This week’s issue: WHEN SHOULD THE U.S. SEND TROOPS TO OTHER COUNTRIES?

Less than a month after the September 11th attacks, the U.S. military began a war in Afghanistan. This country had provided a safe place for the terrorists to plan and organize their attack on the United States. Because nearly 3,000 people died as a result of 9/11, most people in the U.S. supported this war. They believed that military action was the only way to make sure that the terrorists could not plan more attacks against the U.S. As of June 2015, over 2,300 U.S. troops have died trying to make Afghanistan a stable country where terrorists can never plan another attack on the U.S.

In 2003, the United States also went to war in Iraq. Members of the U.S. government claimed that the Iraqi regime had weapons of mass destruction that could be used against Americans. Many people in the U.S. were not convinced that these weapons existed and did not support this war. Some people believed that the war in Iraq was more about protecting an oil supply to support the American economy. In the end, the weapons of mass destruction were never found and over 4,400 members of the U.S. military died fighting for this cause.

Some people believe that the U.S. government should only send troops into a war when there is a clear threat to the safety and welfare of its people. They think that American men and women should only be asked to sacrifice their lives if there is a known threat, as was the case in Afghanistan after 9/11. They think that wars that are not clearly protecting the safety of the American people are also too costly. They point to the expense of the Iraq War. According to some estimates, the cost of this war to the U.S. government was $1 trillion. Many Americans think that this money should have been used for domestic issues, like improving American schools.

Other people think that the U.S. should consider military action when the safety of people from other countries is threatened by violent government actions. For example, during much of the time that Americans were fighting in Iraq, people in the Darfur region of Sudan were being murdered and forced to leave their villages by their government. Approximately 2.7 million people were displaced by these actions, resulting in nearly 300,000 deaths from disease and starvation. Many Americans thought that U.S. military action in Sudan could have diminished the suffering of the Sudanese people. They claim that there was no U.S. military action because this African country offered little economic benefit to America.

What do you think? When should the U.S. government send troops to another region of the world? Should we only get involved when our safety is threatened? Should we commit troops when our economic interests are threatened? Or should we engage in military action when the safety of others is threatened?

Questions for Classroom Discussion:
- Why did most Americans support the war in Afghanistan?
- What resource does Iraq have that is important to the American economy?
- What would be an example of a threat to the safety of the American people?
- What reasons might someone give for sending troops overseas when there is no threat to the safety of Americans?
- Can you name a country whose citizens are being harmed by the actions of their own government today? Do you think the U.S. should send troops to help the people of this country?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS *and alternate parts of speech

displace  (verb) to force from one’s home or homeland

Sample Sentence: The destruction caused by Hurricane Sandy displaced more than 40,000 people.

Turn and Talk: What services should governments provide to people who are displaced by natural disasters?

regime  (noun) a government in power

Sample Sentence: In 2003, members of the U.S. government claimed that the Iraqi regime had weapons of mass destruction.

Turn and Talk: How can a powerful regime cause problems for its citizens?

diminish  (verb) to make smaller; to become smaller

Sample Sentence: Many Americans thought that U.S. military action in Sudan could have diminished the suffering of the Sudanese people.

Turn and Talk: In your opinion, does student motivation diminish after elementary school?

stable  (adjective) not easily changed

Sample Sentence: As of June 2015, over 2,300 U.S. troops have died trying to make Afghanistan a stable country where terrorists can never plan another attack on the U.S.

Turn and Talk: Think about your most stable friendship. Why has it lasted so long?

estimate  (noun) a rough calculation

Sample Sentence: According to one estimate, about 700,000 people attended the San Francisco Giants World Series parade.

Turn and Talk: The U.S. population was 319,000,000 as of 2014. Does that seem like an exact number or an estimate? How do you know?

*estimate  (verb) to roughly calculate the amount of something

Sample Sentence: Samuel estimated that it would take him 20 minutes to bike to soccer practice.

