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## The Historical Context

Arthur Goldschmidt Jr.

History is the study of humanity's recorded past; that of the Middle East is the world's longest. In this area many staple crops were first cultivated, most farm animals were first domesticated, and the earliest agricultural villages were founded. Here, too, were the world's oldest cities, the first governments and law codes, and the earliest ethical monotheistic systems. A crossroads for people and ideas, the Middle East has sometimes contained a single political or cultural system while at other times it has split into competing fragments. During eras of internal cohesion and power, Middle Easterners controlled remote parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. At times of dissension and weakness, however, they were invaded and ruled by outsiders. When they could not drive out the interlopers, they adjusted to them and subtly made their rulers adapt to their own ways. The interplay between invasion and accommodation is characteristic of the region. This chapter will summarize Middle Eastern history: the ancient empires, the rise of Islam and its civilization, the area's subordination to European control, and its struggle for political independence.

### ■ The Ancient Middle East

Environment has shaped much of the region's history. As the polar ice caps retreated, rainfall declined and hunters and food gatherers had to learn how to control their sources of sustenance. Hunting and gathering as a way of life died out in North Africa and Southwest Asia some 5,000 years ago, giving way to pastoral nomadism and settled agriculture. As Ian Manners and Barbara McKean Parmenter discuss in Chapter 2, many parts of the Middle

East receive too little rainfall to support settled agriculture. Yet archaeologists have found the world's oldest farming villages in northeastern Africa and in the highlands of Asia Minor. Many men and women migrated into the valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Tigris Rivers, where they learned how to tame the annual river floods to water their fields.

As grain cultivation spread, farmers gradually improved their implements and pottery. They needed governments to organize the building of dams, dikes, and canals for large-scale irrigation, to regulate water distribution, and often to protect farmers from invading herders. Although the nomads at times served the settled people as merchants and soldiers, they also pillaged their cities and farms. Despite the tension between the sedentary farmers and the nomadic herders, they needed each other. Without both groups, no cities, states, or civilizations would ever have arisen.

The earliest known governments arose in the oldest agrarian societies, Egypt and Sumer, more than 5,000 years ago. Starting in the third millennium B.C.E., ancient Middle Eastern peoples underwent a series of invasions from outsiders, succumbed to their rule, acquired new ideas and institutions, and eventually absorbed or expelled their conquerors. The result was a succession of ecumenical states that blended the cultures of the rulers and their subjects, culminating in the Roman Empire.

The first states based on agriculture were the kingdoms of the Upper and Lower Nile, which combined around 3000 B.C.E. to form Egypt; and the kingdom of Sumer, which had arisen a bit earlier in Mesopotamia, the land between the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers. Both developed strong monarchies supported by elaborate bureaucracies, codes of conduct, and religious doctrines that integrated the political system into a cosmological order. Their governments marshaled large workforces to protect the lands from floods and invaders. A complex division of labor facilitated the development of writing, calculation, architecture, metallurgy, and hydraulic engineering.

### ■ Semitic and Indo-Iranian Invasions

The river states were disrupted and partially transformed by outside infiltrators and invaders. Sumer was conquered by peoples who spoke Semitic languages, producing Babylonia, which reached its height during the reign of the lawgiver Hammurabi (r. 1792–1750 B.C.E.). Meanwhile, Indo-European invaders from the north mixed with local peoples in Anatolia and Persia and introduced the horse into the region. The horse-drawn chariot enabled another Semitic people to occupy the Nile Delta from 1720 to 1570 B.C.E. Whereas the Babylonians absorbed their invaders, the Egyptians expelled theirs and extended their empire into Syria.

Internal dissension and external pressures finally weakened Egypt and Babylonia, leading to a bewildering series of invasions and emerging states



The Great Sun Temple of Abu Simbel was constructed along the banks of the Upper Nile, 50 miles north of the border with Sudan, during the reign of the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II (thirteenth century B.C.E.).

around 1000 B.C.E. As the Middle East's climate grew drier, Semitic peoples, including the Phoenicians and the Hebrews, migrated from the Arabian Desert into the better-watered lands of Syria and Mesopotamia. The Phoenicians of Syria's coast became the ancient world's main mariners, traders, and colonizers. They also invented the phonetic alphabet. Under King David, who ruled in the early tenth century B.C.E., the Hebrews set up a kingdom in Palestine (which they called "the land of Israel"), with its capital at Jerusalem; this state later split and succumbed to mighty conquerors. The Hebrews developed a faith in one God, who according to the Bible appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai and later to the prophets. Elements of this ethical monotheism had existed in earlier Middle Eastern religions, but the Hebrews' ideas, crystallized in Judaism, profoundly affected the intellectual history of both the Middle East and the West.

