

# Title: The Nature of Global Conflicts



**Grade Level:** 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>

**Overview:** The lesson offers students the analytical tools to comprehend the motivations behind common global and regional conflicts, whether of a violent or non-violent nature, in order to better understand the human systems of the earth's peoples and identify successful approaches toward solving cultural, political, or economic differences and conflicts.

## Geographic Elements and Standards:

### Element 1. World in Spatial Terms

STANDARD 3: How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.

### Element 2. Places and Regions

STANDARD 4: The physical and human characteristics of places.

### Element 4. Human Systems

STANDARD 10: The characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

STANDARD 13: How forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.

## PASS Standards:

- 2.2 Identify examples of and reasons for conflict and cooperation among groups, societies, countries, and regions.
- 4.1 Compare and contrast common characteristics of world cultures (e.g., language, ethnic heritage, religion, political philosophy, shared history, social systems, and economic systems).
- 4.4 Recognize and explain the impact of ethnic diversity within countries and major cultural regions.
- 6.2 Explain the influence of geographic features on the development of historic events and movements.
- 6.3 Analyze local, regional, national, and world policies and problems having spatial dimensions.

## Geographic Themes: Region, Place, Human-Environment Interaction

### Objectives:

Students will develop the skills necessary to examine case studies of contemporary global and regional conflicts in order to identify the primary motivations of all sides and the underlying causes of such conflicts. In addition, a practical system of classification will be developed to assist students in analysis of future global or regional conflicts.

**Time Frame:** 2 class periods of 45 minutes

### Resources Needed:

Blank Map of the World (with or without political boundaries, one per pair of students)

"Causes of Conflict" chart (one per every group of four students)

"Conflict" Powerpoint presentation

Student Handouts of Case Studies: (one case study per student)

"Darfur", "Kashmir", "Ecuador-Peru", "Middle East Water Wars"

Computer and classroom monitor (internet access)

VideoClips from ABC News (Darfur or Middle East Water Wars) – Realplayer files

Three signs labeled "Political", "Economic", and "Cultural" (to be posted on the class walls)

## Procedure:

1. Introduce the concept of causation of world conflicts by showing one of the videoclips provided in the lesson ("Darfur" or "Middle East Water Wars"). As students watch, ask them to try to identify the cause of the conflict and the impact the conflict is having on the entire region. Share responses. If desired, watch the clip an additional time and try to discover additional information that might help identify the cause of the conflict.
2. Divide class into pairs of students. Give each pair a blank map of the world and ask pairs to take 5 minutes to brainstorm the conflicts around the world they have heard in the news or read about recently. Ask students to try to list these conflicts directly on their maps, in the relative location of where they believe the conflict to be occurring.
3. Ask students to share their brainstormed results, making a classroom master list on the blackboard or overhead transparency. Ask student pairs to take another 5 minutes in order to discuss observations regarding what they believe to be the causes of the conflicts they listed. Do any commonalities exist among the conflicts?
4. Write the three words, "political," "economics", and "culture" on the blackboard. Ask student pairs to define what they believe each term means within the context of studying about a geographic region or individual nation. Write their responses under each term on the board.
5. Ask students to return to their list of global conflicts. Can they categorize all of their conflicts into one of the three categories presented in step 3? Are they not sure about the causes of some of the conflicts they listed? Do they believe most conflicts are motivated by one single or multiple causes? Show the powerpoint presentation "Conflict" to introduce students to the concept of classifications for causes of world conflict, as well as contemporary examples.
6. Ask one pair of students to join with another pair of students to form a group of four. Give each group a "Causes of Conflict" chart and a set of case studies. Tell students they will be examining four contemporary conflicts occurring in four very different regions of the world. Their task is to discover the underlying causes of the conflicts and classify them, according to the system developed in step 3. On their chart, ask students to note their discoveries and be prepared to share with the class.
7. Conduct a class discussion regarding their investigations into four global conflicts. Return to the original question, "Are global conflicts caused by simple motivations of either a political, economic, or cultural nature, or are most conflicts a result of multiple causations?"
8. Next, ask students how understanding underlying causation might assist world leaders in addressing solutions to global conflicts? Post on the classroom walls the three signs, labeled "Political," "Economic", and "Cultural" placing each on a different wall. Ask students the question, "Which type of conflict would be most difficult to address when seeking a solution?" Students will individually move to take a stance near the sign, indicating their answer to the question. Ask students in each group to justify why they have taken this stand? Why are some causes more difficult to solve than others?

