is with us in our horror and grief. We must now stand together against lawless terror and hold those responsible for these acts accountable.

### **Arguments Against Option 2**

- While cooperation with other nations may be desirable, we cannot afford to wait until a coalition of willing states has come together. If we are to punish those responsible for this heinous act and deter others from committing such acts in the future, we must respond now, even if that means that the United States must respond alone.
- A long-term effort to control and eventually wipe out terrorism will require the full participation of the international community. Any coalition that does not reflect the interests and needs of all of the international community will fail.
- This response fails to address the underlying causes of terrorism, including a deep-seeded resentment of the United States.

## **OPTION 3: JOIN WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN SEEKING JUSTICE**

The United States must join with the international community in a long-term, concerted effort to control and eventually wipe out terrorism worldwide. Our security and the security of the rest of the civilized world depend upon this. The nations of the world have come together in the recognition that the attacks on New York and Washington on September 11 were more than attacks on the United States. They were crimes against humanity. As such the perpetrators should be found and brought to justice before the International Criminal Court. Any effort to bring those guilty of these heinous crimes to justice must be launched cooperatively with the United Nations and other multilateral institutions in order to have global legitimacy. We should begin full diplomatic consultations with all countries that are committed to eradicating terrorism in an effort to identify, capture, and bring to trial all of those behind these attacks.

Full diplomatic pressure must be brought to bear on countries that may be reluctant to cooperate. They must understand that their failure to cooperate may risk grave harm to their citizens as the world seeks collectively to capture those responsible for these acts. The world must stand together against lawless terror and hold those responsible accountable.

### **Arguments Against Option 3**

- This was an attack directed at targets in the United States and against two symbols of America's global power—the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. It is the right and responsibility of the United States to take action.
- We must do what we know is necessary with or without the support of other nations and international organizations. We can not be constrained by others in either the timing of our action or the nature of our response.
- Any international coalition will be ineffective without strong U.S. leadership.
- While an international effort to correctly identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice is a necessary step, terrorism will not end until we address the root causes of terrorism.

### **OPTION 4: ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF TERRORISM**

Terrorism is inexcusable, and these crimes against humanity cannot be allowed to continue. However, military action will only perpetuate the cycle of violence, dragging us into a war of strike and counterstrike that could last for generations. We will not solve the problem of terrorism simply by punishing terrorists. To focus our response to the attacks only on those who perpetrated them is to treat the symptom rather than the disease. We must recognize that terrorism aimed at us grows out of a deep-seated resentment of the U.S. While we should devote resources to improving security in our own country, if we are going to avoid this kind of violence in the future we must join with all civilized nations around the world to examine the deeper issues underlying terrorism. We must devote attention and resources to addressing the underlying causes of terrorism — including poverty, powerlessness, and hatred — that allow terrorism to feed on the frustrations of some of the world's most disadvantaged peoples.

### **Arguments Against Option 4**

- Allowing horrible crimes to be committed anywhere in the world — especially on U.S. territory — without immediate consequences will encourage terrorists to make additional attacks both at home and abroad.
- This approach does not hold the perpetrators of these attacks accountable.
- Addressing the underlying causes of terrorism will take time. We have to act now to protect innocent people from these vicious attacks.
- The underlying causes of terrorism are overwhelming. Neither the United States nor the larger international community has the resources to address all of the underlying causes of terrorism.