The invention of cheap means of making iron tools and weapons led to larger and longer-lasting empires. About 1350 B.C.E., Babylonia gave way to Assyria, centered in northern Mesopotamia. This first Iron Age empire underwent several cycles of rise and decline; at its height (around 700 B.C.E.), Assyria ruled Mesopotamia, Syria, and even Egypt. Its Semitic rival and successor, Chaldea, upheld Babylon's glory for another century. Then Mesopotamia, and indeed the whole Middle East, came under the rule of Persia's King Cyrus (r. 550–529 B.C.E.).

From Cyrus's reign to modern times, the political history of the Middle East has centered on the rise and fall of successive multinational empires: Persia, Greece, Rome, the Arabs, the Seljuk Turks, the Mongols, and the Ottomans. Like Babylon, most of these empires were formed by outside invasions. External rule stirred up local resistance forces that eventually sapped the rulers' strength, leading to political fragmentation and new invasions. Often the conquerors adopted the institutions and beliefs of their Middle Eastern subjects; rarely could they impose their own uniformly.

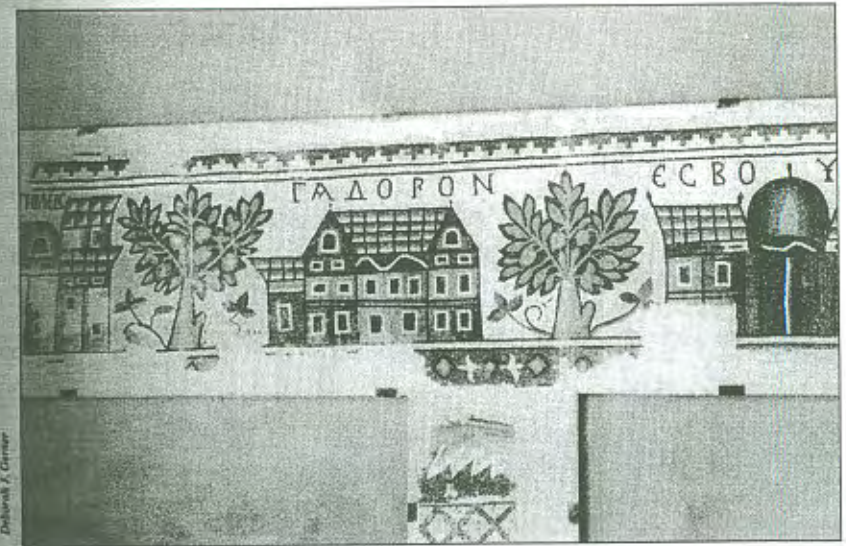
The Persian empire of Cyrus and his heirs, the Achaemenids, was the prototype of this multinational system. Sprawling from the Indus Valley to the Nile, the empire could not make its subjects think and act alike. Instead, it tolerated their beliefs and practices so long as they obeyed its laws, paid their taxes, and sent men to the Persian army. The provincial governors were given broad civil, judicial, and fiscal powers by the Persian emperor. A feudal landownership system kept the local aristocrats loyal, and a postal system and road network—along with a uniform coinage, calendar, and administrative language—helped further unite the empire. Achaemenid Persia survived two centuries before it succumbed to Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C.E.

### ■ Greek and Roman Rule

Alexander's whirlwind conquest of the Middle East between 332 and 323 B.C.E. marks a critical juncture in the area's history. For the next millennium it belonged to the Hellenistic world. Alexander wanted to fuse Greek culture with that of the Middle East, taking ideas, institutions, and administrators from the Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and Persians. This fusion did not occur in his lifetime, nor was it ever complete, but from Alexander to Muhammad the Mediterranean world and the Middle East shared a common civilization. The centers of its cultural blending were the coastal cities, of which the greatest was Alexandria. Alexander's successors in Egypt, the Ptolemies, ruled the country for three centuries. They erected monumental buildings, such as the Alexandria Lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and the Museum, or academy of scholars, which housed the largest library in antiquity.