## Assessment:

Ask students to return to their desks and write a 5-minute "Ticket-Out-the-Door" essay, explaining their individual responses to the question, "What is the United States' responsibility to address conflicts in other regions of the world?"

## Extension:

For follow-up throughout the year, use ABC News Video online to save and show news clips from various examples of global and regional conflicts. (ABC News video is free and clips can be downloaded into Realplayer or Windows Mediaplayer files, then saved to classroom computers.)

Return to the classification system and ask students to identify underlying causes of conflicts they examine the remainder of the school year.

**GLOBAL CONFLICTS: Where in the World?**





### Causes of Global and Regional Conflict

Identify and describe, giving details and examples, the causes of each of the regional conflicts above in the appropriate columns on the chart above. Place a star (\*) in the column which indicates what you believe to be the primary, underlying cause of each conflict. Be prepared to defend your decision to the class.

| <b>Conflict:</b>              | <b>POLITICAL</b><br>(Form/Leadership of Government;<br>Rights & Liberties; Immigration;<br>Territory/Boundaries) | <b>ECONOMIC</b><br>(Use or Access to Natural Resources;<br>Labor; Trade; Form/Stability of<br>Economic System) | <b>CULTURAL</b><br>(Religious, Ethnic Differences;<br>Social Classes) |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>KASHMIR</b>                |  |  |   |
| <b>DARFUR</b>                 |  |  |   |
| <b>ECUADOR-<br/>PERU</b>      |  |  |   |
| <b>MIDEAST<br/>WATER WARS</b> |  |  |   |



## KASHMIR: Territorial Wars

### CONFLICT:

It is beyond any doubt one of the most beautiful places on earth. But the mountains of Kashmir are also home to one of the world's most dangerous conflicts. For over five decades, India and Pakistan have squared off over this terrain.

The region is divided among three countries in a territorial dispute: Pakistan controls the northwest portion, India controls the central and southern portion (Jammu and Kashmir) and China controls the northeastern portion.

Though these regions are in practice administered by their claimants, neither India nor Pakistan has formally recognized the claims by each other.

The two countries have fought several wars over the territory. Several resulted in stalemates following a United Nations- negotiated ceasefire.

Many human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch have condemned human rights abuses in Kashmir such as torture and executions. On the other hand, India alleges that Pakistan has been engaging in a "proxy" war by supporting Islamist terrorists who have crossed the border, engaging in ethnic cleansing of Kashmir's Hindu minorities. The issue of whether Kashmiri militants battling India are terrorists or freedom fighters goes to the very heart of the problem here. And your viewpoint depends largely on where you live.

### BACKGROUND:

1947 was the year the British pulled out of India, leaving only their influence behind. They divided the country into mostly Hindu India and mostly Muslim Pakistan. Although the region of Kashmir has a mostly Muslim population, the local ruler decided to ally the state with India. War immediately erupted between India and Pakistan. After a U.N.-arranged ceasefire in July 1949, Pakistan gained one third of Kashmir territory. The remaining territory was to be under India's control but to have a status of near independence. Despite this arrangement, India formally annexed Kashmir as a state which provoked rioting among the Muslim population. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front strengthened their struggle to liberate of Kashmir from India to form a separate nation.

## Recent Events:

With shelling taking place on almost a daily basis, the world fears that their next battle could go nuclear. India has more than 700,000 troops deployed in Kashmir; the Pakistanis have around 300,000.

