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Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

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Western geographers originally coined the term “Middle East” in the early twentieth century to indicate the land between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia. Today, the term “Middle East” can be used to describe a region spanning countries as far apart as Morocco in North Africa to Pakistan in Southeast Asia. In this reading, the term “Middle East” refers to the countries highlighted above, stretching from Egypt in the west to Iran in the east. The term “Arab world” refers to the countries in which Arabic is widely spoken. This includes countries in North and East Africa and extends to the Persian Gulf. It does not include Iran.

Before September 11, 2001, the United States had cut its defense budget. Some U.S. troops had been withdrawn from overseas bases. Foreign aid spending on most parts of the world had been slashed. After September 11, U.S. leaders and the U.S. public began to reconsider carefully U.S. policies in the Middle East as well as the nation’s role in the world. In early 2002, President George W. Bush identified two Middle-Eastern countries, Iran and Iraq, as part of an “axis of evil” that threatened the security of the United States and the world.

In the spring of 2003, U.S.-led military forces raced through the Iraqi desert, swept aside Saddam Hussein’s military, and occupied Iraq. Now in its sixth year, the war in Iraq has caused divisions both at home and abroad. The political and economic consequences of the occupation, as well as the physical destruction in Iraq, promise to ripple across the landscape of the Middle East for years to come.

In addition to the September 11 attacks and the war in Iraq, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and concerns about Iran’s nuclear ambitions also put the Middle East on the forefront of the minds of many U.S. citizens.

Why does the United States maintain an active role in the Middle East?

The United States maintains an active role in the Middle East for four main reasons. First, the United States wants to ensure the steady flow of oil, the fuel which currently drives most of the world’s economies. Second, the United States is concerned about long-term stability and about retaining power and influence in this important area of the world. The U.S. involvement in Iraq and its promotion of democracy fall under this category. Third, the United States is concerned about nuclear proliferation, so it keeps a close eye on Iran, which the U.S. government believes is trying to develop nuclear weapons. Finally, the United States has long been enmeshed in efforts to settle the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Each of these reasons overlaps with the others, making the U.S. role in the Middle East very complex.

In the following pages, you will read about the debate regarding U.S. policy in the Middle East. You will confront the same questions facing U.S. policymakers: Which interests and values should provide the basis for the role of the United States in the region? How should the Middle East’s enormous oil reserves and the United States’ close relationship with Israel figure into our calculations? Does the importance of Islam in the politics of the Middle East challenge the United States?

The reading will prepare you to wrestle with these questions. In Part I, you will explore the history of U.S. involvement in the Middle East since World War I. In Part II, you will examine the critical issues facing the United States in the Middle East today. Finally, you will have the opportunity to consider four options for the future of the U.S. role in the Middle East.
In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most people in the United States were introduced to the Middle East through the Bible. The territories that are at the center of the Arab-Israeli conflict today were referred to as the “holy land.” The Middle East, which is often called the cradle of civilization, is the birthplace of three of the world’s major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

During the Middle Ages, Islamic empires in the region were at the center of the world's science, scholarship, and commerce. By the 1500s, the Ottoman Turks, one of those empires, had skillfully ruled over the diverse peoples and religions of the area which stretched from the Persian Gulf to the western end of North Africa for three centuries. This empire was militarily strong as well. In 1683, an Ottoman army invaded Europe, conquering Eastern Europe as far as the Austrian city of Vienna before being stopped.

To the east of the Ottomans, the Safavid Empire of Iran was a thriving center of Persian culture and commerce from 1501 to 1736. A well-administered and stable governmental system allowed the Safavid capital of Isfahan with its population of over 400,000 to become renowned for its poetry, paintings, and scholarship.

**The Middle East Meets the West**

In the early 1800s Protestant missionaries traveled to the Middle East, hoping to convert the Muslims of the region to Christianity. To a large extent, U.S. impressions of the Middle East were filtered through the eyes of these missionaries.

Despite the earlier wealth and scholarship of the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, by the nineteenth century the Middle East had fallen behind the nations of the West. The advances in science and technology that fueled the Industrial Revolution in Britain, the United States, and other Western nations were slow to reach the Middle East. The Middle Easterners who greeted the missionary pioneers were surprised when they began to understand that their region lacked much of what Westerners took for granted. For instance, the Ottoman military was unable to match the new firepower of its European rivals, and the traders who followed the missionaries brought items Middle Easterners had not seen before.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire was in decline, often called the “sick man of Europe.” Throughout Europe and the Middle East at that time nationalist movements challenged large, multinational empires. For the Ottomans, this trend, as well as European imperialism, ultimately destroyed the empire. In southeastern Europe, local independence movements took territory away from...
the Ottomans. In the northeastern reaches of the empire, ambitious Russian tsars interested in gaining more land drove them out. Meanwhile, the Ottoman economy increasingly fell under the domination of European nations eager to gain access to oil, a material growing in importance for military and civilian uses. Britain and France, nations with no oil fields of their own, were especially interested in controlling the region.

To the east of the Ottomans, Russia and Britain competed to control Iran and its resources throughout the nineteenth century. Iran’s economy and infrastructure suffered from being in the middle of the two great powers’ struggle. In 1907, Russia and Britain, fearing that the newly-established constitutional regime would limit their role in Iran, agreed to cooperate with each other. In 1912, they invaded Iran to assure “stability” and “security.”

How did World War I affect the Middle East?

World War I, which began in 1914, destroyed the Ottoman Empire. In the early months of the war, the Ottoman Empire allied itself with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Although the decisive battles of the war took place in Europe, the Middle East was thrown into turmoil as well. British forces, with the assistance of their Arab allies, drove Ottoman armies out of most of the empire’s Arab provinces. Fighting between Russia and the Ottomans along the Caucasus front turned vast areas into wasteland.

During the war, parts of Iran were occupied by the Ottoman Empire, by Russia, and by Britain. Iranian leaders had hoped to free themselves from European influence after World War I. But after the Ottomans were defeated and the Russians left to focus on their own revolution in 1917, the British took steps to make sure they could continue to access Iranian oil.

What was the Sykes-Picot Accord?

Meanwhile, much of the most important action took place away from the battlefield. In 1916, diplomats from Britain and France signed a secret treaty concerning the postwar division of the Ottoman Empire. Under the terms of what was known as the Sykes-Picot Accord, the British and French agreed to carve up the Arab provinces of the empire between themselves.

“It is accordingly understood between the French and British governments.... That...France and...Great Britain shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.”

—from the Sykes-Picot Agreement

How did President Wilson’s principle of “self-determination” affect the Middle East?

U.S. President Woodrow Wilson presented the main obstacle to British and French designs. When the United States joined World War I in 1917, Wilson insisted that his country was fighting for a higher set of ideals than the European powers were. He announced a sweeping fourteen-point peace plan which he hoped to implement at the end of the war. Among the key principles of Wilson’s proposal was a call for a postwar international system (a “League of Nations”) based on the “self-determination,” or right to govern oneself, of nations.

“The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development....”

—Point XII of the Fourteen Points, Woodrow Wilson, 1918

Arab leaders applauded Wilson’s views. They saw the president’s emphasis on self-determination as an endorsement of Arab efforts.
to govern themselves without outside interference. In contrast, the British and French realized that self-determination undermined their plan to impose the Sykes-Picot Accord on the Middle East.

Ultimately, at the Paris Peace Conference following World War I, Wilson backed down from his call for self-determination. His European counterparts forced a compromise which allowed European nations to keep their colonial possessions.

When Wilson returned to the United States, he encountered strong opposition to U.S. participation in the new international system he had envisioned. In 1919, the U.S. Senate soundly rejected the treaty that Wilson had helped negotiate. Wilson’s defeat was a turning point for the United States. Over the next two decades, U.S. leaders chose to be involved in international affairs only in ways that were beneficial to the United States. Once the United States had retreated from the international scene, Britain and France were free to divide the defeated Ottoman Empire.

**What were “mandates”?**

The newly-formed League of Nations, precursor to the United Nations, decided that many of the areas that had been controlled by the Ottoman Empire were unprepared for self-government. The League established “mandates,” which gave Britain and France the authority to control and manage the new states that had been carved out of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. While France took over Syria and Lebanon, the British controlled Iraq, Kuwait, Palestine, Jordan, and most of the coastal areas of the Arabian peninsula. Although these areas were not officially called “colonies,” the Arabs within these mandates saw themselves as subjects of European colonialism.

With Russia weakened by civil war, Iran increasingly fell within Britain’s sphere of economic domination as well. Turkey and Saudi Arabia were the only Middle Eastern countries to attain complete independence after World War I. In Turkey, a nationalist movement overthrew the last remnants of the Ottoman Empire and established a republic in 1923. In the Saudi Arabian kingdom, leaders preferred not to have connections with the international world.

Despite being dominated by European nations, the outlines of the countries of today’s Middle East were clearly recognizable by the 1920s. With few changes, the map that the Allies drew at the Paris Peace Conference is the same one that exists today.
Oil Politics

The contest for European control of the Middle East during and after World War I was driven largely by oil. The war effort had been powered mostly by coal, but far-sighted military strategists understood that the next major war would be fueled by oil. Oil was quickly becoming the lifeblood of economies around the world.

“\[I am quite clear that it is all-important for us that this oil should be available.\]”
—Lord Balfour, British foreign secretary, 1918

How did the United States become involved in the oil politics of the Middle East?

Compared to the European Allies, the United States was a latecomer to the oil politics of the Middle East. Unlike Britain and France, the United States was an oil giant and produced roughly two-thirds of the world’s oil output during World War I. Nonetheless, U.S. policymakers encouraged U.S. oil companies to begin looking overseas for new oil reserves.

To maintain good relations with the United States in the 1920s, the British agreed to allow U.S. oil companies to participate in the development of the Middle East’s oil resources. At the time, the two main centers of oil production in the region were northern Iraq and the Iranian side of the Persian Gulf.

Serious oil exploration in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait did not take place until the 1930s. Leading members of the Saudi royal family were reluctant to open their country to foreign oil firms in the 1920s because they were worried that their traditional way of life would be disrupted.

But the Saudis also wanted to increase their wealth and reduce poverty in their kingdom. In 1933, they signed a sixty-year agreement with Standard Oil of California (SOCAL). In exchange for $175,000 up front and the promise of royalty payments on any oil produced, SOCAL was permitted to explore 360,000 square miles of eastern Saudi Arabia (an area larger than Texas and Oklahoma combined). SOCAL invested $10 million before making a major discovery in 1938. At about the same time, a British-American partnership also struck oil in Kuwait.

What was the first oil war?

World War II illustrated the geopolitical importance of oil. The eruption of war in 1939 dashed hopes of turning a quick profit from the newly-discovered oil fields of the Middle East. Instead of expanding production, U.S. and British leaders tried to prevent the energy resources of the Middle East from falling into the hands of Nazi Germany. In 1941, British and Soviet troops jointly occupied Iran to block German ambitions. Technicians even
made plans to destroy the oil wells of the Persian Gulf in case Germany invaded the region. World War II had a profound impact on the position of the Middle East in international affairs.

As strategists in World War I had foreseen, oil was essential for the armies of World War II. The decisive weapons of the conflict—airplanes, tanks, and military trucks—all ran on fuels derived from oil. The war aims of the leading Axis powers, Germany and Japan, were shaped by their quests for oil resources.

The United States was the industrial engine of the Allied victory in World War II. Protected from enemy attack by two oceans, U.S. industry boomed. By the end of 1942, U.S. military production surpassed the output of Germany and Japan combined. During the next year, U.S. factories turned out roughly 100,000 warplanes. The United States was also blessed with abundant oil reserves. In 1940, for example, the United States produced 63 percent of the world’s oil (compared to less than 5 percent from the Middle East). The United States’ wartime leaders feared that demand would soon outstrip supply. Like their British and French counterparts in World War I, U.S. officials in World War II wanted to secure their country’s access to oil.

"If there should be a World War III it would have to be fought with someone else’s petroleum, because the United States wouldn’t have it.”
—Henry Ickes, U.S. secretary of the interior, 1943

Why was Saudi Arabia so important to the United States?

The U.S. strategy included fresh attention to Saudi Arabia. Before 1939, the United States did not have a single diplomat in the country. But in 1943, President Franklin Roosevelt began providing aid to the Saudi monarchy, which was on the verge of financial collapse because of the war. Over the next decade U.S. involvement in Saudi Arabia increased dramatically as U.S. citizens consumed more gasoline in their cars and industry boomed.

SOCAL’s 1938 discovery of a huge oil field brought increased cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the United States. (SOCAL changed its name to ARAMCO, or Arab-American Oil Company, in 1944.) Since then, oil has been at the center of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

The Birth of Israel

The creation of Israel in 1948 complicated U.S. efforts to retain friends in the Persian Gulf. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, the Jewish quest for a homeland gained support in the United States. But most Arab leaders opposed Israel because the country was carved out of lands where Arabs already lived. Saudi King Saud Ibn Saud even threatened to break his contract with ARAMCO to protest U.S. policy. Nonetheless, the United States played a key role in bringing the Jewish state into existence. The story of Israel’s creation starts in the late 1800s.

What was Zionism?

“Zion” is a Hebrew word for the land of Israel. Zionism, the movement for establishing the state of Israel, had its origins in Europe, where Jews had long been subjected to persecution. At the end of the nineteenth century, some Jewish intellectuals argued that their people could flourish safely only by establishing an independent state. They looked in East Africa and South America before settling on Palestine, a significant region in Jewish history, as the best choice. In the early 1900s, these Zionists started buying land there for Jewish settlements.

“One fundamental fact—that we must have Palestine if we are not going to be exterminated.”
—Chaim Weizmann, Zionist leader, 1919

What promises did Great Britain make to Arabs and Jews during World War I?

In 1917, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration, pledging to help establish “a national home” for Jews in Palestine. The British hoped
that the declaration would rally Jewish opinion, especially in the United States, behind the Allied war effort in World War I. At the same time, the British promised Sharif Hussein, the ruler of Mecca, that they would help to set up an independent Arab state across all of the Arab areas of the Ottoman Empire after the war. In exchange, Hussein began a rebellion against the Ottomans in Arabia, which helped the Allies to win the war. These dual promises proved to have long-term effects on the Middle East.

Between 1922 and 1939, as Zionists moved to Palestine, the Jewish population in Palestine rose from 84,000 to 445,000, or about 30 percent of the total population. But the Zionist movement increasingly found itself at odds with the aspirations of Palestinian Arabs to forge a state of their own. British efforts to strike a balance between Palestinians and Jews failed to hold down the escalating tensions.

**Why did so many Jews head to Palestine in the 1940s?**

Zionism might not have fulfilled its mission without the tragedy of the Holocaust. During World War II, Adolf Hitler sought to exterminate all of the Jews of Europe. Six million Jews were put to death by the Nazis.

After the war, hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees saw immigration to Palestine as the only hope for rebuilding their lives. The Holocaust also won the Zionists widespread sympathy in the West. President Truman became personally committed to the Zionist cause.

In 1947, the British announced they would leave Palestine within a year, turning over responsibility for the mandate to the newly-formed United Nations (UN). A plan to partition the mandate between Jews and Palestinian Arabs passed the UN General Assembly by two votes, thanks in large part to U.S. lobbying.

**How did Israel’s creation plant the seeds of conflict?**

The Zionists viewed the UN partition plan as their best hope for a Jewish state, and accepted it. The Arab world did not, fearing that Arabs, who were in the majority, would become subject to a minority immigrant population. Arabs also felt that the creation of Israel would lead to instability in the region.

Knowing the British would pull their troops out the day the partition went into effect, Zionists began to take control of the territory allotted to them by the UN, including many predominantly Arab towns that had been included in the Jewish zone. As the date of the British departure approached, violence...
erupted as each side fought to extend its control. Fighting soon engulfed much of Palestine. This violence was intense; there were terrorist acts on both sides.

With the withdrawal of the last British forces in May 1948, Israel proclaimed itself a state and immediately won recognition from the United States and the Soviet Union. The Arab states refused to recognize Israel.

For some time, Palestinian Arabs had been supported in their fight by men and arms from neighboring Arab countries. The day after Israel declared itself an independent state, forces from Egypt, Syria, Transjordan (now known as Jordan), Lebanon, and Iraq invaded Israel.

"It does not matter how many [Jews] there are. We will sweep them into the sea."
—Abd al-Rahman Azzam Pasha, Secretary General of the Arab League, 1948

Fearing just such an attack, Zionist leaders had been collecting weapons for years. By the time a truce was reached in January 1949, the Zionists had seized a large portion of the land that the UN had designated for the Palestinians. What was left of the former mandate was claimed by Transjordan (which absorbed the West Bank) and Egypt (which held the Gaza Strip). More than 750,000 Palestinians became refugees. Arab countries refused to make peace with or to recognize the fledgling Israeli state. Without a treaty, the cease-fire lines in effect became the borders between Israel and its neighbors. The animosity set the stage for decades of conflict.

Although the Truman administration approved a $100 million loan for Israel, U.S. policy remained torn. Within the State Department (the governmental body responsible for carrying out U.S. foreign policy), many officials advised against supporting Israel. They feared an Arab backlash against the United States. These fears were based in part on the United States’ need for oil from Arab nations, and also on the growing presence of the Soviet Union following World War II.

The Middle East in the Midst of the Cold War

Since the early 1800s, Britain had been the leading power in the Middle East. Britain controlled the Suez Canal (linking the Red Sea and the Mediterranean) and most of Egypt after 1882. British naval forces patrolled the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, guarding shipping lanes to India, the jewel of the British Empire.

World War II brought down the old order of international relations. In 1947, British officials told their U.S. allies that Britain could no longer maintain its presence in the Middle East. World War II had nearly bankrupted Britain. Britain’s postwar leaders saw their enormous empire as a financial burden. They urged the administration of U.S. President Harry Truman to fill the vacuum in the Middle East ahead of the powerful Soviet Union. Both Britain and the United States saw the Soviet Union as a dangerous expansionist power. They believed protecting the Persian Gulf’s oil reserves from Soviet control was critical to the West’s economic survival. Indeed, in 1948, for the first time, the United States imported more oil than it exported.

In fact, the Soviets had already begun to increase their activities in the Middle East. In Iran, the Soviets delayed the withdrawal of their troops after the war. In Turkey, they raised territorial claims along the Soviet border and insisted on sharing control of the straits connecting the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

What was the Truman Doctrine?

In 1947, President Truman announced a $400 million foreign aid package to Turkey and Greece. In what became known as the “Truman Doctrine,” Truman pledged U.S. support for governments resisting communism.

The Truman Doctrine confirmed that the United States was willing to step into the shoes of the British in the Middle East. For U.S. policymakers, this meant that the Persian Gulf would rank second in importance only to protecting Western Europe.
By 1948, the hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union seemed frozen in place. What became known as the Cold War would eventually reach every corner of the globe, raising tensions to particularly dangerous levels in the Middle East.

**How did the politics of the Arab world change following World War II?**

The politics of the Arab world underwent deep changes after World War II as well. Resentment and mistrust toward the West spread in the Middle East as it did in Africa, Latin America, and regions of Asia. As Britain and France retreated from the region, Arab nationalists criticized the Arab monarchies and rich landowners who had cooperated with the colonial powers of Britain and France. In the 1950s and 1960s, nationalist military officers overthrew kingdoms in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

**Why did Nasser’s message appeal to other Arab countries?**

Egypt’s Gamal Abd al-Nasser was the most prominent voice of Arab nationalism. A former army colonel, Nasser emerged as Egypt’s leader after taking part in a coup that toppled the country’s corrupt king in 1952. Nasser addressed his message not just to Egypt, but to the larger Arab world. He campaigned for “pan-Arabism”—the unification of Arabs into a single state.

Nasser’s reputation soared over the next fifteen years as he strengthened his position as the most dynamic leader of the Arab world. Part of what made Nasser appealing to other Arabs was his condemnation of Israel, which he described as an outpost of Western influence in the Middle East. In 1958, Nasser merged Egypt and Syria in order to begin to implement his pan-Arabist campaign (the merger disintegrated in 1961). He also built up his army, mostly with Soviet weapons. Nasser’s prestige enabled him to play the United States and Soviet Union skillfully off one another.

**Why did President Kennedy sell advanced anti-aircraft missiles to Israel?**

U.S. officials mistrusted Nasser’s motives but felt that his popularity could not be ignored. The United States resumed limited financial assistance to Egypt but also began to see Israel as an ally against the expanding Soviet influence in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. In
1962, President John F. Kennedy approved the sale of advanced anti-aircraft missiles to Israel, along with a loan to help the Israelis pay for their purchase.

“We are interested that Israel should keep up its sensitive, tremendous, historic task.”

—President John F. Kennedy, 1962

Three years later, President Lyndon Johnson permitted the Israelis to buy more than two hundred tanks, again with generous financing. The arms sales marked the beginning of a steady flow of U.S. military equipment to Israel. No formal alliance was signed, but the United States and Israel were clearly developing a special relationship. At the same time, the Arab-Israeli conflict continued.

What factors contributed to the Six-Day War?

Expanding nationalism, growing superpower involvement, and an escalating arms build-up ignited another Arab-Israeli war in 1967. The immediate cause was Nasser’s decision in May 1967 to order the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers separating Egyptian and Israeli forces in the Sinai Peninsula and to deny Israeli ships access to the Red Sea by closing the Suez Canal.

President Johnson attempted to resolve the crisis diplomatically. But Israeli leaders placed little faith in diplomatic solutions. In June 1967, they launched a surprise attack, destroying most of the Egyptian and Syrian air forces on the ground. With control of the air, Israeli tanks rolled across the Sinai to the Suez Canal. On their eastern flank, the Israelis drove the Jordanian army out of the Old City of Jerusalem and overran the West Bank.

Within two days, Egypt and Jordan claimed that they were ready to accept a UN resolution that the United States proposed for a cease-fire. But Israel continued its military operations. Israeli warplanes bombed a U.S. communications ship based off the coast of Egypt, killing thirty-four U.S. sailors. Although Israeli leaders claimed the attack was a mistake, some U.S. officials privately believed that Israel’s intent was to direct attention away from Israeli military preparations against Syria. Indeed, two days later the Israelis smashed through Syrian defenses on the strategic Golan Heights.
Heights. Syria quickly agreed to a truce. What came to be known as the Six-Day War ended in a complete military victory for Israel.

What were the results of the Six-Day War? Although Israel would not consider withdrawing from the Golan Heights or Jerusalem, it did not refuse to withdraw from the other territories it had conquered if Arab leaders would recognize Israel’s right to exist. When Arab leaders refused, the Israelis became responsible for governing more than one million Palestinians on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Six-Day War also set the stage for the next round of fighting in the Middle East. Although pan-Arabism had failed, Arab leaders were more determined than ever to match the military might of the Israelis. Increasingly, they turned to the Soviet Union. The Soviets, embarrassed by the speedy defeat of their allies and eager to extend their influence in the Middle East, were more than willing to help. They provided technical assistance and military support to Arab leaders. The United States, though still working for peace and stability, continued to support Israel in the hopes of countering Soviet influence.

What happened during the October War of 1973? In 1970, Anwar al-Sadat came to power in Egypt. Sadat’s top priority was to regain the Sinai Peninsula. When U.S. diplomacy failed to persuade Israel to withdraw, Sadat began making preparations for war.

In October 1973, Egypt and Syria opened a surprise two-front offensive against Israel on Yom Kippur, the most sacred day on the Jewish calendar. Along the Suez Canal, Egypt’s army broke through Israeli lines and spilled into the Sinai Peninsula. At the same time, Syrian troops overwhelmed Israel’s defenses on the Golan Heights and were poised to attack northern Israel.

Israel’s army quickly recovered from its setbacks. Within days, the Israelis drove a wedge between Egyptian forces in the Sinai and crossed to the west bank of the Suez Canal. Against the Syrians, they soon regained the Golan Heights and swept toward Damascus, the Syrian capital. By the end of October 1973, after less than a month of fighting, the Israelis agreed to stop their advance.

How did the Cold War affect the U.S. position during the October War? The October War brought the United States’ chief concerns in the Middle East to the boiling point. In the first week of the conflict, Washington’s commitment to Israel was put to the test. Israel’s prime minister, Golda Meir, pleaded with President Richard Nixon to ship U.S. military supplies to her country. Nixon approved a resupply effort but did not want to give Israel a lopsided advantage on the battlefield.

Cold War politics ultimately convinced Nixon to step up the flow of arms. From the outbreak of the October War, the Soviet Union had showered Egypt and Syria with military assistance. By the second week of fighting, the United States decided to do the same for Israel and began airlifting one thousand tons of military supplies a day. Superpower tensions rose further when the Soviets vowed to send troops to the region to stop Israel’s advance. Nixon warned the Soviets against taking action. He put the U.S. military on worldwide alert to emphasize U.S. resolve.

How did the Arab states try to use oil as a weapon against the United States? Most significantly, the October War prompted Arab states to lead an oil embargo against the United States.

High oil prices and increasing U.S. demand for oil made the embargo an effective tool against the United States. From 1970 to the start of the October War, world oil prices had doubled. During the same period, U.S. oil imports nearly doubled, exceeding one-third of total U.S. consumption. U.S. allies in Western Europe and Japan were almost entirely dependent on imported oil, mostly from the Middle East. Rising demand allowed the
Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC, which at the time included Algeria, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela) to steadily push up prices for the first time since its formation in 1960.