Southern Anatolia, Syria, and Mesopotamia were ruled for two centuries by the Seleucids, who were the descendants of one of Alexander's generals. In the third century B.C.E., the Seleucids lost control of their eastern lands to another dynasty descended from some of Alexander's soldiers, and they lost Persia to a Hellenized Indo-European family, the Parthians.

Meanwhile, a new state was rising farther west: Rome. Having taken Carthage, Macedonia, and Greece by 100 B.C.E., the Roman legions marched eastward, conquering Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt. Once again most of the Middle East was united under an ecumenical empire; only Persia and part of



Located just south of Amman, Jordan, the town of Madaba is home to beautiful mosaics dating from the Byzantine era.

Mesopotamia were ruled by the Parthians. Like earlier empires, Rome absorbed much from its Middle Eastern subjects, including several religions, two of which, Mithraism and Christianity, vied for popular favor throughout the Roman Empire. Christianity finally won. After his conversion, the Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 C.E.) moved the capital—and Rome's economic and cultural center—to Byzantium, renamed Constantinople. But the city gave its old name to Rome's successor state, the Byzantine Empire. Even now, Arabs, Turks, and Persians say "Rum" to mean the Byzantine Empire, its lands, and also Greek Orthodox Christianity and its adherents.

Under Roman rule, commercial cities flourished. Syrian and Egyptian merchants grew rich from the trade between Europe, Asia, and eastern Africa. Arab camel nomads, or bedouin, prospered as carriers of cloth and spices. Other Middle Easterners navigated the Red Sea, the Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. But Roman rule was enforced by a large occupying army, and grain-producing Syria and Egypt were taxed heavily. Rome's leaders did not always tolerate their subjects' beliefs. Roman soldiers destroyed the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, and many of Jesus' early followers were martyred. Christian Rome proved even less tolerant. Many Christians in North Africa and Egypt espoused heterodox beliefs that the emperors viewed as treasonous. Their efforts to suppress heresy alienated many of their Middle Eastern subjects in the fifth and sixth centuries of the common era.



One of the most impressive Roman ruins in the Middle East is at Baalbek, in the northern Bekaa Valley of Lebanon. This temple was completed around 150 C.E.

Rome (and later Byzantium) had one major rival: Persia. There the Parthians gave way in the third century to the Sassanid dynasty. Bolstered by a powerful military aristocracy and the resources of many Hellenized religious refugees from Byzantium, Sassanid Persia threatened Byzantine rule in the Middle East. Early in the seventh century, the Sassanids briefly overran Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. The Hellenistic era of Middle Eastern history was coming to an end.

### ■ The Islamic Middle East as an Autonomous System

The revelation of Islam to an unlettered Meccan merchant in the early seventh century, the unification of hitherto feuding Arab tribes under this new religion, the rapid conquest of the Middle East and North Africa, the conversion of millions of Asians and Africans to Islam, and the development of Arab-Islamic civilization under a succession of empires marked a new epoch. Egyptians, Syrians, and Persians influenced the beliefs of their Arab conquerors just as they had transformed and absorbed earlier invaders. Yet the rise of Islam led to new ideas and institutions, monuments and memories, which continue to affect Middle Eastern peoples profoundly.

### ■ The Arabs Before Islam

Once the camel had been domesticated around 3000 B.C.E., bands of people began roaming the Arabian Peninsula in search of water and forage for their flocks. Unable as nomads to develop architecture, sculpture, or painting, these early Arabs composed poems that embodied their code of values: bravery in battle, patience in misfortune, persistence in revenge, protection of the weak, defiance of the strong, loyalty to the tribe, hospitality to the guest, generosity to the needy, and fidelity in carrying out promises. These were the virtues people needed to survive in the desert. Their poems, recited from memory, expressed the joys and sorrows of nomadic life, hailed the bravery of their heroes, lauded their own tribes, and lampooned their rivals. Even now Arabs recite these poems and often repeat their precepts.

