Welcome to the Interactive timeline.

Take a look at over 100 years of events that are in some way connected to 9/11. This timeline looks at all events before and after the day of 11 September. There is another timeline on the website, which looks at the events (and times of day) on 11 September itself.

You can go directly to any decade within the timeline by using the quick links below:

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1900s

1908 - Middle East oil fields found

In 1908, a British company found huge underground oil supplies in Persia (now called Iran) and started to make enormous profits from selling it. Before long, British and American companies found oil in other parts of the Middle East. The governments of Britain and the USA wanted to keep the supply of oil through the Suez Canal safe, and so they became heavily involved in trying to control events all over the Middle East. The 9/11 attacks attempted to end the USA's involvement in the Middle East. Osama bin Laden, leader of Al-Qaeda, accused western powers of stealing the oil.

1910s

1914 (August) - First World War begins

Before the First World War started in 1914, the land in the Middle East was part of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire. Most of the people in the Middle East were Arabs who did not like being ruled by Turks. The war changed the way the Middle East was ruled - but in a way that suited Western powers such as Britain and France. The people behind the 9/11 attacks believed that Western powers should be punished for treating Arab nations unfairly during and ever since the First World War.
1915 (October) - British promises to create a new Arab nation

In the First World War (1914-1918), the British sent armies to the Middle East to fight the Turks who had sided with Germany against Britain. The British decided to try to persuade the Arabs to help them fight against the Turks. British leaders promised the Arabs that they could rule their own, new Arab state after the war if they would rise up against their Turkish rulers. The Arabs agreed and joined the war... but the British did not keep their promise. Some Arabs - including the 9/11 attackers - have never forgiven Britain and its wartime ally, the USA.

1917 (2 November) - The Balfour Declaration

The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Balfour, publicly declared that Britain would support a new Jewish homeland in Palestine. He did this even though Britain had already promised to help create a new Arab nation in the region. The British Government must have known that this would create difficulties with the Arabs who already lived in Palestine.

The 9/11 attackers hated Britain and the USA for supporting the Jews who set up their own homeland in what had been Palestinian Arab land for over a thousand years.

1919 - Paris peace conferences starts

After the First World War ended, the leaders of the winning nations (including Britain, the USA and France) met in Paris in 1919 to decide what should be done with the land of the losing powers - including the Ottoman Turks. The Arabs were hoping to be given their own new state, as Britain had promised. However, they were to be disappointed as the old Ottoman Empire’s Arab lands were broken up into separate mandates and ruled by Britain or France.

Osama bin Laden has said that this was a betrayal and a major reason for his own anti-Western views.
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### 1920s

**1926 - Muslim Brotherhood founded**

The Muslim Brotherhood was formed by Egyptian Arabs who believed that Islam needed to return to its original ways as set out by the prophet Mohammed. It offered practical support to the poor and began to criticise the British and French who now ruled the Muslim lands. It later criticised Muslim leaders of the Arab world for not ruling as the prophet would have wished.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a non-violent group but its ideas have influenced people like the 9/11 attackers, who are prepared to fight to remove what they see as impure forces and leaders from Muslim lands.

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### 1930s

**1931 - Nazi rule in Germany encourages Jewish emigration**

Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933. His Nazi Party soon started persecuting the Jews and encouraging them to leave the country. Many chose to emigrate to Palestine, where the Zionist Movement was settling Jews in what they believed to be their “Promised Land”. This made the number of Jews in Palestine grow far more quickly than had ever been expected, which caused problems with the Palestinian Arabs who lived there.

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### 1940s

**1942 - The systematic extermination of Jews becomes official Nazi policy**

During the Second World War, Nazi Germany invaded Eastern Europe - where millions Jews happened to live. In 1942 the Nazi leaders met at Wannsee, near Berlin, to decide what to do about the Jews and came up with the “Final Solution”: to kill them all. This led to the deaths of about six million Jews in the Holocaust.

At the end of the war, many Jews who managed to survive decided they would only be safe by moving to Palestine, where they could create a new Jewish homeland.

