Essay and Discussion Questions: Terrorism

Explain

- What motivates groups or individuals to carry out acts of terrorism?
- What makes terrorism different from other forms of violence?
- What is the difference between counterterrorism tactics and counterterrorism strategy?
- Why is cutting off funding for terrorism so important? Why is it so difficult?

Analyze

- In what ways have terrorist tactics and strategies changed over time? What are some possible reasons for these changes?
- What factors contribute to radicalization and violent extremism in the United States and other parts of the world?
- How are domestic terrorism and international terrorism defined differently in U.S. law?
- Has the threat from terrorism increased, decreased, or remained steady? Why do you say so?
- How is media coverage part of terrorists’ strategy?

Evaluate

- To what extent is terrorism an effective means for groups or individuals to achieve political objectives, and why?
- How successful has the United States been at combating terrorism since 9/11?
- Do you agree that counterterrorism policies that infringe on civil liberties are necessary and justifiable? Why or why not?
- Evaluate the definitions of terrorism put forward by various departments of the U.S. government. Is there one that you think is better than the others? Why or why not?
- Should the media cover terrorists as much as they do—or, indeed, at all? Why or why not?