In mid-October 1973, Saudi Arabian King Faisal Ibn Saud, a solid U.S. ally, initiated the oil embargo. He hoped to emphasize to the United States that it would have to do more for the Arab side in the Arab-Israeli conflict if it wanted to minimize Soviet influence in the region. The Arab oil-producing states raised prices on their exported oil by 70 percent. When President Nixon proposed giving Israel $2.2 billion in military aid a few days later, the Arabs responded by completely cutting off oil shipments to the United States. At the same time, they reduced their overall production by 10 percent and vowed to lower oil output by 5 percent a month until Israel withdrew from the territories occupied in the 1967 War and restored the rights of the Palestinians.

What was the impact of the oil embargo?
The impact of the Arab cutbacks on the international oil market was not catastrophic, but it was dramatic. By the end of 1973, world oil production had fallen about 9 percent. Major non-Arab oil producers, such as Iran and Venezuela, increased their exports as new markets opened to them. Nonetheless, the Arab measures set off an economic panic. Oil prices rose as high as $17 a barrel—six times the price in early October. Gasoline prices in the United States jumped 40 percent. Over the next two years, U.S. economic output dropped 6 percent, while unemployment doubled and inflation surged.

The Arab states also caused divisions in the Western alliance. Unlike the United States, most Western European countries and Japan backed away from overt support of Israel. In turn, the Arab oil producers allowed more exports to them. The situation caused the United States to reevaluate its Middle East policies.

U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger undertook what came to be known as “shuttle diplomacy.” Jetting between countries of the region, Kissinger negotiated two agreements to end the fighting between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Syria. The state department left the Soviet Union out of the negotiations. Kissinger’s efforts were enough to convince King Faisal Ibn Saud to call off the embargo in March of 1974.

How did the October War lay the groundwork for peace?

While the October War was the most destructive conflict yet between Arabs and Israelis, it also laid the groundwork for the first steps toward peace. The early battlefield successes of the Arab armies had soothed the humiliating sting of the 1967 War. Arab pride, especially in Egypt, was partially restored.

The initiative for peace came from Egyptian leader Sadat. In 1977, he visited Israel and spoke before Israel’s parliament. Meanwhile, U.S. officials worked behind the scenes to set the stage for serious negotiations.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter invited Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to the presidential retreat at Camp David for peace talks. The negotiations were scheduled to last three days. Instead, they dragged on for two weeks.

What were the Camp David Accords?
Thanks largely to Carter’s persistence, the talks produced a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. In exchange for Israel’s withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt became the first Arab country to recognize Israel. U.S. foreign aid sweetened the deal for both countries. Israel received $3 billion in immediate military assistance, while Egypt was given $1.5 billion. (Israel and Egypt remain the top two recipients of U.S. foreign aid.)

What were known as the Camp David Accords scarcely addressed other aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Arab leaders condemned Sadat for neglecting the needs and hopes of Palestinians and expelled Egypt from the Arab League, an organization founded in 1945 to serve the common good of Arab countries. In
1981, Sadat himself was assassinated by political Islamist extremists. (The term political Islamist is used to describe political movements based on an interpretation of the principles of Islam.)

How did the Camp David Accords affect the position of the Soviet Union in the Middle East?

The Camp David Accords brought Egypt securely into the U.S. camp in the Middle East. At the same time, countries who opposed the treaty, such as Syria and Iraq, moved further into the Soviet camp. To counter the Soviets, U.S. officials placed greater weight on their relations with other long-time friends in the region.

Aside from Israel, the United States counted on close ties with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Turkey was linked to the United States through membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The United States also provided Turkey with ample foreign aid. The Saudis, while they opposed Israel and U.S. support for Israel, nevertheless relied heavily on U.S. firms to market their oil exports and invest their profits. The U.S. relationship with Iran was also complex.

The United States and Iran

At the same time as many conflicts in the Arab-Israeli relationship were heating up, the United States was also trying to strengthen its relationship with Iran in order to oppose the Soviet Union. The United States was bound to Iran and its shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, by political, military, and oil interests. The shah was tied to Washington through his own complicated past. In 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) helped the shah topple a nationalist prime minister who threatened the shah’s power and wanted to bring the foreign oil industry under state control. At the time, Pahlavi was a timid, inexperienced ruler. Over the next two decades, U.S. support boosted his confidence and ambitions.

By the early 1970s, Pahlavi imagined that he could rekindle the greatness of ancient Persia in modern Iran. To celebrate the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian Empire, he spent at least $100 million to host a lavish banquet that featured a 165-person catering staff from Paris and 25,000 bottles of French wine. The rise in oil prices in 1973 permitted the shah to increase his spending on other items as well, particularly on weapons. By the mid-1970s, Iran accounted for half of U.S. arms exports.

How did U.S. policymakers fail to understand the feelings of the Iranian people?

Both Pahlavi and U.S. policymakers underestimated the anger simmering just below the surface of Iranian society. The shah’s efforts to modernize Iran’s educational system and redistribute land sparked protests among the country’s Islamic clergymen because the changes threatened their ideology and power. His push toward industrialization forced millions of peasants to abandon the countryside. Iran’s cities were soon overcrowded, while the gap between the rich and the poor widened. Additionally, rampant corruption in Pahlavi’s government and the brutal role of SAVAK...
Who led the opposition movement?

Islamic clergymen were in the best position to encourage resistance to the shah’s regime. They emerged at the helm of a broad opposition movement that included democrats, nationalists, and communists. In 1978, they began organizing demonstrations against the shah. The shah responded with force, ordering the army and police to smash the protests. In September, they opened fire on a huge crowd in Tehran, Iran’s capital, killing or wounding as many as two thousand demonstrators.

Pahlavi, suffering from cancer, facing hostile public opinion, and losing support from the military for his repressive policies, soon lost the will to hold on to power. In January 1979, he left the country. Two weeks later, the spiritual leader of Iran’s Islamic movement, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, returned to Iran from exile in France.

What were the goals of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini?

Khomeini wanted to transform Iran into his vision of a pure Islamic state. His revolution aimed at purging the country of Western popular culture. He prohibited movies and music from the West. He banned alcohol. He also ordered women to cover themselves from head to toe in public.

Khomeini branded the United States as the “great Satan.” (He referred to the Soviet Union as the “lesser Satan.”) When Carter permitted Pahlavi to enter the United States for medical treatment, Khomeini claimed that Washington was plotting a counter-revolution. In November 1979, Iranian university students seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran. For over a year, they held the U.S. embassy staff as hostages. Carter’s attempt at a military rescue failed, leaving eight U.S. troops dead. The U.S. Cold War policy for Iran had clearly failed.

How did the Iranian Revolution affect the world oil market?

The Iranian Revolution touched off another panic in the oil market. Before the revolution, Iran had been the world’s second largest oil exporter (trailing Saudi Arabia). By the end of 1978, the foreigners who managed much of Iran’s oil industry had been evacuated and Iranian oil exports had ground to a halt. Again prices soared, nearly tripling in a few weeks.

The Iran-Iraq War

The outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq in September 1980 further limited world oil supplies. Iraq’s leader, Saddam Hussein, hoped to take advantage of an Iranian army weakened by revolution to seize a disputed waterway spilling into the Persian Gulf. He also wanted to prevent the spread of Iran’s Islamist revolution elsewhere in the Middle East.

Saddam Hussein aimed to deliver a quick knockout blow, concentrating on Iran’s oil facilities. Instead, Iraq’s invasion stalled. Iran counter-attacked but lacked the strength to defeat Hussein’s impressive military. For the next eight years, the war seesawed back and forth. Iraq had an advantage in air power, missiles, and chemical weapons. Saddam Hussein also benefited from the financial backing of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Arab oil producers. Iran could count on millions of dedicated volunteer soldiers. Tens of thousands were killed charging Iraqi positions in human-wave assaults, often with plastic keys, which they...
were told would open the gates to heaven, dangling from their necks.

**What was the U.S. position in the Iran-Iraq War?**

The administration of President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) remained officially neutral during the war but did not want a victory by Iran’s Islamist government, which was clearly hostile to the United States. The United States began playing a more active role in 1986, when Iran stepped up attacks against Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. The United States gave Iraq military intelligence and loans to buy advanced U.S. weapons. Washington also permitted Kuwaiti ships to sail under the U.S. flag and provided them military escorts.

During the Iran-Iraq War, the United States led an international arms embargo against Iran. But in a contradiction of this public policy, the United States secretly sold thousands of anti-tank missiles and military spare parts to Iran. The U.S. government hoped this would improve relations with Iran so that Iran would help to free U.S. hostages held in Lebanon. This goal was only partially met; some hostages were freed, but others were taken. The secret dealings with Iran damaged the credibility of the United States in the Middle East.

By the time Iraq and Iran agreed to a cease-fire in 1988, the war had claimed more than one million lives. Millions more were injured or became refugees. It also cost each country approximately $500 million. Neither side could claim victory, and the war did not resolve the disputes which started it.

**How did the United States deal with the uncertainty of the Middle East oil industry?**

At the same time, the United States and other western nations learned to live with the uncertainty of the Middle East’s oil industry. The oil price hikes of the 1970s spurred energy conservation in wealthy countries. The fuel efficiency of the average American car more than doubled between 1975 and 1985. By 1983, oil consumption in the non-communist world had dropped by 11 percent from 1979 levels. Higher prices also led oil companies to develop new resources in the North Sea, Alaska, and other sites outside the Middle East. Coal, natural gas, and nuclear power gained a greater share of the energy market. From $34 a barrel at the beginning of the 1980s, oil prices slid to around $18 a barrel by the end of the decade.

**Civil War in Lebanon**

While the Iran-Iraq War dominated events in the Persian Gulf during the 1980s, Lebanon was the main focus of attention in the eastern Mediterranean. Lebanon had long been home to a patchwork of Christian and Muslim groups. Beirut, Tripoli, and other Lebanese ports were centers of Middle Eastern trade and commerce. But beginning in 1975, the country was torn by civil war.
Before the fighting ended in the late 1980s, nearly 150,000 people had been killed. Moreover, because of Lebanon’s location and its connections to neighboring countries, the war drew in most of its neighbors as well as the United States. Syrian leaders, who believed Lebanon belonged under their wing, sent in troops to occupy most of the eastern part of the country. The Syrians also directed many of the actions of anti-Israeli militias working in Lebanon.

In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon to root out the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which was fighting against Israel from Lebanon. PLO units had set up bases in Lebanon after they were expelled from Jordan in 1970. Israel’s efforts to crush the PLO resulted in bombardments of the Lebanese capital. The escalating war prompted the United States to try to negotiate peace.

Why did the United States deploy troops in Lebanon?

In hope of stabilizing Lebanon and preventing a wider regional war, the United States sent in troops as part of an international peacekeeping force. But U.S. soldiers were soon caught in the middle. In 1983, a suicide bomber drove a truckload of explosives into the U.S. marine barracks at the Beirut airport. Two hundred and forty-one troops were killed. A few months later, President Reagan pulled out the U.S. peacekeeping force.

In the United States, the Beirut bombing reinforced the Middle East’s reputation as a dangerous and hostile region. Most people in the United States favored limiting U.S. involvement in the area. But within a few years the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a small country with big oil reserves, would pull the United States deeper than ever into the Middle East.

The First Persian Gulf War Reshapes U.S. Policy

On July 25, 1990, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, met with Saddam Hussein at the presidential palace in Baghdad. Their conversation focused on Hussein’s claim that Kuwait was pumping oil that rightfully belonged to Iraq from deposits along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. The Iraqi dictator also complained that Kuwait was holding down oil prices to slow Iraq’s economic recovery from the Iran-Iraq war. When Glaspie left the meeting, she believed that she had clearly warned Hussein of the dangers of using force to resolve his dispute with Kuwait. The conversation did not make the same impression on Saddam Hussein. Eight days later, 100,000 Iraqi troops poured across the desert border into Kuwait.

How did the end of the Cold War affect U.S. actions toward Iraq?

A few years earlier during the Cold War, the United States might have hesitated to take strong action against Iraq for fear of setting off a wider international crisis. But by the late 1980s, both the world and the U.S. outlook had changed. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev sought to improve relations with the West, and the Soviet Union itself was beginning to teeter under the weight of an ailing economy and political turmoil. Within hours of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, Gorbachev stopped arms shipments to Saddam Hussein and joined the United States in supporting a UN Security Council resolution demanding Iraq’s immediate withdrawal from Kuwait. With the Soviets on his side, President George H.W. Bush (1989-1993) had an opportunity to steer the international system in a new direction.

President Bush quickly positioned U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia to stop any further advances. The United Nations imposed economic sanctions against Iraq. In the weeks that followed, the United States led an effort to build an international coalition to push Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. The United States’ European allies, as well as several Arab states, contributed forces to an international military force.

How did U.S. citizens think the United States should respond to Iraq?

Within the United States, the public was split about how far the country should go in
its response to Iraq’s aggression. U.S. leadership was also divided. Opposition to using force was especially strong from some U.S. military leaders concerned about possible casualties. Many warned that Iraq would turn to chemical weapons or international terrorism if attacked. There were worries that Iraq might even possess nuclear bombs. Some argued that economic sanctions should be given more time to take effect. Other experts noted that with Iraqi control of the Kuwaiti oil fields, Saddam Hussein controlled one quarter of the world’s oil resources.

"Our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom and the freedom of friendly countries around the world would all suffer if control of the world’s great oil reserves fell into the hands of Saddam Hussein."
—President George H.W. Bush, 1990

President Bush favored attacking Iraq quickly. He doubted that economic sanctions alone would pressure Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. He also felt that the coalition of nations he had assembled would not hold together long. Particularly worrisome was Saddam Hussein’s appeal in the Arab world. He sought to rekindle Arab nationalism and called for Arabs to unite against Israel and its ally, the United States. U.S. officials feared that his message would deepen hostility toward the United States throughout the Middle East.

In November 1990, Bush won UN approval to use “all necessary means” to force Iraq out of Kuwait. A deadline was set—January 15, 1991—for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. By January there were 540,000 U.S. troops in the Gulf and an additional 160,000 from other countries. When President Bush asked the Senate in early January to approve military action to drive Iraq out of Kuwait if the deadline was not met, his request passed by five votes.

What happened in the Persian Gulf War?

After the assault against Iraq began in mid-January 1991, the U.S. public quickly rallied behind the war effort. Despite Saddam’s
prediction of “the mother of all battles,” his army proved no match for the United States and its allies. For over a month, warplanes pounded Iraqi targets. By the time allied ground troops moved forward in late February 1991, communication links within Iraq’s army had been shattered. Coalition forces, who came from twenty-eight nations and acted with UN approval, retook Kuwait’s capital with little resistance.

After one hundred hours, President Bush brought the ground war to a halt. The president and his advisors, worried about the consequences of controlling a completely destabilized Iraq, objected to totally destroying Iraq’s retreating army and toppling Saddam Hussein. Instead, they allowed the remnants of Iraq’s front-line divisions to limp northward.

The Persian Gulf War was one of the most lopsided conflicts in history. Iraq’s military presented few obstacles to the advance of the half-million coalition forces. In all, 146 U.S. troops were killed during the war. (Coalition forces suffered a total of 260 deaths.) Iraq lost as many as 100,000 people, both soldiers and civilians, in the war. Saddam Hussein also inflicted a heavy blow against the environment by ordering retreating Iraqi troops to set hundreds of Kuwaiti oil wells on fire and to spill thousands of barrels of oil into the Persian Gulf.

What were the effects of the Persian Gulf War on the U.S. role in the Middle East?

Through a combination of power and persuasion, the United States had won greater influence in the Middle East as a result of the war. At the same time, there were fresh responsibilities. Once the fighting in the Persian Gulf ended, governments there looked to the United States to provide leadership on regional issues.

The war against Iraq brought the region once again to the forefront of discussion in the United States, particularly as events were broadcast live on television. The war also convinced Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the smaller states of the Persian Gulf that a U.S. military presence was needed in the region to safeguard their own security.

Yet the presence of more than fifteen thousand U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf created tensions of its own. For the United States, increased involvement in the Middle East has not been without cost.

The U.S. military presence reminded the Arab world of its own weaknesses and divisions. It also angered many people, including extremists like Osama bin Laden and his followers.
Part II: Weighing U.S. Priorities in the Middle East

Today, the United States faces different challenges in the Middle East than it did during the Cold War, when U.S. policy in the region was defined by its relationship to the Soviet Union and its allies. On September 11, 2001 an extremist Islamist movement known as al Qaeda killed nearly three thousand people, mainly U.S. citizens, in coordinated attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. For over five years the United States has also been fighting in Iraq and is likely to be there for many years to come. The September 11 attacks, the ongoing Iraq war, and the resurgence of Arab-Israeli violence have caused many U.S. citizens to try to understand more about the U.S. presence in the Middle East.

What are the central issues for the United States in the Middle East today?

In addition to its presence in Iraq, the United States has played a central role in efforts to end the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the United States has also found itself confronted by the wide appeal of Islamist political movements, many of which oppose U.S. policies in the region. Finally, the growing demand for oil around the world means that the global economy is dependant on the resources of many Middle Eastern nations.

In the following pages, you will learn more about current U.S. involvement in the Middle East. The first section will provide you an overview of the connection between oil and U.S. policy. The second will introduce you to the interplay between Islam and politics. Understanding this connection is essential to understanding politics in the Middle East. The remainder of the reading will discuss two major areas of concern for the United States: regional security and the Arab-Israeli conflict. As you will see, all of these topics are linked to each other.

Oil Trends

Political instability in the Middle East tends to shake up the world oil market and increase gas prices. Saudi Arabia has taken steps to calm the world oil market during troubles in the Persian Gulf. In general, the Saudis have been careful to increase production to offset any shortfalls. As a result, in the mid-1990s, gasoline prices in the United States (taking inflation into account) dropped to levels not seen since before the 1973 oil embargo.

With energy prices low, U.S. citizens began buying more fuel-hungry cars and paying less attention to conservation. As a result, U.S. oil consumption has increased 30 percent...
since 1985. Meanwhile, U.S. oil production has dropped by about 40 percent since its peak in 1970.

Worldwide demand for oil in recent years has been growing at about 2 percent annually. Economic expansion in the developing world has fueled much of the rise. Increased demand in rapidly growing economies like China and India has led to increased prices. In the United States, dependence on imported oil is creeping up as well. Today, the United States relies on the Middle East for about 16 percent of its oil needs. Oil accounts for about 40 percent of the United States’ total energy consumption.

Why is the Middle East so important to the world oil industry?
The Middle East remains the unrivaled center of the international oil industry and is therefore likely to remain a critical region for the world’s economy. The region contains more than 60 percent of the world’s proven oil reserves. While recent discoveries in Kazakhstan hold great potential, most of the new fields that were discovered in the North Sea, Alaska, and elsewhere in the West after the 1973 oil crisis have passed their peak production years. Middle East oil is also the cheapest to pump. The cost of extracting a barrel of oil from the North Sea, for example, is typically five times greater than in the Persian Gulf area.

But while the Middle East’s oil resources are as important as ever in the global economy, the likelihood of a repetition of the 1973 oil embargo seems distant. On the other hand, the importance of Middle Eastern oil to the United States looks to remain constant for the foreseeable future. Because of the U.S. economy’s need for oil, many U.S. policies in the Middle East involve securing and maintaining access to that oil.

### Political Islam

It can be difficult for people in the United States to understand the importance of religion in many Middle Eastern countries. In almost all Middle Eastern countries, Islam is officially recognized as the binding force of society. State-run television and radio stations broadcast thousands of hours of religious programming, and Islamic clergymen receive government salaries. The Islamist regimes of Iran and Sudan take a different approach. In those countries, the Islamic clergy actually control the government.

### What is political Islam?

Political Islam is a movement that seeks to promote Islam within the political arena. Some supporters of political Islam strive to establish as law one interpretation of the Islamic legal tradition, or Shari’a, as the foundation of government and attempt to rid society of non-Islamic influences. (The Shari’a is a wide body of literature that lays out legal principles and norms but is not a legal code or single document.) Many in the Middle East, frustrated by their countries’ politics in the twentieth century, have turned to political Islam. Earlier political movements, such as pan-Arab nationalism, have failed. Corruption, mismanagement, and reliance on foreign support have

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Data from the Energy Information Administration.
weakened popular faith in Middle Eastern governments. In the midst of these failures, political Islam has gained increasing support.

Islamist movements (movements of political Islam) have grown due to larger economic and social forces as well. In the 1990s, many Middle Eastern countries adopted free-market economic principles that the United States advocated. The reforms called for breaking down trade barriers that had protected local industries, cutting government spending, and selling off state-run companies to private owners. While free-market policies have attracted increased foreign investment to the Middle East, they have also raised unemployment and reduced government assistance to the poor. Economic frustration and insecurity have led many people to turn away from their governments and toward Islamist movements for solutions.

Islamist movements have proven especially strong in the poor neighborhoods of large cities. Many of their supporters are recent migrants from the countryside or the victims of economic reform. For them, Islamist movements are an answer to what they see as reckless change and economic inequity.

How do some political Islamists view the West?

Political Islam’s strength and appeal have increased in the Middle East since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. One of the intellectual founders of modern Islamist radicalism, the Egyptian dissident Sayyid Qutb, argued that existing Arab regimes should all be overthrown as the first step in a war against the enemies of Islam. Some experts believe this is one of Osama bin Laden’s unstated goals. In general, the United States regards radical political Islam as a threat to U.S. interests because it often has an anti-Western stance.

Islam and the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001

The terrorist attacks of September 11 raised questions for people in the United States. Many wondered whether terrorism and violence were justified in Islamic scripture or beliefs.

Like all religions, Islam is subject to interpretation. Most interpretations of Islam have given rise to a history of tolerance and peace. (The word Islam is related to the word salaam, which means peace.) Islam is a religion that values family and tolerance. Throughout much of history, Muslims have lived peacefully with followers of other religions. For example, many Jews fled the persecutions found in Christian Europe for the relative freedom of the Ottoman Empire. Islam permits the use of force in self-defense, but not the killing of innocents or civilians.
How has the United States balanced principles and security interests in the Middle East?

While concentrating on its security and economic interests, the United States has forged many alliances in the Middle East, some based on shared interests and some on shared principles. Balancing principles and security interests in the Middle East remains a challenge for U.S. leaders and citizens.

In general, U.S. policymakers have paid much less attention to promoting democracy and human rights in the Middle East than in other parts of the world. In Latin America, the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere, the United States often determines foreign aid, trade relations, and other aspects of foreign policy on the basis of political reform. Until recently, U.S. leaders have largely ignored how U.S. allies in the Middle East govern within their borders.

“For sixty years, my country, the United States, pursued stability at the expense of democracy in the Middle East, and we achieved neither. Now we are taking a different course. We are supporting the democratic aspirations of all people.”

—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, June 2005

Alliances: Balancing Principles and Interests

Egypt: The United States has been a firm supporter of the secular government of Egypt because it has helped maintain regional stability. Since the 1979 Camp David Accords, the United States has made Egypt the second largest recipient of all U.S. foreign aid. At the same time, critics note Washington has stood behind Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak’s civil rights violations, including his crackdown on Islamist movements. Egypt has been under emergency law since 1981. Human rights groups complain that torture and imprisonment without trial are widespread in Egypt.

Israel: The United States has been a steadfast supporter of Israel for both security and historical reasons. In turn, Israel has stood against U.S. opponents in the region and shared intelligence information with the United States. Some critics note that Israel’s occupation of the West Bank is in violation of international law and complain about repeated Israeli violations of the fundamental rights of Palestinian civilians.

Jordan: In recent years, the United States has nurtured good relations with Jordan, a country considered to be a moderate Arab state. In addition to recognizing Israel in 1994, the late King Hussein opened up the political process in the mid-1990s. Whether the momentum to full-fledged democracy can be sustained during the reign of his son, King Abdullah, remains to be seen. U.S. efforts to support Jordan include a free-trade agreement between the two nations that went into effect early in 2002.

Saudi Arabia: The United States has carefully cultivated relations with Saudi Arabia since the 1940s because of the Arab nation’s central importance to the world’s oil industry. Saudi Arabia works to ensure an uninterrupted and reasonably-priced flow of oil to the world economy. Critics note that Saudi Arabia is an undemocratic, fundamentalist Islamist regime. For example, Saudi textbooks teach that Christians are infidels, and women are not permitted to vote or drive. Others note the funding for terrorism which flows from Saudi Arabia. Government and industry are dominated by the Saudi royal clan, which numbers in the tens of thousands.

Turkey: The United States values its long-standing relationship with Turkey, a secular state and the most westernized Muslim country in the Middle East. Turkey has been a loyal supporter of the United States’ policies and an important member of NATO, the Western military alliance originally formed to oppose the Soviet Union. Turkey’s repressive treatment of twelve million Kurds, an ancient people of the Middle East living in Turkey, has raised concerns for some.
Why did President Bush call for expanding democracy in the Middle East?