The loss of Arab land to Jewish settlers angered many Arabs, including the 9/11 attackers.

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1945 - The end of the Second World War
Jewish refugees go to Palestine

After the Second World War ended, thousands of Jewish Holocaust survivors rushed to live in Palestine, where they believed they would be safe. By 1946, the Jewish population of Palestine reached 33% of the total. The British who ruled Palestine tried to stop any more Jews entering Palestine, as they could see that it was causing trouble with Palestinian Arabs who lived there.

The 9/11 attackers claimed to be fighting on behalf of Palestinian Arabs who had lost land and property, and they attacked the USA for supporting the Jews and their homeland.

1946 (22 July) - Bombing of King David Hotel, Jerusalem

The British used the King David Hotel in Jerusalem as their base while they ruled Palestine. When the British refused to allow any more Jews into Palestine and began to take firm action against Jewish groups, some Jewish extremists responded by bombing the hotel.

This act of terrorism was followed by many smaller attacks that quickly persuaded the British to ask the United Nations to solve the disputes between Jews and Arabs over the future of Palestine.

The 9/11 attacks are yet another example of terrorism being used to win control of the future of the Middle East, but on an altogether different scale.

1947 (February) - United Nations takes charge of Palestine’s future

The British handed responsibility for Palestine’s future to the United Nations in 1947. The United Nations’ plan led to the creation of the new state of Israel in 1948. Ever since then, extreme Muslims have tried to win back full control of Palestine for its Arab people. This has involved them in wars and terror attacks against Israel and its closest ally - the USA.

Al-Qaeda statements since 9/11 have often claimed that the attacks were caused by the USA’s support for Israel.
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1948 (14 May) - State of Israel founded. Arab states invade

The state of Israel was born on 14 May 1948. The United Nations wanted to divide Palestine into two new states: one for the Jews and one for the Palestinians. But the Palestinians refused to accept the division of the land, so only one new state came into existence - the Jewish state of Israel. The Arab states around Israel immediately attacked it with their armed forces, but Israel fought them off.

1948 - USA first to recognise Israel as a nation

The USA was first to accept Israel as an official new nation. It admired the fact that Israel had a democratically elected government, and Jews living in the USA encouraged their politicians to support Israel. Furthermore, the USA was keen to find a strong ally in the Middle East, as its great enemy in the 1960s (Soviet Russia) had close links with Arab states and this posed a threat to the oil supplies coming from the Middle East.

Since 1948, the USA has remained Israel's closest ally, and this is the thought to be the main reason behind the 9/11 attacks.

1949 (July) - Arab-Israel war creates Palestinian refugees

By July 1949, Israel had fought off the attempts of its Arab neighbour states to invade and destroy it. The United Nations wanted Palestinians who lived within the new state of Israel to stay there, but the war (and the violent months just before the war) made this unrealistic. About 750,000 Palestinians left their land, their homes and most of their property. Most simply fled from Israel in fear, but some were forced out by the Israelis. They hoped to return once a solution to the Israeli-Arab dispute had been reached... but that has never happened.

Many refugees settled in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank areas, but others went to live in Jordan, Syria or the Lebanon. The number of Palestinian refugees, including the children and grandchildren of those who moved in 1948, now stands at over 4.5 million.

Terrorists - including the 9/11 hijackers - use violence to try to force Israel and her ally the USA to give land back to these Palestinian refugees, even if it means ending the state of Israel.

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1954 - Sayyid Qutb imprisoned in Egypt

Sayyid Qutb was a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Like other Muslim scholars and preachers, he was very critical of Arab leaders: he believed they were not leading Muslim people as they should. He called for a return to the earliest days of Islam, when all Muslims lived in a single state under the religious leadership of a “Caliph”.

Sayyid Qutb was later hanged by Egyptian authorities in 1966. His writings greatly influenced Osama bin Laden and other extremists who felt they should fight to create a single, strong, pure Muslim people.

1964 - Palestinian Liberation Organisation founded

The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) was set up in 1964 by Arabs who wanted to return the land of Palestine to its original borders. This involved ending the state of Israel, using violence if necessary.

