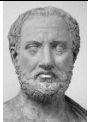







# Why did America go to war in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

War's prevalence in human history is so common as to raise the question whether war or peace is our natural state. Theories abound about what leads to war: greed, need for economic growth, safety and security, nationalism, lack of accountability or responsibility, opportunities for wealth and prosperity, miscalculation of an enemy or circumstance. Historians for centuries have wrestled with these theories, and the varying themes of war have transpired across time and space, and the future likely holds a similar fate.

## TASK

**PART I** – Study the theories of the major scholars on warfare below.

Thinker	Thinker	Why we go to war
	<b>Thucydides</b> (c. 460-400 BCE)	Societies go to war due to a fear something different and the fears of an external threat. The status quo power goes to war against a rising power out of fear of losing control and power.
	<b>Carl von Clausewitz</b> (1780-1831)	War is nothing but politics by other means. War is an act to force our enemies to do what is in <i>our</i> interests. When diplomacy fails, war is the next answer.
	<b>Theodore Roosevelt</b> (1858-1919)	War has become a necessary evil by which the civilized nations must make the uncivilized peoples of the world fit for self-government.
	<b>Barbara Tuchman</b> (1912-1989)	War is caused by tyranny, decadence, ambition, and self-interest. Nobody causes war, rather they stumble into it by the lure of grandeur and glory.
	<b>Geoffrey Blainey</b> (1930 - )	War is no accident and nations go to war because they think that they will win. Peace is only sought after when one or both sides feel they have more to lose by fighting than by offering up concessions.
	<b>Azar Gat</b> (1959 – )	War is a biological reaction to the scarcity of resources around the world.

**PART II** – After using a variety of resources (including your textbook, primary & secondary sources from class, information from the videos and documentaries, information from the different resources found in the links) to study the four major wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (**World War I, World War II, The Korean War, The Vietnam War, The Persian Gulf War**), write a well-developed essay in which you answer the following Inquiry Question:

### ➤ Why did the United States go to war in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

- Apply the theory of ONE of the thinkers from the above text to the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Explain in your essay, in your own words, the thinker's theory on why nations go to war
- Use specific textual evidence to explain why this theory clearly illustrates the reasons why America went to war. You must apply the theory to the causes of each of the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Cite your sources of evidence.
- Final Draft must be TYPED, Double-Spaced, Times New Roman Font, Size 12

## WORLD WAR I

**The nations of Europe blundered into World War I. They did not intend to start a war, but their actions created the conditions that caused one. Although there had been some brief and limited wars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the great powers of Europe – England, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia – had enjoyed a century of relative peace before 1914. They had accomplished this through a series of alliances designed to keep a delicate balance of power in Europe.**

**Study and analyze each of the documents below. For each document, summarize the reasons they give for why the United States entered each war.**

### **DOCUMENT A – The Russian Revolution**

*The United States entrance into World War I in 1917 found the nation allied with England, France, and Russia. But the year 1917 also saw the revolutionary upheaval in Russia. In the fall, the Bolsheviks (communists), under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, took control of the country. Within months Russia dropped out of the war. In August 1918, Lenin released a letter to American workers. These are excerpts from that letter.*

The results of the four years of war have revealed the general law of capitalism as applied to war between robbers for the division of spoils (benefits); the riches and strongest profited and grabbed most, while the weakest were utterly robbed, tormented, crushed and strangled.

The American multimillionaires . . . have profited more than all the rest . . . They have grabbed hundreds of billions of dollars. And every dollar is sullied [dirtied] with filth; the filth of the secret treaties between Britain and her “allies.”

### **DOCUMENT B – The Zimmerman Telegram**

*In January 1917, British intelligence agencies intercepted this message being sent from the German Foreign Minister to the government of Mexico. It was turned over to the US State Department and released to the newspapers in mid-March.*

In the event [that the United States is drawn into the war] we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.