In Roman times the southern Arabs played a larger role in the world; they developed Yemen, colonized Ethiopia, and crossed the Indian Ocean. The northern Arabs were relatively isolated. Some adopted Judaism or Christianity, but most practiced ancestor worship or animism (the belief that every object, whether animate or inanimate, has a spirit). One of the northern tribes, the Quraysh, built a shrine, the Ka'bah, at a small desert city called Mecca on the main trade route between Syria and Yemen. Once a year, the pagan tribes of northwestern Arabia suspended their quarrels to make pilgrimages to the Ka'bah, which housed idols representing tribal deities. Some Meccans grew rich on the proceeds of the caravan trade and the annual pilgrimage.

### ■ Muhammad

In Mecca, around 570, one of the world's greatest religious leaders, Muhammad, was born to a minor branch of the Quraysh. Orphaned as a child, Muhammad was reared by an uncle as a caravan trader. Upon reaching manhood, he became the agent for a rich merchant widow, Khadijah, whom he married. Until he was forty, Muhammad was simply a Meccan trader. But he was troubled by the widening gulf between the accepted Arab virtues of bravery and generosity and the blatantly acquisitive practices of Mecca's business leaders. Often he went to a hill near Mecca to meditate.

One day in the Arab month of Ramadan, Muhammad heard a voice exhorting him to recite. In awe and terror he cried, "I can't recite." The voice replied:

Recite in the name of thy Lord, the Creator  
who created man of a blood-clot.

Recite, for thy lord most generous  
who taught by the pen,  
taught man what he knew not.

Fearing that he had gone mad, Muhammad rushed home and asked Khadijah to wrap him in a cloak. Again the voice sounded:

O thou enshrouded in thy mantle,  
rise and warn!  
Thy lord magnify  
thy raiment purify  
and from evil flee!

Reassured by his wife, Muhammad came to accept the voice as the Angel Gabriel's command to proclaim God's existence to the Arabs and to warn them of an imminent judgment day when all people would be called to account for what they had done. He received more revelations and began to share them in the community. Those who accepted Muhammad's divine message called themselves Muslims and their religion Islam, meaning submission to the will of God, the creator and sustainer.

Muhammad's public recitation of his revelations disturbed the Meccan leaders. Did their wealth and power not matter? If the Arabs accepted Islam would they stop their annual pilgrimages to the Ka'bah, so lucrative to local merchants? Why did God reveal His message to Muhammad, rather than to one of the Quraysh leaders? The pagan Meccans reviled the Muslims. After Muhammad's uncle and protector died, life in Mecca became intolerable for Muslims. Finally the Arabs of Medina, a city north of Mecca, asked Muhammad to arbitrate their tribal disputes and accepted Islam as the condition for his coming there.

The *hijrah* (emigration) of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca is for Muslims the most important event in history. The Muslim calendar begins in the year it occurred, 622 C.E., and it was in Medina that Muhammad formed the Islamic *ummah* (a community ruled by a divine plan). Politics and religion are united in Islam; God, speaking to humanity through Muhammad, is the supreme lawgiver. Thus the Prophet became a political leader and, when the Meccans tried to destroy the *ummah*, a military commander as well. But-tressed by their faith, the Muslims of Medina vanquished Meccan armies larger and stronger than their own, converted most of the pagan Arab tribes, and finally converted Mecca to Islam. In 630 Muhammad made a triumphal pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, smashed its pagan idols, and declared it a Muslim shrine. Two years later, having united much of Arabia under Islam, he died.

### ■ Islamic Beliefs and Institutions

Muslims believe in one God, all-powerful and all-knowing, who has no partner and no offspring. God has spoken to a succession of human messengers, of whom the last was Muhammad. To the Jewish prophets God imparted

the Torah and to Jesus and his disciples the Gospels. Muslims believe that Jews and Christians corrupted their scriptures, so God sent a perfected revelation, the Quran (recitation), to Muhammad. Although Muslims regard the Quran as truer than the Bible in its present form, they do not deny any of God's prophets, honoring Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Muslims also believe in a day of judgment, when God will assess all people and consign them to Heaven or to Hell.