In 1993, the PLO came to accept the right of Israel to exist and committed itself to peaceful methods. By then, other more extreme groups had taken up violent methods of seeking to destroy Israel.

Although Al-Qaeda and the 9/11 attackers had no direct links to the PLO, they shared the aim of trying to restore Palestinians to the land they lost since 1948.

1967 - Six Day War between Arab states and Israel

To watch the video go to: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ax9ckUVkhEA

Israel feared it was about to be attacked again by the Arab states that surrounded it. On 5 June 1967, Israel launched surprise attacks; five days later it had defeated the armies and air forces of Syria, Jordan and Egypt. It occupied large areas of new land, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and also took control of the eastern half of Jerusalem (formerly ruled by Jordan). Thousands of Palestinians from these areas fled. Others stayed as more Israeli families moved onto land in the West Bank.

The United Nations passed Resolution 242 that required Israel to pull out of the land it occupied in the Six Day War - but Israel has never done this. It says it needs the extra land to make its borders safer from attacks by Arab states and terrorists.

Some extremists, such as the 9/11 attackers, believe violent attacks on the USA will make it abandon its support for Israel. Israel will then have to return land to the Palestinians.

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1970s

1973 (6 October) - Arab-Israeli War

In 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on the holiest day in the Jewish calendar: Yom Kippur.

They were supported by troops from other Arab states and managed to strike deep into Israeli occupied lands. Israel fought back, supported by supplies of arms from the USA. (The Arab states were supplied by the USA’s enemy at that time: Soviet Russia.) The war ended without any great change in borders.

In the years after the war, the USA tried to bring the two sides together for peace talks - partly because the USA didn’t want the Arab oil-producing nations to cut oil supplies to the West again, as they had done during this war.

In 1979, Egypt officially accepted the right of Israel to exist. To extremists like the young Osama bin Laden, this just showed that many Muslim leaders were too weak. He came to believe that only terrorist action would end the influence of the USA and Israel in the Middle East.

1978 - Osama bin Laden attends university in Saudi Arabia

In the late 1970s, Osama bin Laden attended university at Jedda in Saudi Arabia. Here he was greatly influenced by the extreme views of a minority of Muslim scholars and preachers, which were based on the teachings of men like Sayyid Qutb (see 1954). Many of these teachers believed that Israel and the USA were anti-Muslim powers and taught their followers to use violence against them and against any Muslim leaders who would not stand up to them.

1979 (December) - Soviet (Russian) invasion of Afghanistan

In December 1979, the Soviet Union (Russia) invaded Afghanistan. Afghan Muslim warriors, called Mujahideen, took up their arms and tried to turn the Russians back. It seemed an impossible task as Russia was a superpower.

Osama bin Laden and thousands of other extreme Muslims travelled from all over the world to fight against the Russians who had dared to attack a Muslim land. This war proved to be a great training ground for extreme Muslims to learn how to fight for their faith. The Al-Qaeda terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attacks all trained in Afghanistan.

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1980s

1983 (23 October) - Suicide bombs kill 299 US and French soldiers in Lebanon

In 1982, Israel invaded its neighbour Lebanon because the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) was using it as a base for its terrorist attacks. During this war, a pro-Israeli Lebanese group carried out a massacre of between 800 and 2,000 Palestinian civilians in refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila. To prevent further bloodshed, the USA and other nations sent a peacekeeping force to Lebanon.

Many Muslims resented the arrival of these Western forces and believed they were there to help Israel. In 1983, two suicide bombers killed 299 French and American soldiers in their bases at Beirut. Within four months, the Americans withdrew their troops from Lebanon.

Years later, Osama bin Laden and other extremists used this as an example to show that the USA would pull out of its Middle Eastern bases and end its support for Israel if it was directly attacked by terrorists.