U.S. President George W. Bush, in a speech in November 2003 on liberty and democracy in the Middle East, called on the United States to promote democracy actively in the region as a way to increase security. He also called on Middle Eastern nations to accept the ideal of freedom.

“The advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country.... We believe that liberty is the design of nature; we believe that liberty is the direction of history. We believe that human fulfillment and excellence come in the responsible exercise of liberty. And we believe that freedom—the freedom we prize—is not for us alone, it is the right and the capacity of all mankind.”

—President George W. Bush

International response to the speech was mixed. Many people in the Middle East and elsewhere supported Bush’s statements, and many others were disappointed or angered.

“The U.S. has hijacked the noble concept of ‘democracy’ which millions of people have fought for in the Arab world. It is now exploiting the slogan of democracy and human rights for its own known political interests that see nothing in the Middle East but oil pipelines and a secure Israel, without showing any real concern or respect for the region’s inhabitants, citizens, culture, civilization, and history.”

—Reporter Bater Mohammad Ali Wardam in the Jordanian newspaper ad-Dustour

Whether democracy is universally valued or even universally possible remains unsettled. President Bush has argued that all of the world aspires towards, and is entitled to, liberty. Others argue that democracy reflects some people’s cultural values rather than universal human values.

There are examples of both positive and negative effects of moves toward democracy in recent years in the Middle East. Coming close on the heels of the elections in Iraq in January 2005, a million Lebanese protestors took to the streets to protest the Syrian presence in Lebanon, and Palestinians elected a new leader following the death of Yasir Arafat.

On the other hand, there may also be some pitfalls of a more democratic Middle East for the United States. For example, Palestinians elected the Hamas party to lead them in early 2006. The United States identifies Hamas as a terrorist organization. Whether it is possible to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict with Hamas in power remains to be seen. You will read more about all of these events in the following pages.

Regional Security

Much of the push toward democracy that the Bush administration embraces stems from a belief that a more democratic Middle East will be a more peaceful Middle East. Over the years, security concerns have defined many U.S. policies in the Middle East. After the first Persian Gulf War, the United States geared its policy in the Middle East toward containing both Iran and Iraq. Fears of weapons of mass destruction and concern about Iraq and Iran’s sponsorship of international terrorism fueled anxiety in Washington after September 11, 2001.

“Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people’s hope for freedom. Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens—leaving the bodies

"
of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections—then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world. States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger.”

—President George W. Bush, January 29, 2002

Iraq

For eighteen years, U.S. policy toward Iraq has been headline news. U.S. efforts to contain Saddam Hussein’s regime continued after the first Persian Gulf War. In the war’s aftermath, the United States backed away from pursuing the overthrow of Hussein’s regime. Instead, the United States blocked Hussein from rebuilding his country’s power and hoped that disgruntled military officers would eventually overthrow the government.

At the urging of the United States, the UN Security Council imposed economic sanctions and limited the sale of Iraqi oil in order to keep Saddam Hussein in check. U.S. and British forces prevented the Iraqi air force from flying over northern and southern portions of Iraq.

As part of the cease-fire agreement, UN monitors conducted regular inspections of Iraq to prevent the production of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. UN weapons inspectors also destroyed vast stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and their components. In late 1998, Iraq refused to allow UN inspectors a free hand in continuing their search for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and, in response, U.S. and British forces conducted a series of massive air strikes. Iraq then refused to allow UN inspectors to operate in Iraq at all until late 2002.

Why did UN weapons inspectors return to Iraq?

In the summer of 2002, Washington turned the pressure up on Iraq. In a speech before the United Nations, President Bush claimed that Iraq’s alleged WMD program and sponsorship of terrorism posed a danger to the region and to the world. He stated that the United States would confront these dangers and asked the UN to join with the United States.

The UN Security Council unanimously passed a resolution calling for Iraq to comply with earlier resolutions and to allow unrestricted access for weapons inspectors once they returned to Iraq. The inspectors returned, but a disagreement quickly emerged among members of the Security Council. The United States and Great Britain argued that the inspections were not working and that twelve years of UN sanctions and resolutions had failed. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell argued before the UN Security Council that Iraq had links to al Qaeda, a charge that turned

Sanctions and Iraq

Although economic sanctions did not bring about Saddam Hussein’s downfall, they may have helped prevent him from reconstructing his arsenal of weapons of mass destruction—an important contribution. They also prompted accusations that the United States increased the suffering of the Iraqi people. Despite the UN’s humanitarian oil-for-food program, the UN estimated that thousands of Iraqi children died each month because of malnutrition and disease attributable to the sanctions. Observers debate whether the United States or Saddam Hussein was responsible for this tragic situation. Some experts estimate that Hussein had the wealth to feed his people but chose to spend it instead on the military and marble palaces. UN reports, as well as economic and political interests, led France, Russia, China, and Arab nations to oppose U.S. actions and to argue for a reevaluation of policy toward Iraq.
out to be untrue. President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair saw military action leading to “regime change” as the next step. France, Russia, and Germany strongly disagreed with the idea of “regime change” and argued that the UN inspectors should continue trying to ensure the disarmament of Iraq.

U.S. diplomats worked hard to build international support for the U.S. position within the UN as it had for the first Gulf War. In spite of these intensive efforts, President Bush realized that he would not win UN approval for military action against Iraq. Approval would have made the use of force legal.

What did the public think about a war against Iraq?

There was widespread public opposition to an invasion of Iraq. For example, on February 15, 2003, millions of people marched in coordinated demonstrations in the United States and around the world.

“...the huge anti-war demonstrations around the world this weekend are reminders that there may be two superpowers on the planet: the United States and world opinion.”

Nevertheless, in March 2003, the majority of U.S. citizens favored military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power. A majority also favored taking into account the views of allies before acting. Forty-five percent of U.S. citizens believed that Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the September 11 terrorist attacks—an opinion not supported by evidence. (A Senate panel concluded in 2006 that Saddam Hussein’s government had no connections to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.)

President Bush ordered the U.S. military into action. The United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark, and Poland also contributed military forces to the operation. During the military’s advance, U.S. officials worried that the Iraqi army would use chemical weapons. This did not happen. An intensive search for WMD in Iraq began, but no WMD were found.

“We are very unlikely to find stockpiles...of weapons. I don’t think they exist.”
—David Kay, former chief U.S. weapons inspector in Iraq, January 25, 2004

What did the U.S.-led military coalition find in Iraq?

Although the coalition did not find any WMDs, they did find mass graves of thousands of Iraqis—murdered by Saddam Hussein’s government during his rule. How many Iraqis died at the hands of his regime remains to be tallied, but some believe the final count will approach 350,000.

The U.S. government declared that its primary goals in sending troops to Iraq were to end Saddam Hussein’s regime and to uncover WMD. But the government also had other, more long-term goals for the reconstruction of Iraq. Even before the war began, U.S. leaders believed that a democracy in Iraq could transform the Middle East, providing an example
of freedom that would influence neighboring countries to undergo similar democratic reform.

“A liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region, by bringing hope and progress into the lives of millions.”

—President Bush, February 26, 2003

What challenges remain in Iraq today?

In May 2003, the U.S. government established a provisional government in Iraq, led by U.S. officials. Over the next year the United States worked with Iraqis to create an interim constitution and an interim Iraqi government. Since elections in 2005, in which Iraqis voted for a permanent constitution and elected a permanent government, the U.S. government has acted in an advisory role through the U.S. embassy in Baghdad. The embassy has approximately one thousand U.S. government employees, more than any other U.S. embassy. U.S. troops remain to provide security and train the Iraqi police and military.

The new Iraqi government and the U.S. military face multiple challenges. Violence from local militias, insurgents, and terrorist groups continue to wrack the country. This violence makes providing public safety, electricity, water, and other basic services extremely difficult. Deep sectarian divisions within the government and the population limit overall reconciliation and nation-building. Finally, Iraq’s economy has been struggling and many Iraqis are frustrated with the government’s failure to improve the situation.

By May 2008, more than four thousand U.S. soldiers had been killed and tens of thousands wounded in Iraq. Statistics vary widely, but according to UN reports, an average of ninety-four Iraqi civilians died each day in 2006, the worst year in terms of violence since the U.S. invasion. Although the number of civilian casualties has declined since then, about 23,000 Iraqi civilians died from violence in 2007. Some two million Iraqis have fled Iraq since 2003.

Many countries in the Middle East are concerned about the U.S. presence in Iraq. They are also suspicious of U.S. efforts to promote democracy in the region. Since the invasion, governments and other regional organizations have supported or been involved with many of Iraq’s paramilitary groups. Iran in particular has been accused of supplying arms, financial support, and training to a number of groups. Most of the foreign insurgents in Iraq have arrived through the Saudi Arabian and Syrian borders. At the same time, most countries in the region do not want the Iraqi state to fail. Many are worried that if Iraq’s civil war worsens, it will draw other countries into the fight, spilling violence over Iraq’s borders. Many fear that with Shi’i Muslim groups supported by Iran and Sunni Muslim groups supported by countries like Syria and Saudi Arabia, Iraq could turn into a war that might destabilize the entire region.

“The core of the problem is that if Iraq is divided, definitely there will be a civil war and definitely neighboring countries will be involved in this. The Middle East can’t shoulder this. It’s too much.”

—Abdullah Gül, former Foreign Minister of Turkey, September 18, 2006

The United States plans to stay in Iraq until it establishes a stable government able to maintain security. How long the United States will remain in the country is uncertain, but many experts predict that it will be years, require additional troops, and cost hundreds of billions of dollars.

How does the conflict in Iraq affect domestic politics in the United States?

The war in Iraq remains one of the most controversial topics in U.S. politics today, heightened by the failure of U.S. officials there to find any WMD, a principal justification for invading Iraq. While most agree that an end to Saddam Hussein’s brutal dictatorship was positive, many disagreements remain and
are likely to continue to play an important role in U.S. domestic politics.

**Iran**

The United States believes that Iran has a well-established program to develop nuclear weapons. The Iranian government has the right to develop nuclear materials to use for nuclear energy. The dilemma for the international community is that it is difficult to distinguish between “good atoms” for peaceful purposes and “bad atoms” for military purposes.

**How has the world responded to Iran’s nuclear ambitions?**

In 2002, the international community discovered that Iran had secret nuclear facilities. In a move supported by Washington and Europe, Russian officials proposed supplying Iran with fuel for its nuclear power plants that could be used only for peaceful purposes. This would prevent Iran from having to create its own nuclear fuel. Nevertheless, in 2006 Iran restarted its uranium enrichment program in a move that has heightened concern around the world. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) referred Iran to the UN Security Council, which passed a resolution in December 2006 calling for Iran to suspend its nuclear activities. Iran is currently in violation of that resolution.

France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have negotiated closely with Iran to encourage it to end its nuclear program. Iran’s hard-line president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has staunchly defended Iran’s right to a civilian nuclear energy program. His public assertion that Israel should be “wiped off the map” has also increased international anxiety about Iran’s intentions.

Three other issues affect U.S. relations with Iran. The State Department believes Iran is the leading state sponsor of terrorism. Iran’s support for anti-Israeli terrorist groups Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad has contributed significantly to violence in the region. Second, the United States believes that Iran’s support of the sectarian groups in Iraq fuels violence there. Finally, human rights violations, including the torture and killing of political opponents of the regime, are a continuing cause for concern.

U.S. officials are divided on how best to deal with Iran. Some advocate a hard-line policy to bring about change in Iran’s leadership, including military action. Others believe that a policy of diplomatic engagement is a better course.

**How has Iran changed since the death of Khomeini?**

The record of Iran’s Islamic Republic presents a contradictory picture. Well-organized fundamentalist clergymen continue to wield strong influence in the political process and meddle in the private lives of Iranian citizens. The clergy have implemented social codes that classify contact between unmarried or unrelated men and women as a violation of public morality. They have also imposed an ineffective ban on satellite dishes that receive international television signals and have banned western videos and music.

But the Iranian Revolution that first set off alarm bells about political Islam has lost
much of its fire. Since the death of Khomeini in 1989, Iran’s leadership has been less eager to export its revolution abroad. Iran’s military budget amounts to only one-sixth of Saudi Arabia’s and one-half of Israel’s, and Iran has not invaded another country since 1736. Iran has also taken steps to encourage foreign investment.

The re-election of a moderate, Mohamad Khatami, as president in 2001 with nearly 60 percent of the vote indicated that Iranian voters wanted to reform the Iranian Revolution. Khatami campaigned for tolerance, social reform, and a greater role for women in public life—a platform that appealed particularly to youth and women. But in February 2004, Iran’s clerics disqualified many liberal reform candidates from running for parliament. Many Iranians chose to boycott the 2004 election in protest of the government’s action.

Public demonstrations calling for reform and criticizing Iran’s clerics became more common.

“\textit{I would not be surprised if we see more of such protests in the future because the ground is ready. Our society now is like a room full of gas ready to ignite with a small spark.}”

—Anonymous member of Iran’s Parliament, June 2003

The presidential election of 2005 seemed to turn Iranian politics on its head once again. The election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a religious conservative who supports the system of ruling clerics, ended the reign of the liberal reformers. Ahmadinejad ran on a platform that focused on stamping out corruption and providing aid to the poor. Liberal reformers acknowledged the need to broaden their appeal.

“We were the party of the intellectuals, so we must change this to develop ideas for the poor and workers. We will still talk about democracy and human rights, but we should explain to people how it will make their lives better.”

—Former President Mohammad Khatami

How has life changed for Iranians in the Islamic Republic?

Most Iranians are better off under the Islamic Republic than they were under the shah. Life expectancy in the country has risen from fifty-five years in the late 1970s to seventy years today. The shah neglected remote villages that now have schools, health clinics, roads, and safe drinking water. Nonetheless, economic hardship and widespread unemployment are ongoing problems.

The rights of women in Iran are restricted. They cannot travel abroad without the permission of their husbands, and their testimony in court is worth half that of a man. Nonetheless, Iranian women are ahead of their counterparts in most of the Arab kingdoms of the Persian Gulf. For example, more than 50 percent of the students in Iranian universities are women, and 95 percent of all girls attend primary school.

Resolving the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Arab-Israeli peace process has commanded a large share of the United States’ diplomatic energy over the years. For the past seventeen years, the United States has played an important role in mediating the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. In addition to playing host at negotiating sessions, the United States exerts influence through foreign aid and diplomatic pressure. Israel has long been the leading recipient of U.S. foreign aid, taking in about $3 billion a year. (Egypt ranks second with about $2 billion a year.) Arab-Israeli peace is important to the United States today because of the long history of friendship with Israel, because U.S. leaders feel a responsibility to help resolve this violent conflict, and because Israel provides the United States with a powerful ally in an important region.
What is the U.S. perspective on relations with Israel?

Since its creation, Israel has occupied a special position in U.S. foreign policy. U.S. leaders have stood by Israel for several reasons. First, Israel has won the admiration of many in the United States as a model of democracy and Western values in the Middle East. Presidents Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson were particularly committed to Israel’s struggle for survival.

Other presidents, such as Richard Nixon and George H.W. Bush, viewed Israel primarily as a strategic ally in the region. They valued Israel for countering U.S. enemies in the Middle East, battle-testing U.S. weapons, and sharing intelligence information. Israel’s development of nuclear weapons (which Israeli officials have never admitted) gave Israel added weight in U.S. policy.

In recent years, U.S. attachment to Israel has attracted fresh attention. Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians under its jurisdiction has drawn more intense criticism. For instance, the Israeli government has limited Palestinians’ daily travel to work and elsewhere through checkpoints at the boundaries. The Israeli government built a barrier to separate the Gaza Strip and Israel in the mid-1990s, and is currently constructing a barrier more than 400 miles long to separate the West Bank and Israel. U.S. support for Israel has not wavered, even though it has been a source of resentment in the Arab world. In this section you will read about recent attempts to resolve the conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors and between Israel and the Palestinians, as well as current events that have derailed that process.

How did the first Gulf War lead to talks between Israel and its neighbors?

The first Persian Gulf War in 1991 shook the entire Middle East. A handful of long-range Iraqi missiles struck Israel during the war and reinforced the country’s sense of vulnerability. Moreover, some Israelis viewed the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a burden on their society, especially since Palestinians had launched a broad-based protest movement in 1987 known as the first intifada. (Intifada is an Arabic word that means “shaking-off.”)

The 1991 Persian Gulf War also boosted the leverage of the United States. President George H.W. Bush decided to use enhanced U.S. power and influence to try to achieve peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. In October 1991, he persuaded representatives of Israel, the Palestinians, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon to sit down together in Madrid. The participants at the Madrid Conference recognized that the Arab-Israeli conflict was not likely to be resolved with a single treaty. Rather, separate peace talks were initiated between Israel and each of its Arab neighbors. Sometimes these talks have produced positive outcomes, such as the treaty between Jordan and Israel in 1994.

Under the peace treaty, Jordan joined Egypt in officially recognizing Israel. Mauritania is the only other Arab state to extend diplomatic relations to Israel, although Israel has established low-level ties with Morocco, Tunisia, Oman, and Qatar.
certainly been the most violent in recent years. One reason peace has so far been elusive may lie in the changing leadership on both sides, which has tended to seesaw between more extreme and more moderate approaches. These changes make progress hard to sustain.

During the 1990s, negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians achieved significant breakthroughs. In 1993 during President Bill Clinton’s administration, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasir Arafat shook hands on the White House lawn to seal their first agreement. In the declaration of principles they signed, Israel accepted the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people while the PLO recognized Israel’s right to exist in peace and security and renounced the use of violence. Both sides expressed their support for earlier UN resolutions that called on Israel to withdraw from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights in exchange for an Arab commitment to peaceful relations.

In 1995, Rabin and Arafat met again at the White House to sign a much more detailed treaty. The second agreement laid out a plan to extend Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and to bring Israel’s military occupation of the area to a close.

These agreements produced some concrete changes. A Palestinian government, called the Palestinian Authority, was largely given control of day-to-day affairs in half the Gaza Strip and the main cities of the West Bank, except East Jerusalem. Palestinians also now manage their own police force and elect the officials who govern them.

What did negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians achieve?

Many experts consider the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians to be the most difficult element of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some believe it is the linchpin on which all other elements of the conflict depend. It has
How did the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin affect the peace process? Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were scheduled to conclude a comprehensive, final agreement by May 1999. Political developments in the region put that deadline out of reach and the entire peace process in doubt.

In 1995, an Israeli extremist gunned down

Israel and the Palestinians: What Are the Unresolved Issues?

Palestinian Statehood: Above all, the Palestinians insist on attaining full statehood. They want to control their own borders, form an army, and exercise the rights belonging to independent nations. Some Israelis fear that a full-fledged Palestinian state could endanger their security. They argue that an independent Palestine could be used as a staging ground for attacks against Israel.

Jerusalem: The status of Jerusalem is another important sticking point. East Jerusalem has religious significance for both Muslims and Jews. Israel captured East Jerusalem during the 1967 War. Prior to this, East Jerusalem and the West Bank were under the control of Jordan. Israel claims complete control over Jerusalem and considers it the nation’s capital. The Palestinians want to establish their capital in East Jerusalem, where they represent a majority of the population. (The United States and most other nations do not recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.)

Jewish Settlements: Like the status of Jerusalem, controversy over Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories has stirred passions. Approximately 250,000 Israelis live in the West Bank. Most of them make their homes in modern suburbs ringing Jerusalem. Other Israelis have settled in more remote areas, often for ideological reasons. Many of the settlers, who use a large portion of the scarce resources of the area, vow that they will never accept Palestinian authority. Israel has insisted on maintaining control of the access roads that connect the settlements, effectively carving lands of the Palestinians into isolated pockets. In 2005, Israel withdrew all its settlements in Gaza and plans to withdraw some from the West Bank, a position which the United States endorses.

The Security Barrier: In the mid-1990s, the Israeli government constructed a barrier between Israel and the Gaza Strip to prevent the unauthorized entry of Palestinians into Israel and prevent attacks by terrorists. In June 2002, Israel decided to construct a similar barrier in the West Bank. Though not yet completed, the path of the barrier is disputed because it has incorporated disputed Jewish settlements, cut across Palestinian farmland, and made it more difficult for Palestinians in the West Bank to travel freely to work. When completed the wall will total more than 400 miles.

Palestinian Refugees: More than 1.7 million Palestinian refugees live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (The total population of the West Bank and Gaza is 4.14 million). As many as 4.5 million other Palestinians live scattered throughout the Middle East, mostly in Jordan. Palestinian leaders argue that all Palestinians—many of whom were forced to flee during the 1967 War—should have the right to return to their former homes in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Israel. Israeli authorities have resisted opening the Palestinian territories to unrestricted immigration and worry that Palestinians returning to Israel would eventually change the nature of their state. Israelis also note that more than 850,000 Israeli Arabs already live within Israel’s borders.

Water Resources: Finally, the right to water and water usage in the region is another significant stumbling block. Limited supply and water sources that cross borders remain significant obstacles to any peace settlement. The Israeli-Jordanian Peace Agreement of 1994 contains a water protocol. Other agreements between Israel and its neighbors will also be necessary to govern the use of this scarce resource.
Israeli Prime Minister Rabin. Following his assassination a more hard-line prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, came to power. Netanyahu backed away from Rabin’s pledge to continue the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank. His positions brought him into conflict with President Clinton’s administration and were not widely popular among Israelis. He lost the elections in May of 1999. Ehud Barak won, largely by promising to negotiate an enduring and comprehensive peace.

His death in November 2004, and the election of Mahmoud Abbas as president of the Palestinian Authority, led to a flurry of new negotiations. After Abbas’ election, the United States pledged increased aid to the Palestinians.

Abbas renounced the intifada and made efforts to halt attacks against Israel. Israel, in turn, reduced military activity in the West Bank, and withdrew from the Gaza Strip. The combination of these actions opened the door to negotiations. Both sides agreed to a ceasefire in early 2005. Many hoped that the waves of violence that had wracked the area since 2000 were over. But recent developments have again thrown the future of the peace process into doubt.

How has the election of Hamas affected the peace process?

In January 2006, Hamas, capitalizing on the frustrations of Palestinians, won a slight majority of votes in democratic legislative elections and assumed control of the Palestinian Authority (Mahmoud Abbas was still president). Hamas, designated as a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union, has both a political and military wing. It is an Islamist organization and its long-term goal is to establish an Islamic Palestinian state on the land historically called Palestine, much of which currently lies in Israel.

The United States, Russia, the United Nations, and the European Union warned Hamas that it would have to recognize Israel’s right to exist, forswear violence, and accept previously-negotiated agreements. Israel vowed not to negotiate with Hamas unless it recognized Israel’s right to exist and renounced violence. Following Hamas’ capture of an Israeli soldier in June 2006, Israel launched a new military offensive in the Gaza Strip, just a year after withdrawing settlements from the area.

Hamas and its rival political party, Fatah (Abbas’s party) agreed to form a unity government in September 2006. But factional fighting continued and when Hamas took control of...
the Gaza Strip in June 2007, President Abbas dissolved the unity government. Abbas, whose Fatah party retains control of the West Bank, ejected Hamas members from the government of the Palestinian Authority in June. Hamas has established its own government in Gaza. Neither party recognizes the other as the official Palestinian leadership.

In response to Hamas’s takeover of the Gaza Strip, the Israeli government has tightened security on its border with Gaza. Economic conditions in Gaza have become increasingly difficult. Political divisions among Palestinians prevent progress on reconciliation with Israel and achieving political goals within the Palestinian territories. The peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, if it still exists, is at a standstill.

*Why was there a war on the Israeli-Lebanese border in 2006?*

In mid-2006 a war erupted on the Israeli-Lebanese border between Israel and Hezbollah. Hezbollah is a political and military organization in Lebanon that many consider to be terrorist.

This violence has a long history. Lebanon borders Israel to the north. Peace between Lebanon and Israel hinges on several factors. First, the relationship between Israel and Lebanon is connected to the relationship between Israel and Syria. Syria insists that it will sign a peace treaty with Israel only if Israel returns the strategic Golan Heights, which have been under Israeli occupation since the 1967 War.

From the 1980s, both Syria and Israel were militarily involved in Lebanon. In May 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Barak ordered a unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. After huge Lebanese demonstrations against Syria’s presence, Syria agreed to withdraw its troops in time for elections in Lebanon in May 2005. Although Syria’s army has left, the Syrian government still influences events in Lebanon.

The presence of Hezbollah in Lebanon also prevents Israel and Lebanon from being able to negotiate peace. The United States and the European Union consider Hezbollah, which cooperates closely with Iran and Syria, to be a terrorist organization. Iran is its single largest financial supporter, though it also receives significant funding from individual donations. Since Israeli forces left Lebanon, one of Hezbollah’s goals has been to support the Palestinian cause.

In the middle of 2006, Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, which led to retaliation from Israel and further violence from Hezbollah. The conflict killed more than a thousand militants and civilians, mostly Lebanese, and made large areas of southern Lebanon uninhabitable because of unexploded bombs. Many foreign nations evacuated their citizens from Beirut during the fighting. Israel invaded Lebanon but failed to find the soldiers.

