

LESSON 2

The Middle East

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can political change cause conflict?
- How can political relationships affect economic relationships?

READING HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

- revenue
- parallel

Content Vocabulary

- **Pan-Arabism**
- **intifada**

TAKING NOTES

Key Ideas and Details

Sequencing As you read, create a table like the one below and list events in the history of Arab-Israeli conflicts.

Year	Event

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

Since 1948 there have been a number of Arab-Israeli wars in the Middle East. In Iran a revolution established an Islamic Republic while war broke out in Afghanistan. Iraq's conquest of Kuwait led to war in the Middle East.

The Mideast Crisis

GUIDING QUESTION *What key issues underline the Arab-Israeli conflicts?*

In the Middle East, as in Asia and Africa, a number of new nations emerged after World War II. Syria and Lebanon gained their independence just before the end of the war. Jordan achieved complete self-rule soon afterward. These new states in the Middle East were largely Muslim.

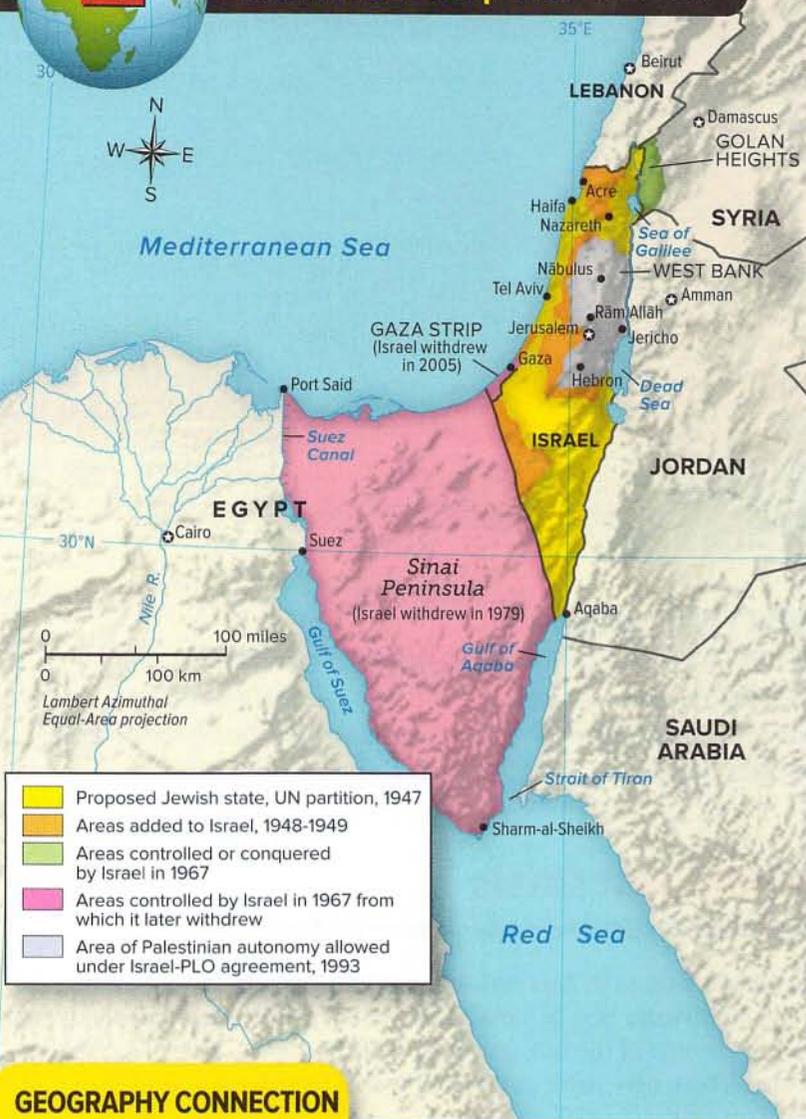
The Palestine Mandate

In the years between the two world wars, many Jews had immigrated to the Palestine Mandate, which is their historic homeland and religious center. Arab immigration to the mandate also increased. Tensions between Jews and Arabs had intensified during the 1930s. After a massive Arab revolt that lasted from 1936-1939, Great Britain, which governed the region under the League of Nations' mandate, decided to limit Jewish immigration into the area and rejected proposals for an independent Jewish state.