The stakes have been raised because both countries are not parties to the nuclear non-proliferation agreement and have developed nuclear arsenals. In addition, much of Al-Qaeda's terrorist activity has occurred in Kashmir. Because Pakistan claims all of Kashmir territory, it has covertly supported this activity. Moreover, the U.S. war against the Taliban has exacerbated this already tense border dispute.

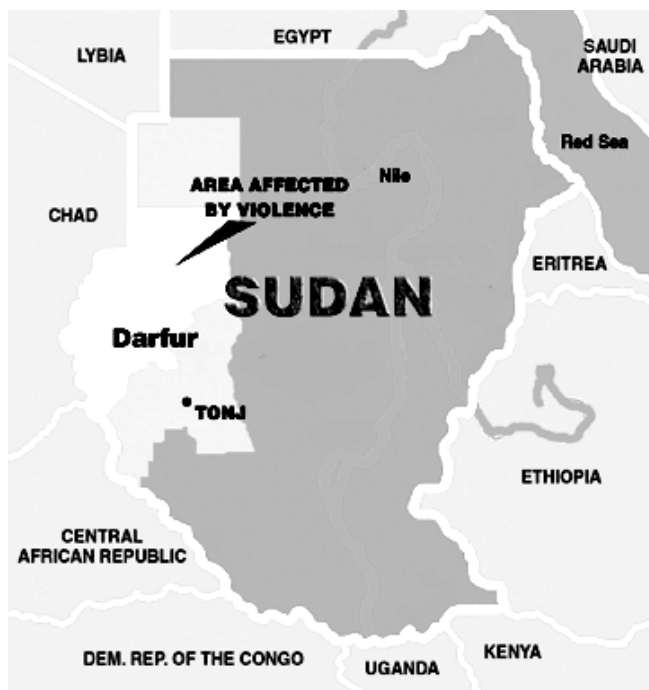
Now under the pressure of the USA, Pakistan has relinquished the path of war and accepted to pursue the path of peace with India in order to settle all issues including Kashmir. In this stage, ice has been broken between India and Pakistan following the model of the boundary talks between India and China. If Pakistan deals with India, the dispute over Kashmir can very well be bilaterally settled. But so far, no agreements after the Indo-Pak Wars in 1949, 1965, 1971 and 1999 are followed. Neither has the UN resolution to conduct an election to solve the Kashmir issue been followed.



## DARFUR

The war in Darfur began in 2003 as a military conflict in the Darfur region of western Sudan. The current lines of conflict seem to be ethnic and tribal, rather than religious. One side of the armed conflict is composed mainly of the Sudanese military and the Janjaweed, a militia group recruited mostly from northern nomadic Arab tribes. The other side comprises a variety of rebel groups, notably the Sudan Liberation Movement, recruited from the land-tilling non-Arab ethnic groups. The Sudanese government, while publicly denying that it supports the Janjaweed, has provided money and assistance to the militia and has participated in joint attacks targeting the tribes.

There are many casualty estimates within the hundreds of thousands of people. The United Nations estimates that the conflict has left as many as 400,000 dead from violence and disease. Sudan's government claims that less than 10,000 people have been killed, although this figure is seen as a gross underestimate. As many as 2.5 million are thought to have been displaced.



The Sudanese government has suppressed information by jailing and killing witnesses. In addition, by arresting journalists, the Sudanese government has been able to hide much of what has happened. The United States government has described it as genocide and in 2007 the United Nations accused Sudan's government of taking part in "gross violations" calling for urgent international action to protect civilians there.

After fighting briefly stopped in 2006, the United Nations Security Council called for a 20,000 peacekeeping force to assist the poorly funded and ill-equipped 7,000-troop African Union force. Sudan strongly objected to this and said that it would consider the UN forces as foreign invaders. The next day, the Sudanese military launched a major offensive in the region.

By July, 2008, prosecutors at the International Criminal Court filed charges of war crimes and genocide against Sudan's President. The ICC's prosecutors have claimed that he "masterminded a plan to destroy" three tribal groups in Darfur because of their ethnicity.