## DOCUMENT C – President Woodrow Wilson’s war message to Congress, April 2, 1917.

Property can be paid for; the lives of peaceful and innocent people cannot be. The present German submarine warfare against commerce [trade] is a warfare against mankind. The German policy has swept every restriction aside. Ships of every kind, whatever their flag, their character, their cargo, their destination, their errand, have been ruthlessly sent to the bottom of the ocean without warning. American ships have been sunk, American lives taken.

I advise that the Congress declare the recent actions of the Imperial German Government to be, in fact, nothing less than war against the Government and people of the United States. Neutrality is no longer feasible [possible] or desirable where the peace of the world is involved.

The world must be made safe for democracy. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion [control or domination]. We seek not material compensation [money] for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind.

It is a fearful, but right thing to lead this great peaceful people to war. We shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts – for democracy, for the right of [people] to have a voice in their own government, for the rights and liberties of small nations.

## DOCUMENT D – Excerpts from Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*

*Howard Zinn was a historian and activist who is best known today as the author of A People’s History of the United States, a book that tells American history from the perspective of people of color, women, and poor people. The book is very critical of the United States government.*

President Woodrow Wilson had promised that the United States would stay neutral in the war. . . . But in April of 1917, the Germans had announced they would have their submarines sink any ship bringing supplies to their enemies; and they had sunk a number of merchant vessels. Wilson now said he must stand by the right of Americans to travel on merchant ships in the war zone. . . .

As Richard Hofstadter points out (*The American Political Tradition*): “This was rationalization of the flimsiest sort. . . . The British had also been intruding on the rights of American citizens on the high seas, but Wilson was not suggesting we go to war with them. . . . The United States claimed the *Lusitania* carried an innocent cargo, and

therefore the torpedoing was a monstrous German atrocity. Actually, the *Lusitania* was heavily armed: it carried 1,248 cases of 3-inch shells, 4,927 boxes of cartridges (1,000 rounds in each box), and 2,000 more cases of small-arms ammunition. . . . The British and American governments lied about the cargo. . . .

Prosperity depended much on foreign markets, it was believed by the leaders of the country. In 1897, private foreign investments of the United States amounted to \$700 million dollars. By 1914, they were \$3.5 billion. . . .

With World War I, England became more and more a market for American goods and for loans at interest. J.P. Morgan and Company acted as agents for the Allies and when, in 1915, Wilson lifted the ban on private bank loans to the Allies, Morgan could now begin lending money in such great amounts as to both make great profit and tie American finance closely to the interest of a British victory in the war against Germany.

## WORLD WAR II

World War II was the most catastrophic war in the history of the world. It killed more people, destroyed more property, and uprooted the lives of more people than any previous war in history. At least 17 million soldiers and more than 35 million civilians were killed. Millions of soldiers were wounded or missing in action. At least 70 million soldiers from more than 70 countries were involved in the conflict.

Study and analyze each of the documents below. For each document, summarize the reasons they give for why the United States entered each war.

### DOCUMENT A – Secretary of State Sumner Welles, “Japan and Our National Security,” July 24, 1941

They [Government of Japan] tend to jeopardize the procurement [obtaining or buying] by the United States of essential materials, such as tin and rubber, which are necessary for the normal economy of this country and the consummation [completion] of our defense program.”

### DOCUMENT B – Secretary of State Cordell Hull, radio broadcast, May 18, 1941

The production and transfer of essential supplies to those countries which are actively resisting aggression demand sacrifice of time and substance and making of maximum effort, on the part of each and every American citizen...Our greatest possible national effort must be made, not for the sale of other countries, but primarily for the sake of and to insure our own security...our own national existence.

### DOCUMENT C – Radio Address from the U.S.S. *Potomac*, May 29, 1941

We Americans realize how tenuous [weak] would be the existence of our party system, our freedom of elections, our freedom of living, if the doctrines of dictatorship were to prevail. For it they were to prevail, it would not be in Europe alone...How long would it be possible to maintain a semblance [appearance] of our two-party system, with free elections, in a Nazi-dominated world?

### DOCUMENT D – “The Axis Dove Lays Its Rotten Egg,” cartoon by Cal Alley, written in response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941



## THE KOREAN WAR

In the late 1800s, Japan was a rising military and industrial power in the Far East. In 1895 it gained control of the Korean peninsula and formally annexed it to Japan in 1910. The defeat of Japan by the Allied forces in World War II forced the Japanese occupation forces to leave Korea. As a result, Soviet troops occupied the area of Korea north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and US troops occupied the southern half of the peninsula.

Study and analyze each of the documents below. For each document, summarize the reasons they give for why the United States entered each war.

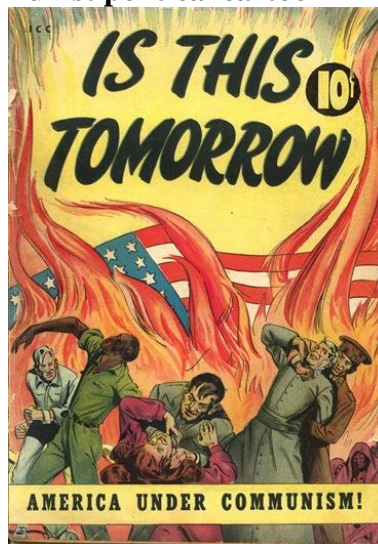
### DOCUMENT A – Excerpts from the Truman Doctrine, March 12, 1947

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation [domination] by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid, which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes. The world is not static and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion [force], or by such subterfuges as political infiltration. In helping free and independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

### DOCUMENT B – Korean War Political Cartoon, 1950



### DOCUMENT C – American anti-communist political cartoon



**DOCUMENT D – President Harry Truman, Radio and Television Address to the American People on the Situation in Korea, July 19, 1950**

...Korea is a small country, thousands of miles away, but what is happening there is important to every American. On Sunday, June 25th, Communist forces attacked the Republic of Korea. This attack has made it clear, beyond all doubt, that the international Communist movement is willing to use armed invasion to conquer independent nations. An act of aggression such as this creates a very real danger to the security of all free nations.

The attack upon Korea was an outright breach of the peace and a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. By their actions in Korea, Communist leaders have demonstrated their contempt for the basic moral principles on which the United Nations is founded. This is a direct challenge to the efforts of the free nations to build the kind of world in which men can live in freedom and peace....

Furthermore, the fact that Communist forces have invaded Korea is a warning that there may be similar acts of aggression in other parts of the world. The free nations must be on their guard, more than ever before, against this kind of sneak attack....

**DOCUMENT E -- President Harry Truman, Address at a dinner of the Civil Defense Conference, May 7, 1951**

... Communist aggression in Korea is a part of the worldwide strategy of the Kremlin to destroy freedom. It has shown men all over the world that Communist imperialism may strike anywhere, anytime.

The defense of Korea is part of the worldwide effort of all the free nations to maintain freedom. It has shown free men that if they stand together, and pool their strength, Communist aggression cannot succeed. . . .

## THE VIETNAM WAR

The Vietnam War was the longest war in which the United States was ever involved. US participation began in 1957 and ended in 1975. However, this was really the second stage of a conflict which began in 1946. In the last decades of the 1800s, France had gained control of Indochina (the areas of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) as part of its efforts to set up a colonial empire like England, Germany, and other European powers were doing. Japan conquered and controlled the region during World War II, but the defeat of Japan led to France's attempt to reestablish control over Indochina. Vietnamese nationalists, led by Ho Chi Minh, defeated the French army in 1956 and called for free elections.

Study and analyze each of the documents below. For each document, summarize the reasons they give for why the United States entered each war.

### DOCUMENT A – Vietnam War Political Cartoon

Fred Siebel published the cartoon below, "Another Hole in the Dike," in the Richmond Times Dispatch in 1953.



### DOCUMENT B – The Domino Theory



### Interview with President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1954)

“You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences . . . [W]ith respect to more people passing under this domination, Asia, after all, has already lost some 450 million of its peoples to the Communist dictatorship, and we simply can't afford greater losses . . . But when we come to the possible sequence of events, the loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the Peninsula, and Indonesia following, now you begin to talk about areas that not only multiply the disadvantages that you would suffer through loss of materials, sources of materials, but now you are talking really about millions and millions and millions of people . . . It takes away, in its economic aspects, that region that Japan must have as a trading area or Japan, in turn, will have only one place in the world to go -- that is, toward the Communist areas in order to live . . . So, the possible consequences of the loss are just incalculable to the free world.”

**DOCUMENT C – President Johnson’s War Message to Congress, 1964.**

Last night I announced to the American people that the North Vietnamese regime had conducted further deliberate attacks against U.S. naval vessels operating in international waters, and I had therefore directed air action against gunboats and supporting facilities used in these hostile operations. This air action has now been carried out with substantial damage to the boats and facilities. Two U.S. aircraft were lost in the action. After consultation with the leaders of both parties in the Congress, I further announced a decision to ask the Congress for a resolution expressing the unity and determination of the United States in supporting freedom and in protecting peace in Southeast Asia . . .

This is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity. Our military and economic assistance to South Vietnam and Laos in particular has the purpose of helping these countries to repel aggression and strengthen their independence.

**DOCUMENT C -- President Lyndon B. Johnson, Speech at Johns Hopkins University, April 7, 1965**

**THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT**

. . . The world as it is in Asia is not a serene or peaceful place. The first reality is that North Viet-Nam has attacked the independent nation of South Viet-Nam. Its object is total conquest. Of course, some of the people of South Viet-Nam are participating in attack on their own government. But trained men and supplies, orders and arms, flow in a constant stream from north to south. This support is the heartbeat of the war. . . .

**WHY ARE WE IN VIET-NAM?** Why are these realities our concern? Why are we in South Viet-Nam? We are there because we have a promise to keep. Since 1954 every American President has offered support to the people of South Viet-Nam.

We have helped to build, and we have helped to defend. Thus, over many years, we have made a national pledge to help South Viet-Nam defend its independence. And I intend to keep that promise. . . .

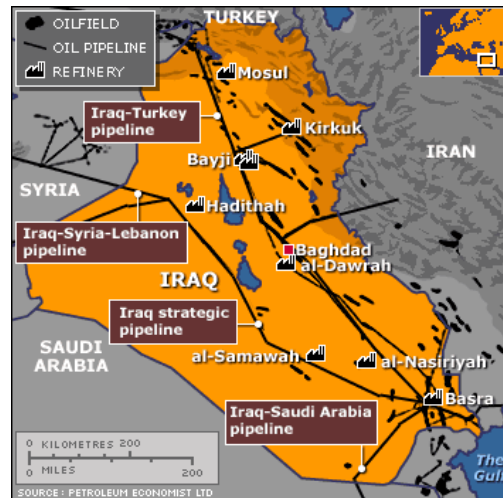


## THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

The United States had a rocky relationship with the dictators who ruled Iraq since the 1960s. In August 1990, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in a dispute over oil production, Iraqi debts to Kuwait, and territory. The United States organized and led a United Nations-sponsored coalition of 39 nations to oust Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Study and analyze each of the documents below. For each document, summarize the reasons they give for why the United States entered each war.

### DOCUMENT A – Map of Iraq’s Natural Resources



### DOCUMENT B – BBC News Coverage of the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, August 2, 1990.

More than 100,000 Iraqi soldiers backed up by 700 tanks invaded the Gulf State of Kuwait in the early hours of this morning. Iraqi forces have established a provisional government and their leader Saddam Hussein has threatened to turn Kuwait City into a “graveyard” if any other country dares to challenge the “take-over by force . . .” Initial reports suggest up to 200 people have been killed in heavy gunfire around the city . . . All communication has been cut with Kuwait and many people, including thousands of foreign nationals, are trapped in the city . . .

