On September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center in New York City was attacked. The attack was not led by a regular army, but by a few people. The U.S. government called these people terrorists. After the attack, the U.S. decided it would stop terrorist groups around the world. It declared a so-called war on terror.

**Tracking terror groups in the Middle East**

America began looking for terrorist groups. In 2001, President George W. Bush signed new laws. These allowed the government could track people more closely. The laws were called the USA Patriot Act.
The U.S. knew there were terrorist groups in the Middle East. America sent its troops to Afghanistan. This is where the terrorists who planned the September 11 attack were. America also sent troops in Iraq. It was afraid the leader of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, would help the terrorists. Many countries, like Great Britain, helped the U.S.

The war on terror worked at first. Hundreds of people, who were thought to be terrorists, were arrested. Training camps for terrorists were closed.

**Criticism about war on terror**

Yet, many people became angry at the war on terror. They said that terrorists simply ran to other countries. The war did not get rid of them, it just made them harder to find. Also, most people in Iraq and Afghanistan were not terrorists. Yet many of them died because of the war.

Some think the U.S. did not really care about terrorism. They think the U.S. wanted to take over Iraq. This country is rich in oil, which every country needs for car gas.
Either way, by 2004 the war on terror was failing. In 2003, the U.S. overthrew the president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein. The U.S. tried to build a new government in Iraq. This did not work, since many different groups started fighting each other. The war continued. Afghanistan was just as unstable.

**Tactics and strategies come under fire**

Many people became angry at President Bush. They said that that the wars were wrong and against the law. People were kept in prison unfairly. Drones were used for the first time to kill people. Drones are war planes without pilots.

The anger at President Bush helped Barack Obama become president. Obama said he was against the war on terror. Under Obama, the U.S. slowly began to leave Iraq and Afghanistan.

Yet, Obama also continued some of what Bush had done. He still used drones. American troops did not completely leave the Middle East. The National Security Agency continued to look for terrorists among Americans.