

CHAPTER II

THE MIDDLE EAST

At the end of this chapter the students 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 that lead to the two wars in Iraq.

This chapter looks at two very violent, complex and tragic conflicts in the Middle East. These two conflicts are often described as being a simple case of “right’ or “wrong.” People simplistically blame one side or the other. However, the situation is not simple. Many innocent people have been killed and continue to die in these conflicts.

Only basic background information is provided in this module. In some cases, only very simplified explanations are given because it would take books, not modules, to properly explain the issues. However, hopefully students will be able to see why the conflicts continue, and to understand the various points-of-view.

INTRODUCTION

1. THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

BRAINSTORM

Students are to say as much as they know and *think* they know about the Middle East.

Some reasons for countries going to war could be land disputes, natural resources, political domination in the region, religion, etc.

Some answers: The Middle East stretches from Egypt in the West to Afghanistan in the East.

See ***Who are the People of the Middle East ?*** in the Supplementary Pack for extra information

MAP WORK

Use the Ottoman Empire map in the module and a modern map of the Middle East to find the countries. If you don't have enough maps for groups of students to work with, get students to take turns to come up to the board and find the countries on the map.

COMPREHENSION

1. At the end of World War One (WWI). Because the Ottomans had been getting weaker while other European countries were getting stronger by the start of the 20th century. Because the Ottomans were allies with the Germans and the Germany lost the war.
2. Great Britain and France
3. European leaders from the countries who won WWI.
4. They were not involved in deciding their own boundaries.

DISCUSSION

Hopefully the students will understand the frustration and anger that local population would feel when outsiders are deciding their fate for them.

Arabs, like other colonized people, were angry at the way Europeans made such important decisions without consulting the local people. They did not want to accept those decisions.

Encourage the students to compare this situation with the situation in Burma at the time of independence. How were decisions made in Burma?

Other similar situations in different parts of the world include South East Asia (Indochina was created by the French), Many parts of Africa (East Africa was mostly British, West Africa mostly French). Many Pacific Islands have been divided amongst the French, British and Americans. South America was divided between Spain and Portugal. Burma and India were divided up by the British.

MAP WORK

Students should write in the name of the countries clearly then colour in lightly in one colour for Great Britain and a different colour for France.

Answers: France:

Syria, Lebanon

Great Britain: Palestine, Trans-Jordan (now called Jordan), Iraq, Kuwait, Arabian Peninsula (not controlled by Britain but allied with Britain)

2. THE RESPONSE TO COLONIALISM

DISCUSSION

Some possible answers: Because local populations were not happy being controlled by outsiders. Especially, after the British did not honour their agreement with Arabs. This agreement was that if the Arabs helped the British during World War One against the Ottomans, the British would allow some Arabs to have independence and control over their own land.

At the start of the twentieth century there were growing movements by colonised people to end colonial rule. All over the world there was growing dissatisfaction with colonialism. One reason contributing to the effectiveness of the new anti-colonialists was the fact that more and more local colonised people were being educated in the West (Europe and America). These people saw how life could be and when they compared it to how their countries were being controlled by outsiders, they clearly saw the injustice. Because they had a Western education they could also understand the colonisers better and develop more effective strategies to resist. Therefore, with increased travel and experiencing other cultures, local people were able to see that they could have and should have a better and freer way of life.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

1. CREATION OF A STATE

BRAINSTORM

Students can discuss the situation inside Burma as well as life on the Border. They can relate to their own personal experiences. Everyone should be able to relate to the issue of persecution.

DISCUSSION

For Jews around the world, the creation of the Jewish State in 1948 was a great event. Jews had not had their own state for about 2,000 years. There were forced from their land and had to migrate from country to country all around the world for hundreds of years. They have suffered persecution almost everywhere they went and have had to become refugees again and again throughout history.

Millions of Jews around the world were happy and proud of their new independent country. They hoped that this would bring the long-awaited peace to the Jewish nation. However, many Jews around the world also saw that the creation of Israel was not going to solve many problems. Many people could see that since the decision about the State of Israel was made without the true participation of the Arabic people that lived in the region it would very quickly cause problems for the new State of Israel.

The Arabs in the region felt that the creation of the Jewish State was unfair. They believed that the area had historically belonged to them and the claims of the Jews were not valid. There were many more Arabs than Jews living in the region. The Arabs were also very angry with the British and the UN because they were not involved in making decisions about what happened on their land. They felt the decision was made without any participation on their part. They did not trust the British or the Jews.

Since Arabs outnumbered the Jews 10 to 1 in the region they felt it was their land. They felt they didn't need to take the Jewish State into account. They felt the Jews didn't have any rightful claims to any land in the region. Arabs saw Jews as basically European people. They felt that creation of Israel was an intrusion of foreigners (culturally and religiously different people) into what was rightfully their land.

COMPREHENSION

1. Arabs (agreed/**disagreed**) with the UN partition plan.
2. The Jewish movement which encouraged settling in Palestine was called **Zionism**.
3. Israel declared itself a new state in **1948**.
4. In Palestine, there were many **ethnic** 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

Some possible answers: They believed it was unfair for this small group of mostly European settlers to have their own country. They also feared that it could lead to more serious conflict. They did not trust the Jews. The Arabs and Jews did not completely accept each other's religion. There was a lot of prejudice.

The neighbouring Arab countries started a war against the new State of Israel.

Students may have many opinions on how this could have been handled better. For example, the local Arab nations could have been involved in making decisions about the creation of the State of Israel and deciding on its borders. The British might have taken a more active role in facilitating early negotiations between the Jewish nationalists (Zionists) wanting to create an independent country, and the Arab nations in the region.

An important note to this situation is that the British were wanting to get out of Palestine for many reasons. First, after WWII, the British had suffered a lot and could not manage colonies all over the world any more. Secondly, there had been a very strong and violent Israeli nationalist movement to force the British out of Palestine. There were a lot of Israeli terrorist actions against the British (ie bombings, sabotage, assassinations). Therefore, perhaps the British left without giving the whole situation as much thought as they could have.