The decades of drought, desertification, and overpopulation are among the underlying causes of the Darfur conflict. The nomads, searching for water, must take their livestock further south to land mainly occupied by Black African farming communities. In the 1980s, the rains failed and the region was plunged into a famine, which killed an estimated 95,000 people out of a population of 3.1 million.

A civil war started in 2003 against the Arab-controlled Sudanese government, with rebel groups accusing the government of oppressing non-Arabs in favor of Arabs. The government was also accused of neglecting the desperate needs of the Darfur region of Sudan. In response, the government began a campaign of aerial bombings and committed major human rights violations, including mass killing and looting of the non-Arab population of Darfur. They have frequently burned down whole villages, driving the surviving inhabitants to flee to refugee camps in Chad.

In 2004, the UN Security Council called for an investigation to analyze the Sudanese conflict. It released a report saying that while there were mass murders, they could not label it as genocide. Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell disagreed, referring to the conflict as a one of world history's most horrific genocide. Since that time however, no other member of the United Nations Security Council has spoken up.

Sudan receives 90% of its weapons from Russia and 10% from China. Human rights advocates and opponents of the Sudanese government portray China's role in providing weapons as a cynical attempt to obtain oil and gas. China has even offered Sudan support by using its veto on at the United Nations to protect the Sudanese government from sanctions.



## ECUADOR-PERU:

### CONFLICT:

The Cordillera del Condor has been the site of armed disputes between the Peru and Ecuador for over 150 years. Despite claims that the land is part of Ecuador, the area is recognized as Peruvian territory by international agreements. Each side accuses the other of provoking the conflicts and insists it is honor-bound to defend its sovereignty and national territory. The core of the dispute - dating back to the earliest independence period - lies in the exact position of the border.

The populations of Peru and Ecuador are accustomed to periodic threats and minor skirmishes on the Condor Cordillera. Ecuador's president frequently proclaims a state of national emergency and calls up the reserves. Peru responds by mobilizing thousands of troops and massing them in the border area. Ecuador's armed forces also accused the Peruvians of using weaponry and helicopters, which they say were provided by the US to aid in Peruvian drug fighting efforts.

### BACKGROUND:

Land squabbles have surrounded bilateral relations for more than 150 years. The disputes between Peru and Ecuador began during the time of the Incas when the Incas from Cuzco, Peru conquered the kingdom of Quito, Ecuador. In 1535, a mission was sent from Quito to mark the border with Peru. The dispute has lasted for hundreds of years since.

Mapping the Ecuadorian-Peruvian border was completed by the US air force. Boundary markers were established along a frontier, called the Condor Cordillera. This is where the dispute is centered. It is also an area believed to be rich in gold, uranium, and oil deposits!

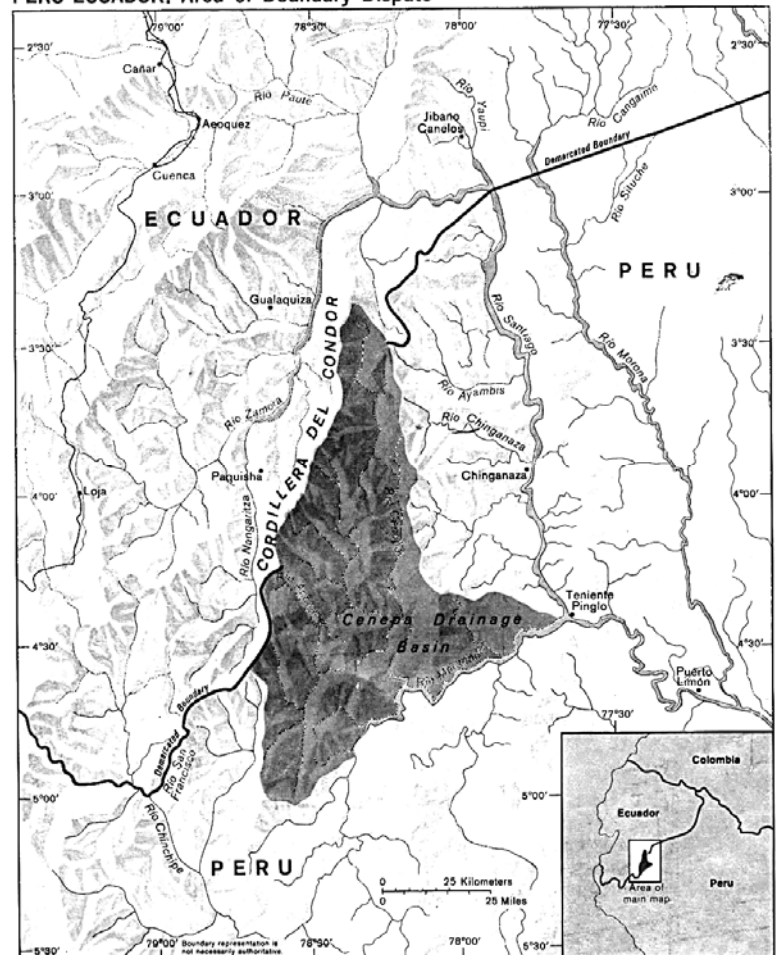
Over the last 150 years, Ecuador has seen its territory whittled away to the point where it is now the smallest country in the Andes. It also finds itself as a buffer country between the regions' two super-powers, Columbia and Peru. With fights over arable land an increasing problem, Ecuador today is South America's most densely populated nation.

Normalization of relations has been a slow process, but the tensions remain high. The two countries refused to engage in face-to-face talks over the border negotiations.

### RECENT EVENTS:

The conflict re-ignited in 1995. The war had a serious impact on the local communities and a reported 28 people were killed during the conflict. Of the 350 Indian communities on the Ecuadorian side of the border, 20,000 people were directly affected by the fighting, 8000 of them were permanently displaced, their habitats destroyed. Human rights groups also reported that the Peruvian military was using the local inhabitants to probe minefields before launching assaults on Ecuadorian bases in the disputed area.

PERU-ECUADOR: Area of Boundary Dispute



# WATER WARS of the MIDDLE EAST

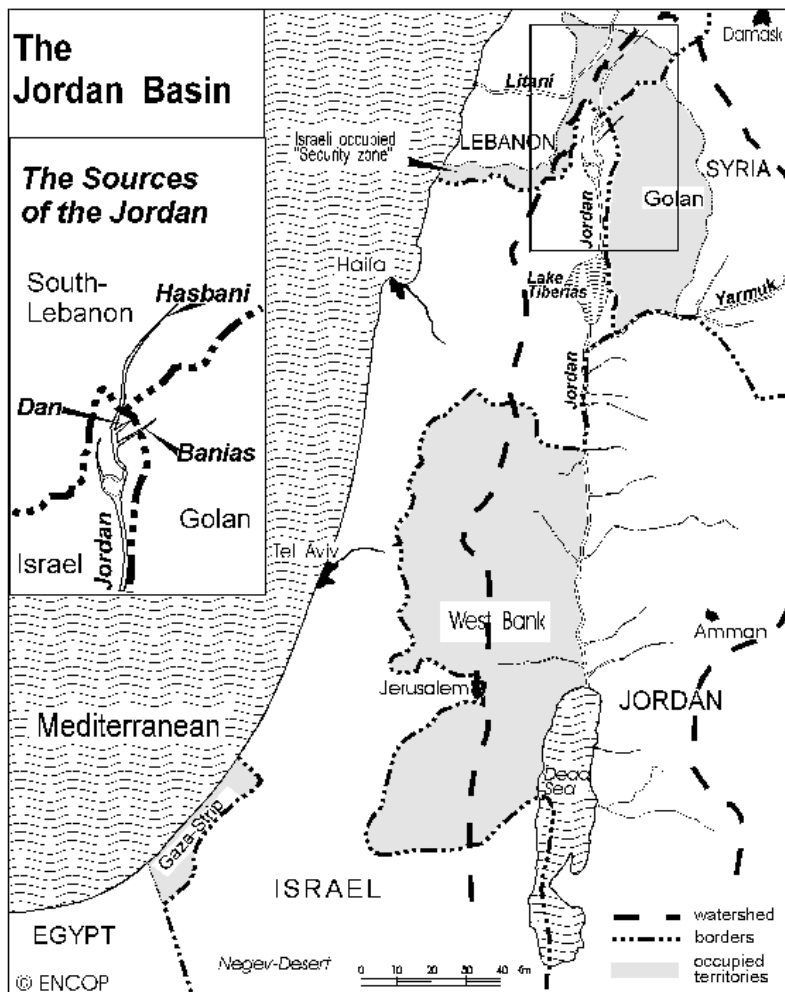
## CONFLICTS:

Middle East conflicts are usually tied in the media to religion or oil, but water has become a major factor in recent disputes. In prominent watersheds such as the Jordan River Basin and the Tigris-Euphrates Basin, water supplies can be critical especially when they are being shared among multiple countries. These rivers play a very important role in the agriculture and economic development of these states.

### Jordan River Basin

The area of the Jordan River Basin, including parts of Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank, is primarily an arid region. The river originates in Lebanon and consists of the Jordan and Yarmuk River, which flows from Syria. With the arid climate and low precipitation in this region, water has become the most valuable resource. Most countries in the Jordan River Basin are among

some of the poorest countries in the region. Groundwater aquifers are the principle source for water supplies to the states that rely on the Jordan River.



Israel uses the greatest amount of water available in the basin. The patterns of water use, overuse, and political territorial issues are resulting in disagreement over water distribution. The increase in population at Israeli settlements has led to significant challenges in managing limited water supplies. Without the existence of a legitimate water sharing agreement, the countries of Syria and Israel have taken over the water supplies.

The Mountain Aquifer underneath the West Bank is a point of contention between Israelis and Palestinians. Issues include the domination of groundwater supplies by the Israeli state and settlers, and the walling off of Palestinian access to water supplies.

## Tigris-Euphrates Basin

The scarcity of water supplies in the river basin of ancient Mesopotamia has long fed disagreement among neighboring nations. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers originate in Turkey, and their watershed covers a much larger area than the Jordan River basin. The river system is shared by several countries and ethnic groups who regularly disagree on water issues. Like the Jordan River Valley, rising population in these areas is heavily affecting the availability of water. Syria obtains approximately 85 percent of the renewable water supply while Iraq obtains 100 percent from the combination of both rivers.

The Turks and the Kurds who live in southeastern Turkey are less dependent on the rivers, yet they still have plans for irrigation to increase their utilization of both rivers. Along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, conflict arises from north to south. Dams along the rivers installed by Turkey have prevented some of the water from flowing downstream to these warmer, drier countries. All three countries have constructed dams on the rivers for purposes of agriculture, hydroelectric power and industrialization.

Turkey and Syria have increased hostilities towards one another over the use of the Euphrates River. Hostilities between Syria and Iraq escalated due to the filling of Lake Assad by Syria, resulting to the reduction of downstream flow in the 1970's. Iraqi's began accusing Syria of holding back water supplies. Among all three countries, the water supply conflict is equated with their national security. The 1991 Gulf War brought on water crisis in Iraq due to the bombing of water treatment facilities in Iraq by the U.S., triggering water shortages in the country. Out of the seven major water pumping stations, four were destroyed. The targeting of sewage and water treatment plants contributed to the mass contamination of the Tigris River, and triggered many waterborne diseases. The bombing during the 2003 Iraq invasion again targeted civilian infrastructure, and left many southern Iraqis with little or no access to water.