When the violence subsided, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert came under attack from moderate Israelis as well as from many abroad for what they saw as his overly aggressive and incompetent response to Hezbollah’s actions. In Lebanon, increased tension between Hezbollah and government supporters broke out into violence in May 2008. Later that month, leaders signed a peace deal giving Hezbollah more power in the government.

Some Middle East experts view these events—violence in Lebanon and the election of Hamas—as representing a turning point in the peace process. They see some possible positive outcomes from the renewed calls for stability and negotiation. Others are not so hopeful.
Soaring populations, popular discontent, rising government expenditures, violence in Iraq, and the unresolved situation between Israelis and Palestinians continue to place pressure on Middle Eastern states. How the United States manages the challenges of our dependence on the region’s oil, Iran’s nuclear ambitions, threats from Islamist terrorists, our presence in Iraq, and the relationship between the Arab world and Israel will be no simple task.

In the coming days, you will have an opportunity to consider a range of options for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Each of the four options that you will explore is based on a distinct set of values and beliefs. Each takes a different perspective on the U.S. role in the world and its stake in the Middle East. You should think of the options as a tool designed to help you better understand the contrasting strategies from which the United States must craft future policy.

After considering these options, you will be asked to create your own policies that reflect your own beliefs and opinions about where U.S. policy should be heading. You may borrow heavily from one option, you may combine ideas from several options, or you may take a new approach altogether.
Options in Brief

Option 1: Police a Rough Neighborhood

The attacks of September 11 and the aggressive dictatorships of the Middle East prove that the world is a dangerous place. The United States cannot hide from the hatreds that fester in this region. U.S. citizens must accept that the United States’ strength and influence in the Middle East and around the world present an irresistible target for hate-mongers and extremists. To ensure U.S. security and the security of U.S. friends and allies, the United States must confront the forces that have aligned themselves against peace and stability before they unleash more havoc. The United States has destroyed the government of the most dangerous and aggressive tyrant in the region, Saddam Hussein. The United States must remain in Iraq until a new, stable, U.S.-friendly government can be established. And the United States must stand up to other countries in the region that sponsor terrorism and are trying to acquire dangerous weapons.

Option 2: Focus on Oil

U.S. citizens have no choice but to recognize the critical importance of Middle Eastern oil to economic and political stability. As the events of the 1970s illustrated, a disruption in Middle Eastern oil supplies has the potential to send shock waves throughout the global economy. In the face of such a threat, it should be clear that the flow of oil from the Middle East is vital to U.S. prosperity and security. U.S. policy in the Middle East must be focused on ensuring that the United States and its allies have access to the region’s oil resources. For too long, the United States’ absolute support of Israel has complicated its relationship with leading Arab oil-producers. Economic common sense demands a more balanced approach. Likewise, there is no benefit in picking fights with Iran or Syria or carrying out a campaign against Islamist movements that needlessly alarms U.S. allies.

Option 3: Promote Democracy and Freedom in the Region

Over the past decade, the world has changed for the better. But democracy has made scant headway in the Middle East, where basic freedoms and the rule of law count for little. No region of the world spends a higher proportion of its wealth on weapons. Regrettably, U.S. policy has contributed to the Middle East’s lack of progress. For too many years, the United States has put its oil interests and security concerns ahead of principle. The time has come for the United States to use its enormous influence to nudge the region toward reform. Governments that take steps toward establishing democratic institutions, open societies, and economic freedoms should be rewarded. At the same time, the United States should withhold favors from those that refuse to budge. Change is possible, but only if the United States is willing to commit its strength and its resources and play a fair and evenhanded role with all states in the region.

Option 4: Break Free of Entanglements

Since the end of the Cold War, much of the United States’ foreign policy attention has shifted to the Middle East. But U.S. efforts have only increased anti-American sentiment. The United States must break free of entanglements in the region. The U.S. military presence must be eliminated to avoid U.S. involvement in another, potentially far more deadly and expansive war. The United States cannot continue to serve as a convenient target for anti-American extremists. Likewise, the United States should not be held responsible for guaranteeing peace between Arabs and Israelis. U.S. relations with countries in the Middle East should be limited to issues that do not entangle the United States in the controversies of the region.
The attacks of September 11 and the aggressive dictatorships of the Middle East prove that the world is a dangerous place. The forces opposed to the United States and its interests did not disappear with the end of the Cold War. Many of them reside in the Middle East. The United States cannot hide from the hatreds that fester in this region. U.S. citizens must accept that the United States’ strength and influence in the region and around the world present an irresistible target for hate-mongers and extremists.

To ensure U.S. security and the security of U.S. friends and allies, the United States must draw a clear line in the sand. On one side belong trusted friends and allies in the region. Fortunately, there are many. Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, and most of the Persian Gulf states have been reliable partners for decades. When their security is threatened, either by enemies beyond their borders or within, the United States should stand beside them. On the other side are the forces that have aligned themselves against peace and stability. They must be confronted before they unleash more havoc on their neighbors and on the United States.

The United States has destroyed the government of a dangerous and aggressive tyrant, Saddam Hussein. The United States must remain in Iraq until a new, stable, U.S.-friendly government can be established. There are also other countries such as Iran and Syria that sponsor terrorism and are trying to acquire dangerous weapons. Terrorists have demonstrated their ability to strike worldwide. Still more chilling is the prospect that a rogue state such as Iran may eventually be armed with nuclear weapons. Only the United States has the power and the prestige to confront the outlaw regimes of the Middle East. The job of police officer is not fun, but in a neighborhood as rough as the Middle East the alternative is chaos and war.

What policies should the United States pursue?

- The United States should maintain strong alliances with key friends in the Middle East and provide foreign aid and military assistance to Middle Eastern governments that are fighting against Islamist movements.

- The United States should work for a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict that ensures the security of Israel while satisfying the United States’ Arab allies. The United States should pressure the Palestinian Authority to reign in Hamas and recognize Israel’s right to exist.

- The United States and its coalition allies should remain in Iraq until a stable government that is friendly to the United States can be established.

- The United States should use its economic, diplomatic, and military strength to prevent states in the region from developing nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons or from gaining access to advanced military technology.

- The United States should restrict the fundraising and organizational activities of groups in the United States that are linked to Islamist movements in the Middle East.

- The United States should press its allies and trading partners worldwide to impose sanctions on Iran and control the flow of funds to terrorists.
Option 1 is based on the following beliefs

- There is no hope for compromise between the United States and the anti-Western leaders who despise U.S. values and way of life.
- The United States has the right to take the initiative to eliminate tyrants who threaten it, its allies, or the rest of the world.

Arguments for

1. Confronting tyrants will, in the long run, reduce tension and promote stability in the Middle East and around the world.
2. Standing by allies and friends in the Middle East will reassure countries worldwide that the United States honors its commitments.
3. Addressing Israeli security concerns in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict will serve as a solid foundation for lasting peace in the region.

Arguments against

1. If the United States continues its military presence in Iraq, this will further inflame Middle Eastern public opinion and jeopardize the stability of the region.
2. Branding Islamist leaders as U.S. enemies will only provoke deeper hostility toward the United States within the Muslim world and may result in an increase of terrorist attacks both within the United States and against U.S. allies in the region.
3. Confronting Iran will leave the United States further isolated from the rest of the international community and cost U.S. companies opportunities for business.
4. Entangling the United States further in the Middle East will draw U.S. resources away from urgent problems at home, such as reducing crime and improving education.
5. Continuing support for corrupt, undemocratic regimes in the Middle East will discourage democratic and economic reform and provide fuel for claims of U.S. hypocrisy.
6. Pledging unconditional support for U.S. allies when their security is threatened will mean that the United States must continue to support Israel at the expense of the Palestinians, a position that only fans the flames of anti-American sentiment in the region.
7. Imposing economic sanctions to achieve political goals harms innocent civilians rather than oppressive dictators.
8. If the United States commits itself to a large military role in the Middle East, it will be stretching the military too thin. This will make the United States vulnerable in other parts of the world.
Option 2: Focus on Oil

Today’s world runs on oil. Much of industrialized society has been built around it. Without oil, the engines of the global economy would grind to a halt. The Middle East contains over 60 percent of the world’s proven oil reserves. Saudi Arabia alone holds one-fifth of the planet’s supplies. U.S. citizens have no choice but to recognize the critical importance of Middle Eastern oil to economic and political stability. As the events of the 1970s illustrated, a disruption in Middle Eastern oil supplies has the potential to send shock waves throughout the global economy. Not only would people in the United States be jolted, but the economic earthquake would strike key U.S. allies and trading partners in Western Europe and East Asia with even more devastating force. The entire international economy could very well crumble. In the face of such a threat, it should be clear that the flow of oil from the Middle East is vital to U.S. prosperity and security. No other issue in the Middle East rivals the importance of energy.

U.S. policy in the Middle East must be focused on ensuring that the United States and its allies have access to the region’s oil resources. With so much at stake, the United States cannot afford to lose track of its priorities. For too long, the United States’ absolute support of Israel has complicated its relationship with leading Arab oil-producers. Economic common sense demands a more balanced approach. Likewise, there is no benefit in picking fights with Iran or Syria or carrying out a campaign against Islamist movements that needlessly alarms U.S. allies. U.S. interests require that the United States maintain a military presence in the Persian Gulf, but U.S. troops should be there to promote stability, not to provoke another war. Above all, the United States must be careful not to rock the boat in a region that is both dangerously explosive and critically important.

What policies should the United States pursue?

- The United States should scale back its support for Israel and take an evenhanded approach to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- The United States should ensure that Iraqi oil continues to flow and that this oil is available to the United States, its allies, and the global marketplace.
- The United States should maintain friendly relations with Middle Eastern governments that respect U.S. oil interests and offer the United States assistance in resolving disputes that threaten regional stability.
- The United States should support the efforts of U.S. oil companies doing business in the Middle East.
- The United States should continue to use its economic and diplomatic leverage to prevent OPEC from again dominating the world oil market.
- The United States should maintain a military presence in the Persian Gulf sufficient to safeguard shipping lanes and to deter attacks against the main oil fields of the region.
- The United States should respond quickly and firmly, using force if necessary, against countries that threaten U.S. oil interests in the Middle East.
- The United States should end economic sanctions against Iran and instead work to draw it back into the international community.
Option 2 is based on the following beliefs

- The free flow of oil from the Middle East is essential to the security and prosperity of the United States.
- By showing respect and tolerance, the United States can live peacefully with the growing political influence of Islam in the Middle East.

Arguments for

1. Pursuing a more balanced policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict will boost U.S. prestige and influence in the Middle East and allow the United States to play a more effective role in promoting regional stability.

2. Ending the United States’ confrontational posture with Iran will remove a needless source of friction in Middle Eastern politics. Improved relations will also allow U.S. companies to do business in Iran and compete with their European rivals on an equal footing.

3. Emphasizing economic interests in U.S. relations with the Middle East will place U.S. foreign policy on a steadier, more predictable course.

Arguments against

1. Focusing on U.S. economic interests in Iraq rather than on the establishment of democracy will indicate that the United States has been hypocritical in its rationale for war with Iraq and will fuel anti-American sentiment in the region.

2. Stabbing Israel in the back after decades of close cooperation will invite an Arab attack against Israel and lead U.S. allies worldwide to question U.S. commitments.

3. Treating the rulers of oil-rich nations as a privileged class will embolden them to crack down on government opposition at home and will inflame anti-American sentiment in the region.

4. Abandoning sanctions against Iran will be seen throughout the Middle East as a victory for U.S. enemies and a defeat for the United States.

5. Ignoring the brutality and corruption of tyrannical regimes in order to gain access to oil will tarnish the United States’ international reputation as a force for democracy and freedom.

6. Focusing U.S. resources on protecting the oil supplies of the Middle East will distract from the more important goal of developing new sources of energy and promoting conservation.

7. Focusing on U.S. access to Middle East oil will only prove to the international community that the United States is not interested in collaborating to solve the region’s pressing problems.
Option 3: Promote Democracy and Freedom in the Region

Over the past decade, the world has changed. More countries than ever have embraced democracy and economic freedom. International standards of human rights have gained widespread acceptance. But troubles continue to exist in the Middle East. Democracy has made scant headway. Basic freedoms and the rule of law count for little in many nations of the Middle East. The rights of women are cruelly neglected. Government officials keep a tight grip over industry and commerce. No region of the world spends a higher proportion of its wealth on weapons. Regrettably, U.S. policy has contributed to the Middle East’s lack of progress. For too many years, the United States has put its oil interests and security concerns ahead of principle. It has looked the other way as heavy-handed rulers have abused their own people. As U.S. experience first with the shah of Iran and then with Saddam Hussein proved, such policies inevitably lead to future problems.

The time has come for the United States to use its enormous influence in the Middle East to nudge the region toward reform. In countries whose regimes are both brutal and tyrannical, the United States should help democratic opposition forces change their governments. In others, the United States should encourage positive change. Governments that take steps toward establishing democratic institutions, open societies, and economic freedoms should be rewarded. At the same time, the United States should withhold favors from those that refuse to budge. Fortunately, there are a few states that serve as models for the region. Israel has a solid record of democracy. Turkey’s political system has overcome several setbacks. Jordan and Lebanon also appear to be moving toward greater political participation. But no country should be above criticism. For the United States to bring reform to the Middle East, U.S. policies must be seen as fair and evenhanded by those in the region and by the wider international community. Change is possible, but only if the United States is willing to commit its strength and its resources to this endeavor.

What policies should the United States pursue?

- The United States should use foreign aid, trade benefits, and diplomatic pressure to promote democratic and economic reform in the Middle East.
- The United States should ensure the survival of Israel and persuade Arab states to establish peaceful relations with Israel. At the same time, the United States should pressure Israel to end human rights abuses against the Palestinians living under Israeli jurisdiction.
- The United States should base its support for Palestinian statehood on whether the Palestinian Authority reins in Hamas, recognizes Israel, and promotes democracy and human rights.
- The United States should stop selling arms to governments that use force against their own people.
- The United States should punish governments that abuse the rights of minority groups, violate the principles of religious tolerance, or discriminate against women. This must apply evenly to both U.S. allies and U.S. enemies in the region.
- The United States should work to foster domestic democratic opponents of the Iranian mullahs and other brutal, tyrannical rulers in the Middle East.
- The United States should reduce its military ties with governments that refuse to take steps toward establishing democratic institutions and economic freedoms.
- Now that it is there, the United States should stay in Iraq and build a democracy there.
Option 3 is based on the following beliefs

- The advancement of democracy, tolerance, human rights, equality for women, and economic freedom in the Middle East is essential to bringing peace and stability to the region.
- Without political and economic reform, the Middle East will fall further behind other regions of the world.

Arguments for

1. Promoting democracy and economic freedom in the Middle East will restore the United States’ reputation as a nation of principle and strengthen the cause of reformers worldwide.

2. Taking a firm stand against abuses of human rights and adopting an evenhanded policy toward all countries in the Middle East—friend and foe alike—will strengthen the U.S. position in the eyes of the Middle East and the world.

3. Gaining acceptance for international standards of human rights in the Middle East will serve as the basis for the resolution of disputes in the region.

Arguments against

1. Trying to impose U.S. values on cultures that are distinctly different will only contribute to further hostility toward the United States.

2. Presenting Israel and Turkey as models for the region—despite their records of human rights violations—will lead others to accuse the United States of having a double standard.

3. Picking fights with countries that control a large share of the world’s oil reserves flies in the face of vital U.S. economic interests.

4. Needlessly rocking the boat by encouraging opposition forces in one of the most explosive regions in the world will lead to the downfall of many traditional U.S. friends and allies in the Middle East.

5. Transition to democracy in many of the countries of the region could lead to regimes that are more, not less, hostile toward the United States.

6. Forcing Middle Eastern countries to adopt reckless economic changes will deepen poverty and play into the hands of extremists.

7. Entangling the United States further in the domestic affairs of the region will inflame public opinion against the United States at home and abroad.
Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

Option 4: Break Free of Entanglements

Since the end of the Cold War, much of the United States’ foreign policy attention has shifted to the Middle East. The United States has fought two wars against Iraq, occupied that country, and established an extensive military presence in the region. In addition, it has committed vast diplomatic and security resources to resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. And what has been the result? Only increasing anti-American sentiment stirred up by Islamist militants. The United States has become the target of terrorist attacks aimed at punishing the United States for its involvement in the Islamic world. History has shown that U.S. policymakers have often misunderstood developments in the Middle East. As September 11 demonstrated, U.S. involvement in the region can be a costly, dangerous adventure.

The United States must break free of entanglements in the Middle East. The military presence it has built up in recent years must be eliminated to avoid U.S. involvement in another, potentially far more deadly and expansive war. The United States cannot continue to serve as a convenient target for anti-American extremists. Likewise, the United States should not be held responsible for guaranteeing peace between Arabs and Israelis. Ultimately, disputes in the region must be resolved by those involved, not by U.S. diplomats or U.S. military forces. U.S. relations with the countries of the Middle East should be limited to issues that do not entangle the United States in the controversies of the region. Like the nations of Western Europe and Japan, the United States should concentrate on doing business with the Middle East, not on meddling in local affairs. By keeping its distance, the United States would remove itself from the sights of Islamist extremists and avoid further terrorist attacks.

What policies should the United States pursue?

- The United States should turn responsibility for rebuilding Iraq to the Iraqi government.
- The United States should withdraw its military forces from the Middle East and end its alliances with countries in the region.
- The United States should scale back its involvement in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict and instead advise the countries of the region to take the initiative in pursuing the peace process.
- The United States should pursue open trade and business relations with all of the countries of the Middle East.
- The United States should repeal its economic sanctions against Iran.
- The United States should reduce its dependence on Middle Eastern oil by encouraging U.S. oil companies to invest elsewhere in the world and by promoting the development of alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind power.
- The United States should limit foreign aid in the Middle East to humanitarian crises.
Option 4 is based on the following beliefs

- The United States’ expanding involvement in the Middle East has contributed to the rise of anti-American feelings in the region.
- As a region, the Middle East is no more important to U.S. interests than other parts of the world.
- Peace and progress in the Middle East can only come from changes within the region, not from U.S. pressure.

Arguments for

1. As the United States decreases its involvement in the affairs of the Middle East, it will reduce the sources of anti-Americanism in the region that serve as fuel for dangerous Islamist extremists.
2. Ending the U.S. military presence in the Middle East will remove a leading grievance against the United States and allow the United States to focus its resources on addressing economic and security needs at home.
3. Untangling the United States from the web of Middle Eastern politics will lessen hostility toward the United States and make it possible for U.S. companies to pursue business in more countries in the region.

Arguments against

1. Walking away from any role as a peacemaker in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will only lead to a further escalation of the conflict.
2. Withdrawing U.S. military from the Middle East will set off an even more dangerous arms race and increase the likelihood that biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons will spread in the region.
3. If the United States withdraws from this region, it will give the rest of the world cause to believe that the United States will sit back and do nothing in other areas as well. This will encourage other states unfriendly to the United States to accelerate their weapons programs.
4. Ending the U.S. military presence in the Middle East will end any hope for a democratic transition in Iraq and change in other countries like Iran and Syria.
5. Abandoning responsibility to rebuild Iraq after a U.S.-led war will give rise to charges of hypocrisy and undermine U.S. credibility around the world.
6. Failing to stand up to Iran could open the door to Iranian aggression in the oil-rich Persian Gulf.
7. A U.S. withdrawal from the Middle East will remove one of the few forces for democratic change in the region.
The field of literature in the Middle East has often been a political and cultural battleground. Most of the region’s best-known writers have stood in opposition to their governments. Many have been imprisoned for their work. At the same time, literature has reflected the larger tensions of the region. Writers have played an important role in shaping the struggle between traditional values and Western liberalism. They have often served as a voice for the powerless and the forgotten.

In this section of the background reading, you will have an opportunity to sample the work of Iranian, Israeli, Palestinian, and Turkish writers. As you read, identify the values and viewpoints that come across most strongly.

Aboud’s Drawings by Ghodsi Ghazinur

Ghodsi Ghazinur (1943- ) is a widely-read author of children’s literature in Iran. She is also skilled at addressing mature themes through the eyes of children.

Aboud’s Drawings is told from the perspective of Morteza, a poor boy living in Tehran, Iran’s capital. The story is set in the early stages of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88). While Morteza, his little brother Mostafa, and his friends are playing with cardboard weapons and fireworks in their neighborhood, Iran is experiencing mounting casualties at the battlefield and suffering from increasingly deadly rocket attacks. In the following excerpt, the reality of war intrudes on Morteza’s innocent game.

After my brother fell asleep that night, I got to work. I found a piece of cardboard, drew a picture of a J-3 gun, cut the picture out in the dark with a pair of scissors I took out of my mother’s sewing box, then I took the half-ready gun to my room and painted it black with a magic marker. It turned out perfect. My brother cried his eyes out when he saw my gun the next morning. My mother who had lost her patience with him bought him a squirt gun, but my brother kept on crying that that was not a gun and that he wanted a gun and my mother, not knowing what was going on, ignored him. Eventually she got disgusted and started beating him. I felt so sorry for him that I had to rescue him from her, in spite of the fact that he was an enemy, and make him understand that a handgun was as good as any gun in a war....

That day my older brother informed us that he was joining the army on Monday. My mother looked at my father. My father’s hand, holding a cigarette, started trembling. They acted as if it were the first time they had learned it. I sat by my brother and said, “Brother, are you going so you can fight the enemy?”

He caressed my hair and said, “Yes.”

“With a real gun?” my younger brother asked enthusiastically. My brother smiled bitterly. My younger brother went on gleefully, “We’re fighting, too. In the alley. But our guns are fake.”

I glared at him but it was too late. I expected my older brother to scorn us, to say that instead of engaging in nonsense like that we should be studying. But he gently said, “Sweet Mostafa! No one really wants to be in a war. You are too young to know what war is, otherwise you wouldn’t be playing a ‘war’ game.”...

A few days later a new boy appeared in our neighborhood. He was our age, with a dark complexion and curly hair. We soon found out that his name was Aboud. Akbar was the first to meet him....

When we went to the alley the next day, we found Akbar and Aboud waiting with the rest of the guys. Akbar introduced him to us. When Aboud saw the sacks in our hands and guns on our backs, he asked, “What are these for?”
“For the ‘war’ game.”
He lowered his head and remained silent.
“Why don’t you join us?” Ali asked.
“No, I don’t want to play.”
“Because war isn’t a game.”...

The next morning we went to the alley as usual. We hadn’t finished setting up our sandbags yet when Aboud appeared. He was holding a big roll of cardboard under one arm. Everyone exchanged curious glances. I decided to act as if I hadn’t seen him, but before we had a chance to discuss it among ourselves he came and stood in the middle of our circle and said, “Good morning, brothers!”

His tone was so friendly that everyone’s attention went to him.

“Since I left you yesterday, I have been working on this. I worked on it all day so I could finish it in time to bring it today.”

And he opened the roll. On the extra-large piece of cardboard, there were several pictures of war, each scene neatly drawn. On the top of the sheet he had written in bold black print, “The Damned War.” A scene showing bomb explosions appeared on the right-hand side. Aboud had drawn pictures of wounded birds on the edge of the scene, writing underneath the picture, “This is what war is all about.” On the left-hand side there was a picture showing a few small children staring sadly at a demolished house. The words underneath the picture read, “This used to be Zaer Abbas’s house.”...

We gazed at the pictures for a few moments.

“Who was Zaer Abbas, Aboud?” Jafar asked.

“Mahmoud’s father,” Aboud answered, squinting. “Mahmoud was a friend from school. An explosion destroyed their house. When my friends and I arrived at the scene, they had closed the alley off, preventing us from getting near the bombed house. The only thing we could find out was that none of the inhabitants had survived. They lifted the restriction in the afternoon after they removed the corpses. I walked toward the house. Mahmoud’s sneakers were tossed outside and lay on a mound of dust next to his sister’s plastic doll with its missing hands and eye sockets filled with dirt. I wanted to scream. I wanted to knock my head against the wall. All my memories of Mahmoud came alive in my mind: the days we used to set fire to car tires during the [Islamist revolution] uprising; the afternoons we used to spend playing soccer; the days we used to go to the river bank and sprinkled bread scraps for the ducks and the fish. Now Mahmoud is dead. The river is contaminated with bodies of ducks and fish killed by bombs, and it stinks. There’s not a single bird left. The explosions have scared away not only the people but also the birds.”

“Where did they escape to?” Mostafa asked.

“God knows. They’ve become refugees, too,” Aboud said. Then he fell silent.

**The Lover**
by Abraham B. Yehoshua

Abraham B. Yehoshua (1936- ) explores the contradictions between the idealism of early Zionism and the reality of Israeli society. His novels find drama in the everyday experiences of Israelis, probing the anxieties and tensions that have emerged since Israel’s triumph in the 1967 War.