The Zionist movement wanted the land of ancient Israel to be a home for the Jewish people and had begun building the institutions necessary for statehood. Many people had been shocked at the end of World War II when they learned about the deliberate killing of 6 million European Jews in Nazi death camps. As a result, sympathy for the Jewish cause grew. In 1947 a United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution called for the Palestine Mandate to be divided into a Jewish state and an Arab state. On May 14, 1948 in Tel Aviv, David Ben-Gurion, a Zionist leader who would become Israel's first Prime Minister, announced the establishment of the State of Israel.



Arab-Israeli Disputes 1947–1993



The Arab states saw the creation of the State of Israel as a betrayal of the Palestinian Arabs and rejected the existence of a Jewish state. In response five Arab countries invaded Israel. The invasion failed, but the Arab states continued to refuse to recognize the State of Israel, leading to ongoing conflict. As a result of these events, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled to neighboring Arab countries, as well as the Jordanian-ruled West Bank and Egyptian-ruled Gaza strip. Many fled at the urging of Arab states who told them they could return once Israel was destroyed. Other Palestinians remained in Israel. Another result of the conflict was that hundreds of thousands of Jews in Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa were expelled. Most sought refuge in Israel.

Nasser and Pan-Arabism

In Egypt, a new leader arose who played an important role in the Arab world. Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser took control of the Egyptian government in the early 1950s. Nasser strongly supported Arab nationalism and also opposed the existence of Israel. He ordered a blockade of the Straits of Tiran to stop ships heading to Israel's southern port of Eliat and supported terrorist attacks on Israel. On July 26, 1956, he seized the Suez Canal Company, which had been under British and French administration since the 1800s.

GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

- 1 THE USES OF GEOGRAPHY** *What is the strategic importance of the Sinai Peninsula?*
- 2 PLACES AND REGIONS** *What was a result of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords?*

Great Britain and France were upset by this threat to their world positions. The Suez Canal was an important waterway linking the Mediterranean Sea to Asia. Great Britain and France decided to strike back against Egypt, and Israel quickly joined them. The three nations launched a joint attack on Egypt, starting the Suez War of 1956.

The United States and the Soviet Union joined in supporting Nasser. Both countries opposed French and British influence in the Middle East. They forced Britain, France, and Israel to withdraw from Egypt.

Nasser emerged from the conflict as a powerful leader. He began to promote **Pan-Arabism**, or Arab unity. In February 1958, Egypt formally united with Syria in the United Arab Republic (UAR). Nasser was named its first president. Egypt and Syria hoped that the union would eventually include all Arab states.

Many other Arab leaders were suspicious of Pan-Arabism. Oil-rich Arab states were concerned they would have to share **revenues** with poorer states in the Middle East. In Nasser's view, Arab unity meant that wealth derived from oil, which currently flowed into a few Arab states or to foreign interests, could be used to improve the standard of living throughout the Middle East.

In 1961 Syrian military leaders took over Syria and withdrew the country from the UAR. Nasser continued to work on behalf of Arab interests.

Pan-Arabism Arab unity, regardless of national boundaries

revenue the yield of sources of income that a nation or state collects and deposits into its treasury for public use

The Arab-Israeli Dispute

During 1956 and 1957, tensions between the Arab states and Israel increased. In 1967 Nasser again imposed a blockade against Israeli shipping and made speeches publicly threatening Israel. He declared, "We are now ready to confront Israel...We are [now] ready to deal with the entire Palestine question." In another speech, he stated that Egypt was "ready to enter a general war with Israel...and our basic objective will be to destroy Israel." Even as he gave these speeches in the spring of 1967, Arab armies began massing in Syria, Jordan, and Egypt near Israel's borders.

Fearing attack by Egypt and other Arab states, on June 5, 1967, Israel launched air strikes against Egypt and destroyed most of Egypt's air force. When Jordan joined the war, Israel responded again with air strikes. In the Six-Day War, the Israeli army broke the blockade, defeated the Arab forces, and took control of Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. The army also took the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria, tripling the size of the territory under its control. As a result, a million Palestinians now lived in areas under Israeli control, most on the West Bank. Following the war, Israel proposed to return the Sinai and Golan Heights and begin negotiations on the status of Gaza and the West Bank in exchange for Arab recognition of Israel and its right to exist. In the wake of severe defeat and high casualties suffered, the Arab states responded with the Khartoum Resolution: "no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it."