## **CONFLICT and COOPERATION: Useful Websites**

The Amsterdam Centre for Conflict Studies (ACS) is an initiative for the interdisciplinary study of conflict and conflict transformation. The aim of the centre is to improve cooperation between scholars and professionals on education, research and the exchange of external knowledge.  
<http://www.conflictstudies.nl/portal/site/conflictstudies>

Human Rights Watch is the largest human rights organization based in the United States. Human Rights Watch researchers conduct fact-finding investigations into human rights abuses in all regions of the world. Human Rights Watch then publishes those findings in dozens of books and reports every year, generating extensive coverage in local and international media.  
<http://hrw.org/doc/?t=news>

The International Boundary Monitor is a monthly digest of international boundary and sovereignty developments. <http://www.boundaries.com/monitor.htm>

Amnesty International's website contains news; features; actions; video and audio; information about countries, campaigns and issues. Amnesty International also produces hundreds of reports, press releases, appeals for action and newsletters each year and these are available in the library.  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library>

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity. We have a unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights.  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx>

University of North Texas, weblisting of international water-related conflicts.  
<http://www.paulhensel.org/water.html>  
<http://www.paulhensel.org/maritime.html>

The Complex Emergency Database (CE-DAT) is an international initiative to monitor and evaluate the health status of populations in regions affected by conflicts and other complex emergencies.  
<http://www.cedat.be/>

CONFLICT! is a one-hour live talk radio program that airs weekly on WGMU Radio from George Mason University. CONFLICT! aims to showcase, highlight, and explore effective constructive ways to address conflict that are generally nonviolent, nonadversarial, and collaborative in nature.  
<http://www.conflictradio.org/Index.html>

OpenDemocracy offers in-depth news analysis and commentary from a pro-Democracy, pro-Human Rights perspective.  
<http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflicts/index.jsp>

Insight on Conflict focuses on the unknown, virtually invisible, civil society peacebuilding initiatives which exist in tens, hundreds or even thousands in every conflict area. The people who run these initiatives and their organisations are the untapped resource which could make a major difference to the security of the world's people over the next twenty years – particularly in low profile conflicts within rather than between countries.<http://www.insightonconflict.org/>

EPA works with other nations and international organizations to protect the U.S. from global and regional environmental risks. The Agency's international programs help to protect the environment along our common borders with Mexico and Canada, reduce global environmental threats such as marine pollution and toxic chemicals, integrate environmental protection with international trade and investment, and exchange innovative practices and technologies.  
<http://www.epa.gov/ebtpages/internationalcooperation.html>

The Center on International Cooperation (CIC) at New York University works to enhance international responses to humanitarian crises and global security threats through applied research and direct engagement with multilateral institutions and the wider policy community. It has an international reputation for agenda-setting work on post-conflict peacebuilding, global peace operations, and UN reform.  
<http://www.cic.nyu.edu/about.html>

The Review of International Co-operation is the official journal of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA). The Review presents in-depth discussion of issues that effect co-operatives around the world.  
<http://www.ica.coop/publications/review/index.html>

African Development Bank <http://www.afdb.org/>

African Union (AU) <http://www.africa-union.org/>

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation <http://www.apecsec.org.sg/>

Asian Development Bank <http://www.adb.org/>

Caribbean Community and Common Market <http://www.caricom.org/>

Central American Bank for Economic Integration <http://www.bcie.org/index.htm>

North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation

<http://www.cec.org/home/index.cfm?varlan=english>

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) <http://www.cisstat.com/eng/cis.htm>

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) <http://www.ctbto.org/>

Council of the Baltic States <http://www.cbss.st/>

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development <http://www.ebrd.com/english/index.htm>

European Court of Human Rights <http://www.echr.coe.int/>

European Union <http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) <http://www.fao.org/>

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) <http://www.interpol.int/>

International Fund for Agricultural Development <http://www.ifad.org/>

International Monetary Fund (IMF) <http://www.imf.org/>

League of Arab States [http://www.arableagueonline.org/arableague/index\\_en.jsp](http://www.arableagueonline.org/arableague/index_en.jsp)

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) <http://www.nafta-sec-alena.org/english/index.htm>

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) <http://www.nato.int/home.htm>

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) <http://www.oecd.org/>

Organization of American States (OAS) <http://www.oas.org/>

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) <http://www.opec.org/>

Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) <http://www.paho.org>

United Nations System of Organizations <http://www.unsystem.org/>

World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org/>

World Health Organization (WHO) <http://www.who.int/>

World Trade Organization (WTO) <http://www.wto.org/>