*The Lover* examines Israeli life in the mid-1970s from a variety of perspectives. Dafi, one of the book’s main characters, is a 15-year-old student who is beginning to question the civic values of her country. Like many teenagers, she struggles to break free of the rules and expectations that are likely to define her life. Dafi expresses her rebellious spirit by challenging the authority of her parents and teachers. She also falls in love with a young Palestinian mechanic who works in her father’s garage. In the following excerpt, she recalls the loss of a teacher killed during the October War of 1973.
war. Who would have guessed that he’d be the one to be killed? We didn’t think of him as a great fighter. He was a little man, thin and quiet, starting to go bald. In the winter he always had a huge scarf trailing behind him. He had delicate hands and fingers that were always stained with chalk. Still he was killed. We worried rather about our P.E. teacher, who used to visit the school from time to time during the war in uniform and with his captain’s insignia, a real film star, with a real revolver that drove all the boys mad with envy. We thought it was marvelous that even during the war he found the time to come to the school, to reassure us and the lady teachers, who were wild about him. He used to stand in the playground surrounded by children and tell stories. We were really proud of him and we forgot all about our math teacher.

On the first day of the war he had ceased to exist for us, and it was days after the ceasefire that Shwartzy [the school principal] suddenly came into the classroom, called us all to our feet and said solemnly, “Children, I have terrible news for you. Our dear friend, your teacher Hayyim Nidbeh, was killed on the Golan on the second day of the war, the twelfth of Tishri. Let us stand in his memory.”

And we all put on mournful faces and he kept us on our feet for maybe three minutes, and then he motioned with a weary gesture that we shouldn’t stand, glared at us as if we were to blame and went off to call another class to its feet. I can’t say that we were all that sorry at once because when a teacher dies it’s impossible to be only sorry, but we really were stunned and shocked, because we remembered him living and standing beside the blackboard not so long ago, writing out the exercises with endless patience, explaining the same things a thousand times. Really it was thanks to him that I got a pretty good report last year because he never lost his temper but went over the same material again and again. For me someone only has to raise his voice or speak fast when explaining something in math to me and I go completely stupid, I can’t even add two and two. He used to make me relax, which was boring, it’s true, deadly boring. Sometimes we actually went to sleep during his lessons, but in the middle of all this drowsiness, in the cloud of chalk dust flying around the blackboard, the formulas used to penetrate.

And now he was himself a flying cloud.

Naturally, Shwartzy used his death for educational purposes. He forced us to write essays about him, to be put into a book which was presented to his wife at a memorial ceremony that he organized one evening. The students that he’d taught in the fifth and sixth grades sat in the back rows, in the middle the seats were left empty and in the front rows sat all the teachers and his family and friends, even the gym teacher came especially, still in his uniform and with his revolver, although the fighting had ended long ago. And I sat on the stage where I recited, with great feeling and by heart, the poems that are usual on these occasions, and between the poems Shwartzy preached a fawning and flowery sermon, talking about him as if he was some really extraordinary personage that he’d secretly admired.

And then they all went and stood beside a bronze plaque that had been put up by the entrance to the physics department. And there, too, somebody said a few words. But those we didn’t hear because we slipped away down the back steps.

Shwartzy was a quick worker. In Israel they hadn’t yet finished counting the dead, and he’d already got the memorials out of the way.

Wild Thorns
by Sahar Khalifeh

Sahar Khalifeh (1941– ) is a keen observer of Palestinian society in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Her writing exposes the psychological wounds suffered by Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. At the same time, Khalifeh lays bare the disunity and weaknesses of her own people.

Wild Thorns tells the story of Palestinian youth growing up in the West Bank in the 1970s. The main character is Usama, who
has returned home after working in the Persian Gulf as a translator. Usama has joined the Palestinian resistance movement and is committed to blowing up the buses that transport Palestinian workers to jobs in Israel. But Usama is torn when he learns that many of his cousins and neighbors work in Israel. Eventually, he goes forward with his mission, but both he and one of his cousins die in the attack. In the following excerpt, an exchange between two Palestinians—one a poor bread seller and the other an affluent businessman—illustrates for Usama the strains and compromises of daily life in the West Bank.

Usama strolled along the narrow muddy streets. The discordant cries of the street peddlers vying with one another assaulted his ears. Meat, fruit and vegetables; the bread seller’s cart was piled high with loaves made “inside,” in Israel.

“Fresh bread! Hurry up! Come and get it, folks! Hurry! Fresh bread! One pound a loaf! A loaf for a pound! Only one pound!”

An elderly man with a red fez set firmly on his head passed by. He picked up one of the long loaves, squeezed it and then put it back. The bread seller shouted, “But it’s fresh, sir. I swear it’s fresh!”

The man walked away, gesturing, as if to say, “Fresh indeed! You dare to sell their leftovers here!”, and disappeared down an alley.

Usama watched the scene angrily. Even our bread! The idea infuriated him.

A well-dressed young man now approached the bread seller and asked in an aggressive tone, “Where’s it from?”

Upset by the question, the bread seller looked around furtively to see if other potential customers nearby might have heard. “It’s just bread,” he said.

Sensing from the well-dressed young man’s expression that an attack was imminent, he repeated defensively, “Now look, sir, this is just bread. Does even bread have a religion and a race? This is top-quality bread—it’s worth its weight in gold!”

The young man picked up a loaf; it was stamped with Hebrew letters. And it was as dry as the trunk of an old olive tree.

“This bread’s from inside!” he said angrily. “And it’s stale too! Disgraceful.”

This was clearly not the first time the bread seller had heard this. He responded to the challenge immediately. “Yes, sir, it’s from inside.” he agreed. “And where else would it be from? It’s all from inside, sir. Everything! Why not just move on and let me try and earn my living?”

“What you’re doing is a disgrace,” the young man repeated disdainfully.

The repeated insult now brought an angrier, more voluble response. “A disgrace, is it? They called it disgraceful when I took a job ‘inside.’ So I stayed home like the women, and they called that a disgrace! And here you are in your fashionable trousers and smart shirt, all nicely pressed, telling me it’s a disgrace. Look, friend, we’re not the first to work with them. While we were still wandering the streets of Nablus looking for bread to eat, your kind were running around Tel Aviv looking for companies to award you franchises so you could sell their products. Isn’t that true now, sir? Tell me if it’s true or not.”

He grabbed a loaf of bread and waved it in the young man’s face, flecks of angry spittle landing on the loaves. “Well, is it true or false?” he shouted. “Answer me, in the name of our faith, answer!”

The young man was gazing at the peddler dumbfounded, his heart beating fast, his expression shocked and imbecilic. Getting a grip on himself, he suggested defensively, “Well, couldn’t you sell Arab bread?”

The bread seller threw the loaf back onto the cart and began to move off, leaving the young man still holding the loaf he’d first picked up. When the cart had moved a few paces away, the young man followed, still clutching the bread, and shouted, “Hey, wait, take this back.”

The peddler stretched out a hand and grabbed it. “Okay, give it here,” he said fierce-
ly. “Let someone else buy it. It’s clear you’re from the upper class. Give it here. Working-class people buy quietly, without making a long song and dance about it.”

Civilization’s Spare Part
by Aziz Nesin

Aziz Nesin (1915-1995) was one of modern Turkey’s most popular writers. His novels and short stories often poked fun at the snags in Turkey’s modernization process. Nesin’s sharp wit frequently provoked criticism from Islamic leaders and conservative politicians.

In Civilization’s Spare Part, the main character, Hamit Agha, is a victim of the mechanization of Turkish agriculture. The short story is set in a rural coffeehouse, where Hamit Agha is explaining to his fellow villagers how the purchase of a tractor has led him to financial ruin. Hamit Agha recalls that his daughter and son-in-law, both of whom are teachers, and his son, who had learned to drive in the army, badgered him to sell his oxen and buy a large tractor. They argued that the tractor would do the work of ten men and save him money. Instead, the tractor suffers one mechanical problem after another. In the following excerpt, Hamit Agha recounts his history of troubles with the tractor.

The winter had set in. We pushed the tractor into the stable and tied it to the post where the oxen used to be, while a tumultuous snowstorm was sounding on the roof. Meanwhile, friends, the bank loan and the installment at the equipment office came due. We had no money.... We borrowed money to pay the first installment at the office.

We reached summer in the middle of all this. We made for the field. Just then it went bang, and crash, and stopped. What is the problem with this damned thing? No one knew. We brought out the expert from the office. Didn’t he say its cogwheel was broken? “Sell us another cogwheel,” we said, and he said no.

“Since this cursed thing has no cogwheel, why do you cheat us poor people?” “Well,” he said, “if you buy another tractor, then you can use its cogwheel.”

Look around at our neighbors’ fields. It’s the same story. A tractor body lies in everyone’s fields. Everywhere you look are chains, tractor treads, and piles of iron....

Then, gentlemen, wouldn’t you know it? The installment was due. The second notice came. For the sake of our honor, sirs, we sold another ten-donum [about 2.5 acres] field. A screw fell out—500 hundred liras [Turkish currency]. A thousand liras for a part the size of your finger. A bolt come loose—1,000 liras. Its chain breaks. Spare parts couldn’t be found. A patch here, a patch there. That blessed tractor started to look like my trousers. While it plowed the ground, it shook all over like someone who has malaria. Everywhere in our field one can find a screw, a belt, an iron bar, a shaft, or a chain. It was as though the filthy thing had sprinkled its seeds in the field.

They said that our assemblyman whom we elected from the Democrat Party was in town. I went to him. “What will happen to us?” I asked. “Does a tractor the size of an elephant stop dead because of a part the size of a nut?”...

What could he say? He talked for a long time. I couldn’t understand very much. “How did people live in the past, in the Stone Age? Now it’s the Iron Age, that is to say, the age of the Democrat. Civilization and the country are turning into iron,” he said.

I said, “What you’re saying is all very well. You brought this civilization, but where is its spare part? Come with me and look at the field. Our civilization is in pieces. It lies there like a corpse. Isn’t there a smaller one than this? If this miserable thing hits something it doesn’t move, if you say ‘giddap’ it doesn’t start up, and if you say ‘whoa’ it doesn’t slow down.”...

Just then another installment notice arrived. Let me tell you something. The sighs of the oxen have affected me. How tearfully that yellow ox wept when he was sold to the market! How sorry I was!
To make a long story short, I sold every field and paid off the whole debt. Then I called to my daughter and son-in-law. I took my wife and the boy out to the wreck. “Either we repair this calamity of God’s or I’ll put the yoke on you, drive you like oxen, and plow the farm,” I said. They worked on the engine, kicked it once, twice, tore off and reattached a strap, tightened a screw, and put something else in place of the fragile cogwheel whose bolt was loose....

Then, gentlemen, I could see that it wouldn’t work. I gathered my son, daughter, son-in-law, and wife. “Come on, folks,” said I, “let me show you how to repair this thing.” I picked up a sledgehammer. I drove those people of mine before me like a flock of sheep.

We came to the wreck. I struck the steering wheel and said, “Take that, you 20th century.” I struck the engine and said, “Take that civilization.” I struck the driving wheel with the sledgehammer and said, “Take that. This is your spare part.” I swung the sledgehammer again and again. Suddenly I saw that my wife was shouting. “Help! My husband has gone crazy!” My daughter ran, my son-in-law ran, and my son ran the hardest. I threw away the sledgehammer and started down the road. I came straight here, gentlemen. I’m still sweating....

What a relief! I escaped from the accursed, foul thing. A thousand thanks to God. It’s as though I’ve been born again.
**Supplementary Resources**

**Books**


**World Wide Web**

U.S. Energy Information Administration <www.eia.doe.gov/> Statistics about U.S. energy consumption, imports, production, etc.

Council on Foreign Relations <www.cfr.org/region/397/middle_east.html> Provides up-to-date articles, reports, and analyses of events in the region.

Maps of the Middle East <www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east.html> The Perry-Casteñada Map Collection at the University of Texas.

PBS NewsHour <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/region/middle_east/index.html> Provides news coverage of Middle East topics, interviews with leaders, expert analysis, and maps and other aids.
Our units are always up to date.

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- Middle East ★ Iraq ★ Russia ★ South Africa
- India & Pakistan ★ Brazil ★ Iran ★ Mexico
- Colonialism in Africa ★ Weimar Germany ★ China
- U.S. Constitutional Convention ★ New England Slavery
- War of 1812 ★ Spanish American War
- League of Nations ★ FDR and Isolationism
- Hiroshima ★ Origins of the Cold War
- Cuban Missile Crisis ★ Vietnam War

And watch for new units coming soon:

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Choices Education Program
Watson Institute for International Studies
Box 1948, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912

Please visit our website at <www.choices.edu>.
Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

*Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* draws students into the policy debate on one of the world’s most volatile regions. Students explore the Arab-Israeli conflict, the significance of oil, the politicization of Islam, and other issues that have shaped U.S. ties to the Middle East.

*Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* is part of a continuing series on current and historical international issues published by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program at Brown University. Choices materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens.
Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

THE CHOICES PROGRAM
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History and Current Issues for the Classroom

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Acknowledgments

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Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East is part of a continuing series on public policy issues. New units are published each academic year, and all units are updated regularly.

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The Choices Approach to Current Issues

Choices curricula are designed to make complex international issues understandable and meaningful for students. Using a student-centered approach, Choices units develop critical thinking and an understanding of the significance of history in our lives today—essential ingredients of responsible citizenship.

Teachers say the collaboration and interaction in Choices units are highly motivating for students. Studies consistently demonstrate that students of all abilities learn best when they are actively engaged with the material. Cooperative learning invites students to take pride in their own contributions and in the group product, enhancing students’ confidence as learners. Research demonstrates that students using the Choices approach learn the factual information presented as well as or better than those using a lecture-discussion format. Choices units offer students with diverse abilities and learning styles the opportunity to contribute, collaborate, and achieve.

Choices units on current issues include student readings, a framework of policy options, suggested lesson plans, and resources for structuring cooperative learning, role plays, and simulations. Students are challenged to:

- recognize relationships between history and current issues
- analyze and evaluate multiple perspectives on an issue
- understand the internal logic of a viewpoint
- identify and weigh the conflicting values represented by different points of view
- engage in informed discussion
- develop and articulate original viewpoints on an issue
- communicate in written and oral presentations
- collaborate with peers

Choices curricula offer teachers a flexible resource for covering course material while actively engaging students and developing skills in critical thinking, deliberative discourse, persuasive writing, and informed civic participation. The instructional activities that are central to Choices units can be valuable components in any teacher’s repertoire of effective teaching strategies.

The Organization of a Choices Unit

Introducing the Background: Each Choices curriculum resource provides historical background and student-centered lesson plans that explore critical issues. This historical foundation prepares students to analyze a range of perspectives and then to deliberate about possible approaches to contentious policy issues.

Exploring Policy Alternatives: Each Choices unit has a framework of three or four divergent policy options that challenges students to consider multiple perspectives. Students understand and analyze the options through a role play and the dialogue that follows.

- Role Play: The setting of the role play varies, and may be a Congressional hearing, a meeting of the National Security Council, or an election campaign forum. In groups, students explore their assigned options and plan short presentations. Each group, in turn, is challenged with questions from classmates.

- Deliberation: After the options have been presented and students clearly understand the differences among them, students enter into deliberative dialogue in which they analyze together the merits and trade-offs of the alternatives presented; explore shared concerns as well as conflicting values, interests, and priorities; and begin to articulate their own views.

For further information see <www.choices.edu/resources/guidelines.php>.

Exercising Citizenship: Armed with fresh insights from the role play and the deliberation, students articulate original, coherent policy options that reflect their own values and goals. Students’ views can be expressed in letters to Congress or the White House, editorials for the school or community newspaper, persuasive speeches, or visual presentations.
Western civilization has always had a unique relationship with the Middle East. During the Crusades, exposure to the wealth and learning of Middle Eastern cities forced Europeans to acknowledge their own shortcomings. With the rise of the West in the modern era, the Middle East was seen as the antithesis of Western progress and dynamism. Today, the United States’ need for oil, relationship with Israel, involvement in Iraq, and fears about terrorism have made the Middle East an increasingly critical area of U.S. involvement.

*Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* analyzes the mix of interests and values that have drawn the United States into the region. This unit asks students to consider the principles behind the U.S. presence in the Middle East. At the core of the unit is a framework of four distinct options for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. By exploring a range of alternatives, students gain a deeper understanding of the values underlying contrasting policy recommendations.

Part I of the readings surveys the history of the U.S. involvement in the Middle East up through the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Part II examines the rise of political Islam and the critical issues that surfaced after the Persian Gulf War. The readings prepare students to consider the complexities of U.S. relationships with Middle Eastern countries.

The readings themselves are complex. Prior to the unit, students should have a foundation in the history and geography of the Middle East, particularly with respect to the region’s ethnic composition, natural resources, and religious landscape. You also may wish to split up the readings over more days or use graphic organizers (see suggestions in the Teacher Resource Book (TRB) on page TRB-3). Teaching about the Middle East is difficult because of the many issues and countries involved. Because of the breadth of issues, not all topics can be covered in the reading. Some topics are covered in more depth in the lesson plans.

**Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan:** The Teacher Resource Book accompanying *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* contains a day-by-day lesson plan and student activities. The unit opens with an investigation into the causes of the Iranian Revolution. Alternatively, teachers may choose to use a map lesson of the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict. An optional lesson challenges students to come up with a partition plan for Palestine in 1947. On the second day students assume the roles of key Middle Eastern leaders in evaluating the United States’ impact on the Middle East. Another optional lesson considers Middle Eastern literature. The third and fourth days engage students in a simulation in which they act as advocates for the four options. Finally, on the fifth day, students apply their own recommendations for U.S. policy to three hypothetical regional crises. You may also find the “Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan” useful.

- **Alternative Study Guides:** Each section of reading has two distinct study guides. The standard study guide helps students harvest the information in the readings in preparation for analysis and synthesis in class. The advanced study guide requires the student to tackle analysis and synthesis prior to class activities.

- **Vocabulary and Concepts:** The reading addresses subjects that are complex. To help your students get the most out of the text, you may want to review with them “Key Terms” on page TRB-61 before they begin. A “Shifting Sands Issues Toolbox” (TRB-62) provides additional information on key concepts.

- **Additional Resources:** More resources, including powerpoint maps and a Google Earth activity, are available at <http://www.choices.edu/middleeastmaterials>.

The lesson plans offered here are provided as a guide. Many teachers choose to devote additional time to certain activities. We hope that these suggestions help you tailor the unit to fit the needs of your classroom.
Integrating this Unit into Your Classroom

Materials produced by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program are designed to be integrated into a variety of social studies courses. Below are a few ideas about where *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* might fit into your curriculum.

**International Politics:** For the countries of the industrialized world, national security has long been synonymous with access to oil. Many of the twentieth century’s wars and alliances have revolved around the contest for oil. Government officials, corporate executives, and military leaders have fixated on its significance. Since World War II, the importance of oil has transformed the Persian Gulf into one of the world’s most strategically prized regions. *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* allows students to take a broader look at oil’s role in geopolitics. The subject carries added weight as alternative energy sources emerge and concern mounts about the impact of fossil fuels on the global environment.

**World and U.S. History:** Many of the forces that have shaped the modern Middle East were in fact unleashed during the last decades of the Ottoman empire. Nationalism, spurred in part by the failure of Ottoman reformers to establish the rule of law and basic human rights, eventually recast Turkish and Arab identity. Additionally, the emergence of pan-Islamism as a political factor in the Ottoman empire influenced the direction of the Islamist movements that were to follow.

The Middle East also served as the setting for many of the Cold War’s most intriguing dramas. The 1967 Six-Day War and, in particular, the 1973 October War were largely a contest between U.S. and Soviet weaponry. The competition for allies fueled an arms race that turned the region into a testing ground for U.S. and Soviet weapons. In addition, many of the Middle East’s most prominent political figures—such as Gamal Abd al-Nasser and Saddam Hussein—built their careers by turning the superpower rivalry to their advantage. *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* gives students an opportunity to re-examine U.S. efforts to counter Soviet influence in the Middle East.

**Contemporary Issues and Religion:** With the collapse of Soviet communism, some Western observers have elevated Islam to the status of a global menace. A few scholars, most notably Samuel Huntington, have suggested that the civilizations of the West and the Islamic world are locked in fundamental conflict. Political leaders on both sides of the cultural divide have fanned the flames of tensions. At the same time, moderate voices have stepped up their efforts to promote reconciliation and mutual understanding. *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* provides students a starting point for studying the relationship between the Judeo-Christian West and the Islamic Middle East.
This unit covers a wide range of issues which involve many countries over a long period of time. Your students may find the readings complex. It might also be difficult for them to synthesize such a large amount of information. The following are suggestions to help your students better understand the readings.

Pre-reading strategies: Help students to prepare for the reading.

1. You might create a Know/Want to Know/Learned (K-W-L) worksheet for students to record what they already know about the Middle East and what they want to know. As they read they can fill out the “learned” section of the worksheet. Alternatively, brainstorm their current knowledge and then create visual maps in which students link the concepts and ideas they have about the topic.

2. Use the questions in the text to introduce students to the topic. Ask them to scan the reading for major headings, images, and questions and so they can gain familiarity with the structure and organization of the text.

3. Preview the vocabulary and key concepts listed in the back of the TRB with students.

4. Since studies show that most students are visual learners, use a visual introduction, such as photographs, the Google Earth activity (TRB 45-48) or a short film clip to orient your students.

5. Be sure that students understand the purpose for their reading the text. Will you have a debate later, and they need to know the information to formulate arguments? Will students write letters to Congress? Will students communicate with students in Middle Eastern countries over the internet? Will they create a class podcast?

Split up readings into smaller chunks:
Assign students readings over a longer period of time or divide readings among groups of students.


Graphic organizers: You may also wish to use graphic organizers to help your students better understand the information that they are given. For each part of the reading we have included two organizers, one basic and one more complex. These organizers are located on TRB 9-10 and on TRB 35-36. Students can complete them in class in groups or as part of their homework, or you can use them as reading checks or quizzes.
The Iranian Revolution

Objectives:

Students will: Explain factors that contributed to the Iranian Revolution.
Recognize that the causes of historical events are multiple and complex.
Develop an understanding of hypothesis formation, testing, and revision that can be applied to other historical events.

Note:

Graphic organizers for Part I of the reading can be found on TRB 9-10.

Required Reading:

Students should have read the Introduction and Part I in the student text (pages 1-18) and completed “Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 5-6) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 7-8).

Handouts:

“Hypotheses about Iran” (TRB-11)
“Data Cards” (TRB 12-14)

In the Classroom:

1. Introducing the History— Divide students into groups of three or four. Distribute “Hypotheses about Iran” (TRB-11) to each group. Instruct students to read the background information on the Iranian Revolution at the top of the handout. Help students to define and understand “revolution.” What would it take for students to be personally motivated to protest? What would it take for two million people to protest?

2. Forming Initial Hypotheses— Review with students the purpose of forming hypotheses. Ask groups to form hypotheses about why the revolution occurred, following the directions on the handout. Remind students that there are no wrong answers, and that all ideas might be important. Once groups have completed the assignment, record groups’ findings on the board or overhead. Which hypothesis has the most support at this point? Why does that idea seem most likely to students?

3. Gathering Data—Distribute Data Card #1 to student groups or project it on an overhead. Ask groups to consider the questions associated with the card’s information. Based on their interpretations, students should revise their hypotheses, eliminate some, or add additional ones to the list. Repeat this process until the groups have reviewed all the cards.

4. Forming Conclusions—What do groups now believe caused the Iranian Revolution? How did students come to that conclusion? What information changed or refined their thinking throughout the process? Stress to students that historians use a similar process when studying historical events, and that as new evidence or new interpretations of evidence arise, historical conclusions often change.

5. Connecting to the United States—Ask students why people in the United States should know about the Iranian Revolution. Refer students to their reading. How was the United States involved in the revolution? How did the revolution affect the U.S. role in the Middle East?

Homework:

Students should read Part II in the student text (pages 19-33) and complete “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 32-33) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-34).
Study Guide—Part I

1. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most people in the United States were introduced to the Middle East through the ___________________. The Middle East is the birthplace of ________________, ________________, and ________________.

2. What did the Sykes-Picot Accord say?

3. During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson called for a postwar __________________ based on the “____________________” of nations. _______________ leaders applauded his views.

4. Why were European and U.S. leaders so concerned about access to oil?

5. Fill in the chart below comparing competing pacts and promises in the Middle East during WWI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacts and Promises</th>
<th>Who agreed?</th>
<th>What did they agree to?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balfour Declaration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British promises to Sharif Hussein</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Why were some U.S. government officials concerned by support for Israel in 1948?

7. Egypt’s Gamal Abd al-______________ was the most prominent voice of Arab______________.

   He campaigned for “____________________,” the unification of Arabs into a single state. This leader skillfully played the ________________ and the ________________ off one another.
8. The Middle East has been the scene of numerous conflicts. Fill in the chart below based on the reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Outcome of Conflict</th>
<th>U.S. and Soviet Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palestine—May 1948</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suez Crisis—1956</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six-Day War—1967</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October War—1973</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. List two outcomes of the Camp David accords.
   a. 
   b. 

10. Why did the United States support the shah of Iran?

11. List two ways that the United States helped Iraq during the Iran/Iraq war.
   a. 
   b. 

12. List three outcomes of the Persian Gulf War.
   a. 
   b. 
   c.
Advanced Study Guide—Part I

1. How did World War I and the peace conference that followed shape the “outlines of today’s Middle East”?

2. Why did World War II prompt U.S. leaders to pay greater attention to the oil resources of the Persian Gulf region?

3. How did the Zionist movement set the stage for long-term conflict in the Middle East and contribute to the rise of Arab nationalism?