1988 - Soviet (Russian) Al-Qaeda formed

In late 1988 or early 1989, Osama bin Laden and other extremist Muslims agreed to set up a loose organisation called Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda grew out of the success that Muslim fighters were having in the war against Soviet Russia in Afghanistan. The name means “The Base” and the organisation’s aim was to provide money and training to support attacks on the enemies of Islam all over world. It later organised the 9/11 attacks on the USA.

1989 (February) - Mujahideen defeat Soviet army in Afghanistan

In 1989, Soviet Russia withdrew its troops from Afghanistan. The Muslim forces that defeated the Russians were called “Mujahideen”. This success against one of the world’s two superpowers gave extremist Muslim groups confidence. They believed that the other great power - the USA - could be forced to end its support for Israel and any other involvement in the Middle East. This confidence led to the 9/11 attacks on the USA in 2001.

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1990 (2 August) - Iraqi invasion of Kuwait

In August 1990, Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein, invaded Kuwait and took its oil wells and ports. This affected the world’s oil supplies and a United Nations force, made up mainly of American forces, quickly restored Kuwait’s freedom. Most Arab states supported this, believing that Saddam Hussein was a threat to them all.

Osama bin Laden disliked Saddam Hussein but was disgusted when American forces were invited to be based in Saudi Arabia during the war. He vowed to drive them out of the country where two of Islam’s most holy sites at Mecca and Medina are found.

1991 (February) - Defeat of Iraq - and strict sanctions imposed

After Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi forces had been forced out of Kuwait, the United Nations imposed strict controls (called sanctions) on Iraqi trade. The aim was to stop Saddam Hussein buying new weapons. However, the sanctions ruined Iraq’s economy. Saddam stayed rich but hundreds of thousands of Iraqis suffered.

Although bin Laden hated Saddam Hussein, he was horrified when he learnt that thousands of Iraqi children were dying due to sanctions cutting medical supplies. He pointed out that the United Nations did nothing like this to Israel, even though the Israelis had never obeyed the United Nations’s orders to give back Palestinian land.

It was American ships and planes (including some based in Saudi Arabia) that enforced the sanctions. The 9/11 attacks aimed to make the US withdraw its bases from the Gulf region and end United Nations sanctions on Iraq.

1993 - US troops suffer losses in Somalia

In 1991, a civil war broke out in the Muslim country of Somalia in east Africa. The United Nations sent a force into the country to try to restore order. The USA provided many of the troops and weapons.

In 1993, an American force tried to capture a tribal leader who had been responsible for many deaths. The mission went badly wrong and resulted in the death of 19 US soldiers and many more Somalis. Soon afterwards, the US withdrew its troops from Somalia.

Osama bin Laden later claimed that this showed that the USA would end its support for Israel and remove its bases from Saudi Arabia if Al-Qaeda were to hit US cities with massive terrorist attacks.

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1994 - Taliban movement founded in Afghanistan

After the Russians left Afghanistan (see 1989), the country had no single government. Local tribal warlords fought each other for control.

By 1994, a force of highly committed Muslims formed a group called the Taliban, which gradually restored order over large parts of the country. It imposed the most strict form of Muslim law and social control ever seen in a modern state. The Taliban allowed Al-Qaeda to operate freely from secret bases such as those in the Tora Bora mountains - where the 9/11 attacks were planned and where the hijackers were trained.

1996 - Khalid Sheikh Mohamed suggests an attack on USA

In January 1996, a Muslim extremist called Khalid Sheikh Mohammed met Osama bin Laden at the Al-Qaeda base in Afghanistan. He put forward his plan to attack US cities by flying hijacked planes into well-known buildings. Bin Laden did not immediately support the idea.

In August 1996, bin Laden issued a “Declaration of War” on America for its support for Israel and its use of air bases in Saudi Arabia.

Over the next two years, bin Laden kept in touch with Kahlid Sheikh Mohammed and a version of his original plan was finally put into action on 11 September 2001.

1998 (February) - Bin Laden warns USA to expect attacks

In 1998, Osama bin Laden issued another declaration against the USA. He called on all Muslims to serve God by killing Americans so that the USA would withdraw its troops from Saudi Arabia and end its support from Israel. Secretly, he was already supporting several terrorist attacks against US targets in Africa.