Turn and Talk: Estimate the amount of time it would take you to walk to school.
**DO THE MATH**

**Option 1:** At the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003, the administration of President George W. Bush estimated that it would cost 60 billion dollars to end Saddam Hussein’s regime. In 2010, Iraq held its first democratic election as part of its effort to develop a stable government. Millions of Iraqi refugees who had been displaced by the war were still unable to return home. After several years of fighting, American support for the war had diminished. At that point, the war had already cost $1.1 trillion.

Which of the following shows 1.1 trillion written in standard form?

A. 1 trillion, one hundred million  
B. 1,000,000,000 + 1,000,000  
C. $1,100,000,000,000  
D. $1,100,000,000,000

---

**Option 2:** According to some estimates, there are over 2 million internally displaced people, or IDPs, in Iraq. IDPs are people who have fled their homes, but stayed within their home countries. Another 2 million Iraqi refugees have sought stability in neighboring countries. Returning these people to their homes is one of many problems faced by the new Iraqi regime. As time goes on, the chances that these people will be able to resume their old lives diminishes. The population of Iraq is about 30 million. What percentage of the population has been displaced according to the estimates above?

**Discussion Question:** Who is responsible for displaced people? The regime of the home country? The regime of the country to which they flee? Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees on the streets of Syrian and Jordanian cities are threatening the stability of these countries. (While it is difficult to count refugees, it is estimated that 1.2 million refugees fled to Syria, and around half a million fled to Jordan.) Resources in these host countries are diminishing. The U.S. has ended its operation in Iraq, but should we help these people return home?
THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

Ms. Kahn and her class became interested in how U.S. soldiers are trained. The U.S. military is one of the most highly trained militaries in the world. An elite Army unit called Army Rangers conducts special missions, like helping to displace enemy regimes in Panama, Iraq, and Somalia. The Rangers’ nine-week intense training prepares them to lead a group of soldiers even while working in unstable, unpredictable, and physically challenging situations. They get an estimated 3.5 hours of sleep and eat two meals or less each day during training sessions.

Raj asks, “Wouldn’t lack of sleep and hunger cause slower reaction times?”

Ms. Kahn responds, “I doubt the intense training would diminish the quick-thinking skills of these elite members of the service. But we could test to see if our reaction times might be affected!”

### Raj enjoys setting up experiments, so he set up an experiment that would help find an answer to his question.

**Question:** Does hunger affect reaction time?

**Hypothesis:** Students have better reaction times when they are not hungry.

**Materials:** 30 cm ruler.

**Procedure:**
1. Set up testing sessions with test subjects right before lunch and right after lunch.
2. Have the subjects hold their fingers and thumb at the zero mark of the ruler without actually touching it.
3. Let go of the ruler without warning and see how quickly they can catch it as it falls.
4. Record the centimeter mark where each subject caught the ruler.
5. Repeat same test after lunch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person tested</th>
<th>Alan</th>
<th>Bak</th>
<th>Cherise</th>
<th>Dava</th>
<th>Eldridge</th>
<th>Fernando</th>
<th>Gisela</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before lunch</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After lunch</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Raj is a bit concerned about his experiment. He is wondering if it is fair. Here are his two main concerns:

1. He tested everybody only one time before lunch and one time after lunch.
2. People were already familiar with the reaction test when he tested them after lunch.

Have a class discussion about how seriously Raj should take his concerns. Do you have advice for Raj about a way he could improve his experiment?
DEBATE THE ISSUE

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A  The United States should only take military action to protect its own safety and economic stability.

OR

B  The United States should also take military action when the human rights of people in other countries are being threatened.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN  ______________________

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

______________________

______________________

______________________

______________________

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

“Can you show me evidence in the text that...”

“I believe that...”

“You make a good point, but have you considered...”

“I agree with you, but...”
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

displace | regime | diminish | stable | estimate

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________