4. Why did the Cold War influence U.S. decision-making in the Middle East?

5. What were the most important changes resulting from Israel’s victory in the Six-Day War?
6. Why did Middle Eastern states aim the “oil weapon” specifically at the United States? What was the economic impact of the 1973 oil crisis?

7. How did the October War pave the way to the Camp David accords? What was the United States’ role in bringing about the peace settlement?

8. Why was the Islamist revolution in Iran seen as a serious setback for U.S. interests in the Middle East?

9. Why did the United States become involved in Lebanon in the 1980s?

10. What were the main considerations behind President Bush’s decision to go to war against Iraq in January 1991? How did changes in international relations influence his response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait?
Oil, Israel, and Containing the Soviet Union

**Instructions:** During much of the twentieth century, U.S. involvement in the Middle East revolved around oil, Israel, and containing the Soviet Union. On the chart below, indicate what key events took place that were related to these three topics. Events may be placed in more than one box. Page numbers associated with the dates running down the left side of the worksheet are in parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Oil</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Containing the Soviet Union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914-1945 (pages 3-7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-1973 (pages 7-11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-1991 (pages 11-18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
U.S. Policies in the Middle East, 1914-1991

What are the effects of these two sets of policies on each other?

**U.S. Interests**: oil
**U.S. Policies**: cold war

**U.S. Interests**: Cold War
**U.S. Policies**: oil

**ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT**

What are the effects of these two sets of policies on each other?

**U.S. Interests**: oil
**U.S. Policies**: Arab-Israeli conflict

**U.S. Interests**: Arab-Israeli conflict
**U.S. Policies**: oil

**COLD WAR**

What are the effects of these two sets of policies on each other?

**U.S. Interests**: Arab-Israeli conflict
**U.S. Policies**: Cold War

**U.S. Interests**: Cold War
**U.S. Policies**: Arab-Israeli conflict

Instructions: On the chart above, begin by filling in the U.S. interests and policies for each circle. Then answer the question in each square, linking the concepts in the circles together.
Hypotheses about Iran

**Background:** In December 1978, two million people marched in Iran’s capital city, Tehran, demanding the resignation of their king, or shah. The shah’s army refused to put down the protests. The shah left the country, and a religious leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini, assumed leadership.

**Instructions:** Use this sheet to record and refine your hypotheses about the Iranian Revolution. First, answer the questions below, listing all your ideas about why this revolution might have occurred. Then, as you read the data cards, add to your list, remove items from your list, or refine your hypotheses based on the information you receive.

What do you think were the issues or events that led to the Iranian Revolution? Why do you think Iranian people protested the shah?
**Data Card 1: 1941**

Between 1939 and 1941, Germany was Iran’s leading trading partner. Hundreds of German agents operated in Iran. With the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Allied leaders worried that Germany would use Iran as a base for military operations against the Soviet Union. The British and Soviet governments sent a note to the shah, or king, of Iran demanding the expulsion of all Germans from Iran. The shah did not give in, and in late August 1941, Soviet forces moved in from the north, British from the south. Under pressure from the Allies, the shah relinquished the throne to his son, Mohammed Reza, in September 1941. Mohammed Reza swore allegiance to the Allies and promised to allow the British and Soviets to continue to extract and export Iran’s oil. The Iranians received 16% of the profits from the sale of the oil.

**Questions:**
How did Mohammed Reza become shah? How might the Iranian people have viewed his leadership? To whom did the shah owe his position? Where might his allegiance have lied?

**Data Card 2: 1944**

Iran’s constitution provided for a parliament in addition to a shah. In 1944 a member of parliament named Mohammad Mossadegh proposed a bill that would postpone all new oil contracts with Britain and the Soviet Union until they ended their occupation of Iran. He argued that these countries would be able to force Iran to accept a poor deal for the oil while they were still occupying the country. The bill passed, though it angered the British and the Soviets because they had been counting on the shah to give them favorable deals. (The United States was less interested in Iranian oil at the time.) The shah did not support the bill because he knew he owed his position to the British and calculated that he could strengthen his power by supporting the British.

**Questions:**
Whose interests did the British and Soviets represent? Whose interests did the shah represent? Whose interests did Mossadegh represent? How might the Iranian people have viewed the shah? Mossadegh? The British and Soviets?

**Data Card 3: 1951**

In the years after World War II, the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) became a focus of resentment and represented to Iranians the exploitation and weakness of Iran. In 1951 popular pressure forced the shah to appoint Mossadegh as prime minister. Mossadegh moved to nationalize, or take over, the British oil company so that control would come into Iranian hands. The British feared they would lose access to the oil and the revenues they desperately needed, and refused to compromise. The United States attempted to negotiate between the Iranians and the British, but negotiations did not resolve the dispute.

**Questions:**
Why would Mossadegh have wanted Iran to control the oil? How might Iranians have felt about the foreign control of Iranian oil? How might Iranians have felt if Mossadegh had succeeded?
In the early 1950s the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was heating up. The Soviets’ proximity to and relationship with Iran worried President Eisenhower, who was particularly concerned about the spread of communism. U.S. and British officials saw the shah as a key to their goals in Iran. Both countries wanted an oil-producing Iran firmly aligned against the Soviet Union. They aimed to rid Iran of the Mossadegh government, and increase the power of the shah, whom they were convinced would do their bidding. The shah, anxious to increase his power, approved of the coup in advance. In 1953, the CIA and British secret services bribed a small group of Iranians to instigate a coup. Mossadegh was removed from power, and the shah took steps to increase his own power.

Questions:
Mossadegh was an elected representative of the Iranian people. How might Iranians have felt when he was overthrown? How might this event have affected their views of the United States, the British, or the shah?

The shah was anxious to modernize Iran and make it a more powerful country. He had the support of the United States and Britain, who wanted a stable, oil producing Iran as an ally against the Soviet Union. With the help of the United States and Israel he formed the SAVAK, a secret police organization, which he used to hunt down opponents. SAVAK became known for the mistreatment, torture, and execution of opponents and political prisoners. The shah’s actions severely limited the public expression of political ideas. He also negotiated a new oil contract with Britain and the United States that gave Iran 50% of the profits. The shah used most of the profits on himself. During the 1950s, the United States provided more than $500 million in military aid to the shah.

Questions:
How might Iranians have felt at this time in their history? What options might they have had for changing things they disagreed with?

During the 1960s the shah continued his efforts at modernization. The most important reforms included redistributing land to peasants, giving women the right to vote, and emphasizing education. Elementary school enrollment rose from 1.6 million 1963 and to more than 4 million in 1977. Land reform took away land from wealthy landowners and from religious schools and mosques but did not provide most peasants with enough land to even reach a level of subsistence. The shah also introduced laws that gave women more rights in marriage. Although some supported the shah’s efforts to modernize, these reforms were a source of resentment among some religious leaders because they challenged traditional interpretations of Islamic law and replaced them with what religious leaders saw as Western values.

Questions:
How did groups of Iranians view these new laws?
Data Card 7: 1964

The Ayatollah Khomeini, a high ranking cleric, opposed the shah’s rule. Khomeini urged all Iranians to protest new laws that he argued would “...turn Iran into an American colony.” He proposed canceling all laws that he considered un-Islamic. He proposed taking away women’s right to vote, banning “corrupt content” from television and radio programs, and prohibiting alcohol. Khomeini considered the shah to be an enemy of Islam who was unconcerned about the welfare of the Iranian people. Khomeini’s ideas struck a chord with Iranians of many classes and ideologies. Although not all Iranians agreed with his religious ideology, they were pleased to have a voice to speak out against the shah. The shah ordered Khomeini arrested and exiled. In the coming years, visitors would smuggle pamphlets and cassette recordings by Khomeini back into Iran.

Questions:

Why might people have admired Khomeini? What about him and his beliefs were different from the shah’s?

Data Card 8: 1978

In January 1978, a government newspaper published a negative article about Ayatollah Khomeini in an effort to discredit him. Some theology students protested. The army brutally put down the protest and killed several students. Leading members of the clergy who opposed the shah called for protests and attendance at mosques forty days after the deaths of the students. This was a Shi’i tradition of mourning for forty days and then gathering to remember the dead. Protests were peaceful, except in the city of Tabriz where the government sent in tanks to control the demonstrations. The shah’s army and police forces killed more than one hundred people. Iranians protested again forty days later. The cycle continued, and over the next year, the government killed thousands of protesters. In December 1978, more than two million people took to the streets of Tehran.

Questions:

Why did the Iranian Revolution occur?
Objectives:

Students will: Practice general map reading skills.

Identify the major geographical landmarks of the Middle East on a map.

Understand the geography of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Required Reading:

Students should have read the Introduction and Part I in the student text (pages 1-18) and completed “Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 5-6) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 7-8).

Handouts:

“The Middle East” (TRB-16)

Maps of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1920-2008 (TRB 17-19)

(A Powerpoint presentation of these maps is available for download at <www.choices.edu/middleeastmaterials>.)

In the Classroom:

1. Overview—Ask students to identify as many of the countries and geographical landmarks in the handout “The Middle East” as they can. After five minutes, review the map with the class and ask students to fill in any landmarks they may have missed. Ask students to note connections between the places on the maps and current events or Part I of the reading.

2. Forming Small Groups—Divide the class into groups of three or four. Distribute the maps to each group. Groups should complete the questions on the bottom of each map.

3. Sharing Conclusions—After about ten minutes, call on students to share their findings. Ask students to make connections to Part I of the reading when they can. Ask students to connect past events to present events. To what extent did the First World War affect the current political geography of the region? The Second World War? Do the maps offer insight into the current Arab-Israeli conflict?

Homework:

Students should read Part II in the student text (pages 19-33) and complete “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 32-33) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-34).
The Middle East

Fill in the names of the countries of the Middle East. Identify major bodies of water.
1. Using the maps above, describe how the UN divided Israelis and Palestinians. What happened to the area that was a British mandate?

2. What happened to Jerusalem as a result of the partition?

3. Does the 1947 map suggest any areas of potential conflict? Explain your answer.
Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

Day One - Alternative Lesson

**1949: After the First War**

- Boundaries extended after 1949 war with neighboring Arab countries. The Gaza strip remained in Arab control.

**1967: The Six-Day War**

- Area occupied by Israel after the Six Day War in 1967 (includes Gaza Strip and all of the city of Jerusalem)

Compare both of these maps to the map of 1947.

1. How were the international boundaries different in 1949 from those set by the UN partition in 1947?

2. What were the results of Israel’s military gains in the Six-Day War? Which countries lost control of territory?
2008: The Region Today

1. How is this map different from the map of 1967?

2. Does the geography of the region offer any insight into possible solutions or obstacles to resolving the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict? How might things like access to waterways, the separation of Palestinian territories, and borders be important? Explain.
The Partition of Palestine

Objectives:

Students will: Understand the issues surrounding the partition of Palestine.

Design a map for the partition of Palestine in 1947 based on contemporaneous data.

Required Reading:

Students should have read the Introduction and Part I in the student text (pages 1-18) and completed “Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 5-6) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 7-8).

Handouts:

“Designing Your Partition Plan” (TRB-23)

“Palestine Maps and Sources” (TRB 24-29)

(A Powerpoint presentation of these maps is available for download at <www.choices.edu/middleeastmaterials>.)

In the Classroom:

1. Discussing Partition—Review the British decision to give the UN responsibility for Palestine with your students. How did the British originally come to control Palestine and other mandates in the Middle East? Remind students that Palestine was the only mandate that was not granted independence. Why did the British give the UN responsibility for Palestine? What do students think different groups in the region might have wanted at the time? Would they have supported this transfer of power?

   The UN then decided to partition Palestine between Jews and Palestinians. Were there any possible pitfalls of this plan? Whose perspectives might have been given importance? Whose perspectives might have been neglected?

2. Groupwork—Explain that student groups will now be given the opportunity to design their own partition plans for the region after World War II. Divide students into groups of three or four and distribute “Designing Your Partition Plan” (TRB-23). Tell students to follow the directions for Part I of the handout. Give groups five minutes to discuss the factors they think might be important to consider when creating their own partition plans. Provide students with suggestions as needed to broaden their thinking (see “Factors for Students to Consider When Designing Partition Plans” on TRB-22 for suggestions).

3. Understanding Maps, Sources, and Different Perspectives—Now distribute “Palestine Maps and Sources” to each group. If necessary, help students to understand what data the maps show. Have students consider what the perspectives of Jews and Arabs at the time might mean for their partition plans. Explain, if necessary, why the information provided in these maps and sources might be important to incorporate in their partition plans. Have groups use the blank map to devise their own partition plans. Remind students to complete Part II of “Designing Your Partition Plan” while they are drawing their maps.

4. Sharing Conclusions—When groups have completed their maps, ask them to share their decisions. What did different groups aim to achieve with their partition plans? What factors did they incorporate and what compromises did they have to make in designing their plans? What other information did students think would be useful in designing their plans? Encourage groups to point out possible areas where contention or conflict might occur in their own and others’ maps.

5. Understanding Outcomes—Show students the map on TRB-17 which depicts the actual UN plan. How were students’ maps different? What do students think about the UN plan? Does it seem reasonable? Can students figure out which factors the UN focused on or what compromises the plan shows? What points of contention can they see in the UN map? You also may wish to show your class maps from later decades that show how the
borders in the region have changed since 1947 (for example, TRB 18-19).

**Notes:**

You might want to do this lesson over two days or use an entire block.

Students need to have a good understanding of the history of the region to complete this task effectively. You may wish to give a mini-lecture or have them re-read “The Birth of Israel” (pages 6-8) before you begin this exercise.

Providing additional resources such as contemporary accounts from Palestinian refugees or Holocaust survivors might enrich the lesson.

You might consider having students read only to page 6 in the student text before doing this lesson so that they do not know the outcome of the UN decision before designing their own solutions.

**Homework:**

Students should read Part II in the student text (pages 19-33) and complete “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 32-33) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-34).
Factors for Students to Consider When Designing Partition Plans

The following are suggestions you may wish to use to prompt student groups’ discussion.

1. Population:
   - numbers
   - locations of different groups

2. Land ownership:
   - amounts
   - locations of different groups

3. Quality of land for agriculture

4. Location of natural resources including water

5. Location of cities

6. Shape of a viable state:
   - access to the sea
   - length of the borders (affects ability to control and protect them)
   - size of the state

7. Historical claims and ties

8. Religious claims and ties, including to Jerusalem

9. Previous commitments made

10. The Holocaust

11. Fairness

12. International opinion (i.e. will the plan be recognized and accepted by the world community?)

13. Local opinion (i.e. will the plan be recognized and accepted by those immediately affected?)

14. Military strength of each community (i.e. will one party be able to undermine a plan that it opposes?)
Designing Your Partition Plan

Instructions: Imagine that it is 1947 and you have been asked to come up with your own plan for the partition of Palestine.

Part I: Answer the following questions with your group members.

1. What factors do you think should be considered in your partition plan? Think about things like geography, history, population, and the promises that were made at the time. What do you and your group members think are the most important issues to be considered?

2. What will your group aim to achieve with your partition plan?

Part II: Your teacher will now provide you with a number of maps and sources. Use these, as well as the information in your reading, to help you develop your own plan to create a Jewish state and an Arab state in Palestine. You may find that you have to make compromises and that not everything can be considered. Be sure to answer the following question with your group members while you are designing your plan. You can draw your plan on the blank map provided.

3. You have been provided with some background information and statistics for the region. What other information do you wish you had? What other sources or kinds of information do you think are important to consider?
Palestine Maps and Sources

Balfour Declaration, 2 November 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty’s Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur James Balfour

Statement of British Policy in Palestine Issued by Winston Churchill in June 1922

“...The tension which has prevailed from time to time in Palestine is mainly due to apprehensions, which are entertained both by sections of the Arab and by sections of the Jewish population. These apprehensions, so far as the Arabs are concerned, are partly based upon exaggerated interpretations of the meaning of the [Balfour] Declaration favouring the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine...Unauthorized statements have been made to the effect that the purpose in view is to create a wholly Jewish Palestine. Phrases have been used such as that Palestine is to become ‘as Jewish as England is English.’ His Majesty’s Government regard any such expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view. Nor have they at any time contemplated...the disappearance or the subordination of the Arabic population, language, or culture in Palestine. They would draw attention to the fact that the terms of the Declaration referred to do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded in Palestine....”

Jewish Agency, The Biltmore Program, 1942

“In our generation, and in particular in the course of the past twenty years, the Jewish people have awakened and transformed their ancient homeland; from 50,000 at the end of the last war their numbers have increased to more than 500,000. They have made the waste places bear fruit and the desert to blossom. Their pioneering achievements in agriculture and in industry, embodying new patterns of cooperative endeavor, have written a notable page in the history of colonization.... In the new values thus created, their Arab neighbors in Palestine have shared....

“The Conference urges that the gates of Palestine be opened; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for upbuilding the country, including the development of its unoccupied and uncultivated lands; and that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.

“Then and only then will the age-old wrong to the Jewish people be righted.”
"The Problem of Palestine," submitted by the Arab Office, Jerusalem, to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, March 1946

“The whole Arab people is unalterably opposed to the attempt to impose Jewish immigration and settlement upon it, and ultimately to establish a Jewish State in Palestine. Its opposition is based primarily upon right. The Arabs of Palestine are descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the country, who have been in occupation of it since the beginning of history; they cannot agree that it is right to subject an indigenous population against its will to alien immigrants, whose claim is based upon a historical connection which ceased effectively many centuries ago. Moreover they form the majority of the population; as such they cannot submit to a policy of immigration which if pursued for long will turn them from a majority into a minority in an alien state; and they claim the democratic right of a majority to make its own decisions in matters of urgent national concern.

“…The Palestinian State would be an Arab state not…in any narrow racial sense, nor in the sense that non-Arabs should be placed in a position of inferiority, but because the form and policy of its government would be based on a recognition of two facts: first that the majority of the citizens are Arabs, and secondly that Palestine is part of the Arab world and has no future except through close co-operation with other Arab states…”

Proclamation of the Independence of Israel, 14 May 1948

“The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious, and national identity was formed. Here they…created a culture of national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world.

“Exiled from the Land of Israel, the Jewish people remained faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom.

“Impelled by this historic association, Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their statehood. In recent decades they returned in their masses. They reclaimed the wilderness, revived their language, built cities and villages, and established a vigorous and ever-growing community, with its own economic and cultural life. They sought peace yet were prepared to defend themselves. They brought the blessings of progress to all inhabitants of the country and looked forward to sovereign independence.

“The recent holocaust, which engulfed millions of Jews in Europe, proved anew the need to solve the problem of homelessness and lack of independence of the Jewish people by means of the re-establishment of the Jewish State, which would open the gates to all Jews and endow the Jewish people with the equality of status among the family of nations.

“The survivors of the disastrous slaughter in Europe, and also Jews from other lands, have not desisted from their efforts to reach Erets-Israel, in face of difficulties, obstacles and perils; and have not ceased to urge their right to a life of dignity, freedom, and honest toil in their ancestral land.”
Statement issued by the governments of the Arab League States on the occasion of the entry of the Arab armies into Palestine, 15 May 1948

“...The Arabs have always asked for their freedom and independence. On the outbreak of the First World War, and when the Allies declared that they were fighting for the liberation of peoples, the Arabs joined them and fought on their side with a view to realizing their national aspirations and obtaining their independence. England pledged herself to recognize the independence of the Arab countries in Asia, including Palestine....

“As Palestine is an Arab country, situated in the heart of the Arab countries and attached to the Arab world by various ties—spiritual, historical, and strategic—the Arab countries...have concerned themselves with the problem of Palestine and have raised it to the international level...

“...The Arab League and its Governments have not spared any effort to pursue any course...in order to bring about a just solution of the Palestine problem; [a solution] based upon true democratic principles and compatible with the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the [Charter] of the United Nations, and which would be lasting, guarantee peace and security in the country and prepare it for progress and prosperity....

“The governments of the Arab States emphasize...that the only just solution of the Palestine problem is the establishment of a unitary Palestinian State...”
The population of Palestine in 1946 was approximately 1.8 million people. Jewish immigration had increased steadily throughout the early twentieth century. The population of Jews in Palestine had increased from 8% in 1912 to about 33% in 1946. About 67% of the population was Palestinian Arab in 1946.
Your Partition Plan

Mediterranean Sea

Gulf of Aqaba

LEBANON

Syria

Egypt

JORDAN

EGYPT

JORDAN

Lake Tiberias

Dead Sea

Gaza

Tel Aviv

Jerusalem

Nablus

Hebron

Haifa

Gulf of Aqaba

Name:______________________________________________
Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

Day Two

Views from the Middle East

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Analyze the U.S. role in the Middle East from a Middle Eastern perspective.

2. Explore the goals and concerns of prominent Middle Eastern leaders.

3. Collaborate with classmates to develop a group presentation.

Note:

This lesson can also be done with materials on TRB 45-48 that utilize Google Earth. These materials will help students gather considerably more information for their presentation.

If time permits, this lesson may be done over two class periods.

Graphic organizers for Part II of the reading can be found on TRB 35-36.

Required Reading:

Students should have read Part II in the student text (pages 19-33) and completed “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 32-33) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-34).

Handouts:

“Middle East Summit—Profiles of the Leaders” (TRB 37-41) to appropriate small groups

“Middle East Summit—Organizing Your Presentation” (TRB-42)

“Middle East Summit—Evaluation Form” (TRB 43-44)

In the Classroom:

1. Review—Call on students to review Part II of the reading to explain how the U.S. role in the Middle East has changed since the Persian Gulf War. What are the most important U.S. connections to the region? How have the war in Iraq and reconstruction efforts there changed the landscape of the Middle East?

2. Defining Roles—Divide the class into ten groups. Assign each group the responsibility of representing one of the ten Middle East leaders featured in “Middle East Summit—Profiles of the Leaders.” Distribute the appropriate section of “Middle East Summit—Profiles of the Leaders” to each group. Distribute “Middle East Summit—Organizing Your Presentation” to all ten groups. Explain that the groups will take part in a summit of Middle Eastern leaders to evaluate the U.S. role in the region. Emphasize that each group must faithfully reflect the views of the leader it has been assigned. After the groups read the profiles of their leaders, they should answer the questions in “Middle East Summit—Organizing Your Presentation.”

3. Comparing Perspectives—Once the groups have completed their preparations, call on group spokespersons to deliver their presentations. (“Middle East Summit—Evaluation Form” is designed to enable students to record the main points of the presentations.) Encourage the groups to analyze other presentations. For example, how does the perspective of King Abdullah differ from that of Ayatollah Khamenei? How do domestic political factors influence the views of Hosni Mubarak or Bashar al-Assad? Which leaders favor a high level of U.S. involvement in the Middle East? Which leaders want the United States to withdraw from the region? How should the viewpoints emerging from the simulation affect U.S. policy toward the region?

4. Regional Politics—Note that a meeting of the ten leaders represented in the simulation has never taken place and is unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future. Call on students to identify the political, cultural, religious, and economic factors that might contribute to regional alliances and rivalries. For example, why have Turkey and Israel developed closer ties in recent years? How has recent U.S. involvement shaped relations among Middle Eastern countries?
Note to Teachers:
The profiles provided are brief sketches and are not meant to be comprehensive. For the most up-to-date and complete information, you may wish you have your students do further research on their leaders and countries or regions.

To give more complexity to the simulation, you may also want to give students a hypothetical scenario to discuss as summit leaders. Examples might be the complete collapse of the government in Lebanon or the assassination of the king of Jordan. You might also wish to use one of the scenarios outlined in the Day 5 lesson on TRB-60. How would each leader react to the situation? What would their concerns be? What do they think the U.S. role should be?
Study Guide—Part II

1. List three different challenges the United States faces in the Middle East today.
   a.
   b.
   c.

2. Why is Middle Eastern oil so important for the world economy?

3. Define political Islam.

4. U.S. policymakers have paid less attention to promoting _______________ and __________ in the Middle East. In other parts of the world, the United States often determines ______________, ______________, and other aspects of foreign policy on the basis of political reform.

5. What are two security issues that have contributed to U.S. concerns about Iraq and Iran?
   a.
   b.

6. Identify three challenges for the United States in Iraq.
   a.
   b.
   c.
7. List three concerns that U.S. policymakers have about Iran.
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

8. Fill in the chart below describing Israel’s relationship with its neighbors. Be sure to include issues that have been resolved and issues that remain to be resolved in the relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbor</th>
<th>Status of Relationship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian Territories</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
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<td>Lebanon</td>
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</table>

9. List three reasons why Israel has commanded a special position in U.S. foreign policy.
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

10. What was the result of the Israel/Hezbollah conflict in the middle of 2006?
Advanced Study Guide—Part II

1. Why has the growing U.S. military presence in the Middle East generated controversy among both Arabs and people in the United States?

2. How has the growth of political Islam changed the U.S. role in the Middle East since the Cold War?

3. What challenges exist for the United States in Iraq today?

4. Why does United States want to contain Iran?

5. In your view, is the Arab-Israeli conflict resolvable? Why or why not?
# U.S. Relations with Countries in the Middle East Today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>U.S. interests</th>
<th>U.S. involvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
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<td>Gaza Strip</td>
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<td>West Bank</td>
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</table>
What should U.S. policy in the Middle East be?

