



**SS.7.CG.4.3 Benchmark Clarification 1:** Students will identify specific examples of and the reasons for United States’ involvement in international conflicts.

The United States Constitution gives specific powers to **Congress** and the **president** when it comes to dealing with other nations, especially wars and other military conflicts.

Article I of the Constitution discusses the powers of the legislative branch (Congress) and gives Congress the power to declare war, approve spending for the military, and raise an army and navy. Article II gives the U.S. Senate the power to ratify treaties.

Congress has used its power to declare war five times in United States history. Two of these wars occurred during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1900-1999).

1. **World War I (1914-1918)**– The U.S. declared war on Germany after the German navy attacked British submarines and ships carrying U.S. citizens.
2. **World War II (1939-1945)**– The U.S. declared war on Japan after Japan bombed a navy base in Hawaii. Hawaii was not a U.S. state at the time, but it was a U.S. territory.

Article II of the Constitution discusses the powers of the executive branch (president) and gives the president the title of Commander in Chief. This means the president is in charge of the military and can send troops to other countries.

Some presidents have used their power as Commander in Chief to send U.S. military troops into conflicts or “war-like” situations without a formal declaration of war from Congress. Examples include the **Korean War** (1950-1953), the **Vietnam War** (1964-1975), **Gulf War I** (1990-1991), and **Gulf War II** (2003 – 2011).

Several reasons might lead a nation into international conflicts. These might include military conflicts, trade disagreements, or treaty disagreements. The United States has been involved in several international conflicts throughout its history.

International Conflict	Reasons for Involvement
Bays of Pigs Invasion (Cuba, 1961)	<p>The Bay of Pigs is on the coast of Cuba in the Caribbean Sea. It was the site of an attempted invasion of Cuba by a group of people who were against the Cuban dictator, Fidel Castro. This became known as the Bay of Pigs Invasion.</p> <p>The United States led this invasion to try to stop the threat of <b>communism</b> so close to the U.S. (Cuba is only 90 miles from the Florida Keys.)</p>

<p>Cuban Missile Crisis (Cuba, 1962)</p>	<p>In 1962, there was a lot of tension between communist and non-communist nations. The Soviet Union put missiles in Cuba to threaten the United States. President John F. Kennedy threatened <b>military action</b>. After a 13-day standoff (a period of time when neither country took action), the U.S. and the Soviet Union reached an agreement to remove the missiles from Cuba.</p>
<p>Iran Hostage Crisis (Iran, 1979-1980)</p>	<p>In 1979, a group of Iranian students supporting the Iranian Revolution took over the U.S. <b>embassy</b> in Tehran, Iran. They held 66 U.S. diplomats hostage for 444 days. During the Iranian Hostage Crisis, President Jimmy Carter said that the U.S. would “not yield to blackmail,” which meant that the U.S. was not willing to use <b>diplomacy</b> to get the hostages released. They were finally freed on January 20, 1981, the day of President Ronald Reagan’s inauguration.</p>
<p><b>Terrorism</b> September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001</p>	<p>On September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked (took by force) four airplanes in the U.S. and flew them into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon near Washington, DC. Another plane crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. Over 3,000 Americans lost their lives as a result of this attack.</p> <p>The World Trade Center was made up of two 110-story buildings where many important businesses were located. The Pentagon is the headquarters of the U.S. military, located in Arlington County, Virginia.</p> <p>Terrorists are people or groups who use fear and violence to achieve political goals, such as a change of government. The terrorist group that led the September 11 attacks was Al Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden.</p> <p>Another terrorist group, the Taliban, ruled most of the country of Afghanistan. The Taliban allowed Al Qaeda to live in Afghanistan and to train for the terrorist attacks on September 11.</p> <p>The U.S. military and its <b>NATO allies</b> responded by invading Afghanistan with the help of allied forces of the Afghani people. Together, they removed the Taliban from power in Afghanistan.</p>

**allies** - nations united with another for some common purpose such as assistance and protection

**communism** - a form of government in which a single ruling party owns and controls the entire economy, and in which no private ownership is allowed

**Congress** - the national legislative body of the U.S., consisting of the Senate, or upper house, and the House of Representatives, or lower house

**diplomacy** - the work of keeping good relations between the governments of different countries

**embassy** - the residence or office of a country's ambassador

**Gulf War I** - a military conflict in 1991 between Iraq and a group of 34 nations; the war was approved by the United Nations and led by the U.S; also known as the Persian Gulf War

**Gulf War II** - the 2003 military conflict in Iraq, also called the Iraq War or "Operation Iraqi Freedom", which began March 20, 2003; started by the U.S., Great Britain, and other nations

**Korean War** - a war between North and South Korea; South Korea was aided by the U.S. and other countries; it was fought from 1950-1953

**military action** - members of the U.S. military (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard) are sent to another country to use force to stop a conflict

**NATO** - North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a group of 28 countries that has agreed to protect each other in case of attack; founded in 1949

**president** - the head of the executive branch

**terrorism** - the use of extreme fear and violence as a way to achieve a political goal

**Vietnam War** - a military conflict (1954-1975) between the Communist forces of North Vietnam (supported by China and the Soviet Union) and the non-Communist forces of South Vietnam (supported by the U.S.)

**World War I** - a war between the Allied Powers (including Russia, France, British Empire, Italy, the U.S., Japan, Romania, Serbia, Belgium, Greece, Portugal, Montenegro), and the Central Powers (including Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Bulgaria); that lasted from 1914 to 1918

**World War II** - a war that began in 1937 in Asia, in 1939 in Europe, and in 1941 in the U.S.; it lasted until 1945 and involved most of the world's countries