Muslim duties may be summed up as the "five pillars of Islam": statement of belief in God and in Muhammad as his Prophet; ritual prayer five times daily; fasting in the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan; payment of part of one's property or income to provide for the needy; and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Muslims also abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages, eating pork, gambling, and all forms of licentious and dishonest behavior. Standards of sexual morality are strict, limiting contacts between unmarried men and women. Muslims ascribe human misdeeds to ignorance or forgetfulness and believe that God forgives those who repent.

Islam is a way of life. It prescribes how people relate to one another as well as their duties to God. Muhammad's *ummah* aspired to serve as the ideal earthly setting in which believers could prepare for the judgment day. In the centuries after Muhammad's death, Muslim scholars (*ulama*) developed an elaborate legal code, the *sharia*, to regulate all aspects of human behavior. The *sharia* was derived from the Quran, the words and deeds of the Prophet (or those actions by his followers that he sanctioned), the consensus of the *ummah*, analogical reasoning, and judicial opinion. Dynastic and doctrinal schisms soon divided the *ummah*; however, the *sharia*, upheld by the *ulama*, united Muslims of diverse races, cultures, regions, and political allegiances.

### ■ The Patriarchal Caliphs and the Early Arab Conquests

When Muhammad died, his followers needed to name a successor. No one could succeed Muhammad as the Prophet, but someone had to lead the *ummah*, and Abu Bakr was chosen as the first caliph (successor). During his caliphate the Muslims won back the rebellious tribal Arabs and deflected their energies outward against Byzantium and Persia. Under Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, these rebellious Arabs routed armies mightier than their own, wresting Syria and Egypt from Byzantine control and absorbing Sasanid Persia. The Arabs conquered most of the Middle East in a generation and much of the Old World in a century. Many Syrians, Egyptians, and Persians welcomed Arab rule as a respite from Byzantine intolerance and Sasanid exploitation. These subjects were forced neither to speak Arabic nor to become Muslims, although gradually some chose to do one or both. The new Arab rulers, often called the patriarchal caliphs, retained local administrative customs and languages and even the bureaucrats themselves; the Arabs lacked the numbers and the experience to govern their new empire unaided. Those

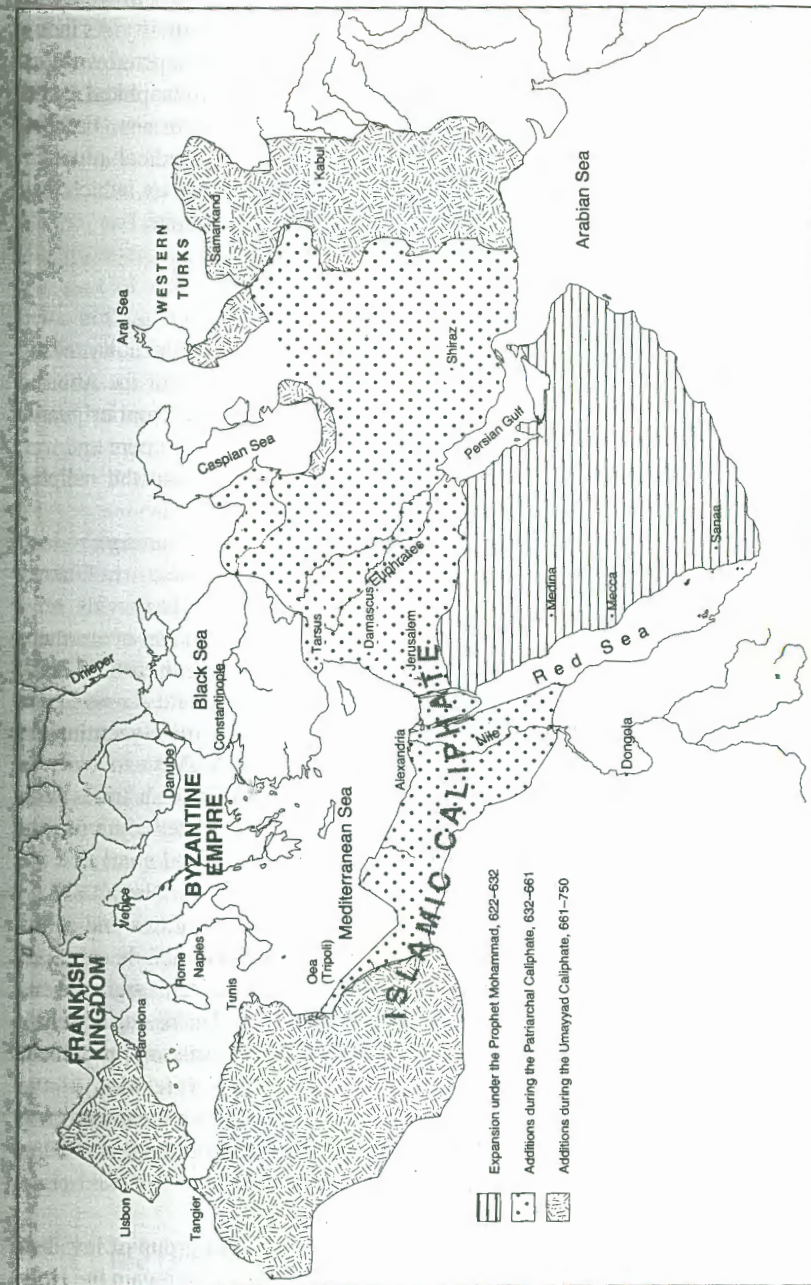
males who did not convert were required to pay a head tax in return for exemption from military service. Jerusalem under Arab rule remained a religious center and pilgrimage site for Jews and Christians, but it became a holy city for Muslims as well.