One must consider the multiple dimensions of this complicated issue in order to formulate sound policy.

Regional Security
Why is this important to the United States?

U.S. involvement:

Arab-Israeli Conflict
Why is this important to the United States?

U.S. involvement:

Islamist Governments
Why is this important to the United States?

U.S. involvement:

Oil
Why is this important to the United States?

U.S. involvement:
Middle East Summit—Profiles of the Leaders

Recep Tayyip Erdogan—Prime Minister of Turkey

Re-elected for your second term as prime minister when your party won the 2007 elections with a large portion of the vote, you were born in 1954 in Istanbul. You were educated in Turkey and became mayor of Istanbul in 1994, after playing professional soccer for many years. You were a popular mayor and gained fans from around the country despite your leanings toward Islamism. Turkey is a secular state and the separation between mosque and state is taken very seriously, even enforced by the military. In 1998 you were convicted of inciting religious hatred after reciting an inflammatory poem, and you served ten months in jail. Your successful reentry into politics after your imprisonment eventually led to your election as prime minister in 2003. You lead an Islamist political party called the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

As prime minister you have sought to strengthen connections to the West and increase foreign investment, to unify Cyprus, the island currently divided between Greeks and Turks, and to support Turkey’s bid to become a member of the European Union. You are also concerned about the status of Kurds in Iraq, as a sizeable minority of Kurds also lives in Turkey. Fighting between separatist Kurdish groups and the Turkish government has cost more than thirty-thousand lives in the past twenty-five years.

Ehud Olmert—Prime Minister of Israel

You were born in 1945, and educated in Israel. You have a lengthy history of political leadership. In 2003, you ran for parliament and shortly after you were appointed deputy prime minister. After the prime minister had a crippling stroke you became prime minister.

You want to keep Jerusalem united and under Israel’s control and to retain the Jordan Valley, but you support the construction of a peaceful Palestinian state. In principle you support the “road map” to peace laid out by the United States, the EU, the UN, and Russia, but are concerned about the divisions in Palestinian leadership. In June 2006, you authorized a new military offensive in the Gaza Strip against Hamas and since mid-2007, have authorized retaliations to frequent rocket attacks from Gaza. You have halted all planned evacuations of Israeli settlements from the West Bank. At the same time, you have begun negotiations with Syria over long-standing issues such as the status of the Golan Heights and Syrian support of anti-Israel groups. You believe that Israel’s alliance with the United States is important enough to weather any difficulties. Your position has been helped by a healthy economy, but you came under fire for what many in Israel saw as an overly aggressive response to Hezbollah’s rocket attacks from Lebanon in mid-2006.

Turkey

- Population: 71.9 mil.
- Literacy: 87.4%
- Per capita GDP: $9,400
- Unemployment rate: 9.7%
- Internet users: 12.3 mil.
- Main exports: food, clothing, textiles
- Major trading partners: Germany (10.9%), Russia (7.5%), Italy (6.9%)
- Military spending as % of GDP: 5.3%

Israel

- Population: 7.1 mil.
- Literacy: 97.1%
- Per capita GDP: $28,800
- Unemployment rate: 7.6%
- Internet users: 1.9 mil.
- Main exports: machinery, software, cut diamonds
- Major trading partners: U.S. (24%), Belgium (9%), Germany (3%)
- Military spending as % of GDP: 7.3%
Mahmoud Abbas—President of the Palestinian Authority

Born in 1935 in what was then the British Mandate of Palestine, you left for Syria when Israel became a country in 1948. You were educated in Syria and the USSR. You helped to organize the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and later established, with Yassir Arafat, the Al Fatah movement. You have worked as an advocate of peace, meeting with left-wing Jewish groups and pacifists. You are dedicated to the construction of a Palestinian state and the removal of Israeli settlers from the West Bank and Gaza, and have been working to prevent violent actions against Israel from various Palestinian organizations.

You were elected president of the Palestinian Authority in January 2005. The United States has supported you in the past, but the victory of the Hamas party in the 2006 elections has complicated your task. In 2007, Hamas expelled Fatah politicians from the Gaza Strip and your government now administers only the West Bank. The West Bank has a stronger economy than the Gaza Strip and a much smaller percentage of the population lives in refugee camps. You want to unite the Palestinian people from both the West Bank and Gaza behind Fatah and hope that by pressing forward with peace negotiations with Israel, you will gain support for your own party and weaken support for Hamas.

Khaled Meshal—Leader of Hamas

Born in 1956 in the West Bank village of Silwad, you have spent the majority of your life outside of the Palestinian territories. You were involved in a number of Islamist organizations in Kuwait, and became very active in Hamas after it was formed in 1987. In 1997, you survived an attempted assassination attempt by Israeli agents. In 2004, you became the leader of Hamas after the organization’s leader was killed in an Israeli attack. In 2007, your organization took control of the Gaza Strip, effectively separating the Palestinian territories into Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza.

Hamas has established a government in Gaza, but Hamas’s top leadership includes many external figures who weigh in on important decisions. You live in Syria but exert influence in Gaza as the leader of Hamas. You are also Hamas’s main diplomat, as your movement is not limited by the Israeli travel restrictions imposed on Hamas leaders in the Palestinian territories.

Israel and its allies have been reluctant to negotiate with you, because they consider Hamas a terrorist organization. Hamas is committed to the creation of a Palestinian state in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Your organization refuses to recognize Israel, but has expressed some willingness to negotiate a truce if Israel will revert to its 1967 borders and allow the return of Palestinian refugees. Hamas has also expressed willingness to talk with Fatah, but only if Hamas is accepted on an equal footing. Economic conditions in Gaza, which has always been poorer than the West Bank, have grown worse in recent years due to Israel’s economic blockade of the region.

*Figures are for both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei—Supreme Jurist of Iran

Born in 1939, you began pursuing religious studies as a teenager. In 1958, you joined the Islamist movement opposing the shah’s modernization program. During the 1960s and 1970s, you were repeatedly imprisoned for plotting to overthrow the shah. With the triumph of the Islamist revolution in 1979, Khomeini appointed you to the Council of the Islamic Revolution. After barely surviving a terrorist bombing attack in 1981 against the ruling Islamic Republic Party, you were elected president by a large majority. In 1989, you were chosen supreme spiritual leader following the death of Khomeini. Your position makes you the most powerful political figure in Iran, with the authority to overrule parliament’s decisions.

You oppose efforts to expand economic ties with the West and ease Islamic social restrictions. The United States has accused your country of sponsoring terrorism throughout the Middle East, of trying to secretly develop nuclear weapons, and of fomenting violence in Iraq. The United States has imposed sanctions on your country. Iran’s economy is mostly state-controlled and heavily dependent on oil exports. High oil prices have brought foreign currency to Iran but unemployment and inflation are still high. Iran has several land disputes with its neighbors. A broad-based democratic opposition movement initiated by young people (who make up 70 percent of the population) has recently caused you difficulties.

Hosni Mubarak—President of Egypt

Born in 1928, you were trained as a military pilot and are credited with the impressive performance of the Egyptian air force in the opening days of the October War against Israel in 1973. President Anwar al-Sadat promoted you to the top rank of the air force in 1974 and in 1975 named you vice-president. You became president after Sadat’s assassination in 1981. Under your presidency, Egypt has ended its isolation from the rest of the Arab world. Compared to Sadat, you have been quicker to criticize Israel. You have denounced terrorism and have helped broker agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. Approximately 70,000 Palestinian refugees live in Egypt.

The United States views you as an important source of peace and stability in the region. Egypt ranks as the second-leading recipient of U.S. foreign aid, amounting to about $1.8 billion a year. But your close ties with the United States have sparked a backlash at home. You have responded by cracking down against a broad range of opponents. The Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organization that is your government’s main opposition, has gained strength in recent years. For many years you insisted that Egypt was not ready for democracy, but multiparty elections for president are now constitutionally-mandated. Egypt has been under emergency law since 1981 and critics argue that torture and imprisonment without trial are widespread. Egypt’s economy is also struggling as the population increases, food prices rise, and arable land for agriculture decreases.

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**Iran**

- Population: 65.9 mil.
- Literacy: 77%
- Per capita GDP: $12,300
- Unemployment rate: 11%
- Internet users: 18 mil.
- Main exports: oil (80%), chemicals, food
- Major trading partners: China (11.8%), Japan (7.8%) Italy (5.9%)
- Military spending as % of GDP: 2.5%

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**Egypt**

- Population: 81.7 mil.
- Literacy: 71.4%
- Per capita GDP: $5,400
- Unemployment rate: 10.1%
- Internet users: 6 mil.
- Main exports: oil, cotton, textiles
- Major trading partners: U.S. (11.4%), Italy (8.1%), Germany (5.6%)
- Military spending as % of GDP: 3.4%
Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

Day Two

Bashar al-Assad—President of Syria
Born in 1966, you are the son of Hafez al-Assad who was the president of Syria for thirty years. You studied in London as a young man. You are a member of the Alawite Islamic sect—a minority in Syria. Before becoming president, you were a colonel in Syria’s armed forces. You were also head of the Syrian Computer Society and oversaw the introduction of limited internet access to Lebanon. In the 1970s your father strengthened Syria’s military with Soviet assistance. During the Lebanese civil war, he established Syrian control over much of eastern Lebanon. At home, he ruthlessly smashed opposition to his regime.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per capita GDP:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate:</td>
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<td>Internet users:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main exports:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major trading partners:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military spending as % of GDP:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Bush administration accused your government of assisting Saddam Hussein during the 2003 war with Iraq and of developing weapons of mass destruction. You deny these charges. Approximately two million Iraqis have fled Iraq to Syria and neighboring Jordan. At the same time, the U.S. government has criticized you for allowing militants to enter Iraq through your borders. The United Nations is investigating Syria for the assassination of the former Lebanese prime minister. Massive demonstrations against Syria in Lebanon led Syria to withdraw its military forces from Lebanon in early spring 2005. At the urging of the United States, Syria has entered peace negotiations with Israel. You insist that Israel must give up control of the Golan Heights before Syria will agree to peace. Finally, Israel accuses you of financing Hezbollah, the terrorist organization that launched an attack against Israel in the summer of 2006.

Fuad Siniora—Prime Minister of Lebanon
You were born in 1943 and raised in a Sunni family in Lebanon. You earned an MBA at the American University in Beirut and worked in the Lebanese banking industry before entering politics. You were a close associate of the former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, and served in all five of his cabinets. You were appointed prime minister by the president of Lebanon in 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lebanon</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per capita GDP:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet users:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main exports:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major trading partners:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military spending as % of GDP:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), which raged for fifteen years, devastated your country. For fifteen years following the war Syria kept a military presence in Lebanon, stabilizing the country yet also controlling it. Following Hariri’s assassination in 2005, huge demonstrations against Syria’s presence forced Syria to leave. Lebanon’s relationship with Syria remains tenuous, and is complicated by the fact that Syria supports Hezbollah, a political and military organization operating in Lebanon which aims to eliminate Israel. Hezbollah’s attack against Israel, and Israel’s counter attacks, led to a 34-day conflict in mid-2006 which left much of southern Lebanon in ruins. More recently, violence between Hezbollah and government supporters led to an agreement giving Hezbollah a larger role in your government. Lebanon has good relations with the Arab countries of the Middle East but does not recognize Israel. You insist that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be resolved before Lebanon will engage in peace talks with Israel. U.S.-Lebanese relations historically have been strong. The United States pledged $1 billion in aid to Lebanon following the 2006 war.
Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq

A Shi‘i Muslim, you were born in 1950 and educated in Iraq. After Saddam Hussein sentenced you to death for opposing his regime, you lived in exile in Iran and Syria. You returned to Iraq after Saddam Hussein’s fall. You were elected to the National Assembly in 2005 and were the senior Shi‘i member of the committee which wrote the new Iraqi constitution. The president named you prime minister in April 2006, a position you accepted out of duty to your country.

Iraq

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population: 28.2 mil.</th>
<th>Literacy: 74.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per capita GDP: $3,600</td>
<td>Unemployment rate: 18-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet users: 36,000</td>
<td>Main exports: oil (84%), crude materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major trading partners: U.S. (32.6%), Syria (10.7%), Turkey (8.3%)</td>
<td>Military spending as % of GDP: 8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Iraq suffers from violence and a lack of basic services, including security. You have been working to eliminate the militias and other groups which engage in violence, though Sunnis accuse of you of not doing enough. You have been meeting regularly with U.S. officials who remain in Iraq in advisory roles, but you affirm that you do not do the bidding of the United States and you have criticized U.S. soldiers for occasionally being reckless with civilians’ lives and property. You visited Iran in 2006, meeting with President Ahmadinejad to discuss Iran’s role in the conflict in Iraq. You also visited the United States and spoke before a joint session of Congress. President Bush consistently says you have the full support of the U.S. government.

Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al Saud—King of Saudi Arabia

Born in 1923, as one of King Ibn Saud’s thirty-seven sons, you grew up surrounded by privilege and wealth. You were appointed head of the Saudi National Guard in 1963 and Prime Minister in 1982. When your half-brother King Fahd had a disabling stroke in 1995, you became the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia. Since Fahd’s death in 2005, you have served as king. Saudi Arabia is home to the two holiest shrines in Islam. The presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia after the Gulf War caused tension; in fact, Osama bin Laden, a Saudi, was angry about Westerners in Saudi Arabia. (U.S. troops left Saudi Arabia shortly after September 11.)

Saudi Arabia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population: 28.2 mil.</th>
<th>Literacy: 78.8%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per capita GDP: $20,700</td>
<td>Unemployment rate: 13% (males only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet users: 4.7 mil.</td>
<td>Main exports: oil (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major trading partners: Japan (14.8%), U.S. (14.8%), S.Korea (7.6%)</td>
<td>Military spending as % of GDP: 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In recent years, Saudi Arabia’s economy has been managed largely by Western-educated specialists. Although Saudi Arabia is the world’s largest oil exporter, your country’s soaring population growth and rising defense spending have strained the Saudi budget. Your economic dependence on oil is a particular concern. You are encouraging diversification and foreign investment in order to broaden your country’s economic base. Saudi Arabia joined the World Trade Organization in 2005. In foreign policy, you have favored close relations with the United States. At the same time, the United States has claimed that you allow militants to enter Iraq through your borders. At home, Islamist leaders increasingly criticize Saudi ties to the West and the corruption of the royal clan. Beyond your borders, you view Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as threats to Saudi security.
Instructions: Your group has been called on to represent one of ten Middle Eastern leaders at a regional summit. The summit will consider the role of the United States in the Middle East. Your group should organize a three-to-five minute presentation from the perspective of the leader you have been assigned. Answering the questions below will help you develop your presentation. You should also review the reading to gain a deeper insight into the challenges confronting your leader.

1. From the perspective of the leader you represent, how has U.S. involvement in the Middle East since World War II affected the region?

2. What are the most important issues currently facing your government?

3. What are your most pressing security concerns?

4. Summarize your government’s current relationship with the United States. How has it changed since September 11, 2001? The Iraq war?

5. What changes would you like to see in U.S. policy toward the Middle East?
Middle East Summit—Evaluation Form

Instructions: Use this worksheet to record the main points of the group presentations.

1. Summarize the attitudes of the Middle Eastern leaders toward the United States.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Turkey)  Hosni Mubarak (Egypt)

Ehud Olmert (Israel)  Bashar al-Assad (Syria)

Mahmoud Abbas (West Bank)  Fuad Siniora (Lebanon)

Khaled Meshal (Gaza Strip)  Nouri al-Maliki (Iraq)

Ayatollah Khamenei (Iran)  King Abdullah (Saudi Arabia)
2. Summarize the main domestic concerns of the Middle Eastern leaders.

*Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Turkey)*

*Hosni Mubarak (Egypt)*

*Ehud Olmert (Israel)*

*Bashar al-Assad (Syria)*

*Mahmoud Abbas (West Bank)*

*Fuad Siniora (Lebanon)*

*Khaled Meshal (Gaza Strip)*

*Nouri al-Maliki (Iraq)*

*Ayatollah Khamenei (Iran)*

*King Abdullah (Saudi Arabia)*
Views from the Middle East Using Google Earth

Objectives:

**Students will:** Deepen their understanding of the geography of the Middle East.

Enhance their preparation for the “Middle East Summit.”

Consider the connections between geography and politics.

Suggestion:

Google Earth is interactive software that uses satellite imagery and maps to allow a user to explore the world’s geography. The software is available for free at <http://earth.google.com>. It requires an internet connection.

Some familiarity with Google Earth is helpful before starting. There are two simple tutorials available.

**Getting to Know GoogleEarth:** <http://earth.google.com/userguide/v4/#getting_to_know>

**Navigating on the Earth:** <http://earth.google.com/userguide/v4/tutorials/navigating.html>

This lesson can be done either in class if students have access to the internet or as homework. Teachers may want to review with students their guidelines for internet usage ahead of time.

Handouts:

“Middle East Summit—Using Google Earth” (TRB 46-48) to the small groups.

Downloads:

Go to <http://www.choices.edu/middleeastmaterials> and download “Views of the Middle East—Google Earth.” Once downloaded, double click on SUMMIT.kmz icon to open Google Earth.

In the Classroom:

1. **Focus Question:** Write the following question on the board: “How does geography affect politics?”

2. **Overview**—Tell students that they are going to use Google Earth to obtain additional information to prepare for the Middle East Summit. Tell them to record their answers on the handout. Encourage them to explore their assigned country and the region as much as possible using Google Earth.

3. **Assessing Information**—After completing the Middle East Summit, ask students how Google Earth helped them prepare for their presentation at the Middle East Summit. What information about the geography of the region or their country helped in their presentation? Did they use geography to strengthen their arguments? Were there connections between geography and political arguments?

Note:

By selecting other layers, your students can have access to other kinds of information. For example, the “Geographic Web” layer contains photographs taken by members of the Google Earth community and links to Wikipedia, and the “Gallery” layer has resources from media such as The New York Times and other organizations. These layers are constantly changing.
Instructions: You represent one of ten Middle Eastern leaders at a regional summit. Follow the directions below to help you gather additional information about your country for your presentation.

Go to <http://www.choices.edu/middleeastresources>. Download “Views of the Middle East—Google Earth” and open the “SUMMIT.kmz” icon. You may need to open Google Earth first.

In the Layers panel on left: Select “Terrain,” and “Borders.” (Under “Borders” you may wish only to select international borders, country names, islands, and coastlines.)

De-select all other subcategories. You can turn these on later if you want to explore further.

In the Places panel on left: Expand “Summit.kmz.” You will find several subcategories that will help you to further explore the country you are representing. Double click on the word “Summit” to bring your viewer to the Middle East.

Answer the questions below to help you prepare for the Middle East Summit.

1. **Country ID’s:** To see the information for the summit, select “Country ID’s.” In the Places panel, double-click on the name of your country to zoom in on it.

   1. Fill in the chart below using the information in Google Earth. You should fill in information about your country, a neighboring country, and another country in the summit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>country name</th>
<th>literacy</th>
<th>per capita GDP</th>
<th>unemployment</th>
<th>% in poverty</th>
<th>internet users</th>
<th>exports</th>
<th>trading partners</th>
<th>military spending as % GDP</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. What countries does your country border?

3. Is your country large or small compared to other countries in the region?

   When you are done with this layer, de-select it and double click on “Summit” to return to a full view of the region.
II. Government: Select “Government.” Expand the folder, and also expand the subcategory folders of “Monarchy,” “Parliamentary Democracy,” “Theocratic Republic,” and “Republic.”

Click on the name of each subcategory for a definition. To get more information about your country’s executive branch, click on your country’s icon on the map or your country’s name in the Places panel.

1. What type of government does your country have?

2. What types of government do other countries in this summit have?

When you are finished looking at the “Government” layer, de-select it and double click on “Summit” to return to a full view of the region.

III. Water: Select the “Water” subcategory to see where water is generally plentiful, moderate, and scarce in the region and in your country. To look at your country up close, zoom in on it. If you want to look only at one level of water availability, deselect the other categories.

1. Is water generally scant, moderate, or plentiful in your country?

2. Zoom in closely. Describe the terrain in areas where water is scant, moderate, and plentiful. You may wish to deslect the layer once you have zoomed in.

   Scarce:

   Moderate:

   Plentiful:

3. Does your country border bodies of water? What are they?

4. How do the water resources in your country compare to other countries in the summit?

When you are finished viewing the “Water” layer, de-select it and double-click on “Summit” to return to a full view of the region.
IV. Oil: Select the “Oil” subcategory to see where oil fields and oil lines are in the region. Expand the “Oil” subcategory. Turn “Pipelines” off and on to see pipelines in the region. If you have an oil exporting country, double click on it to zoom in and to see information about oil production in your country. Look for translucent green blotches to see where oil fields in your country are. Zoom in on these and see what the terrain looks like.

1. Does your country have oil fields? If so, describe where the are located. Are they near cities? Bodies of water?

2. Zoom in on the terrain near the oilfields. Describe the terrain.

3. Are there oil pipelines in your country? Where do they go? Do they cross international borders?

When you are finished viewing this layer, de-select it and double-click on “Summit” to return to a full view of the region.

V. Cities: Select “Cities.” The most populated cities for each country at the summit will appear marked with purple balloons. Double-click on the name of your country to zoom in on it. Expand your country’s folder to see a list of cities, with the most populated at the top and the least populated at the bottom. Click on a city name on the map or in the Places panel to see its population. Zoom in on a city to see it up close. If you select “Geographic Web” in the Layers panel, you can click on the blue spheres or cameras to see photographs of the city.

1. What are the three largest cities in your country? What are their populations? Are they in areas that have plentiful, moderate or scant/unavailable freshwater sources?

2. Are your country’s cities concentrated in any particular region of your country? Are they near oil fields? Are they near bodies of water?

3. Zoom in on a city. Describe what you see.

When you are finished viewing this layer, de-select it, de-select “Geographic Web” if you turned it on, and double-click on “Summit” to return to a full view of the region.
Objectives:

Students will: Assess the interplay among literature, politics, and culture in the Middle East.

Analyze the political content of selections from modern Middle Eastern fiction.

Articulate the values and attitudes of fictional characters.

Required Reading:

Students should have read “Middle Eastern Society through Literature” in the student text (pages 44-49) and completed “Study Guide—Optional Reading” (TRB-50).

In the Classroom:

1. Cultural Comparisons—Call on students to share their impressions of the excerpts they read. Where are they able to sympathize with the concerns and hopes of the main characters? Are the settings and plots comprehensible for U.S. readers? How do the styles and themes of the excerpts compare to those of U.S. fiction?

2. Probing for Political Meaning—Emphasize that literature in the modern Middle East is often a vehicle for political expression. Call on students to extract the political meaning of the excerpts they read. For example, how do Ghodsi Ghazinur’s feelings about Iranian foreign policy come across in Aboud’s Drawings? What is Yehoshua’s view of the direction of Israel’s development?

3. Exploring Viewpoints—Form groups of three or four students. Assign each group one of the four main characters featured in the optional reading (i.e., Morteza, Dafi, Usama, or Hamit Agha). Call on the groups to write a brief monologue from the perspective of their assigned characters. They should focus on the attitudes of their characters toward their respective societies. Suggest that students concentrate on current controversies. For example, what is Morteza’s opinion of Iran’s Islamist revolution? How does Dafi feel about the prospects for peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors?

4. Promoting Dialogue—Ask the groups to present their monologues to the class. Encourage dialogue among the characters. For example, how do the contradictions in Palestinian society apparent to Usama compare to those observed by Dafi regarding Israeli society? How do the expectations and concerns of Hamit Agha differ from those of Morteza? What attitudes do the characters share?
Study Guide—Optional Reading

1. How does Morteza’s attitude toward war change in the course of *Aboud’s Drawings*? How is Morteza likely to react when the time comes for him to go to war?

2. What is the attitude of Dafi toward her math teacher’s death? How has her school’s emphasis on patriotism influenced her outlook?

3. How does the exchange between the bread seller and the affluent businessman illustrate the contradictions facing Palestinians living under Israeli occupation? Why is Usama especially troubled by the confrontation?

4. What does the breakdown of the tractor in *Civilization’s Spare Part* say about Turkey’s modernization effort? What does the future likely hold for Hamit Agha and his fellow small farmers?

5. Which of the four excerpts gave you the most insight into Middle Eastern society? Explain your reasoning.
Role Playing the Four Options: Organization and Preparation

Objectives:
Students will: Analyze the issues that frame the current debate on U.S. policy toward the Middle East.

Identify the core underlying values of the options.

Integrate the arguments and beliefs of the options and the readings into a persuasive, coherent presentation.

Work cooperatively within groups to organize effective presentations.

Handouts:
“Presenting Your Option” (TRB-52) for option groups

“Expressing Key Values” (TRB-53) for option groups

“Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate” (TRB-54) for committee members

In the Classroom:
1. Planning for Group Work—In order to save time in the classroom, form student groups before beginning Day Three. During the class period of Day Three, students will be preparing for the Day Four simulation. Remind them to incorporate the reading into the development of their presentations and questions.