EXERCISE

Students to show what is similar and what is different to their own situation as refugees. Students may need some historical background to your camp and other camps along the Border.

Some possible answers:

Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">They are refugeesThey are not given equal rights or legal status in the countries they run toThey have to live in temporary settlementsThey cannot return to their homes because they are afraid of persecution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Palestinians refugees enjoy a much greater international profilePalestinian refugees seek shelter in the neighbouring countries that have almost identical cultural and religious practices.Burmese refugees have to rely completely on NGOs, while Palestinian refugees can partially provide for themselves.Karen and Karenni refugees in camps have their own education system supported by NGOs while education for majority of Palestinian refugees is provided by the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Welfare Agency). A small number of Palestinian refugees is able to access education in the countries of temporary asylum.

DISCUSS

Some possible answers: Then neighbouring Arab countries could have offered better legal status to Palestinian refugees on their land and helped them to integrate in the new countries' societies, since they are fellow Arabs, practice the same religion, and a similar way of life. Of course, it is still important to realize that even within Arabic society there are a lot of cultural and religious differences and sub-groups.

The neighbouring Arab countries could have been more ready to negotiate with Israel to achieve better peace in the region so that it would be easier for refugees to return home.

3. THE OCCUPATION

COMPREHENSION

1. Some sample answers:

political reasons	religious reasons	geographical reasons	social reasons	other reasons
<p>Most Arab countries refused to recognise the State of Israel. Some do not accept Israel as a legal country. Some are angry about Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and oppression of Palestinian people.</p> <p>The US has supported Israel since independence. The US/Israel connection is strong which makes Israel be seen as a threat by the other Arab countries. Israel has the strongest military in the Middle East (including nuclear weapons) and has successfully fought and won wars against its Arab neighbours.</p>	<p>Jerusalem is a very important city for Jews, Muslims and Christians. Now it is controlled by Israel. That makes it difficult for Muslims and Christians from most Arab countries to visit there.</p>	<p>Israel occupies the Golan Heights which legally belong to Syria. They have occupied Southern Lebanon for a long time until recently.</p> <p>The Palestinians still do not have a country of their own. The Israelis have gained more land since independence. Jewish settlements in the West Bank in the Occupied Territories has angered and threatened Palestinians. The Security Barrier has taken a lot of land from the West Bank.</p>	<p>Lack of equality, lack of respect for Palestinian rights.</p> <p>Wealth of Israel compared with surrounding countries.</p>	<p>The Palestinian struggle is very popular among people throughout the Middle East. By opposing Israel, some Middle Eastern governments can gain respect and support from their people.</p>

2. Methods used by Israel to control the Occupied Territories:

- building a wall to separate the Occupied Territories from the rest of Israel, and separate Palestinians from each other
- maintaining Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories and a continued military presence to protect these settlements
- 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.

3. Lack of freedom of speech, press and assembly. Freedom of movement (from place to place due to checkpoints and the Wall). House demolitions and confiscation of land. Basically most of the answers to number 2 above are violations of human rights.

4. Students should justify their answer. Why do they think 'yes' or 'no'?

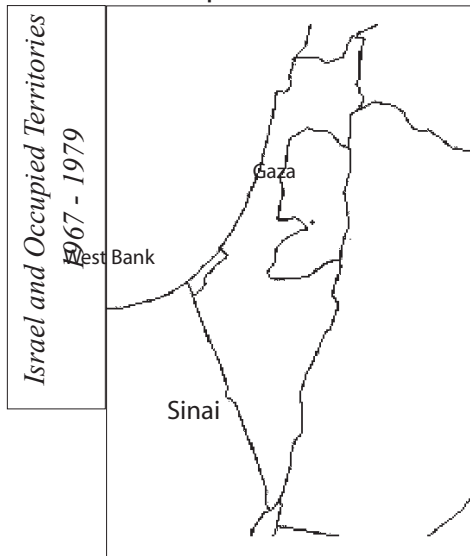
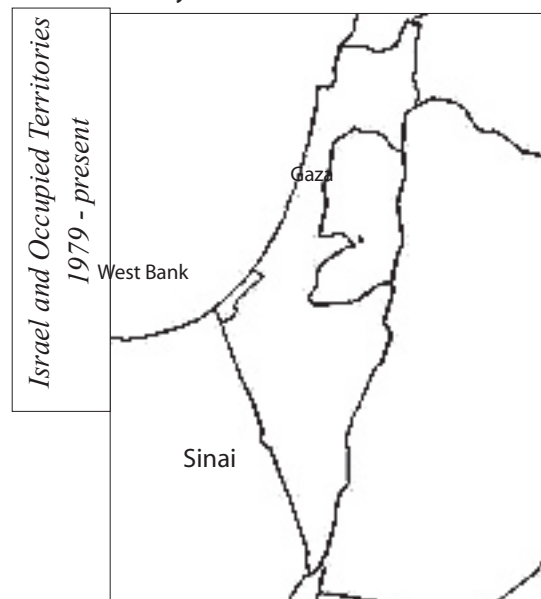
5. They are trying to make themselves safe from very hostile Palestinian actions as well as from hostile neighbours. They are trying protect Israeli citizens. They are trying to control the Palestinians.

6. Encourage discussion with as many ideas and alternatives as possible

Remember, there are two sides to this story. Two points-of-view. Encourage the students to recognize both views.

MAP WORK

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



2. *Possible Answers:* The map of Israel has grown since 1947. Israel has gained/taken land from the Palestinians and neighbours. The borders have grown. Israel keeps on taking more land from its neighbours. Israel took a large piece of land from Egypt (Sinai Peninsula) after the war in 1967 but then gave it back in 1979.

Events: The Six Day War in 1967 when Israel took control of Sinai and Gaza (Egypt) and the West Bank (Jordan) and Golan Heights (Syria).

The peace deal in 1979 when Israel gave back the Sinai Peninsula.

4. THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE VETO

This brief introduction to the United Nations (UN) is to show students how the UN works and how the structure of the UN has resulted in decision-making. The UN was created after World War Two. The main countries to create the UN were the winning countries in the war. Therefore, the US, Britain, France, China and USSR created an organisation in which they would have the most power. The main purpose stated by the creators of the UN was to have an international organisation which could help to prevent war and where countries could go to solve conflicts peacefully.

During the Cold War, the UN was the scene of non-stop struggle and arguments between the superpowers — US and USSR. After the Cold War ended, the US took firm control of many decisions and used its veto more than any other permanent member of the Security Council. Often the General Assembly (which is the vast majority of the UN membership) will have extremely different opinions and decisions than the Security Council. However, the final decision is in the hands of the 15 Security Council members and the real power is in the hands of the 5 permanent members.

In regard to Israel, the United States has defeated many resolutions condemning Israeli actions. Yet, still Israel has been condemned and criticised many times by the UN. In most cases, the Israeli government has refused to accept UN recommendations. The UN does not have the power to enforce its recommendations except when the powerful members decide to take serious action.

In the case of Israel, the US has never allowed serious action to be taken against Israel. Yet, in other cases as with former Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Croatia) and Iraq, there have been strong UN military actions. In these cases, the United States agreed to action. In the next unit in this module, the weakness of the UN is discussed in the case of the Iraq War of 2003.

DISCUSSION

Some possible answers:

- The General Assembly is made up of all member nations (over 200). But final decisions are made by a Security Council made up of 15 countries. The membership in the Security Council is made up of five “permanent” members—US, Britain, France, Russia, China—and the other ten members are on the Security Council for two years. The other ten non-permanent members rotate being on the Security Council with all other UN members.
- No. Only the five permanent members can veto a decision. In other words, any one permanent member can defeat a vote even if all of the other countries in the world disagree
- Encourage discussion/opinions
- Encourage discussion to think of a fairer way to make world decisions, for example include more countries in the Security Council of the UN, give more equal power to the permanent and temporary members of the Security Council.

5. THE INTIFADAH

PREVIEW

Students may discuss examples from the democracy movement for Burma.

It may be useful here to show the differences between how to oppose government actions in a more democratic country as well as in less democratic countries. What laws or procedures can some people use in democratic countries? (i.e. appeal to their MPs, organize public talks and demonstrations and protests, set up new political parties or work with existing ones to achieve change)

What are the options for people who have no rights or are persecuted? What about those who have tried to use institutions like the UN but have had no success. Palestinians have gone to the UN many times to seek support only to have resolutions defeated by one or two countries. It might be useful to look at the extremes of choices people make when opposing/resisting their government—from legal demonstrations and elections to violent acts of terrorism.

Palestinians React

DISCUSS

1. Creation of the Palestinian Authority, also the Intifadah brought the situation to the world's attention.
2. Increasing tensions, deaths on both sides, use of terrorist tactics
3. Most politically active Palestinians
4. More concentrated effort on compromise and negotiation rather than opposition and violence

Israel Reacts***International Community Reacts***

GROUP WORK

Consider: people involved, methods used by protestors, reaction by the government, international reaction, results, current situation.

Students work in groups to fill out the chart, then put the chart on board and summarize all the groups' answers

Sample answers:

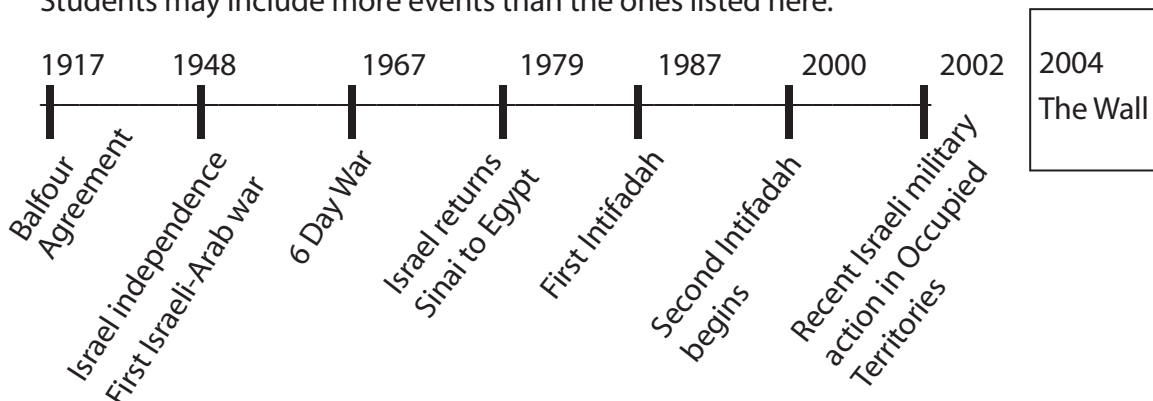
1988 Uprising in Burma	Palestinian Intifadahs
Popular uprising involving people from many different parts of society and many different ethnic groups. It was mostly unplanned – it grew out of smaller student protests. The demands were for a new democratic political system. The protests were peaceful and mostly involved people marching on the street and taking control of suburbs and universities. The uprising was stopped by the military who shot and arrested thousands of people. There was very little international attention.	These were partly planned and announced by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. They are long term (are still going on). The demand is for an end to occupation and for a Palestinian state. Many people from different parts of society and different religions are involved. A large part is non-violent, involving peaceful protest. Part of it is violent involving armed groups, some using terrorist tactics. The Israeli government and army have tried to control the uprisings by using violence. There has been a lot of international attention.

Similarities	Differences
Both involved many people from different backgrounds. Both had violent reactions from governments and involve many deaths and arrests. Both have been unsuccessful in meeting their aims.	The intifadahs have received a lot more attention than the uprising in Burma. The uprising in Burma was peaceful but in Palestine, involves peaceful and violent tactics.

GROUP WORK

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

Students may include more events than the ones listed here.



