

## When is conflict a war?

### Piece in the original order

- A When would conflict be described as war? Are there criteria which enable us to identify what war is?
- G A very general way to define war would be a state of conflict between states or nations.
- I But conflicts between nations may be carried out in various ways which we would not normally call 'war'.
- K These ways could include diplomacy (talking to try and find a solution), economic sanctions (stopping trade with a country) and propaganda (producing exaggerated or false information about the opponent).
- B We could narrow war down to armed conflict.
- D But countries have existed in states of declared war against each other without any actual armed conflict occurring.
- F Perhaps we can simply define 'war' as a conflict when an official declaration of war is made.
- L But that doesn't seem quite correct because many long, brutal conflicts including civil wars occur without any official declarations of war, such as the conflict that took place in Vietnam.
- E Today, military forces find themselves in combat with terrorist or rebel groups, who are beyond clear government control. Is this war? Government involvement is usually thought to be required for the existence of 'war'.
- H Military forces may also find themselves in high-level policing or peacekeeping functions which look quite a lot like war.
- M War certainly involves conflict and force and a number of different factors may play a role in the situation. What is crucial, however, is that these factors would not be permitted during a state of peace.
- J In other words, a state of war is a condition which is believed to allow for behaviour and action normally considered illegal or immoral. Examples include killing others (including innocent people), destruction of property and lying.
- C However, this definition shows us the dangers of declaring a so-called 'war' on problems like drugs and terrorism.

N The use of the word 'war' can express the seriousness of the problem and the commitment of the government to use many resources in the effort. It may also lead to a point where otherwise immoral or illegal actions become 'normal.'