2a. Option Groups—Form four groups of four students. Assign an option to each group. Distribute “Presenting Your Option” and “Expressing Key Values” to the four option groups. Inform students that each option group will be called on in Day Four to present the case for its assigned option to members of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate. Explain that option groups should follow the instructions in “Presenting Your Option.” Note that the option groups should begin by assigning each member a role.

2b. Committee Members—The remainder of the class will serve as members of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate. Distribute “Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate” to each committee member. While the option groups are preparing their presentations, members of the Committee on Foreign Relations should develop cross-examination questions for Day Four. (See “Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate.”) Remind committee members that they are expected to turn in their questions at the end of the simulation.

Suggestions:
In smaller classes, other teachers or administrators may be invited to serve as members of the committee. In larger classes, additional roles—such as those of newspaper reporter, lobbyist, or political consultant—may be assigned to students.

Extra Challenge:
Ask the option groups to design a poster or a political cartoon illustrating the best case for their options.

Homework:
Students should complete preparations for the simulation.
Preparing Your Presentation

Your Assignment: Your group has been called on to appear before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate. Your assignment is to persuade the committee members that your option should be the basis for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. You will be evaluated on how well you present your option.

Organizing Your Group: Each member of your group will take a specific role. Below is a brief explanation of the responsibilities for each role. Before preparing your sections of the presentation, work together to address the questions on the “Expressing Key Values” sheet.

1. Group Organizer: Your job is to organize your group’s three- to five-minute presentation of its option to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In organizing your presentation, you will receive help from the other members of your group. Read your option and review the reading to build a strong case for your option. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet will help you and your group to organize your thoughts. Keep in mind that, although you are expected to take the lead in organizing your group, your group will be expected to make the presentation together.

2. U.S. Foreign Policy Adviser: Your job is to explain why your option best serves the foreign policy goals and interests of the United States. Carefully read your option, and then review Part II of the reading. Make sure that your area of expertise is reflected in the presentation of your group. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

3. Arab-Israeli Conflict Specialist: Your job is to explain why your option best serves U.S. interests regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. Carefully read your option, and then review the reading. Pay close attention to the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process that began after the Persian Gulf War. Make sure that your area of expertise is reflected in the presentation of your group. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

4. Persian Gulf Specialist: Your job is to explain why your option best serves U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf region, including Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Carefully read your option, and then review the reading. Pay close attention to the history of U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf and the impact of the Persian Gulf wars on the region. Make sure that your area of expertise is reflected in the presentation of your group. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

Making Your Case

After your preparations are completed, your group will deliver a three- to five-minute presentation to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet and other notes may be used, but speakers should speak clearly and convincingly. During the presentations of other options, you should try to identify their weak points. After all of the groups have presented their options, members of the Senate committee will ask you clarifying questions. Any member of your group may respond during the cross-examination period.
Values play a key role when defining the parameters of public policy. What do we believe about ourselves? What matters most to us? When strongly-held values come into conflict, which is most important?

The term “values” is not easy to define. Most often, we think of values in connection with our personal lives. Our attitudes toward our families, friends, and communities are a reflection of our personal values.

The United States’ political system and foreign policy have been shaped by a wide range of values. Since the nation’s beginnings a commitment to freedom, democracy, and individual liberty has been a cornerstone of U.S. national identity. At the same time, the high value many people in the United States place on justice, equality, and respect for the rights of others rings loudly throughout U.S. history.

Since World War II, the United States has played a larger role in world affairs than any other nation. At times, U.S. leaders have emphasized the values of human rights and cooperation. On other occasions, the values of stability and security have been stressed.

Some values fit together well. Others are in conflict. People in the United States are constantly being forced to choose among competing values in the ongoing debate about foreign policy. Each of the four options in this activity revolves around a distinct set of values. Your assigned option describes a policy direction grounded in distinct values. Your job is to identify and explain the most important values underlying your option. These values should be clearly expressed by every member of your group. This worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

1. What are the two most important values underlying your option?
   a. 

   b. 

2. According to the values of your option, what should be the role of the United States in the world?

3. Why should the values of your option be the guiding force for U.S. policy toward the Middle East?
Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate

Your Role
As a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate, you consider issues relating to our country’s foreign policy. As you know, the Middle East has occupied an important place on the U.S. foreign policy agenda for over half a century. Since the end of the Cold War, the region has attracted increased attention, even as the United States has scaled back its involvement in other parts of the world. These hearings will introduce you to four distinct approaches to U.S. policy toward the Middle East.

Your Assignment
While the four option groups are organizing their presentations, you should prepare two questions regarding each of the options. Your teacher will collect these questions at the end of Day Four.

Your questions should be challenging and critical. For example, a good question for Option 3 might be:

Will focusing on U.S. oil interests in the Middle East tarnish our country’s international reputation for leadership?

On Day Four, the four option groups will present their positions. After their presentations are completed, your teacher will call on you and your fellow committee members to ask questions. The “Evaluation Form” you receive is designed for you to record your impressions of the option groups. Part I should be filled out in class after the option groups make their presentations. Part II should be completed as homework. After this activity is concluded, you may be called on to explain your evaluation of the option groups.
Role Playing the Four Options: Debate and Discussion

Objectives:
Students will: Articulate the leading values that frame the debate on U.S. policy toward the Middle East.

Explore, debate, and evaluate multiple perspectives on U.S. policy toward the Middle East.

Sharpen rhetorical skills through debate and discussion.

Cooperate with classmates in staging a persuasive presentation.

Handouts:
“Evaluation Form” (TRB-56) for the committee members

In the Classroom:
1. Setting the Stage—Organize the room so that the four option groups face a row of desks reserved for the Committee on Foreign Relations. Distribute “Evaluation Form” to the committee members. Instruct members of the committee to fill out the first part of their “Evaluation Form” during the course of the period. The second part of the worksheet should be completed as homework.

2. Managing the Simulation—Explain that the simulation will begin with three-to-five minute presentations by each option group. Encourage all to speak clearly and convincingly.

3. Guiding Discussion—Following the presentations, invite members of the Committee on Foreign Relations to ask cross-examination questions. Make sure that each committee member has an opportunity to ask at least one question. The questions should be evenly distributed among all four option groups. If time permits, encourage members of the option groups to challenge the positions of the competing groups. During cross-examination, allow any option group member to respond. (As an alternative approach, permit cross-examination following the presentation of each option.)

Homework:
Students should read each of the four options in the student text (pages 36-43), then moving beyond these options they should fill out “Focusing Your Thoughts” (TRB-58) and complete “Your Option Five” (TRB-59).

Note:
The consideration of alternative views is not finished when the options role play is over. The options presented are framed in stark terms in order to clarify differences. After the role play, students should articulate their own views on the issue and create their own options for U.S. policy. These views will be more sophisticated and nuanced if students have had an opportunity to challenge one another to think more critically about the merits and trade-offs of alternative views. See Guidelines for Deliberation <www.choices.edu/resources/guidelines.php> for suggestions on deliberation.
Evaluation Form:  
Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate

Part I

What was the most persuasive argument presented in favor of this option?

Option 1

What was the most persuasive argument presented against this option?

Option 1

Option 2

Option 2

Option 3

Option 3

Option 4

Option 4

Part II

Which group presented its option most effectively? Explain your answer.
Weighing Recommendations for U.S. Policy

Objectives:

Students will:

Articulate guidelines for U.S. policy based on personally held values and historical understanding.

Apply values and beliefs to hypothetical crises in the Middle East.

Compare and contrast values and assumptions with classmates.

Required Reading:

Students should have read each of the four options in the student text (pages 36-43) and completed “Focusing Your Thoughts” (TRB-58) and “Your Option Five” (TRB-59).

Handouts:

“Coping with Crisis” (TRB-60)

In the Classroom:

1. Analyzing Beliefs—Call on members of the Senate committee to share their evaluations of the option groups. Which arguments were most convincing? Which beliefs were most appealing? To what extent did the options address the concerns of people in the United States? To what extent did they address concerns of those living in the Middle East? Invite students to summarize their own options. To which interests and values did they attach the greatest importance? How would their policy recommendations change U.S. involvement in the Middle East? Ask students to identify the beliefs in “Focusing Your Thoughts” that they most strongly support.

2. Applying Student Options—Distribute “Coping with Crisis.” Lead the class in reading the first hypothetical crisis. Call on the students who earlier presented their answers to “Your Option Five” to respond to the scenario from the perspective of their options. Invite other students to assess the responses. Are they consistent with the principles that the students articulated earlier? What are the potential threats and opportunities posed by the crisis? How would U.S. leaders, past and present, respond to the crisis? Encourage other students to challenge the views of their classmates. Review the two remaining hypothetical crises, inviting participation from the entire class.

Suggestion:

Allow students to work in pairs or small groups before sharing their responses to the hypothetical crises.

Extra Challenge:

As homework, instruct students to write a letter to a member of Congress or the president expressing their views on U.S. policy toward the Middle East. The first part of the letter should summarize the ideas expressed in the first two questions of “Your Option Five.” In the second part, students should offer their recommendations for U.S. policy toward pressing issues in the Middle East.

Encourage students to explore the local dimension of the debate on U.S. policy toward the Middle East. For example, students could be asked to contact organizations that have a deeply-rooted interest in U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Business interests with connections to the Middle East, such as energy companies, are often active in the foreign policy arena. Ethnic organizations, particularly Jewish-American and Arab-American groups, also seek to make their voices heard. In addition, students, scholars, and immigrants from the Middle East may offer a source of insight into the region.

Note:

“U.S. Role in the World Student Ballot” is available online at <www.choices.edu/us-roleballot>. Students are encouraged to record their ballots online and join a nationwide debate about the U.S. role in the world. Student answers entered online will be developed periodically into a national report and sent to the White House and members of Congress.
Focusing Your Thoughts

Instructions
You have had an opportunity to consider four options for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Now it is your turn to look at each of the options from your own perspective. Try each one on for size. Think about how the options address your concerns and hopes. You will find that each has its own risks and trade-offs, advantages and disadvantages. After you complete this worksheet, you will be asked to develop your own option on U.S. policy toward the Middle East.

Ranking the Options
Which of the options below do you prefer? Rank the options from “1” to “4,” with “1” being your first choice.

___ Option 1: Police a Rough Neighborhood
___ Option 2: Focus on Oil
___ Option 3: Promote Democracy and Freedom in the Region
___ Option 4: Break Free of Entanglements

Beliefs
Rate each of the statements below according to your personal beliefs:

1 = Strongly Support  3 = Oppose  5 = Undecided
2 = Support  4 = Strongly Oppose

___ All countries are capable of making progress toward democracy, human rights, and tolerance.
___ Meddling in the local affairs of other countries is counter-productive and dangerous.
___ Economic interests should be the driving force behind U.S. foreign policy.
___ In international relations, reliable friends and allies are the United States’ most valuable asset.
___ The United States has a moral obligation to promote U.S. political values and freedoms around the world.
___ Political disputes and cultural differences should not prevent U.S. companies from doing business with other countries.
___ The greatest threats facing the United States are all at home: poverty, mediocre schools, crime, and an inadequate healthcare system.
___ U.S. enemies can be contained only if the United States remains strong and vigilant.

Creating Your Own Option
Your next assignment is to create an option that reflects your own beliefs and opinions. You may borrow heavily from one option, or you may combine ideas from two or three options. Or you may take a new approach altogether. There is no right or wrong answer. You should strive to craft an option that is logical and persuasive. Be careful of contradictions. For example, we should not launch an effort to promote democracy in the Middle East without expecting to upset our relations with the Arab kingdoms of the Persian Gulf.
Your Option Five

Instructions: In this exercise, you will offer your own recommendations for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Your responses to “Focusing Your Thoughts” should help you identify the guiding principles of your proposal.

1. What values and interests should guide U.S. policy toward the Middle East?

2. Which issues in the Middle East deserve the most attention from the United States?

3. What specific policies should the United States pursue toward the Middle East? (Use the policy steps featured in the options as a guide.)

4. What are the two strongest arguments opposing your option?
   a. 
   b. 

5. What are the two strongest arguments supporting your option?
   a. 
   b. 

6. How would your option affect people residing in the region?
Coping with Crisis

Instructions: In this exercise, you are asked to decide how the United States should respond to three hypothetical crises in the region. You should use your answers to the “Your Option Five” worksheet as a guide to developing your recommendations.

Crisis #1—Saudi King Under Siege
Followers of an Islamist movement have launched a wave of labor strikes in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia. The strikes, which have won broad support among both local and foreign Muslim workers, have cut Saudi oil production in half over the past two weeks. Prices in the world market have already jumped to $204 a barrel since the labor unrest began. The leaders of the Islamist movement have announced that they are seeking to overthrow the Saudi government. They charge that the Saudi royal family is corrupt and out-of-touch. They pledge to install a new leadership that better represents the will of the people. Reports indicate that the movement has received extensive support from Iran. Saudi Arabia’s King Fahd has vowed to use his army to smash the challenge to his rule.

How should the United States respond?

Crisis #2—Unrest Spreads
After a series of suicide attacks from both Gaza and the West Bank that have killed hundreds of Israeli citizens, Ehud Olmert, prime minister of Israel, has declared an end to contact with Hamas and Fatah. He has ordered the Palestinians to give up their weapons. The Israeli military has reimposed direct control over West Bank cities and moved into the Gaza Strip. Fighting is raging in the streets. Israeli tanks have also reoccupied the southern region of Lebanon and launched air-strikes against guerrilla bases. Violence has threatened to spread throughout the region.

Other leaders in the Middle East have called upon the United States to act.

How should the United States respond?

Crisis #3—Tumult in Iran
The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports Iran is continuing its nuclear activities. Iran has blocked the IAEA access to its nuclear facilities and has made it clear that any further attempts at interference will result in an acceleration of its weapons program. In recent days, intelligence reports claim that Iran has already acquired chemical, biological and nuclear weapons as well as long-range missiles that could be armed with weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, Iran has reportedly moved several border posts along the Iran-Iraq border onto Iraqi territory in the latest development of a longstanding border dispute. Meanwhile in Tehran, President Ahmadinejad has ordered armed forces to put down student protests that have erupted throughout the city. The students demand the resignation of the president along with increased tolerance, greater freedom, and other social changes.

How should the United States respond?
**Key Terms**

**Introduction and Part I: The Middle East in the World**
- economic interests
- nuclear proliferation
- nationalists
- multinational empire
- imperialism
- international system
- self-determination
- self-government
- persecution
- Zionist movement
- partition
- cease-fire lines
- international relations
- expansionist power
- Arab nationalism
- superpower
- diplomatic solutions
- Cold War politics
- oil embargo
- shuttle diplomacy
- political Islamist extremists
- opposition movement
- counter-revolution
- international arms embargo
- international peacekeeping

**Part II: Weighing U.S. Priorities**
- free-market economic principles
- trade barriers
- Islamist radicalism
- secular government
- economic sanctions
- weapons of mass destruction
- militias
- sectarian divisions
- diplomatic engagement
- liberal reformers
- strategic ally
Religion in the Arab-Israeli Conflict:

The Arab-Israeli conflict centers on a small piece of land in the Middle East no larger than the state of New Jersey. This area, which stretches from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, is referred to either by its Latin name of Palestine, or the Hebrew name of Eretz Israel. Arabs, Christians, and Jews have religious ties to this land.

The current conflict is not primarily a religious battle, but a political battle over competing national aspirations. Nonetheless, to comprehend the modern conflict an understanding of these religious ties is important. Religious beliefs still carry great weight in today’s secular and political life in the Middle East, making it difficult for some who value these ties to compromise over their claims to the land.

Three of the world’s great religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—developed in the Middle East. Each of these religions is monotheistic, which means that its followers believe in only one god. Believers in all three religions claim descent from the Hebrew patriarch Abraham and all have special ties to the land.

**Jewish ties to the land:** According to Jewish sacred writings, Palestine was promised to the Jewish people by God in a covenant with Abraham and later with Moses. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son to prove his obedience to God. The attempted sacrifice is believed to have taken place on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, the location on which the first and second Jewish Temples were later built and which is the holiest site for the Jewish people.

**Christian ties to the land:** Palestine is the “Holy Land” to the world’s Christians because it is the birthplace of Jesus, a Jew, and the setting for the story of his life and lessons as recounted in the New Testament of the Bible. Many Arabs today are Christians and trace their religious origin to the early followers of Christ.

**Muslim ties to the land:** Muslims believe that God revealed his truths through a series of prophets: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus, and finally Muhammad, who is the last of the prophets. For Muslims, therefore, some of the scriptural heritage of the Jews and the Christians is their heritage as well. But they are guided by their own holy scripture, the Koran, which is the word of God as revealed to Muhammad. The Dome of the Rock, the golden domed structure in the Jerusalem skyline, was built over a rock which, according to tradition, marked the site of Abraham’s attempted sacrifice. It is also believed to be the place where Muhammad touched earth during a miraculous nocturnal journey to heaven. Muslims consider Jerusalem their third holiest city and, therefore, an important pilgrimage site.

**State:**

A state is an entity that has a defined territory and a permanent population under the control of its own government. A state has sovereignty over its territory and its nationals. States can enter into international agreements, join international organizations, pursue and be subject to legal remedies. Palestinian statehood would have profound implications for both Israel and the Palestinian people.

**Sovereignty:**

The absolute right of a state to govern itself. The UN Charter prohibits external interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state without the state’s consent.

**Diplomatic Relations:**

A formal arrangement between states by which they develop and maintain the terms of their relationship. This often includes establishing treaties regarding trade and investment, the treatment of each other’s citizens, and the nature of their security relationship. It also includes the establishment of an embassy and consuls in each other’s countries to facilitate representation on issues of concern for each nation.
Making Choices Work in Your Classroom

This section of the Teacher Resource Book offers suggestions for teachers as they adapt Choices curricula on current issues to their classrooms. They are drawn from the experiences of teachers who have used Choices curricula successfully in their classrooms and from educational research on student-centered instruction.

Managing the Choices Simulation

A central activity of every Choices unit is the role play simulation in which students advocate different options and question each other. Just as thoughtful preparation is necessary to set the stage for cooperative group learning, careful planning for the presentations can increase the effectiveness of the simulation. Time is the essential ingredient to keep in mind. A minimum of 45 to 50 minutes is necessary for the presentations. Teachers who have been able to schedule a double period or extend the length of class to one hour report that the extra time is beneficial. When necessary, the role play simulation can be run over two days, but this disrupts momentum. The best strategy for managing the role play is to establish and enforce strict time limits, such as five minutes for each option presentation, ten minutes for questions and challenges, and the final five minutes of class for wrapping up. It is crucial to make students aware of strict time limits as they prepare their presentations.

Fostering Group Deliberation

The consideration of alternative views is not finished when the options role play is over. The options presented are framed in stark terms in order to clarify differences. In the end, students should be expected to articulate their own views on the issue. These views will be more sophisticated and nuanced if students have had an opportunity to challenge one another to think more critically about the merits and trade-offs of alternative views. See Guidelines for Deliberation <www.choices.edu/resources/guidelines.php> for suggestions on deliberation.

Adjusting for Students of Differing Abilities

Teachers of students at all levels—from middle school to AP—have used Choices materials successfully. Many teachers make adjustments to the materials for their students. Here are some suggestions:

- Go over vocabulary and concepts with visual tools such as concept maps and word pictures.
- Require students to answer guiding questions in text as checks for understanding.
- Shorten reading assignments; cut and paste sections.
- Combine reading with political cartoon analysis, map analysis, or movie-watching.
- Read some sections of the readings aloud.
- Ask students to create graphic organizers for sections of the reading, or fill in ones you have partially completed.
- Supplement with different types of readings, such as from literature or text books.
- Ask student groups to create a bumper sticker, PowerPoint presentation, or collage representing their option.
- Do only some activities and readings rather than all of them.

Adjusting for Large and Small Classes

Choices curricula are designed for an average class of twenty-five students. In larger classes, additional roles, such as those of newspaper reporter or member of a special interest group, can be assigned to increase student participation in the simulation. With larger option groups, additional tasks might be to create a poster, political cartoon, or public service announcement that represents the viewpoint of an option. In smaller classes, the teacher can serve as the moderator of the debate, and administrators, parents, or faculty can be invited to play the roles of congressional leaders. Another option is to combine two small classes.
Assessing Student Achievement

Grading Group Assignments: Students and teachers both know that group grades can be motivating for students, while at the same time they can create controversy. Telling students in advance that the group will receive one grade often motivates group members to hold each other accountable. This can foster group cohesion and lead to better group results. It is also important to give individual grades for groupwork assignments in order to recognize an individual’s contribution to the group. The “Assessment Guide for Oral Presentations” on the following page is designed to help teachers evaluate group presentations.

Requiring Self-Evaluation: Having students complete self-evaluations is an effective way to encourage them to think about their own learning. Self-evaluations can take many forms and are useful in a variety of circumstances. They are particularly helpful in getting students to think constructively about group collaboration. In developing a self-evaluation tool for students, teachers need to pose clear and direct questions to students. Two key benefits of student self-evaluation are that it involves students in the assessment process, and that it provides teachers with valuable insights into the contributions of individual students and the dynamics of different groups. These insights can help teachers to organize groups for future cooperative assignments.

Evaluating Students’ Original Options: One important outcome of a Choices current issues unit are the original options developed and articulated by each student after the role play. These will differ significantly from one another, as students identify different values and priorities that shape their viewpoints.

The students’ options should be evaluated on clarity of expression, logic, and thoroughness. Did the student provide reasons for his/her viewpoint along with supporting evidence? Were the values clear and consistent throughout the option? Did the student identify the risks involved? Did the student present his/her option in a convincing manner?

Testing: Teachers say that students using the Choices approach learn the factual information presented as well as or better than from lecture-discussion format. Students using Choices curricula demonstrate a greater ability to think critically, analyze multiple perspectives, and articulate original viewpoints. Teachers should hold students accountable for learning historical information, concepts, and current events presented in Choices units. A variety of types of testing questions and assessment devices can require students to demonstrate critical thinking and historical understanding.

For Further Reading
### Assessment Guide for Oral Presentations

**Group assignment:**

**Group members:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Group Assessment</strong></th>
<th><strong>Excellent</strong></th>
<th><strong>Good</strong></th>
<th><strong>Average</strong></th>
<th><strong>Needs Improvement</strong></th>
<th><strong>Unsatisfactory</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The group made good use of its preparation time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The presentation reflected analysis of the issues under consideration</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The presentation was coherent and persuasive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The group incorporated relevant sections of the background reading into its presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The group’s presenters spoke clearly, maintained eye contact, and made an effort to hold the attention of their audience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The presentation incorporated contributions from all the members of the group</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Individual Assessment</strong></th>
<th><strong>Excellent</strong></th>
<th><strong>Good</strong></th>
<th><strong>Average</strong></th>
<th><strong>Needs Improvement</strong></th>
<th><strong>Unsatisfactory</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The student cooperated with other group members</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The student was well-prepared to meet his or her responsibilities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The student made a significant contribution to the group’s presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan

Day 1
See Day Two of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan. (Students should have read Part II of the reading and completed “Study Guide—Part II” before beginning. To gain an introduction to the topic, students should also read the Introduction.)

Day 2
Assign each student one of the four options, and allow a few minutes for students to familiarize themselves with the mindsets of the options. Call on students to evaluate the benefits and trade-offs of their assigned options. How do the options differ in their assumptions about the U.S. role in the world and the extent of U.S. interests in the Middle East? How would U.S. policy toward the Middle East change if their assigned options were adopted? Moving beyond the options, ask students to imagine they have been called on to advise the U.S. president on U.S. strategy in the Middle East. What concerns would be at the top of their agenda? What values should guide the direction of U.S. policy?

Homework: Students should complete “Focusing Your Thoughts” and “Your Option Five.”

Day 3
See Day Five of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan.
Our units are always up to date.

Are yours?

Our world is constantly changing.
So CHOICES continually reviews and updates our classroom units to keep pace with the changes in our world; and as new challenges and questions arise, we’re developing new units to address them.

And while history may never change, our knowledge and understanding of it are constantly changing. So even our units addressing “moments” in history undergo a continual process of revision and reinterpretation.

If you’ve been using the same CHOICES units for two or more years, now is the time to visit our website - learn whether your units have been updated and see what new units have been added to our catalog.

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  Cuba ■ Nuclear Weapons ■ UN Reform
Middle East ■ Iraq ■ Russia ■ South Africa
  India & Pakistan ■ Brazil ■ Iran ■ Mexico
  Colonialism in Africa ■ Weimar Germany ■ China
U.S. Constitutional Convention ■ New England Slavery
  War of 1812 ■ Spanish American War
  League of Nations ■ FDR and Isolationism
  Hiroshima ■ Origins of the Cold War
  Cuban Missile Crisis ■ Vietnam War

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  Westward Expansion ■ Human Rights

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Choices Education Program
Watson Institute for International Studies
Box 1948, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912

Please visit our website at <www.choices.edu>.
Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

*Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* draws students into the policy debate on one of the world’s most volatile regions. Students explore the Arab-Israeli conflict, the significance of oil, the politicization of Islam, and other issues that have shaped U.S. ties to the Middle East.

*Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* is part of a continuing series on current and historical international issues published by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program at Brown University. Choices materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens.