

**WORLD WAR I AND BEYOND****Issues Connector: America Goes to War**

Americans have been fighting wars since before the United States was even a nation. After all, it was a war that made Americans citizens of an independent state rather than colonists under British rule. Every war has been supported by some Americans and opposed by others. The quotations selected illustrate some of the reasons why the United States has gone to war and some reasons that Americans have had for opposing war.

**Patrick Henry's Speech, March 23, 1775**

By the time Patrick Henry gave his most famous speech, he had been speaking out against the British government for at least a dozen years. His 1775 call to arms was a response to Britain's military buildup in the colonies. In 1774, British General Thomas Gage replaced the civilian governor of Massachusetts. Soon after that, four additional regiments of British troops landed. A new law required colonists to provide housing for British soldiers and Gage and his soldiers began seizing colonists' weapons and ammunition. Henry became convinced that avoiding war was no longer possible.

**The Women's Peace Party**

Many women activists and reformers opposed not just the United States' entry into World War I, but war in general. In 1914, Jane Addams, the founder of the Settlement House movement, led a women's peace parade through the streets of New York and exhorted women to challenge the war's supporters. Along with suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt, Addams and others formed the Women's Peace Party and sought to find a way to settle differences between nations without resorting to violence. Jeanette Rankin, the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress, also opposed war, and her position cost her re-election.

Another woman who spoke out against the war was Helen Keller. An illness when she was less than two years old had left Keller both blind and deaf, but she triumphed over her disability to become an author, speaker and activist. She supported labor unions, women's suffrage and opposed war of any type, and supported Socialist candidate Eugene V. Debs for president in each of his campaigns. This quote is from "Strike Against War," a speech Keller gave to the Women's Peace Party in 1916.

**WORLD WAR I AND BEYOND****Issues Connector: America Goes to War****Declaration of Conscience Against the War in Vietnam**

What became known as the antiwar movement gained momentum in 1965, after President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered a bombing campaign that was widely seen as an escalation of the Vietnam conflict. The groups that jointly published the declaration illustrated the movement's broad base. Religious groups, student groups, pacifist organizations, intellectuals, and professionals were among those who organized and took part in antiwar activities. These activities ranged from marches and demonstrations to calls for young men to "dodge" their legal duty to register for the military draft. The groups even called for military personnel to desert their posts. The selection comes from a document or poster, called a broadside, published jointly by *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, the Committee for Nonviolent Action, the Student Peace Union, and the War Resisters League.

**Senate Joint Resolution 23, Authorization for Use of Military Force, September 14, 2001**

Congress passed Joint Resolution 23 just three days after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This resolution marked the official beginning of what has come to be known as the war on terror. The terms of the resolution are broad because at the time of its passage, the United States government was still learning details about who was responsible for the attacks of September 11. Planning for the U.S. response was in its early stages. On September 20, President George W. Bush addressed Congress. In that speech, President Bush identified al Qaeda, also spelled al-Qaida, as the organization that had carried out the attacks and linked al Qaeda to the Taliban, which ruled Afghanistan. When the Taliban failed to meet certain demands that President Bush had made in his address, the United States launched a military action in Afghanistan that quickly led to the defeat of the Taliban.

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"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

—Patrick Henry, March 23, 1775

*Joint Resolution*

To authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States.

Whereas, on September 11, 2001, acts of treacherous violence were committed against the United States and its citizens; and

Whereas, such acts render it both necessary and appropriate that the United States exercise its rights to self-defense and to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad; and . . .

Whereas the President has authority under the Constitution to take action to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States: Now, therefore be it Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, . . .

That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 . . .

—Senate Joint Resolution 23, Authorization for Use of Military Force, September 14, 2001

"Every modern war has its root in exploitation. The Civil War was fought to decide whether the slaveholders of the South or the capitalists of the North should exploit the West. The Spanish-American War decided that the United States should exploit Cuba and the Philippines . . . The present war is to decide who shall exploit the Balkans, Turkey, Persia, Egypt, India, China, Africa. And we are whetting our sword to scare the victors into sharing the spoils with us."

—Helen Keller, 1916

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"Because we believe that all peoples of the earth, including both Americans and non-Americans, have an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the peaceful pursuit of happiness in their own way; and

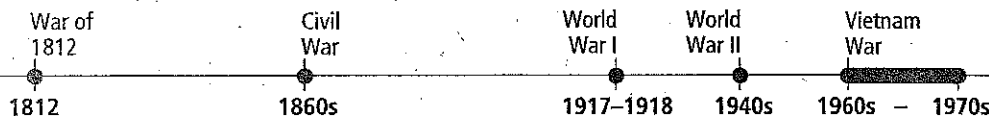
Because we think that positive steps must be taken to put an end to the threat of nuclear catastrophe and death by chemical and biological warfare, whether these result from accident or escalation—

We hereby declare our conscientious refusal to cooperate with the United States government in the prosecution of the war in Vietnam.

We encourage those who can conscientiously do so to refuse to serve in the armed forces and to ask for discharge if they are already in.

Those of us who are subject to the draft ourselves declare our own intention to refuse to serve.

—Declaration of Conscience Against the War in Vietnam; circa 1965



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**Directions:** Read the excerpts regarding the issue of America at war and answer the following questions.

1. Paraphrase the quotation from Patrick Henry to restate Henry's main point in your own words.

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2. What does Helen Keller claim is the root cause of war? How does she connect that cause with the entry of the United States into World War I?

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3. What action did the authors of the *Declaration of Conscience Against the War in Vietnam* ask readers of the leaflet to take to show their opposition to the war in Vietnam?

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4. According to Senate Resolution 23, from where does the President of the United States get the authority to act to prevent attacks against the United States?

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5. **Draw Conclusions** Under what circumstances do you think the United States is justified in going to war? Give a reason for your position.

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