In May, he allowed an American television reporter to interview him in his secret base in Afghanistan. In that interview he again warned the US to expect direct attacks by terrorists.

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1998 (August) - Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania

Two massive suicide bombs at US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killed hundreds of people in August 1998. Most of the dead were not US citizens and many were local people.

As he grew in confidence, bin Laden started planning attacks against targets in the USA.

1998 (August) - Bin Laden starts planning 9/11 attacks

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Osama bin Laden finally agreed to plan an attack on sites in the USA, using suicide bombers and planes. This was the start of the 9/11 attacks.

1999 - Al-Qaeda agents move to USA

Al-Qaeda agents started to arrive in the USA to learn how to fly planes and prepare for the 9/11 attacks.

2000s

2001 (July) - Final planning for 9/11 attacks

Preparations for the 9/11 attacks were more or less finalised when the lead hijacker, Mohammed Atta, travelled from the USA to Madrid in Spain to meet his Al-Qaeda contact there. After this meeting, Atta flew back to America and arranged the final practical details such as buying tickets for the flights that were to be hijacked.

2001 (11 September) - 9/11 attacks take place

On 11 September 2001, the world was shocked by the most deadly and spectacular terrorist attack in history. See the other timeline for the events of that day.

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2001 (12 September) - Arrests of US Muslims under way

1,200 Muslims living in the USA were arrested within the first two months after the 9/11 attacks. The vast majority were later released without charge.

2001 (13 September) - US air space reopened

Within minutes of the first plane hitting the World Trade Center, all air space over the US was shut down. It remained closed for two days.

Since 9/11, airports all over the world have tightened security procedures, which now take much longer for passengers.

2001 (14 September) - President Bush visits Ground Zero

On 14 September, President Bush visited Ground Zero (as the site of the attacks on the World Trade Center had become known). He met rescue workers and made a short speech to those who were there in an attempt to lift the nation’s spirits.

2001 (18 September) - First conspiracy theory published

One week after the 9/11 attacks, the first “conspiracy theory” was published in the French newspaper, Le Monde. It claimed that the attacks were an “inside job” planned by Americans.

Many alternative theories about 9/11 have been put forward since then.

2001 (20 September) - President Bush declared “War on Terror”

On 20 September 2001, President Bush addressed the United States Congress. By then, his security advisers had decided that the attacks had been organised by Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda.

Bush declared a “War on Terror” and warned that this war would start with Al-Qaeda but would not end there. This was to prove to be the start of major military campaigns - first against Afghanistan and then, in 2003, against Iraq.

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2001 (7 October) - US/UK invasion of Afghanistan

One week after the 9/11 attacks, the first “conspiracy theory” was despite warnings, the Taliban in Afghanistan refused to hand Osama bin Laden over to the USA.

On 7 October, a combined US and UK force attacked Afghanistan, aided by anti-Taliban Afghans called the Northern Alliance. The invasion started with massive bombing raids over the Tora Bora mountains where Osama bin Laden had his base.

Bin Laden escaped and was only found in 2011 when he was killed by US soldiers. The war in Afghanistan is still continuing in 2011, and up to 42 nations have supported the campaign.

2001 (26 October) - USA Patriot Act passed

On 26 October, US Congress passed the Patriot Act, which gave the US authorities much more freedom to investigate telephone, email, medical, financial, and other records. It also allowed them to detain people suspected of terrorist activities more easily.

Some Americans have seen these changes as a serious threat to their liberty.

2001 (19 November) - UK Anti-terrorism Act passed

The United Kingdom Government passed the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act on 19 November 2001. It allowed the UK authorities to detain indefinitely any non-British person if they were suspected of terrorist involvement.

As in the USA, some people criticised the Government for threatening the liberty of the British people in an effort to prevent terrorism.