In recent weeks, Iraq had accused Kuwait of flooding the world market with oil and has demanded compensation of oil produced from a disputed oil field on the border of the two countries . . .

Kuwait has appealed for international aid but there is no suggestion of any military action from the West at this stage.

### DOCUMENT C – President George H.W. Bush, address to Congress, September 11, 1990

We stand today at a unique and extraordinary moment. The crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times, our . . . objective – a new world order – can emerge: a new era – freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony.

**DOCUMENT D – President George H.W. Bush, Address to the Nation on the Invasion of Iraq, January 16, 1991**

Just two hours ago, allied air forces began an attack on military targets in Iraq and Kuwait. These attacks continue as I speak. This conflict started on August 2<sup>nd</sup> when the dictator of Iraq invaded a small and helpless neighbor. Kuwait – a member of the Arab League and a member of the United Nations – was crushed; its people, brutalized. Five months ago, Saddam Hussein started this cruel war against Kuwait.

Tonight, the battle has been joined. This military action . . . follows months of constant and virtually endless diplomatic activity on the part of the United Nations, the United States, and many, many other countries. Arab leaders sought what became known as an Arab solution, only to conclude that Saddam Hussein was unwilling to leave Kuwait . . .

Our objectives are clear: Saddam Hussein's forces will leave Kuwait. The legitimate government of Kuwait will be restored to its rightful place, and Kuwait will once again be free.

Some may ask: Why act now? Why not wait? The answer is clear: The world could not wait any longer. Sanctions, though having some effect, showed no signs of accomplishing their objective. Sanctions were tried for well over five months, and we and our allies concluded that sanctions alone would not force Saddam from Kuwait.

**DOCUMENT E – American Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, to Saddam Hussein, July 25, 1990**

I admire your extraordinary efforts to rebuild your country. I know you need funds. We understand that and our opinion is that you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country. But we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait.

**DOCUMENT F – Military Analysis**

In 1979 political turmoil in the Middle East forever changed the regional strategic landscape. In January of that year a groundswell of Islamist protesters drove the Shah of Iran from the Persian throne, in December the Soviet Union launched its ruinous war in Afghanistan, and in September 1980 Iraq invaded Iran. Thus, the Middle East stage was radically changed as the Reagan Administration entered the White House. In the minds of Ronald Reagan's foreign policy team, US national interests in the oil-rich Persian Gulf now faced two significant threats: communist expansionism by direct military means from the Soviet Union and the spread of anti-US Islamic fundamentalism from Iran. With these two factors in mind, Iraq's sponsorship of international terrorism was seen as the lesser of evils, and therefore Baghdad was perceived as a potential partner that could serve US strategic interests in the region.

## **Further References:**

### **World War I**

US Entry into World War I

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/wwi>

America and World War I

<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-one/america-and-world-war-one/>

The US in World War I (History.com)

<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/world-war-i-history/videos/the-us-in-world-war-i>

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/america-enters-world-war-i>

Crash Course

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbm3hfV4uPc>

### **World War II**

World War II History (History.com)

<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/world-war-ii-history>

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<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/world-war-ii-history/videos/america-enters-world-war-ii>

The National World War II Museum

<http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/america-goes-to-war.html?referrer?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

Crash Course

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Objoad6rG6U>

### **The Korean War**

Facts & Summary

<http://www.history.com/topics/korean-war>

The War Begins

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/korean-war-begins>

TIME Magazine Article on Korean War

<http://time.com/3915803/korean-war-1950-history/>

Fast Facts

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/28/world/asia/korean-war-fast-facts/>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2IcmLkuhG0&list=PLslzskoh5uah-J4J4XFf04Y5Z7pdxApfj>

### **The Vietnam War**

Vietnam War History

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Best Vietnam Websites

<http://besthistorysites.net/american-history/vietnam/>

### **The Persian Gulf War**

Persian Gulf War History – Facts & Summary

<http://www.history.com/topics/persian-gulf-war>

PBS – Frontline

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/>

National Archives <https://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/military/gulf-war.html>

