CHAPTER II
THE MIDDLE EAST

In this chapter we will explore two extremely explosive recent conflicts in the Middle East. These conflicts have seen political, economic and military involvement of many countries throughout the world. The two conflicts are:
> The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and
> The Tragedy of Iraq

At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- Name and locate on a map the main countries in conflict in the Middle East
- Explain how European colonialism helped to create more conflict
- Discuss both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Describe the role of geography and natural resources in the region
- Discuss how the United Nations has reacted to regional conflict
- Identify important events in the recent history of Iraq
- Identify events in the last two decades lead to the two wars in Iraq

INTRODUCTION

1. THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

BRAINSTORM

What are some reasons for countries going to war?
Where is the Middle East?
What do you know about the Middle East?

For over six hundred years (1300-1922) the Ottoman Empire ruled much of what we today call Central Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and North Africa. The Ottomans were Muslim and their capital was Istanbul. By the start of the twentieth century, the Ottoman's power was weakening. Strong European countries threatened the Ottomans for control of the Middle East region. During World War One, the Ottomans were on the side of Germany, which lost the war. As a result, after the war, most of the Middle East was divided up and taken over by the winners in the war: mainly France and Britain.

More importantly, during the war, many Arabs supported Britain by fighting against the Ottomans. Britain promised independence for Arabs in exchange for their support. This agreement was never honoured. Most of the Middle Eastern countries as we know them today were created by the victorious European powers. France controlled Syria and Lebanon. Great Britain took control of Palestine and the new states of Iraq and Trans-Jordan. The rest of the Arabian Peninsula was not under direct British control but was allied with Britain.

> **Nation Makers**
> *At the end of World War One, the future of millions of Arabs in the Middle East was decided by a handful of European leaders. Borders were changed and made in private sessions by powerful men thousands of kilometres away from the areas affected. After generations of living together, tribal and ethnic groups were separated from each other based on European politics.*

MAP WORK

On the map, find all present-day countries that used to be part of the Ottoman Empire.

COMPREHENSION

1. When was the Ottoman Empire broken up? Why did this happen?
2. Which European countries controlled most of the Middle East after WWI?
3. Who made the new boundaries for the new Middle Eastern states?
4. How were the local populations involved in deciding the new boundaries?

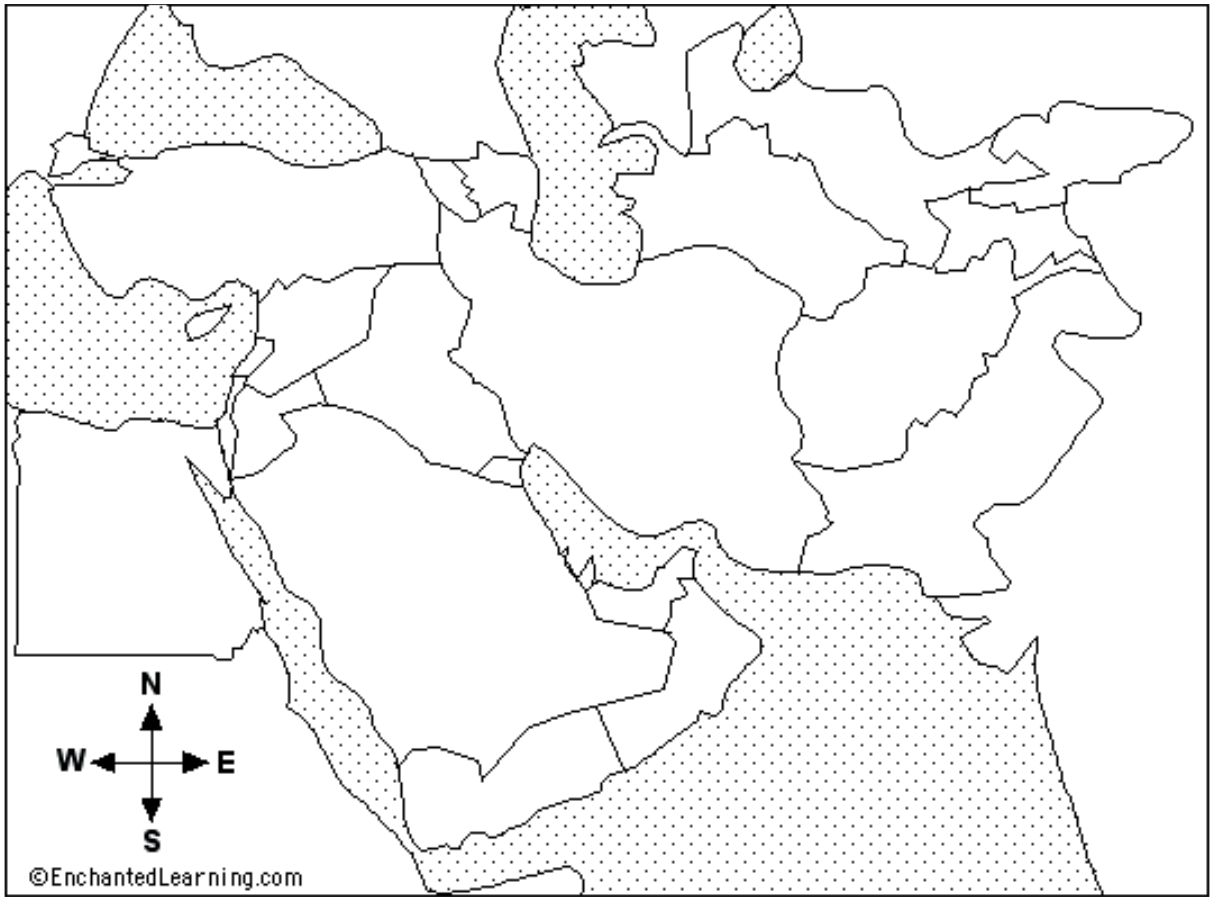
DISCUSSION

How do you think the Arabs felt about the new shape of the Middle East after WWI? Describe a similar situation in a different part of the world.

MAP WORK

On the map below name and locate the countries controlled by France and Great Britain after World War One. Make a key, colour them according to the key.

France and Britain in the Middle East After WWI



2. THE RESPONSE TO COLONIALISM

VOCABULARY

presence *(n)* being there, occupying
radical *(adj)* excessive, extreme, fanatical
resentment *(n)* anger over past actions
tolerate *(v)* to accept
betrayal *(n)* not keep a promise, disloyal
fundamentalism *(n)* ideology based on strict/extreme interpretation
identity *(n)* a self image
nationalism *(n)* movement to establish own national identity

No one likes outsiders coming to take control of their land, resources and their futures. British and French occupation and military **presence** resulted in many armed conflicts between local people and the European occupiers. During the first half of the twentieth century, many forms of **nationalism** grew to challenge colonialism all over the world. Local populations were no longer willing to **tolerate** the injustice of colonialism. In the Middle East there were various types of Arab nationalism (i.e. Egypt under President Nasser, Ba'athism in Iraq and Syria). There was also Jewish nationalism (Zionism).

Religious **fundamentalism** (both Muslim and Jewish) was another reaction by some groups who tried to maintain their own **identity** and independence. Some of these fundamentalists adopted extreme beliefs and used **radical** actions, which were separate from the basic beliefs of their religions. In the Middle East, the nationalist feelings and anger were increased by the **betrayal** of the British when they refused to honour their World War One agreement, to give some Arabs independence. This **resentment** became a major factor in future conflicts and wars.

DISCUSSION

Why was there an increase in nationalist movements after World War I?

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

1. CREATION OF A STATE

BRAINSTORM

What do you know about the persecution of minority groups?
What groups have been persecuted?
How are groups persecuted?

VOCABULARY

bitter *(adj)* disagreeable, very angry
extermination *(n)* mass killing, slaughter
intolerance *(n)* not accepting, prejudice
overwhelmingly *(adv)* by huge amount, vastly
partition *(n)* separation, division
persecuted *(v)* mistreated, victimized
sanctuary *(n)* safe place

Settlers Arrive

Throughout history, Jews worldwide have been **persecuted**. Creating a Jewish homeland had been a goal for Jews for many years. In 1948, the state of Israel was created. However, the vast majority of people living in the region—who were **overwhelmingly** Arabs - did not accept this new creation.

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is long and **bitter**. It concerns land and religion. For centuries, Jews and Muslims have lived together in Palestine and many other parts of the Middle East. For both Jews and Muslims in Palestine, there was always a certain amount of distrust and religious **intolerance**. However, land is the main point of disagreement, which goes back to before the time of European colonialism.

European Jews migrated to Israel to escape persecution.

Beginning with the end of the 19th century, Jews from all over the world began moving to Palestine to settle. At the end of the 19th century, Jewish persecution, especially in Russia, was extreme. Jews living in many parts of the world organised and created a nationalist movement called 'Zionism.' A main goal of Zionism was to establish a Jewish state in the area known as Palestine. This became particularly important for Jewish people after the horrors of the *Holocaust.*

Before the arrival of the Zionist settlers, Arabs from many religious and cultural groups and sub-groups (Muslim, Druze, Christian) had mostly been living together in harmony with the minority Jewish population. By the start of World War One (1914), Arabs outnumbered Jews by over ten to one in Palestine.

Holocaust

During World War II the Nazis started extreme and systematic persecution of Jews. The ultimate goal of this persecution was to kill all Jews in the world. As the German army occupied more and more countries in Europe, all Jews in the occupied territories were put into concentration camps where they were forced to do hard labour, starved to death, and were killed in special cells filled with gas. Many Jews tried to escape Europe during that time, but most other countries did not want to take refugees. It was also very hard to escape once a country was occupied by Nazi Germany. About 6 million Jews were killed in Europe in the Holocaust. Very few Jews survived in the occupied countries and territories during World War II. Some people managed to escape into Palestine.

DISCUSSION

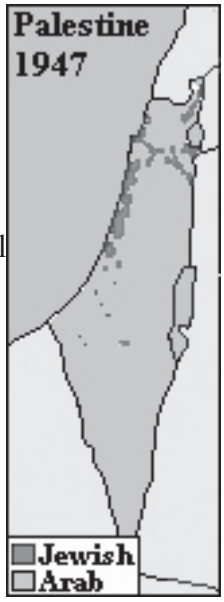
In 1948 the State of Israel was created. How do you think the Jews felt about this? Why? How did the Arabs in the region feel about this? Why?
Arabs outnumbered Jews by over ten to one in Palestine. What importance do you think this fact had for the future of the region?

Under British Rule

When the British gained control of Palestine at the end of the war, they had also agreed to the creation of a separate Jewish state (the agreement was known as the *Balfour Declaration,* named after British Foreign Minister, Arthur Balfour). This decision angered local Arabs who felt the British once again betrayed them.

Under British control, there was continual tension and inter-ethnic violence in Palestine. During and after WWII (1939-1945), thousands of Jews fled the mass **extermination** by the Nazis. Jews thought of Israel as a **sanctuary** from the horrors happening in Europe.

By the end of World War Two (1945), most European powers were giving up their colonies. Great Britain agreed to give up control of Palestine. In 1947, the newly formed United Nations declared that Palestine would be divided into an Arab state and a Jewish state. Arabs rejected this plan. In their opinion, the illegal Jewish settlers had never received permission to be in Palestine, yet they were now being given equal rights to the Palestinians. This UN decision, Arab rejection and Israeli reactions have all contributed to the conflict.



The Wars Begin

At the moment of Israeli independence, intense fighting broke out between Arab and Jewish residents of Palestine. Soon, neighbouring Arab countries (Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Trans-Jordan) entered the fight and declared war. The smaller but better trained and organised Israeli army was able to defeat the Arabs. In 1949 an agreement was signed which gave the new state of Israel even more land than the UN plan. The Palestinians did not have the leadership nor the support from the neighbouring Arab countries. Therefore, Egypt took control of the Palestinian area near Gaza and Jordan took control over areas of Central Palestine (the West Bank) and East Jerusalem. The new Jewish state had been created and the UN **partition** plan (see map) never came to be. The Palestinians were left out of the negotiations as their Arab neighbours benefited by gaining control over Palestinian territory. The Palestinians had lost a war and a home.

Whose land is it?
According to the Bible (Old Testament), Palestine was the home of the Jews. Jews claim that this means that Palestine is still their home. Arab Palestinians claim that their long and continuous presence (living) in Palestine gives them rights to the land.

COMPREHENSION

Choose the appropriate word or fill in the gaps to complete the sentences.

1. Arabs (agreed/disagreed) with the UN partition plan.
2. The Jewish movement which encouraged settling in Palestine was called _____.
3. Israel declared itself a new state in 19_____.
4. In Palestine, there were many _____ groups who are all Arabs.
5. The Balfour Agreement (**a.** supported **b.** opposed **c.** ignored) creating a Jewish state.
6. At the end of the first Arab-Israeli war in 1949, Israel possessed (a. less b. more c. the same) land compared to the UN plan.

DISCUSSION

Why were the other Arab nations in the region against the new state of Israel?
How did they show their disagreement?
How could the British have organised Palestine in a way that would have led to less fighting in the future?

2. REFUGEES

Palestinian refugees in search of a home

Almost immediately after the announcement of the creation of the state of Israel, hundreds of thousands of people fled their homes as refugees. Many Jews who had been living in neighbouring Arab countries for centuries were forced or chose to leave their homes. They feared for their safety in countries which had just declared war on the new Jewish state. These Jewish refugees were accepted into the new state of Israel as citizens.

Almost immediately after the announcement of the creation of the state of Israel, over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs left Israel as refugees. There were several reasons why Palestinians left their homes:

1) To escape war
2) Persecution by Jews
3) Fear of living under future Israeli rule.

Over the next fifty years, the number of Palestinian refugees increased to about four million. Many are still living in the same camps established in 1949. Jordan has the largest number of Palestinian refugees, and Lebanon and Syria also have large numbers. Many Palestinians have moved to the wealthier Arab Gulf countries (like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE) and other parts of the world. However, the only Arab state to grant citizenship to some Palestinians is Jordan. Palestinians in other Arab states do not generally have the same rights as the citizens of those states.

Palestinians and most other Arabs share the same religion and both have generally opposed Israeli government policy, but the Palestinians have not received full support from these other Arab countries.

EXERCISE

Fill in the chart with the similarities and the differences between the refugee situation for Palestinians and for refugees from Burma. What is similar, what is different?

Similarities	**Differences**

DISCUSSION

What could other Arab countries in the region have done to help the refugees?

3. THE OCCUPATION

VOCABULARY

confiscation *(n)* taking away
curfew *(n)* not allowed out after a certain hour
demolition *(n)* destruction
detention *(n)* arrest, imprisonment
hostile *(adj)* unfriendly, opposing
justify *(v)* give reason for
monitor *(v)* check, watch, observe
occupation *(n)* remaining in a place
prohibit *(v)* not allow, forbid

A Palestinian stone thrower faces the Israeli army

After the 1949 ceasefire agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours, two areas in the original Palestine (West Bank and Gaza) remained under Arab control. That changed in 1967.

In 1967, the Israeli government identified large numbers of troops from Egypt and Syria gathering around its borders in what looked to be hostile, aggressive actions. Israel reacted by quickly and effectively attacking and defeating Egypt, Syria and Jordan. The result of this war was that Israel took control and occupied the two Arab territories, a large piece of land formerly belonging to Egypt (Sinai Peninsula) and land bordering Syria (Golan Heights). This war is known as the "Six Day War" because Israel defeated its enemies in six days.

In 1979, as part of a peace agreement, Israel handed back most of the Sinai Peninsula, taken in the 1967 war. However, it kept control of Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Before the 1990s, Israel's neighbours refused to accept Israel's right to exist. The destruction of Israel was a policy for several Arab governments. Israel has been continually threatened by aggressive actions from both Palestinians as well as hostile neighbouring Arab countries.

It is important to remember that much of the land in Palestine and Israel is dry and infertile. Water is one of the most valuable resources. Two very important water supplies are found in the West Bank—The Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee. Whoever controls these significant water sources controls a key resource. The Israeli government maintains that it must control these areas for its own security. These areas are where most of the Israeli Palestinians live. Israel uses many security measures in the "Occupied Territories" These security measures control and limit the movement of the Palestinians living there. Some security measures include:

- freedom of speech, press and assembly are either severely monitored or prohibited.
- the Territories have continual Israeli military presence: military checkpoints and curfews
- closure of roads, schools and community buildings
- house demolitions
- detention of political activists
- confiscation of Palestinian land.

Recently, the Israeli government began the construction of a large wall used to separate the Occupied Territories from the rest of Israel (see box below). This "security barrier" is also used to separate Palestinians from each other. Another important method used by the Israeli government to maintain control is to build new Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers have moved into these new settlements. In 2004, Israeli Prime Minister Arial Sharon proposed removing Jewish settlements in Gaza but keeping others in the West Bank. Protecting these settlers in the Occupied Territories justifies continued Israeli military force in the region, according to the Israeli government.

The Wall

In July 2004 the International Court of Justice ruled that the Israeli security barrier is illegal and should be removed. The UN General Assembly passed a resolution saying that Israel should take down the wall immediately. So far (October, 2004), the Israeli government has refused to obey the resolution.

COMPREHENSION

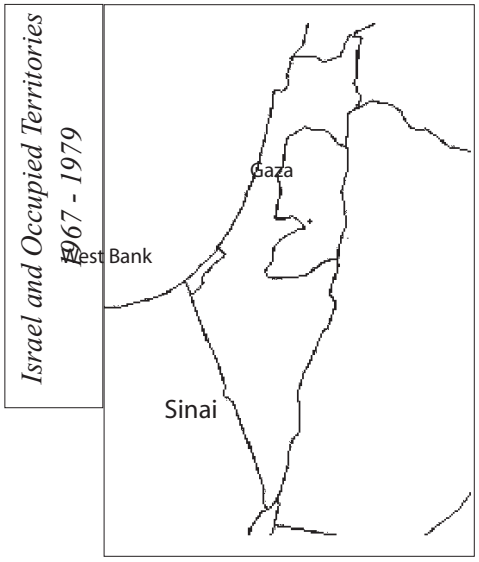
1. Why are the Arabs in the neighbouring countries and some Palestinians inside Israel hostile to the Israeli government? How many reasons can you name? Organise these reasons into groups:

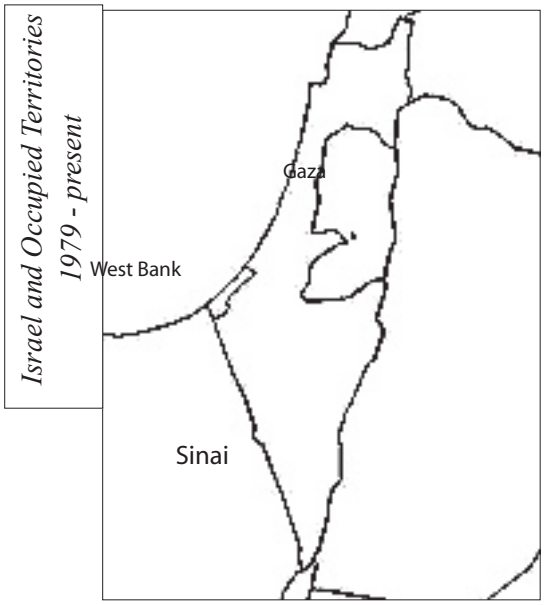
political reasons	religious reasons	geographical reasons	social reasons	other reasons

2. What methods have been used by Israel to control the Occupied Territories?
3. Can you find any human rights violations mentioned in this text?
4. Do you think the Israeli government has a right to commit these human rights violations?
5. What is the Israeli government trying to achieve?
6. What would be a better way to do this? (discuss in your group and present to class)

MAP WORK

1. In each of the maps below, colour in the land controlled by Israel.





2. Make statements about the changes in the Map of Israel from 1967 until the present. Why has the map changed? What events affected the changes?

4. THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE VETO

VOCABULARY

condemning *(v)* criticizing, judge negatively
resolution *(n)* official statement, judgement
rotate *(v)* take turns, alternate
veto *(n)* refusal, rejection
violate *(v)* disobey, to break a law

US president GW Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

In 1967, in response to the Israeli invasion and occupation of Arab land, the UN passed a **resolution**. The resolution required Israel to leave the occupied land and to accept the old boundaries. To date, Israel refuses to accept this interpretation. Over the next thirty-five years Israel would **violate** over thirty-five UN resolutions – more than any other country in the world. Most of the resolutions relate to Israeli-Palestinian relations. Many more resolutions condemning Israeli actions have been proposed by the UN but have not been approved because of the UN system of **veto**.

The UN has over 200 member states. The most important decisions are made by a group of 15 countries, called the Security Council. Five of the fifteen members are "permanent" members—they are the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, and China. The other ten members of the Security Council are chosen from the overall membership and **rotate** being a Security Council member every two years. Any of

the five permanent members can defeat a vote for a resolution by using their power of veto. So even if all of the other countries in the world agree on something, one country alone (a permanent member only) can defeat the agreement.

The US has been Israel's largest supporter, providing them with more military and financial aid than any other country. There are many reasons for this. Firstly, the US wants a strong presence in the Middle East for political and economic reasons. Israel is the only non-Muslim country in the region. Culturally, it is more similar to the US than Muslim Middle Eastern countries. Another reason for the support is that there are many influential American Jews who have strong political and cultural links to Israel. The US has supported Israel by vetoing numerous UN resolutions **condemning** Israeli actions.

DISCUSSION

- How are decisions made at the United Nations?
- Do all member countries have equal power?
- What is your opinion about this kind of system?
- Think of a different way to make decisions at the United Nations.

5. THE INTIFADAH

PREVIEW

How can people organise resistance or opposition to government?

VOCABULARY

barricading *(v)* blocking, deny access something, struggle	**resistance** *(n)* to be against
bombardment *(n)* attack from bombs or missiles	**siege** *(n)* long attack
boycotts *(n)* an organised refusal to buy	**strikes** *(n)* organised refusal to work
intervention *(n)* to get involved, participation	**uprising** *(n)* rebellion, revolt

Palestinians React

By 1987, after years of living under Israeli occupation and failed attempts at peace (see box below), Palestinians organised a mass uprising or resistance movement. People from many different backgrounds participated in this movement. It was called the Intifadah (which means "shaking off" in Arabic). Palestinians from all parts of society used the following *non-violent* methods:

- organised demonstrations and strikes
- boycotted Israeli goods
- created underground schools (because many Palestinian schools were closed by Israel during the uprising).
- refused to pay taxes

Palestinian throwing a Molotov cocktail

There were also direct acts of violence:

- throwing stones and explosives
- barricading roads
- Suicide bombing

The first Intifadah lasted about six years with hundreds of people dying—Israelis and Palestinians. One result from the first Intifadah was the creation of an official Palestinian government, called the Palestinian Authority (PA). However, there have been several Palestinian political parties and organisations that do not agree with the Palestinian Authority. Some of these organisations refuse to negotiate with the Israeli government. Terrorism and violence are their main methods for trying to bring about change. The first Intifadah brought the level of violence from Palestinian extremists to a new high. Later in 2000, a second Intifadah began. The Israeli reaction to this uprising was even stronger than the first time. The Palestinian response was also more violent. Suicide bombings of innocent Israelis by Palestinians increased. This increase in violence by both sides has made the possibility of peace increasingly difficult.

DISCUSSION

- What were some positive results of the Intidfadah?
- What were some negative ones?
- Who were the participants in the Intifadah?
- What could have made the Intifadah more successful?

The Peace Process

There have been many attempts at creating peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians: The United Nations, The USA, USSR/Russia, The European Union, various Arab governments and occasionally non-aligned governments have all tried to bring about peace. Until the present, no peace deal has been fully accepted by either the Israeli or the Palestinian representatives. Each side claims the need for security and a fair share of the land.

Israel Reacts

In 2002, Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) moved into the Occupied Territories to take over important towns and cities. Palestinian Authority's official residence was completely surrounded and under heavy bombardment. Its former leader, the late Yasser Arafat, and his cabinet were unable to leave for many weeks. Buildings were destroyed and many Palestinians were killed during the siege. Individual leaders of Palestinian resistance organisations were specifically targeted and killed by the IDF.

The International Community Reacts

Most international observers thought Israelis were guilty of using excessive force and of violating international law. The UN and the international community loudly condemned the violence. Israel rejected the international reaction and continued the siege for many more days. Lack of strong US intervention allowed this to happen. Both Intifadahs have attracted a lot of international attention to the Palestinian situation. However, there have also been negative international reactions condemning Palestinian suicide bombings against civilians.

In spite of efforts to work out a peace arrangement, the situation remains as violent as ever. By September 2004, over 3000 Palestinians and 1000 Israelis had died since the start of this second Intifadah.

GROUP WORK

How were the Intifadahs similar or different to the uprising in Burma in 1988? (Consider: people involved, methods used by protestors, reaction by the government, international reaction, results, current situation.)

1988 Uprising in Burma	**Palestinian Intifadahs**

GROUP WORK

Work with your group to make a timeline showing important events mentioned in this unit.

GROUP WORK

There are many players in this conflict: The Israeli army, the Palestinian Authority, the other Palestinian groups, the USA, the UN, Israeli and Palestinian civilians.
In your group, say what each player has done so far to add to the conflict. Then say what each player could have done differently for a better result. Finally, say what each player could do now to help resolve the conflict.
Organise your answers in this chart:

Who	What they have done	What they could have done better	What can they do in the future
The Israeli Government and Army			
The Palestinian Authority			
Other Palestinian Group			
The UN			
Israeli and Palestinian Civilians			

6. LIFE IN ISRAEL

VOCABULARY

alleged *(adj)* suspected, not proven	**escalation** *(n)* increase
arsenal *(n)* collection of weapons	**sophisticated** *(adj)* very advanced

PREVIEW

How do you think the Israeli/Palestinian conflict affects life in Israel today?

A bombed Israeli bus and innocent passengers are the work of a Palestinian suicide bomber.

The **escalation** of violence inside and outside the Occupied Territories has made life in Israel dangerous. Palestinian resistance organisations have increased the use of suicide bombing in civilian areas in response to:

- Continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian land
- Harsher responses by the Israeli army
- Lack of progress with the peace process.

Palestinian suicide bombers target public places such as bus stations, restaurants, nightclubs and community halls. The Israeli army has strongly reacted by using its **sophisticated arsenal.** They use helicopter gunships, fighter jets and tanks to respond to the Palestinian violence. Israelis use targeted killing of **alleged** Palestinian terrorists which has made the situation worse. Each side refers to the other's murderous activities as "terrorism:" One form is committed by individuals or members of organisations whilst the other is committed by a State. The results are the same: Innocent people are dying, both sides refuse to be open to understanding the other side and the conflict is nowhere near resolved.

Government vs The People

In most international conflicts it is common that the position or opinion of a government is not the same as what the people think or want. Such is the case in Israel/Palestine. Throughout all the years of this conflict, there have been people on both sides who have strongly disagreed with their governments and their leaders. There have been individual Israelis and Palestinians, as well as organisations, which reject violence and have tried to work together to find peaceful solutions.

DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think suicide bombers choose public places to carry out their actions?
2. How do the Israeli reactions to the suicide bombing affect plans for peace?
3. What other options do the Israeli and Palestinians have?

DEBATE

The hostile actions of the State cannot be called "terrorism."

ROLEPLAY

Read the two stories below. Then in pairs take the role of either Rachel or Majdi and have a discussion on how to create peace in Israel/Palestine.

RACHEL'S STORY

Rachel Shamir is a university student in Jerusalem. She used to believe that peace was possible with the Palestinians, but now she is no longer sure.

One year ago her brother, who was in the Israeli army, was killed by a Palestinian at a military checkpoint. Rachel explained, "He was only 19 years old and he was my only sibling." My parents have not gotten over his death and are really angry. They think we should just send all the Palestinians out of Israel forever."

Six months later, Rachel was at a restaurant popular with university students. "I went to this restaurant like I usually do every week." However, this time the restaurant was chosen as the target of a Palestinian suicide bomber. "I remember the ear splitting sound of the explosion and then the screams and people wailing. Blood was splattered everywhere." Four people died in the bomb blast but Rachel was lucky, she only suffered a few scratches and cuts from shattered glass. Rachel asks, "Why do they attack innocent people?"

Ever since that day, Rachel doesn't go out in public very often. She tries to hurry from place to place, never stopping too long at any one spot. She is frightened and confused. "I believe there must be some compromise with the Palestinians but I don't know how anyone can trust them."

(Adapted from: http://www.megastories.com/mideast/reports/1018/action.html)

MAJDI'S STORY

Majdi Dana, a Palestinian youth worker in the West Bank town of Hebron, spends a lot of time trying to persuade young Palestinians there are other things besides violence.

But avoiding snipers to get to work, he understands only too well why many youngsters end up on the front-line throwing stones at Israeli soldiers.

"I did it too. I went with the daily marches, which started from the main street, down to the city centre and ended in clashes with the Israeli soldiers. I still throw rocks sometimes, but only if I think it is really necessary," he told me.

"It's the frustration … I go past the stage of fear - like I'm not afraid if I see a helicopter shooting. But I think all the time for the children in the city. I hear many stories about my nephews and my nieces. My sisters tell me that they cry all night long because of the noise of the shooting and the rockets."

Since the start of the latest round of violence, life for Majdi has meant either sitting at home 24 hours a day and making do with what's left in the cupboard, or leaping over garden walls to get to work without getting shot: "You lose weight but you also lose your mind," he said.

At night Majdi lies awake listening to the sound of missile and rocket attacks on the neighbourhood. "Sometimes they aim, sometimes not." He says the Israelis fire randomly: " My friend told me this morning there were 4 bullets in the kitchen and one of the bullets went into the leg of her younger brother. He couldn't get to the hospital right away because the Israeli soldiers had blocked the main road. By the time he arrived at the hospital, he had lost a lot of blood and nearly died. Fortunately, he survived. He was one of the lucky ones."

THE TRAGEDY OF IRAQ

1. A BRITISH CREATION

BRAINSTORM

What do you know about the recent history of Iraq?
What is happening there now?
Who is involved in the Iraq crisis? Why are they involved?

VOCABULARY

province (n) regional area within a larger State, country or Territory	**distinct** (adj) particular; unique
sect (n) a subdivision of a main religion	**protectorate** (n) a kind of a colony with some independenc

King Faisal (front right) was selected by the British to rule the new colony of Iraq.

Before World War I, the place we now know as Iraq was a part of the Ottoman Empire. After the Ottoman Empire split up at the end of WWI (1918), Great Britain took control of Iraq. However, this area was never considered to be one country before the British got involved. In 1920, the British combined the three separate Ottoman **provinces** of Mosul in the north, Basra in the south and Baghdad in the centre to create the new colony of Iraq. Each of these three provinces had its own **distinct** culture. In the north were the Kurds, the south the Shi'as (a **sect** of Islam) and Baghdad was mostly Sunnis (another sect of Islam).

When the British drew the new boundaries, they excluded oil rich Kuwait from the new Iraq. During the time of the Ottoman Empire, Kuwait was part of Basra. After WWI, Kuwait remained a British "**protectorate**," though completely separate from Iraq. The British appointed King Faisal to rule the new Iraq. Unfortunately Faisal was not from the area, but was from Arabia.

All of these decisions by the British led to many future resentments, conflicts, difficulties and problems in the region.

COMPREHENSION

- Who controlled Iraq before the British?
- Name the main ethnic and religious groups in Iraq.
- List three things the British did in Iraq, which made it difficult to govern.

DISCUSSION

What could be some consequences of appointing an outsider (King Faisal) to rule the new Iraq?
The paragraph says that decisions made by the British led to many problems in Iraq. Do you agree? Why or why not?

PREVIEW

Look at the map of Iraq. What prominent geographical features can you see? What importance do you think they have played in Iraq's history?

2. OIL AND WATER

The combination of these two valuable resources has been at the root of years of conflict and foreign interest in the Middle East. Two major rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, flow through Iraq, and provide a useful transport route and also a source of fresh water in a generally dry land. But it is oil which has been the most interesting resource for outside countries.

In the early 20th century, the British established themselves as primary controllers of the Mosul and Kuwaiti oil fields. From 1920 until an Iraqi military takeover in 1958, the British remained in Iraq. Protecting the oil fields was one of the main responsibilities. Even after "independence" was given to Iraq in 1930, the British kept a military presence in Iraq.

This form of occupation also helped to create an anti-Western feeling among many Iraqis. These feeling would re-appear during the next occupation in 2003. Britain was responsible for governing Iraq and therefore had the advantage in access to its rich oil supplies. But Britain was not the only country interested in Iraqi oil. France, Germany, Russia and especially the United States all struggled to keep a presence in Iraq because of oil.

Iraq has the second largest oil reserves in the world (after Saudi Arabia). Access to and control of Middle Eastern oil proved to be one of the most important international political issues during the entire twentieth century. It still is today.

COMPREHENSION

1. Why did the British keep a military presence in Iraq even when it became independent?
2. Why did many Iraqis get anti-Western feelings?

DISCUSSION

Why is oil so important? Name all the uses of oil/petrol. What role does oil play in most economies?

EXCERCISE

Bar Graphs: Make a bar graph comparing the top six oil producing countries in the world.

Country	**Oil Reserves (in billion barrels)**
Saudi Arabia	265
Iraq	115
Iran	96
Kuwait	99
UAE	63
Russia	54

GROUP WORK

Have a mini debate in your group:
Was it a good idea for the British to keep a military presence in Iraq after the country became independent?

3. NATIONALISM AND THE BIRTH OF A TYRANT

VOCABULARY

revolt *(n,v)* forcefully try to change a current situation **secular** *(adj)* not religious

ruthless *(adj)* will use any methods to achieve goals, merciless

Saddam Hussein

After nearly forty years of foreign occupation in Iraq, in 1958 a nationalist military **revolt** replaced the **monarchy.** The new Iraqi leaders were also anti-Western. The new nationalist government in Iraq had three major goals:

1) Uniting Arabs from all over the region to work together.
2) Removing Zionists from Palestine and
3) Re-claiming Kuwait (remember, Kuwait was not included in the new British Iraq).

The military continued to control Iraqi politics for the next two decades. In 1979, Saddam Hussein, an officer in the army, seized power and remained in power until the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Saddam Hussein was an authoritarian and **ruthless** dictator. Saddam's political party was called the Ba'ath party. Its membership was mostly Sunni Muslims who were a minority in Iraq. However, they controlled both the military and the government.

The Ba'athist party was a **secular** party and it developed positive relations with Western countries as well as the Soviet Union. There was virtually no political opposition in Iraq. Political opponents were sometimes imprisoned, tortured and even murdered. In particular, the Kurds in the North and the Shi'as in the South suffered extreme persecution from the Sunni controlled Ba'athist regime. Many refugees and exiles left Iraq during the reign of Saddam.

COMPREHENSION

1. Name three things the nationalists hoped to achieve.
2. True or False? The new military government in Iraq supported European countries.
3. True or False? Saddam Hussein's ethnic group was in the majority in Iraq.
4. True or False? Saddam Hussein's government was anti-Western.
5. How did Saddam Hussein's government respond to political opposition?

DISCUSSION

How is it possible for a minority group (like Sunnis in Iraq) to control a country?
Clue: Which parts of society have the most influence?
During the British military presence there were anti-Western feelings developing in Iraq. However, Saddam Hussein's government was interested in establishing friendly relations with the West. How can you explain this? Why was Saddam Hussein interested in friendly relations with the West?

4. WAR WITH IRAN

Vocabulary

strict (adj) very exact, inflexible, orthodox	**militarisation** (n) build-up of weapons and military
intelligence (n) information of political and military importance	**disputes** (n) disagreements, arguments

PREVIEW

Find Iran on the map. What countries does Iran border? What do you know about Iran and its people? Do you know who started the war between Iran and Iraq?

In 1980, Iraq attacked its neighbour Iran and began a war, which lasted eight years. The year before, in 1979, there was an Islamic Revolution in Iran. In other words, a government came to power, which was based on a **strict** interpretation of Islamic principles. Secular Iraq did not want this ideology to spread. Also, old border **disputes** between Iraq and Iran were unresolved.

Many powerful Western countries, especially the United States and Great Britain also feared the spread of this "Islamist" ideology. In addition, the Islamic revolutionary government in Iran was extremely anti-Western. There was a good chance that Western access to the rich Iranian oil fields would be restricted. Therefore, during the eight years of the Iraq-Iran war, Iraq received large amounts of military and financial aid from the US, Britain, France and Germany. The aid was in the form of weapons, technology and **intelligence**.

During the war, both Iran and Iraq used chemical weapons on each other. Although this was a clear violation of international law, Iraq continued to receive support from its Western 'friends.' As the war continued, the casualties grew on both sides. By war's end, over a million Iraqis and Iranians had died. Iraq and Iran had both suffered great loss and finally agreed to a cease-fire in 1989. One very important result of the Iraq-Iran war was the **militarisation** of Iraq. This new weapons technology came mainly from Western countries.

International "Friends"

In the world of international relations, countries often develop 'friendships' or alliances based on current political needs. If the needs change, so do the 'friendships.' Iran and Iraq are a good case in point. Before the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran was a strong ally of the US. As a Cold War balance to the US friendly Iran, the USSR supported Iraq. However, the new government in Iran was very anti-American. So, going by the old saying, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend," the US supported Iraq in its war against Iran.

COMPREHENSION

1. List two reasons Iraq started a war against Iran.
2. List two reasons the US and Britain supported Iraq against Iran.
3. How did the Western countries support Iraq?
4. Did the West stop supporting Iraq after it used chemical weapons?
5. Who won the Iraq-Iran war?

DISCUSSION

Discuss the meaning of:"The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Can you think of other examples where this has been true?

GROUP WORK

Group A is the government of Iran. Group B is the government of Iraq. Group C is the US government. Have a role play about the conflict situation and war between Iran and Iraq.

5. INVASION OF KUWAIT AND THE GULF WAR

VOCABULARY

annex (v) officially take claim and possession of land
withdrawal (n) leaving; ending an occupation

PREVIEW

What do you know about the Gulf War? Why is it called that way? Who fought in the Gulf War? Who won?
Find Kuwait on the map. Is it a large country? Why do you think Saddam Hussein was interested in controlling Kuwait? Do you think its geographical location had anything to do with it?

Pushing the Boundaries

In 1990, Iraq was still recovering from the effects of the long war with Iran. But, Saddam Hussein had plans for another neighbour: This time it was Kuwait. Iraq had a long history of border disputes with Kuwait. Kuwait had been a part of the Ottoman province of Basra before the British took control. The Iraqi government believed that Kuwait was a part of Iraq. Kuwait's oil and access to the Persian Gulf made it very attractive to Iraq. In July 1990, Iraq invaded, occupied and **annexed** Kuwait.

International Crisis in a New World Order

The international community reacted strongly, condemning the invasion. The collapse of the Soviet Union the year before and the end of the Cold War had left the United States as the sole superpower. This crisis with Iraq was the first opportunity for the US to show its new dominant position within the UN and the international community.

When the UN suggested resolutions against the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the US vetoed these resolutions. However, the US supported the UN sanctions against Iraq. The United States led the world in aggressively speaking out against the Iraqi invasion. The UN quickly passed a resolution demanding an Iraqi **withdrawal** from Kuwait. Negotiations for a peaceful settlement between Iraq and the UN had provided some hope but failed when the United States decided it would not wait any longer. In fact, the US Congress had already given approval for an attack of Iraq with or without UN approval. The US managed to influence and convince several countries to join in a military attack against Iraq. The attack began on 16 January 1991.

A burning Iraqi oil well during the Gulf War

Saddam Down, but not Out

This military force was mainly American but did have minor participation by Britain, France and several other countries. The US-led "coalit ion" easily forced the much weaker Iraqi army out of Kuwait. The Iraqi military was never a serious threat to the powerful US-led forces. Tens of thousands of Iraqi troops were killed as well as thousands of Iraqi civilians.

At the end of this very short (about three weeks) war, known as the *Gulf War*, the US encouraged and helped organise a rebellion inside Iraq. The two persecuted ethnic groups, the Kurds and the Shi'as, tried to overthrow the Iraqi government. Unfortunately, when they did revolt, the US did not provide the military support needed for a successful overthrow. The result was a disaster and many Kurds and Shi'as were killed. It wasn't long before Saddam was firmly back in power, however, now he was no longer a friend of the West.

COMPARISON

1. Compare the US reactions to Israeli occupation and Iraqi occupation.
2. Why do you think there were differences?
3. Compare the Iraqi military to the US-led forces.
4. Compare what the Kurds and Shi'as hoped to get from the Americans with what they did get?

DEBATE

The US should not encourage rebellion and the overthrow of other governments

6. BETWEEN TWO WARS: SANCTIONS AND "NO-FLY ZONES"

VOCABULARY

sewerage (n) sanitary system for disposal of wastewater	**extensive** (adj) very involved, widespread
economic sanctions (n) making it difficult for one country to trade with another; blocking import/export	**patrolling** (v) close monitoring, watching activities
elite (adj, n) privileged, high ranking, high status	**sovereign** (adj) independent

US and UK controlled most Iraqi airspace for twelve years

Iraq suffered extreme damage and casualties because of the Gulf War. US-led forces destroyed a great deal of Iraq's *infrastructure* (roads, bridges, ports, communications, power supply, etc) during the war. Many Iraqis were without power, access to clean water, safe **sewerage** and transport. Many public facilities like schools and hospitals were damaged or destroyed.

Before the war, the UN voted to put **economic sanctions** on Iraq to try and pressure it to withdraw from Kuwait. These sanctions remained for the next 12 years. Because of these sanctions, a very **extensive** *black market* (goods sold illegally without any government regulation) was created. However, for common Iraqis without lots of money or connections (to officials or business), life became very difficult. The destroyed infrastructure needed rebuilding. Sewage and public water supplies needed repair. Many supplies were blocked by the sanctions. This led to the spread of diseases like cholera. Especially dangerous was the fact that hospitals had difficulty getting supplies and equipment.

The Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein chose to rebuild its military after the Gulf War. Money used for military spending could have been used for fighting the effects of the sanctions. UNICEF (United Nations Childrens Fund) estimated that over 500,000 Iraqis died because of sanctions: over half of them children. Many countries tried to pass UN resolutions to end the sanctions but each time the US and Britain would veto the resolution.

The US and Britain claimed the sanctions should remain until Iraq had followed all of the UN demands. Especially important was a UN resolution, which demanded that Iraq destroy all of its weapons. UN weapons inspectors were sent to Iraq to confirm that the Iraqis were following their orders. The Iraqi government did not always co-operate and do as they were told which made the inspection and disarming process extremely difficult. At the same time, the US and Britain (and France in the beginning) began **patrolling** Iraq with military aircraft and declared two "no-fly zones" over northern and southern Iraq. This meant that no Iraqi aircraft could fly in these zones. These zones covered more than half of all **sovereign** Iraqi air space.

The US and Britain claimed that the purpose of the zones was to protect the Kurds and Shi'as from being persecuted by the Iraqi military. Any Iraqi activity considered threatening within these zones would receive immediate and severe US/British military response. The Americans and British made hundreds of attacks on alleged Iraqi military targets. However, some of these attacks involved more than military targets. Hundreds of innocent Iraqi civilians were killed due to US/British bombing raids.

The "no-fly zones" were never approved by the United Nations. Despite these hardships on Iraq, the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein still had the resources to rebuild its army. The **elite** political and military leaders did not suffer like the majority of Iraq's population. However, worse fortune was still to come for the Iraqi people.

COMPREHENSION

1. Name two direct effects of the Gulf War.
2. What was the purpose of the economic sanctions on Iraq?
3. Who suffered the most from the sanctions?
4. Why did so many people die as a result of sanctions?
5. Where were the no-fly zones located?
6. Who approved the no-fly zones?

GROUP WORK

In your group compare the situation in Burma and in Iraq. List all differences and similarities you can think of.

DISCUSSION

How effective are economic sanctions? What are the effects—on a government and on the people of that country? What is the situation of the current economic sanctions on Burma? Do you support economic sanctions? Explain

ROLEPLAY

Each group will play a role of one of the countries in the UN. Role play a UN meeting, where the countries discuss the issue of the sanctions on Iraq.

7. THE IRAQ WAR

PREVIEW

Why did the Iraq War happen? What were the factors?
What is your opinion of the Iraq War? Explain

VOCABULARY

emphasise (v) to give special attention to, to stress
credible (adj) believable,, probable
expel (v) to force out, remove forcefully
misleading (adj) give a false impression, not truthful
liberate (v) to free, to unchain
legitimacy (n) influence, power, authority
defiance (n) opposition, disobedience
insufficient (adj) not enough, unsatisfactory
comprehensive (adj) complete, thorough
exaggerated (v) over stated, distorted
chaos (n) confusion; disorder
irrelevant (n, adj) meaningless, not important
intensify (v) make stronger

At the end of the Gulf War there were many powerful people in Washington DC who were very disappointed. For them, the war wasn't finished until Saddam Hussein was removed from power. Besides, these people felt America had many interests in Iraq. Over the next 12 years, much effort, money and preparation went into achieving this goal of "regime change" (changing the government in Iraq). The following methods were used to achieve regime change:

- the bombing raids in the "no-fly zones;"
- CIA activities to overthrow and/or kill Saddam;
- maintaining economic sanctions
- funding and training opposition groups inside and outside of Iraq;
- increasing public relations (influencing opinions by providing specific anti- Saddam information to the media—newspapers, magazines, radio, TV).

US tanks in Baghdad: US war planners had to wait for the right moment

Between 1991 and 2003, the US spent billions of dollars to try and change the Iraqi government.

A Case for War

Until the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, there was little public or international support for a second war with Iraq. Yet, an atmosphere of fear and worry about terrorism resulted from these attacks. The US government decided to take advantage of these fears to gain support for making Iraq a part of their global "War on Terror."

From early 2002 until the attack in March 2003, the US government attempted to convince the world that Saddam Hussein was the major threat to global security and peace. The fact that Saddam was one of the most outspoken critics of America was **emphasised**. US politicians tried to make a link between Saddam and the international terrorist organisation, Al Qaeda, despite **insufficient** evidence.

There were also claims that Iraq had nuclear weapons and might be willing to use them or, more likely, sell them to terrorist organisations. The US accused Iraq of having large quantities of chemical weapons as well. After the Gulf War, UN weapons inspectors spent years in Iraq trying to disarm the Iraqi regime. The Iraqi government's lack of co-operation made this task difficult, but UN inspectors found little evidence of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Up until this date there has been no evidence found that Iraq was still in possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The final argument used to justify "regime change" was to **liberate** the Iraqi people. This last reason had much support since the human rights abuses in Saddam Hussein's Iraq were well known. The regime in Iraq, however, was not the only government to abuse human rights. Why then should Iraq be targeted above other countries?

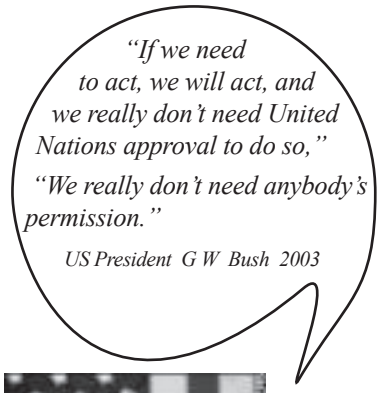
EXERCISE

Make a diagram to represent the sequence of events described in the four paragraphs above.

The UN is Tested

Those supporting the UN process and international law believed there was a legal and peaceful solution to the Iraq problem. They argued for:

1) Continuing sanctions
2) Increasing political pressure/negotiations
3) **Intensifying** weapons inspections to insure Iraq was not a threat.



The American government (with the support of British Prime Minister Tony Blair) argued that 12 years of sanctions and other pressure on Iraq had not stopped Saddam from resisting UN demands. Therefore, only through the use of force could there ever be a change in Iraq. Like in the Gulf War, the American government decided that they would go to war with or without the UN approval or participation.

G W Bush

The US president, GW Bush challenged the UN to either support the forceful removal of Saddam Hussein or else become, **"irrelevant".**
The power and **legitimacy** of the UN was tested like never before. There was much discussion, debate and negotiation at the UN in the tense months before the March 20, 2003

attack of Iraq. In the meantime, the Americans and British began moving large numbers of combat troops and equipment to the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar) in preparation for war. The US/British increased the now regular bombing of Iraqi military and communication targets in the "no-fly zones."

World public opinion, the United Nations and most governments strongly opposed war at that point. Even Iraq's Arab/Muslim neighbours in the Middle East, who should have felt the most threat from Iraq, did not support a war against Iraq. The largest anti-war demonstrations ever seen since the Vietnam War were held all over the world.

The majority of the world's people were united and said "NO to war!"

Muslim protest Even Saddam's neighbours did not feel a threat

War and the Effects

But in the end, as in the Gulf War, the American government would not wait any longer for a peaceful settlement. Along with Britain, Australia and Spain (known as "the Coalition"), the United States attacked, invaded and finally occupied Iraq—in clear **defiance** of the UN, international public opinion, and international law. Once again, the poorly trained and poorly equipped Iraqi military was easily defeated by the most powerful military force in history. This time, the US-led forces did not stop until they had the entire country under their control.

Man and child The innocent victims of war. Over 11000 Iraqi civilians have died.

The initial damage to Iraq and its people was great. In the first month of fighting over 3000 Iraqi civilians were killed. The number of civilian deaths would continue to rise. The destruction of Iraq infrastructure and the ongoing fighting between the occupying forces and the Iraqi resistance, kept Iraq in a state of **chaos**.

US soldiers fighting an urban guerrilla war

Iraqis want control of their own country

War in Iraq: The Aftermath

On May 1, 2003 US president George W Bush announced an end to major military action as well as, victory in Iraq. Over one year later, more than 11,000 Iraqi civilians, several thousand Iraqi soldiers and well over 1000 US and "Coalition" soldiers have been killed (over 700 since Bush's "victory" speech). After the most careful and comprehensive search by American weapon's inspectors, no evidence of any weapons of mass destruction has been found in Iraq. Further, we have learned that much of the so-called intelligence and evidence presented before the war was inaccurate, misleading, false, or created by those supporting war.

The US and the UK government special enquiries to investigate pre-war intelligence found that the threat from Iraq was exaggerated and that intelligence had been used selectively (not using all of the information, just the parts which are wanted) by politicians to justify their position. Saddam Hussein was caught alive and is being held by the Americans. The US-led forces are involved in a guerrilla-style war against Iraqi resistance—an Iraqi resistance that includes local Iraqis as well as foreign fighters.

Before the war, there was little evidence of the presence of international terrorist groups in Iraq, but now the American occupation has attracted many terrorists who have come to expel the occupiers. Iraq has become a land of suicide bombings, rocket attacks, patrolling tanks, helicopter gunships, sniper and other constant gunfire. Journalists, aid workers, private contractors (in Iraq for reconstruction), US-trained Iraqi security forces and newly appointed Iraqi politicians have all been victims of kidnapping, abuse and murder.

The US government is trying to install a government in Iraq so that it can begin to withdraw some of its military troops—As of 10/04 there are still over 130,000 American soldiers in Iraq. A new Iraqi interim (temporary) government was chosen by the US occupation government to take over power on 30 June, 2004. Elections are planned for sometime in the future.

Even with the new Iraqi interim government, the daily terror attacks continue. Many see this new government as controlled by the Americans and therefore illegitimate. The Americans have made it clear that they do not intend to leave Iraq completely. Military bases are being established in Iraq to prepare for a long term US military presence. Opposition to the US occupation is extremely strong in Iraq and throughout the Middle East. Most Iraqis were very happy to see the end of Saddam Hussein's regime but as with Britain over 80 years ago, the Iraqi people do not want outsiders coming into their country to take over their land, resources and futures.

COMPREHENSION

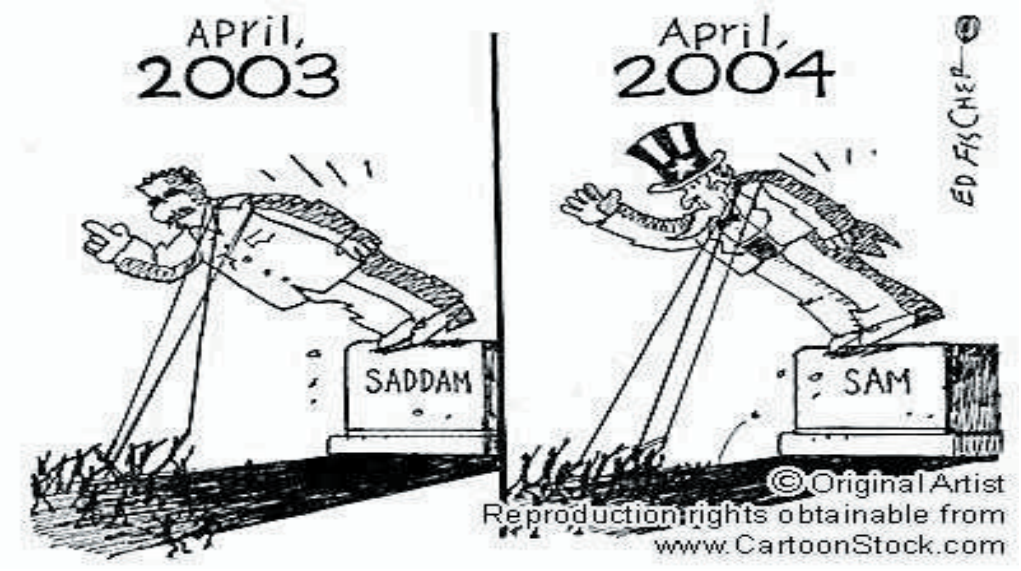
1. Why were some US officials dissatisfied with the result of the Gulf War?
2. What were the reasons the US government gave for war with Iraq in 2002/2003?
3. Were these reasons agreeable to everyone? Explain
4. How did the UN believe the Iraqi crisis should be resolved?
5. Was the UN able to prevent war in Iraq? Why or why not?
6. Did US actions in Iraq (2003) have the majority of the world's support? Explain
7. What was learned after the US attack about the so-called 'Iraqi threat?'

DEBATE

Choose the side of the United States government or the United Nations.
Debate the issue of war in Iraq. What were the reasons given for going to war? What were the risks? What were the costs? What were the results? What is the current situation? Was it worth it?

DISCUSSION

- If the US is so concerned with human rights and democracy, than why are they not threatening "regime change" in Burma?
- Would you support the US attacking, invading and occupying Burma if it meant an end to the present government?

CARTOON INTERPRETATION

Look at the cartoon below. Who do the two statues represent? Who are the people pulling them down? Why are they pulling down the statues? What is the main message of this cartoon? How does it relate to the theme of colonialism in the Middle East?