Although Arab toleration of local customs sustained stability, the conquests strained the *ummah* itself. The caliphs set aside some of the captured booty for charitable or communal use and put the troops on a payroll, but the sudden influx of wealth led to unrest. In 656 the third caliph, Uthman, was murdered. His friends suspected his successor, Ali (who was a son-in-law of the prophet Mohammad), of taking part in his assassination. Demanding revenge, Uthman's supporters fought Ali's backers in a battle that led to a mediation favoring Uthman's cousin, Mu'awiyah, the governor of Syria. He named himself caliph, moved the capital to Damascus, pacified the dissident Muslims, and made the caliphate hereditary in his own family, the Umayyad branch of the Quraysh tribe.

The Umayyad caliphs, who ruled in Damascus from 661 to 750, were more political than pious. They crushed their opponents and spread Arab rule to northern Africa and Spain, central Asia, and what is now Pakistan (see Map 3.1). Many Muslims resented the Umayyads. One of these dissidents was the prophet Mohammad's grandson and Ali's son, Husayn, who died during a revolt at Karbala (Iraq) in 680. Husayn's martyrdom led to a political and religious opposition movement known as Shi'ism. Even now a split remains between the Shi'ites, who accept only Ali and his descendants as rightful leaders of the *ummah*, and the Sunnis, who recognize the caliphs who actually ruled. Sunnis now outnumber Shi'ites in most of the Muslim world, but Shi'ism is the state religion of Iran.

### ■ The First Islamic Empire

The Umayyads' power depended on their main fighting force, the Arab tribes, that the caliphs favored even after many non-Arabs converted to Islam. Some non-Arab Muslims turned to revolutionary movements, often pro-Shi'ite, against Umayyad rule. One such rebellion was led by the Abbasid family, who toppled the Umayyads in 750 and set up their own caliphate in Baghdad. At this point, the formal unity of the *ummah* ended, for the Umayyads kept control over Spain. The North African Berbers, tribal peoples whose conversion from Christianity and Judaism to Islam did not mean they accepted Arab political dominance, soon cast off Abbasid rule. A Shi'ite movement, the Fatimids, took power in Tunisia and later in Egypt. Elsewhere, ambitious governors, warlords, and religious leaders carved out their own states. Most Arabs reverted to nomadism or intermarried with their conquered peoples, many of whom were now Arabized in language and culture.