GROUP WORK

There are many players in this conflict: The Israeli Government, 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.

Below are some possible discussion points and ideas. Students are not expected to have all of the answers. If students need help you can offer suggestions from the table below. Also, some of the answers for what could've been done differently and what could be done now are only realistic if the current atmosphere/environment changes. Therefore, some answers are only "ideal" answers and not practical under current conditions.

Who	What they have done	What they could have done better	What they can do in the future
Israeli Government and military	Occupied Palestinian land. Took land from neighbours. Human rights abuses of Palestinians under occupation. Rejected UN resolutions. Built the security wall. Encouraged Jewish settlements in Occupied Territories (OT)	Allowed Palestinians to have their own land. Not taken land from neighbours. Accepted UN resolutions. Not built the Wall. Not made new settlements. Ended the Occupation.	Agree to peace proposal. Return land to Palestinians. Agree to independent Palestinian State. Take down Wall. Leave settlements. End the Occupation. Live peacefully with Palestinian neighbour State. Allow Palestinians to return to their land in Israel.
Palestinian Authority (PA)	Could not control groups using violence. Accepted terrorism. Acted undemocratically and have been accused of corruption.	Not permitted terrorist groups. Controlled other groups which were violent.	Try to cut all ties with terrorist groups. Co-operate with a peaceful Israeli government.
Millitant groups	Used violence against IDF and Israeli civilians. Didn't co-operate with the Palestinian Authority.	Used peaceful means for bringing about change. Co-operated with the Palestinian Authority. Not targeted civilians.	Use peaceful means for bringing about change. Co-operate with the Palestinian Authority.
The US	Provided more arms to Israel than any other. Gave nuclear technology to Israel. Supported most Israel actions. Vetoed UN resolutions against Israel. Didn't force Israel to stop violence against Palestinians. Used the UN to further their international political agenda.	Not provided arms to Israel. Stopped supporting Israeli actions. Not used veto so often. Forced Israel to stop the violence. Stopped using UN to promote their own aims.	Stop supplying arms to Israel. Force Israel to stop the violence and occupation. Strongly support a peace plan. Stop using the UN to promote their own military aims.
The UN	Did not insist on the Partition Plan. Did not enforce resolutions to end the occupation. Allowed the US to control final decisions.	Insisted on Partition plan borders. Enforced resolutions. Been stronger in trying to stop the US from controlling the UN	Enforce resolutions. Encourage Israel to return to pre-1967 boundaries. Encourage Israel to take down the Wall and end occupation. Find ways to control US domination of the UN. Send peacekeepers.

6. LIFE IN ISRAEL

PREVIEW

Some sample answers:

1. Terrorists cannot fight successfully against a superior Israeli army. Therefore, they attack the most vulnerable. They attack those who cannot fight back. They use surprise and fear to be successful against their enemy. They also hope to weaken the Israeli people's support of their government. They want to receive lots of attention---even negative attention. They also feel that innocent Palestinians are being killed by the Israeli army so it is no different for them to kill innocent Israelis.
2. When the Israeli government reacts to Palestinian violence with more and greater violence it only keeps the cycle of violence going. It also is very bad for Israel's image internationally. It is obvious that Israel has far superior force than the Palestinians so they are often seen as the aggressor.
3. The only realistic options are peaceful dialogue and negotiations. After over fifty years of using the same methods, the situation is as bad as ever. The current model/plan does not work!

DEBATE

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

This is a very serious and difficult question for debate. Most governments, media and people consider only violence by small groups or individuals as a "terrorist." Yet, the same violence, or worse, is not considered to be "terrorism" if it is committed by a government. For example, a suicide bomber which kills one or ten or twenty is called "terrorism" but at the same time a high-tech cruise missile which kills twenty or one hundred civilians is called "defensive" or "counter-terrorism."

Put the students in two or four teams, depending on the size of the class (if four teams, team one and three will argue in favour of the statement, team two and four will argue against) and give students a time limit to prepare arguments. Alternatively, you could give this as an independent work assignment to groups – they have to do research and prepare arguments in their free time, and then have the debate in the next lesson.

You can either divide the students evenly, or ask them to choose their position: do they agree or disagree with the statement: "The hostile actions of the State cannot be called 'terrorism.'"

ROLE PLAY

Have the students read the two stories for homework. In class, put them into pairs. In pairs decide on their roles. The student who is going to speak for Majdi should read Majdi's story again. The student who is going to take Rachel's role should re-read Rachel's story.

When students are ready, they have a role-play in pairs: Students should try to see the two points-of-view. In the role play, one student must take the point-of-view of Palestinian and the other student take the role of the Israeli. They are to have a discussion which shows how each side might feel.

Both sides have experienced terrible violence. Both sides feel scared. Both sides feel angry. Both sides sometimes can feel hopeless and desperate. Hopefully, by now the students will have a sense that the situation is not going to get better if the two sides continue to do as they have been doing for over fifty years.

You might want to choose one or two pairs to present in front of the class. Afterwards, summarise everyone's suggestions and make a list on board. Have a discussion about it. Do the students think that some of the suggestions are practical? Could they work?

THE TRAGEDY OF IRAQ

1. A British Creation

BRAINSTORM

Encourage students to offer as much as they know or think they know.

COMPREHENSION

1. Iraq was formerly three provinces in the Ottoman empire.
2. Shi'as, Kurds, Sunni's
3. a. Combined three different cultural areas.
b. Excluded Kuwait from Iraq
c. Chose a king who was not from the area. (students might also include the British betrayal after WWI)

DISCUSSION

Possible answers: Locals would not respect or obey an outsider. An outsider might not be able to understand the local people. There may be problems for the government if the people did not obey the leader. Dissatisfaction could lead to social unrest and serious social problems like demonstrations, riots, political violence, etc

PREVIEW

Some possible answers: There are two major rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, flowing through the whole country, from North-West, to South-East, and into the Persian Gulf. This makes Iraq strategically located in the region, with access to the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea with a port at Umm Qasr.

