U.S. National Security and 9/11

Student Handout 4:
Mapping Terrorist Activity with Google Earth

Overview:

In this activity, you use Google Earth to document terrorist activities alleged to have been carried out by al-Qaeda. This activity provides you with details and a visual examination of al-Qaeda terrorist activities throughout the world, before and after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Some of details of the attacks have been researched for you, while some you'll have to research yourself. Becoming familiar with these attacks may change your opinion on the most effective foreign policy option, or it may reinforce your previous opinion. The lesson concludes with a brief written assignment on this topic.

Directions:

1. Access the Google Earth program, "Mapping Terrorist Activity"

2. Locate several placemarks arranged across the globe in specific locations, as well as others in a bundle lying off the coast of the eastern U.S. in the Atlantic Ocean

3. Read through all the placemarks. All have dates and titles of the event. Some have details of that event, while others don't.

4. Equally divide the work with your partner and research the incomplete place markers with the following details:
   • Location, date, identification of prime target, casualties (number and description), details of the attack, perpetrators

5. For each attack, move the place marker to its correct location on the map.
   • February 1993: World Trade Center bombing
   • November 1995: Bombing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
   • June 1996: Khobar Towers bombing in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

- August 7, 1998: U.S. Embassy bombings in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

- December 22, 2000: USS *Cole* is attacked in Yemen

- September 11, 2001: Attack on the World Trade Center in New York City

- September 11, 2001: Attack on the Pentagon, Washington D.C.

- September 11, 2001: Plane crashes in Pennsylvania field

- April 2002: Attack outside a synagogue in Tunisia

- October 2002: Attack on a French tanker off the coast of Yemen

- November 2002: car bomb attack and a failed attempt to shoot down an Israeli jetliner in Mombasa, Kenya

- 2002–present: Countless suicide bombings and other attacks on civilians in Iraq

- May 2003: Car bomb attacks in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

- March 2004: Bomb attacks on Madrid, Spain, commuter trains

- July 2005: Bombings of the London public transportation system

- February 2006: Attack on the Abqaiq petroleum-processing facility in Saudi Arabia

- December 2007: Bombing and suicide attacks in Algiers

- Also label Osama bin Laden's believed location in the mountains of Afghanistan

6. After identifying and locating all 18 attack sites, analyze the map with your partner by discussing the following questions:

   a) What do these countries have in common?

   b) What types of areas or buildings were targeted in each country? Are there similarities?

   c) Why do you think these areas were considered as targets?

   d) What interest do these areas have for the U.S.?

    e) What policies, laws, or procedures could have prevented each attack?

    f) What organization or individuals do you feel should be responsible for making policies and taking actions to prevent each attack?

    g) What responsibility does or should the U.S. have to prevent attacks in other countries?

7. Write a five-paragraph essay to demonstrate your new understanding. Be sure that your essay answers the essential question, "What foreign policy position do you feel would best keep the United States safe from terrorist attacks?" Be sure to address the following:

    a) A brief summary of the reasoning behind and actions suggested by the four foreign policy positions

    b) Rank which foreign policy (or combination of policies) you feel would best keep the United States safe from terrorist attack at this time, clearly explaining why your choice is superior to the others you considered

    c) How your analysis of the targets using the Google Earth tool modified or reinforced your choice of foreign policies