Map 3.1 Extent of the Islamic Empire

Despite its turbulent politics, the Abbasid era (which lasted in weakened form until 1258) was one of agricultural and commercial prosperity. As industry and trade flourished, so did science and letters. Rulers competed with one another in patronizing the translation of scientific and philosophical works from Greek into Arabic, supporting court poets and historians, building mosques and palaces, and sponsoring astronomical and medical research. Thus Muslims preserved and improved their classical patrimony, which they passed on to medieval Europe, helping to spark the Renaissance.

### ■ Invasions from East and West

The influx of Turks from eastern Asia began in the tenth century. Many had already been imported as slave soldiers and bureaucrats for the Abbasid caliphs; others served the Abbasids or local Muslim rulers as frontier guards against non-Muslims farther east. Schooled in the arts of government and war, the Turkish *ghazis* (border raiders) proved more reliable than the caliphs' other Muslim subjects and rose to positions of power.

One Turkish family serving a Persian dynasty received an *iqta'*—land granted for military or administrative service to the government—in Ghazna (in what is now Afghanistan) around 960. This family, the Ghaznavids, built up an empire spanning eastern Persia, central Asia, and parts of northern India. The Ghaznavids in turn gave *iqta'*s to Turkish clans from central Asia. One of these, the Seljuks, proceeded to conquer lands westward across Persia and Mesopotamia and into Anatolia, where they defeated the Byzantines in 1071. The military gains of these families attracted other Turks to serve as *ghazis*, opening the way for large-scale immigration of Turkish tribes with their horses, two-humped camels, sheep, and goats. Soon Azerbaijan (northwestern Persia), northern Iraq, and much of Anatolia, highland areas that the Arabs had never taken, became mainly Turkish.

The Turks were devout Sunni Muslims who built new cities and refurbished old ones. They rescued the Abbasid caliph, who had been taken hostage by Shi'ite bureaucrats, and restored his authority, although not his power. For several generations the caliph ruled in Baghdad beside a Seljuk sultan (holder of power). The Turks strengthened Sunni schools, promoted Sufism (organized Islamic mysticism), and limited reinterpretation of the *sharia*. Sufism involved Muslims more deeply in their faith but caused some to withdraw from worldly pursuits. Once Sunni Muslims could not revise the *sharia*, changing social needs led rulers and subjects to bypass it, and practices diverged ever further from Islamic precepts.

As Turkish nomads poured in from the East, a different group of invaders came from the West. In 1096 the pope proclaimed a Crusade to regain the Holy Land for Christianity. Muslims had ruled Jerusalem for more than four centuries without harming Christian interests, but the Seljuk invasion of Anatolia had

weakened the Byzantine Empire and threatened the Christian pilgrimage routes to the Holy City. The Crusaders helped the Byzantines to stem the Seljuk advance and then went on to take western Syria and Palestine from divided and weak Muslim rulers. For almost a century, Jerusalem, purged of its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants, was the capital of a European Christian kingdom.

Outside Jerusalem, however, the Crusaders rarely uprooted the local population, and they never took the Muslim power centers: Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, and Mosul. Once Egypt and Syria were united under a strong Sunni Muslim ruler, Saladin, the Muslims retook Jerusalem in 1187. The Crusaders held part of coastal Syria for another century and twice invaded the Nile Delta, but Saladin's descendants, the Ayyubids, kept them in check.

Far more damaging to the Middle East were the thirteenth-century invasions by the Mongols, who came from the lands north of China. Mongol armies led by Genghis Khan (r. 1206–1227) defeated weak Muslim rulers and conquered central Asia and eastern Persia. His grandson, Hülegü, pressed farther into Persia and Mesopotamia and in 1258 took Baghdad and wiped out the Abbasid caliphate. The Mongols were not Muslims. Horse nomads accustomed to grassy steppes, they saw no need for cities or the farmers who supported them. They destroyed irrigation works in Persia, Mesopotamia, and Syria, impoverishing the land and its people. Many Muslim rulers, even Anatolia's surviving Seljuks, became Mongol vassals. But in 1260 the Mongols failed to take Palestine and Egypt, where the Ayyubids had recently been overthrown by their Turkish slave soldiers, the Mamluks. The Mamluk rulers went on to build a prosperous empire in Egypt and Syria, the bulwark of Muslim power until their conquest by the Ottoman Turks in 1516–1517. Meanwhile, Persia's Mongol rulers soon adopted Islam, accepted Persian culture, and rebuilt much of what they had earlier destroyed.