Throughout the country's history, the rivers provided waterways for trade from Syria and Turkey, as well as a great resource of water for drinking and agriculture in an otherwise hot, dry, and infertile climate.

2. OIL AND WATER**COMPREHENSION**

1. The British kept a military presence in Iraq after independence to protect oil supplies and insure that they would have access to them.
2. Anti-Western feelings grew in Iraq for several reasons: they appointed a foreign king to rule the country, the British forced different cultural groups to live together in one state, they did not fulfil their agreement to give Iraq independence – they maintained a military presence after 1930.

DISCUSSION

Possible answers:

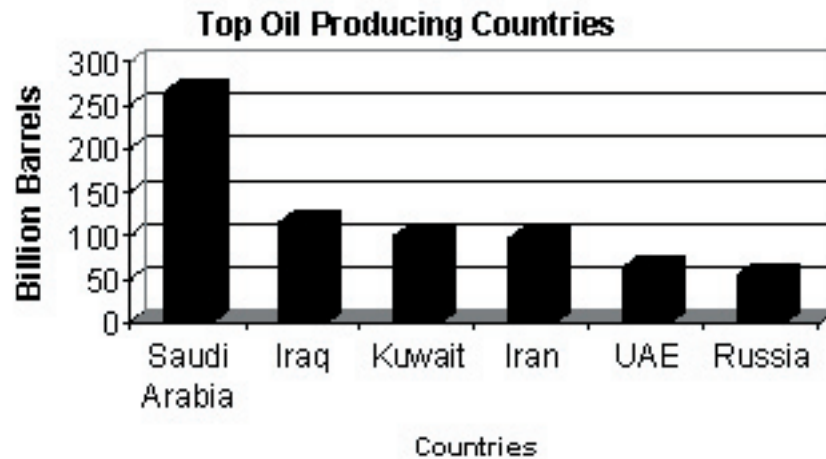
Most economies depend on oil to run their industries for transport (cars, trains, ships, planes, busses, etc), for heating, for energy/power generation (to make electricity), and for the petro-chemical industry and all the products which come from petrol (plastics). Most industrialised countries depend on oil for most of their energy needs. It is also the main source of income for many countries (those who produce oil).

Countries use it as currency to trade with other countries.

EXERCISE

Students should use basic graphing techniques: title, label axes, use consistent spacing, ascending or descending order—high to low or low to high.

Sample graph:



GROUP WORK

It might be useful for students to imagine how they would feel if a foreign country occupied their country after giving them "independence."

Possible Answers: In Iraq, the continued military presence of the British led to mistrust and resentment. But on the other hand, it insured the British economy had access to oil, without which it could have been at risk.

You may also look at who has suffered from this military presence: the British or the Iraqis? Ask students who the winners and losers of this situation were.

3. NATIONALISM AND THE BIRTH OF A TYRANT

COMPREHENSION

1. (a). Uniting all Arabs
(b). Removing Zionists from Palestine
(c). Re-claiming Kuwait
2. False
3. False
4. False. The earlier Iraqi government was anti-Western, but Saddam was pro-Western as well as being pro-Arab.
5. Through harsh oppression, imprisonment, torture, murder, intimidation.

DISCUSS

Students should discuss the balance of power in some countries. In countries like Iraq, control of the military is the most important for control of the country. In a military government/regime, the military leaders are the political leaders. Friends and relations of the military leaders will often be chosen as political leaders. In Iraq, the military coup was staged by minority Sunnis who went on to control the country until the Iraq War of 2003.

4. WAR WITH IRAN**PREVIEW**

Answers: Iran borders Iraq and Turkey to the West, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan to the North, and Afghanistan and Pakistan to the East. The Persian Gulf is to the South of Iran. The capital of Iran is Tehran.

Iran is an Islamic republic – it is a theocracy, ruled by religious leaders. It is a Muslim country. The language is Farsi (Persian).

The Iran-Iraq war was started by Iraq.

COMPREHENSION

1. *Possible answers:*
 - A. Border dispute
 - B. Fear of the spread of Islamist anti-Western ideology
 - C. Saddam Hussein's desire for more power
2. *Possible answers:*
 - A. Fear of spread of anti-Western Islamist ideology
 - B. Iran could restrict access to oil
 - C. Some in the West wanted to see both countries (Iraq and Iran) weakened from fighting each other
3. Providing military aid—weapons, technology, intelligence
4. No, it continued to support Iraq.
5. No one did. Although, both countries claimed victory

DISCUSSION

Some possible answers: People and governments are usually friendly with anyone who has the same enemy. For example, if person A is in conflict with Person B and Person A learns that Person C also is in conflict with Person B then A will become friendly with C. Where the two new “friends” do not really like each other, they will still see each other as “allies” because they share the same enemy. In fact, they are only allies because they have the same enemy not because they like each other or want to have any kind of relationship with each other. During the Cold War it was common for the superpowers to support anyone who opposed the other superpower.

One example of this is the Vietnam war where the US supported the South Vietnamese government, not because they liked the regime, but because they opposed the Communist North Vietnamese.

GROUP WORK

Put students in three groups: A, B, and C. Each group is assigned a role: US government, Iranian government and Iraqi government. Each group will prepare the position and arguments for their role. Have role play.

5. INVASION OF KUWAIT AND THE GULF WAR

PREVIEW

Students might not know much about the Gulf War. If they can't answer any of the questions, just start reading the text.

Some answers: The Gulf War was fought by many countries against Iraq, after Iraq invaded Kuwait. It is called the “Gulf War” because it was fought in the Persian Gulf. The Gulf War was mostly fought by the US, Britain and France. The US led coalition won the war by forcing Iraqi troops out of Kuwait. Kuwait is a very small country but very rich in oil resources and access to Persian Gulf. This is why Saddam Hussein was interested in controlling it.