Over the next few years, Arab states continued to demand the return of the West Bank and Gaza. Nasser died in 1970, and Anwar el-Sadat succeeded him. On October 6, 1973 (on Yom Kippur, Judaism's holiest day of the year), Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated surprise attack against Israel. Golda Meir, Israel's first female prime minister, had little time to mobilize troops. Soon, however, Israeli forces went on the offensive and pushed into Egypt. A UN-negotiated cease-fire on October 22 stopped the fighting. An agreement in 1974 officially ended the conflict, but tensions remained.

Meanwhile, however, the war was having indirect results in Western nations. In 1960 several oil-producing states had formed OPEC, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, to control the price of oil. During the Yom Kippur War, some OPEC nations announced large increases in the price of oil to foreign countries. The price hikes, coupled with cuts in oil production, led to oil shortages and serious economic problems in the West.

In 1977 U.S. President Jimmy Carter began to press for a compromise peace between Arabs and Israelis. In September 1978, President Carter met with President Sadat of Egypt and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin (BAY • gihh) at Camp David in the United States. The result was the Camp David Accords, an agreement to sign an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. The treaty, signed by Sadat and Begin in March 1979, led to a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula and ended the state of war between Egypt and Israel. Many Arab countries, however, continued to refuse to recognize Israel.

In 1964 the Egyptians took the lead in forming the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to represent Palestinian interests. The PLO believed that only the Palestinian Arabs should have a state in the Palestine region and called for the destruction of Israel. At the same time, a guerrilla movement called al-Fatah, headed by the PLO political leader Yasir Arafat, began to launch attacks on Israel. These terrorist attacks continued for decades.

During the 1980s, Palestinian Arabs, frustrated by their failure to achieve self-rule, grew more militant. This militancy led to a movement called an **intifada**, or uprising, concentrated on the territories controlled by Israel since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Eventually, in the Oslo Accords of 1993, an interim



Golda Meir (1898–1978)

Golda Meir was born in Kiev, Russia, but immigrated with her family to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the age of eight. In her early 20s, she moved to the Palestine Mandate, where she was active in politics and the Zionist movement. Meir signed Israel's declaration of independence in 1948. She was subsequently elected to parliament and later served as both labor and foreign minister. In 1969 Meir became the prime minister of Israel and led her country during the Yom Kippur War. During her career, she attempted to establish peace with neighboring Arab states and fostered diplomacy with foreign powers.

DBQ DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

How do you think Meir's upbringing affected her foreign policy decisions?

intifada "uprising"; militant movement that arose during the 1980s among supporters of the Palestine Liberation Organization living in the West Bank and Gaza

agreement for future negotiations, Israel and the PLO agreed to the establishment of a Palestinian Authority in the West Bank that would exercise considerable autonomy. In return, the PLO recognized Israel and renounced terrorism.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Sequencing Place the events of the Six-Day War in order.

Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan

GUIDING QUESTION How has the move for self-rule led to turmoil among the countries of the Middle East?

The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is one of many challenges in the Middle East. As in other parts of the world, a few people are rich while many are poor. Some countries prosper because of oil, but others remain in poverty. A response to these problems is the growth of movements based on Islam. Many of these groups believe that Muslims must return to a pure Islamic culture and values to build prosperous societies. Some are willing to use violence to bring about an Islamic revolution. Such a revolution took place in Iran.

The Iranian Revolution

The leadership of Reza Shah Pahlavi and revenue from oil helped make Iran a rich country. Iran was also an ally of the United States in the Middle East in the 1950s and 1960s.

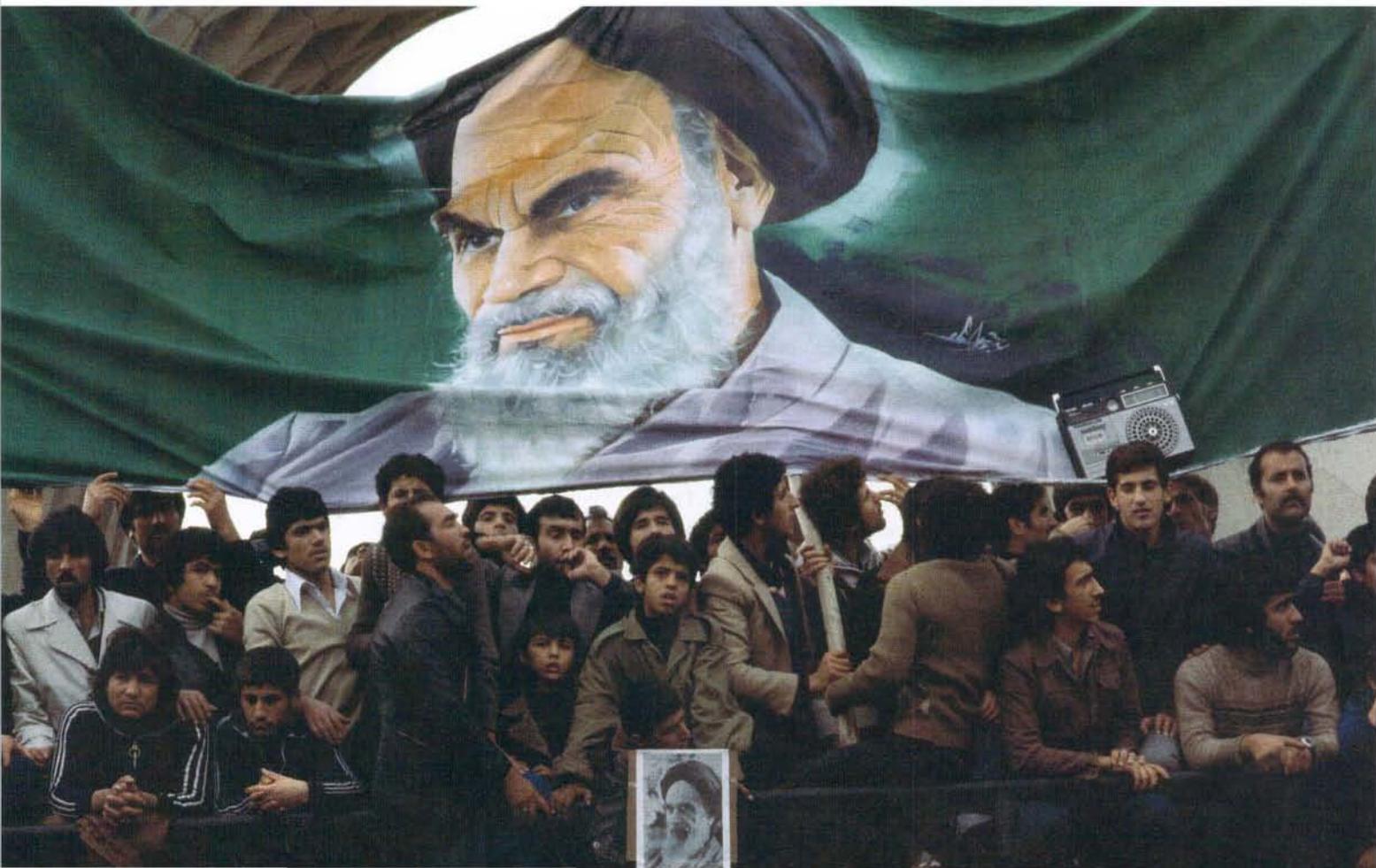
However, there was much opposition to the shah in Iran. Many Muslims looked with distaste at the new Iranian society. In their eyes, it was based on greed and materialism, which they identified with American influence. Leading the opposition to the shah was the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (ko • MAY • nee), a member of the Muslim clergy. By the late 1970s,

▼ A pro-Khomeini demonstration during the Iranian Revolution, December 1978.

► **CRITICAL THINKING**

Analyzing Visuals How would you describe the participants in this demonstration?

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many Iranians had begun to respond to Khomeini's words. In 1979 the shah's government collapsed and was replaced by an Islamic republic.

The new government, led by the Ayatollah Khomeini, moved to restore Islamic law. Supporters of the shah were executed or fled Iran. Anti-American feelings erupted when militants seized 52 Americans in the United States embassy in Tehran and held them hostage for more than a year.

After Khomeini's death in 1989, a more moderate government allowed some civil liberties. Some Iranians were dissatisfied with the government's economic performance. Others, especially young people, pressed for more freedoms and an end to the rule of conservative Muslim clerics.

The Iran-Iraq War

To the west of Iran was a militant and hostile Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein since 1979. Iran and Iraq have long had an uneasy relationship. Religious differences have fueled their disputes. Although both are Muslim nations, the Iranians are mostly Shia Muslims. The Iraqi leaders under Saddam Hussein, on the other hand, were mostly Sunni Muslims. Iran and Iraq have fought over territory, too, especially over the Strait of Hormuz. Strategically very important, the strait connects the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

In 1980 Saddam Hussein launched a brutal war against Iran. During the Iran-Iraq War, children were used to clear dangerous minefields. Saddam Hussein used poison gas against soldiers and civilians, especially the Kurds, an ethnic minority in the north who wanted their own state. In 1988, Iran and Iraq signed a cease-fire without resolving the war's basic issues.

The Persian Gulf War

In August 1990, Saddam Hussein sent his troops across the border to seize Kuwait, an oil-rich country on the Persian Gulf. The invasion began the Gulf War. The United States led the international forces that freed Kuwait. Hoping an internal revolt would overthrow Hussein, the allies imposed harsh economic sanctions on Iraq. The overthrow of Saddam Hussein, however, did not happen.

Afghanistan and the Taliban

After World War II, the king of Afghanistan, in search of economic assistance for his country, developed close ties with the Soviet Union. Internal fighting was followed in 1979 by a full-scale invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets, who occupied the country for 10 years. Anti-Communist Islamic forces (known collectively as the mujahideen), supported by the United States and Pakistan, eventually ousted them. When the Soviets left, the Islamic groups began to fight for control of Afghanistan. One of these, the Taliban, seized the capital city of Kabul in 1996. By the fall of 1998, the Taliban controlled more than two-thirds of the country.

Backed by conservative religious forces in Pakistan, the Taliban provided a base of operations for Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden came from a wealthy family in Saudi Arabia and used his wealth to support the Afghan resistance. In 1988 bin Laden founded al-Qaeda, or "the base," which recruited Muslims to drive Westerners out of nations with a largely Muslim population. After the Taliban seized control of much of Afghanistan, bin Laden used bases there to train al-Qaeda recruits.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Identifying Central Issues What role did religious differences play in the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq War?



▲ Women ride an escalator at an upscale shopping center in Dubai.

► CRITICAL THINKING

Describing How does this photograph show the contrast between tradition and modernity in the contemporary Middle East?

parallel having the same direction or course; similar

Society and Culture

GUIDING QUESTION How has Islam influenced society and culture in the Middle East?

In recent years, conservative religious forces in the Middle East have tried to replace foreign culture and values with Islamic forms of belief and behavior. This movement is called Islamic fundamentalism or Islamic activism. For some Islamic leaders, Western values and culture are based on materialism, greed, and immorality. Extremists want to remove all Western influence in Muslim countries. These extremists give many Westerners an unfavorable impression of Islam.

Islamic fundamentalism began in Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini. There the return to traditional Muslim beliefs reached into clothing styles, social practices, and the legal system. These ideas and practices spread to other Muslim countries. In Egypt, for example, militant Muslims assassinated President Sadat in 1981.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, women's place in Middle Eastern society had changed little for hundreds of years. Early Muslim women had participated in the political life of society and had extensive legal, political, and social rights. Cultural practices in many countries had overshadowed those rights, however.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Muslim scholars debated issues surrounding women's roles in society. Many argued for the need to rethink outdated interpretations and cultural practices that prevented women from realizing their potential. Until the 1970s, the general trend in urban areas was toward a greater role for women. Beginning in the 1970s, however, there was a shift toward more traditional roles for women. This trend was especially noticeable in Iran.

The literature of the Middle East since 1945 has reflected a rise in national awareness, which encouraged interest in historical traditions. Writers also began to deal more with secular themes for broader audiences, not just the elite. For example, *Cairo Trilogy* by Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz tells about a merchant family in Egypt in the 1920s. The changes in the family **parallel** the changes in Egypt. Mahfouz was the first writer in Arabic to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (in 1988). Another Middle Eastern writer, Shmuel Yosef Agnon, was the first writer in Hebrew to win a Nobel Prize in Literature (in 1966). The central themes of Agnon's writing explore the relationships between traditional Jewish life, the Hebrew language, and the modern world.

✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

Making Connections Why was there a turn toward more traditional roles for Iranian women beginning in the 1970s?

LESSON 2 REVIEW

Reviewing Vocabulary

1. **Identifying** How did concern over revenue help lead to suspicion of Pan-Arabism?

Using Your Notes

2. **Sequencing** Use your notes to list specific events in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Answering the Guiding Questions

3. **Analyzing** What events led to the dispute between Israel and its Arab neighbors?

4. **Drawing Conclusions** How has the move for self-rule led to turmoil among the countries of the Middle East?

5. **Making Generalizations** How has Islam influenced society and culture in the Middle East?

Writing Activity

6. **Informative/Explanatory** Research Golda Meir and find out how she became a leader of Israel. What did a woman rising to this position of power say about the State of Israel at that time?