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2001 (22 December) - New Afghan government installed by US/UK

By December 2001, the Taliban regime had been overthrown by the forces of the USA, UK and the Afghan Northern Alliance. A leading anti-Taliban Afghan politician called Hamid Karzai was installed as the leader of a temporary government until elections could be held. This eventually happened in 2004, when Karzai became the official President of Afghanistan - even though the Taliban continued to control large areas of the country.

2001 (22 December) - “Shoe bomber” attack failed

In December 2001 a UK Muslim called Richard Reid was arrested on an American Airlines flight to the USA. He was attempting to blow up the aircraft in mid-air by lighting a fuse to explosives that were hidden in his shoes. Reid became known as the Shoe Bomber. He had converted to Islam in 1998 and became a terrorist after being taught extremist views at a mosque in London. His actions made airport security even more tightly controlled.

2002 (January) - First detainees arrive at Guantanamo Bay

As the war in Afghanistan and other actions continued, the USA captured more and more suspected terrorists. It decided to set up a special detention centre where the suspects could be held and interrogated. It did this at a US Naval base at Guantanamo Bay (which is on part of the island of Cuba that belongs to the USA). Ever since it opened, some people have criticised the US for harsh and unfair treatment of the people who are held there, as they have not faced normal court proceedings.

2003 (19 March) - Invasion of Iraq

After months of warnings, the USA and UK invaded Iraq on 19 March 2003 claiming that Saddam Hussein was building up weapons of mass destruction that threatened world peace. Although Iraq had no proven links to al Qaeda, the invasion was still seen as part of the War on Terror. Saddam Hussein was quickly overthrown and captured. The USA and UK found it difficult to set up an orderly government in Iraq and the presence of US and British troops there led to an increase of terrorist attacks both against western troops and between Muslim groups.

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2004 (July) - US Commission Report published

Almost three years after the 9/11 attacks had taken place, the US Government published its report into them.

The report blamed Al-Qaeda but said little about why bin Laden and other terrorists hated the USA. It also showed how the US security systems and the Government had missed opportunities over the years to deal with Al-Qaeda.

2005 (7 July) - London 7/7 bombings

Since the 9/11 attacks, there have been many more terrorist bombings around the world. The attacks that are remembered most in Britain are the 7/7 bombings in London, when four British Muslim suicide bombers blew up three Tube trains and a bus, killing 56 people including themselves.

The bombers left videotaped messages in which they praised Osama bin Laden and other Al-Qaeda leaders, and said that similar attacks would continue until Britain and America withdrew all troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, and ended support for Israel.

2006 (30 December) - Execution of Saddam Hussein

After being captured in December 2003, the ex-Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, was tried and found guilty of murdering Iraqi citizens. As required by Iraqi law he was executed on 30 December 2006. This did nothing to end the continuing violence across Iraq however.

2009 (30 April) - Last British combat troops leave Iraq

As Iraq reached a rather more settled condition, British fighting troops finally withdrew from the country in April 2009. American troops remain.

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2010s

2010 (May) - Row over “Ground Zero mosque”
In May 2010, it was reported that some American Muslims planned to build a community centre with a prayer room at a site a few hundred metres from Ground Zero. This caused a fierce debate in the American media. Some mistakenly claimed that Muslims were planning to build a mosque at Ground Zero. Feelings ran high and polls showed that most Americans opposed the plan.

2011 (February) - “Arab Spring” protests demand democracy
In the first few months of 2011, there were protests in many Arab states across the Middle East and North Africa.

The protesters used the internet to spread their ideas, criticising their leaders for being corrupt and demanding democracy.

In Egypt and Tunisia these protests led to a change of government. In Libya it led to a civil war. The protests continued in other states such as Bahrain, Yemen and Syria.

Some say that these protests will encourage greater freedom and less extremism in Arab states. Others fear they will create a “power vacuum” that groups like Al-Qaeda will fill.

2011 (1 May) - Osama bin Laden killed
On 1 May 2011, a US team of specially trained operatives raided the compound in Afghanistan where Osama bin Laden was living. Bin Laden was killed in the attack. It is not yet clear whether the work of Al-Qaeda will continue without him.

2011 (11 September) - Ten years on from 9/11 - commemoration events

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