DISCUSSION

Possible Answers:

1. For many years the US has not really opposed Israeli occupation and has in fact, vetoed and defeated many UN resolutions which would have condemned Israeli occupation. On the other hand, the US immediately strongly opposed and condemned the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The US pushed a UN resolution to demand that Iraq leave Kuwait or else face military action. The US enthusiastically “encouraged” the UN Security Council to vote in favour of a resolution against Iraq.
One reason for differences is the US’s close relationship with Israel. Other reasons many experts have considered for the US reaction in Iraq has to do with control of the region and its resources (like Oil). *On the other hand, however, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait was a violation of another sovereign state which is not so for Israel.*
2. The Iraq military in 1991 had just finished fighting a long and difficult eight-year war against Iran. It had suffered many losses. *Its equipment was old, poorly functioning and Iraqi soldiers were mostly poorly trained forced recruits.* On the other hand, the US-led forces were easily the most powerful fighting force ever to fight. The US-led force had the most modern equipment and professional soldiers in the world. The US alone had the strongest military. With Britain and France and others, it was far more powerful than any other force in the world.
3. The US government had encouraged and funded (gave money and information) the Iraqi opposition groups of Kurds and Shi’as to overthrow the government of Saddam Hussein. After the Iraqi military was easily defeated and forced to leave Kuwait it seemed the perfect time for the opposition groups to try and overthrow the weakened Iraqi government. But, when the Shi’as and Kurds started a rebellion, the US did not offer military help. The Kurds and Shi’as thought they would receive military help from the Americans but the Americans did not assist them. Even though the Iraqi military was weakened from the Gulf War it still was strong enough to stop the rebellion and murder thousands of Shi’as and Kurds.

DEBATE

Some arguments in *support* of this kind of activity is that it is necessary for “good” countries to stop “bad” countries from getting stronger, abusing local people and maybe go on to start wars. It is better to try to overthrow a government by helping local opposition groups rather than go in and start a war. It looks better to have a local group overthrow a government than to have an outside country do it. Sometimes local opposition groups are much weaker and need help to fight a strong government in power.

Students can think of Burma. Would they like to see the US support the opposition groups to overthrow the SPDC?

Students can discuss if they think this is proper or ethical. What are other consequences after the new government comes to power? If one country, like the US, can support rebellion and succeed, then what is to stop them from doing it again and again? What effect does this have on smaller weaker countries? What effect does this have on democracy?

At some point (before or after the debate), the students should know that the governments of many powerful countries routinely help to overthrow other governments. The British, Soviets and French have done it and in the last fifty years the US has done it many times. The Cold War was a time of constant meddling in the politics of other countries all over the world by the US and USSR. After the Cold War ended, this kind of activity has continued. The CIA (US), MI6 (British), Mossad (Israel) and other intelligence agencies commonly interfere in the politics of other countries. Powerful countries who want to see another government changed usually do not go to war but use secretive, “covert” (not open) methods to destabilise and change governments. They support opposition groups or they train local opposition leaders and military. They provide money, information, expertise and equipment. They interfere in democratic elections and give money to leaders they want to see win. They organise coups (forceful overthrow of a government). They assassinate leaders and use sabotage to cause social unrest.

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

COMPREHENSION

1. *Possible answers:* Thousands of Iraqis killed. Iraq's infrastructure destroyed. Iraqi military crushed/weakened. Iraq occupation of Kuwait ended.
2. At first, before the Gulf War it was to put pressure on the Iraqi government to obey UN resolutions to leave Kuwait. After the Gulf War it was to put pressure on Iraq to disarm (destroy their weapons). Also, to weaken the power of Saddam Hussein and hopefully lead to his removal.
3. The Iraqi people/civilians
4. After the Gulf War, the infrastructure of Iraq was seriously damaged. Many supplies were needed to rebuild Iraq. Many supplies were needed to help the thousands of Iraqis who were injured during the war. The sanctions made it difficult to get some supplies in Iraq, such as medicines and spare parts to machinery. Therefore, everyday life was very difficult. Poverty increased, people got sick and could not get some medicines or proper treatment in hospitals. Diseases like cholera spread because of destroyed infrastructure like sewers and water supplies.
Some hospital equipment could not be replaced or repaired. Also, the Iraqi government chose to spend a lot of money on rebuilding their army which could have been used to help reduce some of the negative effects of sanctions.
5. In the North, in the area where there were mostly Kurds. In the South, in the area where there mostly Shi'as. Overall, over half of all Iraqi air space.
6. Only the Americans and the British (and the French at first). The UN did not.

GROUP WORK

Some similarities: The people of each country have been oppressed by an authoritarian military regime. The international community has imposed sanctions in both cases in an attempt to bring about political change. Each country was a former British colony which still deals with the effects of that colonialism.

Some differences: Direct military intervention in Burma has not been considered, yet two wars have been fought by western governments over Iraq. The intervention in Iraq was due to the invasion of another sovereign state.

DISCUSSION

Students are to consider the purpose or intention of economic sanctions. Then to look at the effects. In some cases the sanctions can be very effective. Economic sanctions have been effective in other parts of the world.

In the case of South Africa, there were degrees of sanctions used during the 1980s and 1990s trying to force the South African government to change its system of Apartheid. In the beginning, there was not total participation by other governments and South African government was able to survive with limited sanctions. But eventually, more and more governments supported sanctions. When the majority of governments were not trading with South Africa, the effects were serious enough for the SA gov't to make the changes the rest of the world were demanding. Yet, the sanctions were only part of the process that forced change in South Africa.

In Iraq, the sanctions resulted only in making life miserable for the common people. The wealthy and powerful elite were able to use the black market and could survive without serious problems. Also, Saddam used the sanctions for political propaganda and received sympathy. Finally, there were many ways to bypass or go around the sanctions through trade with third parties. In other words, there were always companies and corporations who did business with the Iraqis by using false records or claiming it was not going to Iraq but to one of its neighbours (like Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi). Then the other ("third party") country would pass it on to Iraq for a profit. There were many American, British and French companies doing business with Iraq during the sanction years while their governments were strongly criticising Iraq.

