

Maya

Costs of war assignment

Humanities

May 20th, 2020

I believe that the US needs to gradually remove its military presence, but leave behind support and resources for the government. Additionally, I think that the US should encourage support and relationships with nearby countries, and provide aid for democratic institutions. I think the US cannot just leave, but needs to continue to support democracy in the region, just not with military efforts.

- Who has borne costs of the war?
 - Both the people of Afghanistan and Americans have suffered, but I imagine that Afghanistan has suffered the most.
- Identify the benefits of the war in Afghanistan. Who has benefited from the war?
 - I think that in some ways the US and Afghanistan have both benefitted. The US killed Osama bin Laden. Afghanistan is getting aid in making more infrastructure. "We should continue to provide funds to build schools and roads. We must also support Afghan efforts to rebuild a productive economy that does not include opium. With security and economic help, Afghans can create a safe society and their democratic institutions will grow"(42). While I do not think these benefits were worth it, these few things are probably things that these parties are happy about.
- What are acceptable grounds, if any, for going to war? For invading and occupying another country?
 - I think if there are human rights violations occurring in a country, violence that their government is not dealing with, and no other options have worked. I think that if a country attacks another country and there is no peaceful resolution that will work I guess then too.
- What standards do you think should be used when deciding to end a war?

- Is there continued benefit to anyone? Although I do not agree with the option three group, there was a good point in the brief. “Trying to remake Afghanistan in our own image is a recipe for failure. How many more years will we continue down this never-ending path? We must remember that we have succeeded in killing Osama bin Laden and scattering al Qaeda. That is why we came to Afghanistan in the first place, not to transform Afghan society” (46). The US was risking the lives of its own soldiers and so many resources on an internal conflict in a country, and it wasn’t working. I am not sure just pulling out all resources would have worked, but it might have been better than nothing changing.
- What role the United States should play in the world. What should its top priorities be? What values and beliefs should drive its policies? Are they similar to or different from the values and beliefs that motivated the invasion of Afghanistan?
 - I think the US preaches democracy and freedom and human rights. But these are not really the reasons why they invaded Afghanistan. But, I think that fighting for those things without taking over a country would be good priorities and values to drive the US’s role in the world.
- What can high school students do to help shape U.S. foreign policy now and in the future?
 - I think not much to be honest. I think anybody can put things online and call their representatives and try to advocate for something, but I think the majority of Americans, not just teenagers, cannot really shape foreign policy.
- Have the costs of the war in Afghanistan been greater than the gains?
 - I don’t think so. I think there was a point where that might have been true, but the war has gone on so long and, from my perspective at least, it feels like not much has changed and there have not been any gains in a while.

The 42^{TRB}

United States in Afghanistan Options: Organization and Preparation

Focusing Your Thoughts

Ranking the Options

Which of the options below do you prefer? Rank the options "1" to "3" with "1" being your first choice. ___ Option 1 : Preserve the Gains in Afghanistan

___ Option 2 : Promote Security by Supporting Democracy

___ Option 3 : Withdraw Our Troops

Beliefs

Rate each of the statements according to your personal beliefs:

1 = Strongly Support 2 = Support 3 = Oppose 4 = Strongly Oppose

1 The Taliban are a threat to U.S. security.

2.5 Pakistan is an essential and reliable partner of the United States.

2 Strengthening Afghanistan's democracy and economy is an important part of reducing the threat from extremist groups.

1 Taxpayer dollars currently being spent in Afghanistan would be better spent back in the United States.

2 Unmanned drone strikes against targets in Pakistan are an effective and justifiable method of fighting extremist groups.

2.5 Using military force against targets in Afghanistan and Pakistan creates more enemies than it kills.

3 Al Qaeda is no longer a threat to the United States.

3 It is possible to negotiate an end to violence with the Taliban.

2 Reducing tensions between India and Pakistan will help reduce the role of extremists in the region.

3 Afghanistan can become a secure, stable democracy with continued international assistance.

2 A continued U.S. presence in Afghanistan is costly and does little to promote our national security.

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Your Own Option

Instructions: In this exercise, you will offer your own recommendations for U.S. policy concerning Afghanistan. You may borrow heavily from one option, or you may combine ideas from two or three options. Or, you may take a new approach altogether. You should create an option that is logical, persuasive, and that reflects your personal beliefs. Your responses to "Focusing Your Thoughts" and your deliberations with your classmates will help you identify the guiding principles of your proposal.

Title of Your Own Option: _____

1. What values and interests should guide U.S. policy in Afghanistan?

Leaving Afghanistan in the best possible shape that we can without undermining democracy and their government.

2. What policies should the United States pursue to put these values into action?

Gradual military removal to see how that affects the citizens of Afghanistan, put more money into humanitarian efforts, try to fix Afghanistan-Pakistan-India relations.

3. a. How would your option affect people living in the United States?

Once the US government pulls out of Afghanistan, American soldiers will be safer, taxpayer money won't be spent in Afghanistan, the US won't be spread as thin.

b. How would your option affect people in Afghanistan?

Hopefully support democracy and end violence.

c. How would your option affect people in Pakistan?

4. What are the two strongest arguments opposing your option?

a.

b.

5. What are the two strongest arguments supporting your option?

a.

b. Name: _____

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