Students can also look at and discuss the sanctions against Burma. Are they working?

At the time of this writing (October 2004) there were still many countries trading with Burma. The European Union, and the US are currently using economic sanctions against Burma. However, Australia and Burma's neighbours, China, India and Thailand do not.

ROLE PLAY

Try to get students to identify both the positive and negative aspects and the risks associated with extensive economic sanctions.

PREVIEW

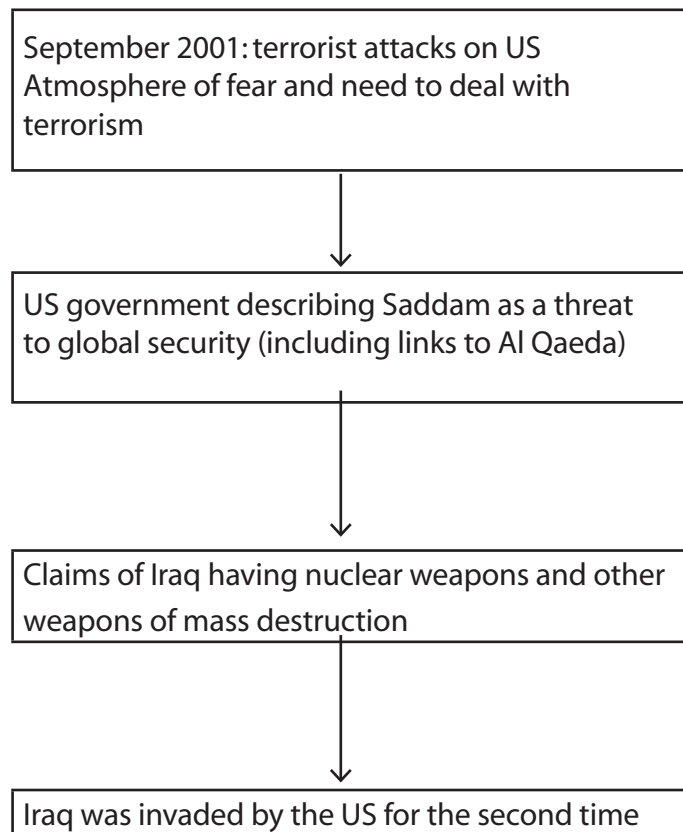
The US had been trying to get rid of Saddam Hussein for a long time. The escalating atmosphere of fear and linking Iraq with the September 11 attacks (even though there was never any evidence), in addition to suspected (but not proved) weapons of mass destruction being developed in Iraq, gave US an excuse to start a war against the UN decision.

7. THE IRAQ WAR

A Case for War

EXERCISE

An example of a possible diagram:



COMPREHENSION

1. Because they wanted the US to completely remove Saddam from power and to invade and occupy Iraq.
2. First they said that Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction —nuclear and chemical weapons. They said Iraq would use the Weapons of Mass Destruction on other countries including the US. Next, they said that Iraq was working with al-Queda (international terrorists) and Osama bin Laden who was blamed for the September 11 attacks. Also, the US was afraid that Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction might find their way into the hands of terrorists. Finally, when there was no real evidence to support the first two reasons, the US government said they would go to war with Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power (“regime change”) and to liberate the Iraqi people.
3. No. First, the UN had weapon’s inspectors in Iraq looking for Weapons of Mass Destruction and making sure Iraq destroyed any Weapons of Mass Destruction .The UN inspectors had not found any evidence of Weapons of Mass Destruction and needed more time to finish their search. Many inspectors as well as the CIA said that even if Weapons of Mass Destruction were found, Iraq did not have the ability to use them. In other words, Iraq did not have the technology or equipment to use any weapons. Secondly, there was no evidence of any connection between Osama bin Laden, al-Queda or September 11 and Saddam Hussein. In fact, on many occasions, Osama bin Laden had criticised Saddam for his pro-western attitudes. Saddam was a Muslim but a very different kind of Muslim to Osama bin Laden. Finally, although most people and governments agreed that Saddam Hussein was a cruel dictator, they did not believe going to war to remove him was correct. It was against the UN charter and international law to attack a country without proving a threat. A huge majority of the world’s governments and millions of people spoke out against war.
4. They believed more time was needed to finish the weapons inspections. They believed in keeping the sanctions in place and making it difficult for Iraq to receive any supplies which could be used for making weapons. They also believed that there must be continued negotiations. They believed that with the “no-fly zones”,sanctions, weapon’s inspections and the whole world watching, that Iraq could not do any harm and eventually would have to obey the UN.
5. No. The main reason the UN could not prevent war was because the most powerful country in the UN and the world, wanted to go to war. The US made it very clear that it did not need the UN’s permission to go to war. The US wanted the UN to agree to go to war but only to make legitimate its attack. In the end war occurred and many pointed to the weakness of the UN in failing to prevent it. Others, however, looked to the fact that the UN did not conform to the opinions of the US and was not manipulated by the US to support American policy. The UN is not an independent organisation with independent power. It is an organisation made up of individual countries. Its membership decides what to do and how to do it.
6. No. The UN (except Britain, Australia, Spain, Israel and a few others) was strongly against the US attack. The UN security council did not support US resolutions to attack Iraq. Opinion polls in most of the countries in the world showed that a large majority of the world was against the war. Even in Britain, Australia and Spain, the majority of the people were against war in Iraq—although the governments of these countries supported the war. There were millions of people out in the streets demonstrating and protesting the US plan for war with Iraq.
7. It was confirmed by special commissions and investigations in the US, UK (Britain), and Australia that the information (“intelligence”) given before the war which said that Iraq had nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction was wrong. Various government officials in the US and UK admitted that they had received information which said that Iraq was not a threat. But that they ignored that information and instead, only believed the information which said Iraq was a threat. In fact, the head of the American CIA, George Tenet, resigned when we learned that he gave false information to the president about Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. We also learned that CIA had given honest information to the president which was ignored by the president. Official investigations in the US about the September 11 (911 Commission) concluded that there no connection between Saddam Hussein and the al-Queda attacks. US Secretary of State Colin Powell, President George W Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair admitted that they had bad information and that Saddam did not possess Weapons of Mass Destruction. We learned that there was a US plan to attack Iraq for many years. We learned that after the September 11 attacks in the US, the US government began seriously planning a war against Iraq. “Regime Change” was a long planned US strategy and all the discussions at the UN about Weapons of Mass Destruction and al-Queda were not going to change the plan for war in Iraq.

DEBATE

The US position: Iraq is a threat. Iraq has WMDs. Iraq has used WMDs before (against the Kurds in the Iraq-Iran War). Saddam supports international terrorism. If terrorists receive the WMDs that Saddam has then they could cause unimaginable harm to the US. Iraq has defied UN resolutions and has not followed UN orders to disarm. The sanctions have not stopped Saddam from rebuilding his military. Saddam has attacked its neighbours twice (Iran and Kuwait). Saddam is a brutal dictator. He murders, rapes, tortures people all the time. There is no freedom or democracy in Iraq. The Iraqi people should have the right of democracy. We must free the Iraqi people.

The UN position: Iraq has been under investigation by the UN and the world for the last twelve years. Weapons inspectors have been searching every corner of Iraq to find and destroy any WMDs. We have successfully destroyed almost all of the known WMDs Iraq possessed in 1991. The inspections are successful and they need more time to complete the job. The US and UK have been patrolling Iraq in the "no-fly zones" and therefore making it impossible for Iraq to conduct any serious military activity. Iraq knows that if it attempted any hostile action it will face the most severe military reaction from the strongest military force in the world. For Iraq to try any hostile action would be suicide. Twelve years of sanctions has weakened the Iraqi economy. The Iraqi military was easily defeated and damaged after the Gulf War. We know that the Iraqi defence is one of the weakest in the region. We have watched Iraq carefully with non-stop presence in the region---US military bases in Saudi, Qatar, Turkey, Israel and the "no-fly zones." Iraq is like a caged animal. Its every move is being watched. There is no way Iraq can be a threat. We do not support war because it is clearly stated in the UN charter that war is a last resort. There must be a proven threat to a UN member before the UN would authorise the use of force. At the moment we have no evidence that Iraq is a threat to any member of the UN. The UN was created to prevent the use of force to solve conflict. The recent UN resolutions which call on Iraq to obey all UN orders to disarm or suffer serious consequences, clearly say that force must be approved by the UN Security Council. And force will be authorised only after all peaceful means have been used to the fullest. This has not happened yet. Negotiations at the moment are going well. The Iraqi government has recently been co-operating with the UN and we must allow the negotiations to continue. The US has not received UN authority to attack Iraq and if it does it is a clear violation to the UN charter and to international law.

DISCUSSION

Things to consider for discussion: What were the real reasons for the US to invade and occupy Iraq? Why did the US want to remove Saddam? What did Saddam have that the US wanted? What is the value of controlling Iraq? Is that region of particular importance? Does Burma have anything that the US might find interesting? Is it worth fighting for (from a US point-of-view)?

The Middle East has always been a very important region for world politics. Control of energy supplies is essential for having power. Since the end of the Cold War, the US has tried to increase its influence all over the world. Many oil rich countries like Iraq and Iran have been anti-Western and anti-American. Israel is the only true ally in the region for the US. Iraq and Iran are also very anti-Israel. Removing the threat of Iran and Iraq was and is a major

concern for many US leaders. Saddam was the most outspoken Middle Eastern critic of the United States. As long as he continued to criticise the US and control a very important oil producing country, he was seen as a serious threat to US power in the region and the world. His removal was a number one goal for many American leaders. It was convenient to use human rights as a reason to go to war against Iraq. It was true that Saddam was a brutal dictator and that the Iraqi people would be happy for him to be removed from power. Therefore, the US would say that this was the main reason for attacking Iraq. However, it would then be logical to say that the US will attack every country where there are human rights abuses. Why not Burma? But, Burma does not have the large supply of natural resources that Iraq has. Yes, Burma has some valuable natural resources (gas in the South West and teak) but not enough to interest the US. Also, in terms of geo-politics, the location of Burma is not of huge interest to the US. Thailand is already a US ally, as is India, therefore, the US does not feel a serious threat in the region.

Would you support the US attacking, invading and occupying Burma if it meant an end to the present government?

Ask students to justify their opinions. What would some possible consequences be if the US attacked, invaded and occupied Burma. Look at Iraq now. Could the same thing happen in Burma?

CARTOON INTERPRETATION

Who do the two statues represent?

The statue on the left represents the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein which was still in power in April 2003 (just before the US invasion). The statue on the right represents the United States government and occupation force one year later.

Who are the people pulling them down? The people pulling them down are the people of Iraq.

Why are the people pulling them down? They are pulling them down because when Saddam was in power they wanted him stopped, removed from power. In 2004, the Iraqi people wanted the US occupation to end. They wanted the US out of Iraq.

What is the main message of this cartoon? One of the main messages is that the Iraqi people did not like Saddam because he was a dictator and did not allow freedom and democracy in Iraq. They were happy to see him gone from power. Yet, the Iraqi people do not want the US controlling their country. They appreciate that the US removed Saddam from power but that does not mean that they will accept outsiders trying to control their country. They want the US occupation to end. They want America out of Iraq. They want to control their own country.

How does it relate to the theme of colonialism in the Middle East?

After WWI, Europeans colonised much of the Middle East. There were wars between locals and Europeans and even when the Europeans gave some power to locals, they still had control over many resources. Back then, local people in the Middle East wanted Europeans out, they wanted to control their own resources, government and future. Eighty years later, Europeans and Americans are still trying to control the Middle East. The people of the Middle East want exactly the same thing now as they did before, control of their own land and destinies.