The harnessing of gunpowder by Europe in the fourteenth century altered the West's relationship with the rest of the world. Firearms and long-distance sailing ships soon enabled Europeans to explore and conquer distant lands and finally to encircle the Muslim world. States using gunpowder as their main weapon require disciplined infantries rather than the feudal cavalries of the Middle Ages. The West's adoption of firearms sparked the growth of strong monarchies, a commercial middle class, and eventually the Industrial Revolution. In the Middle East, some Muslim states learned how to use firearms on land and sea; others never did. The gunpowder revolution weakened the landowning horse soldiers there, too, but failed to stimulate European-style modernization.

### ■ The Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire was the archetypal Muslim state built on the use of firearms. From their humble origins in the thirteenth century as Turkish *ghazis*

for the Seljuks, the Ottomans expanded their landholdings into an empire that stretched—at its height in the seventeenth century—from central Europe to the Gulf and from Algeria to Azerbaijan. Like most *ghazis*, the early Ottomans raided peasant lands on horseback. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, they developed a disciplined corps of professional foot soldiers, the famous janissaries, who used siege cannon and lighter firearms against the Europeans or their Muslim neighbors. The Ottoman state took boys as tribute from their Christian subjects. Converted to Islam, the boys were taught Turkish and Arabic and trained as soldiers or, less often, as administrators. As Ottoman sultan's slaves, the janissaries were forbidden to marry or to own land. They lived in barracks in order to be ready to fight whenever they were needed. This system of recruitment and training was called *devshirme*, as were, collectively, the Ottoman soldiers and bureaucrats it produced.

Backed by well-equipped armies and competent administrators, the Ottoman sultans conquered the Christian peoples of the Balkans and surrounded Constantinople. In 1453 they took the city and ended the 1,000-year-old Byzantine Empire. Once the world's greatest Christian city, Constantinople (now Istanbul) became a Muslim center. During the following century, the Ottomans subdued most of their Muslim neighbors, including the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria. Only the Persians, ruled after 1501 by the Safavids, remained independent, for they, too, learned to use firearms.

Ottoman strength rested on two principles: (1) the power of the ruling class was balanced between the traditional aristocracy and the *devshirme* soldiers and administrators; and (2) the subject peoples were organized into religious communities, called *millets*, that had autonomous control over their laws, schools, and general welfare. These internal divisions strengthened the sultan. So long as the sultan could play off the aristocracy against the *devshirme* class, both ruling groups performed their tasks as defenders and managers of the Ottoman Empire. The subject peoples were self-sufficient but geographically scattered, unable to combine against their Ottoman overlords. These subjects looked to their communal leaders—rabbis, priests, and *ulama*—whose most prominent members were named by and responsible to the sultan, to mediate between them and the government. For centuries, this approach to social and political organization endured; even now, some Middle Easterners identify themselves by their religion more than by their nationality.

Of all the factors that weakened the Ottoman Empire, the most significant was the triumph of the *devshirme* bureaucrats and janissaries over the aristocracy. This occurred during the reign of the greatest sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566), when he appointed a series of chief ministers who had risen from *devshirme* origins. Not checked by either the weaker succeeding sultans or the declining aristocracy, these onetime slaves corrupted the Ottoman government to serve their own interests. Janissaries received per-



The Blue Mosque, built in the early seventeenth century for Sultan Ahmet I, with its six minarets and numerous domes, is among the most beautiful examples of Ottoman architecture in the Middle East.

mission from the sultan to leave the barracks, marry, buy property, and enroll their sons in the corps, which stopped training and degenerated into a hereditary, privileged caste. Military failure and corrupt government ensued. Taxes rose, especially for those least able to avoid paying them. Agrarian and commercial well-being declined, partly because the trade routes between Asia and Europe shifted away from the Middle East. Once-loyal subjects rebelled against Ottoman misrule. By the late seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire was no longer the scourge of Europe.

### ■ The Subordination of the Middle East to the West

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the West gained military, political, and economic superiority over much of the Middle East. Whereas Arabs and Turks had once mastered the routes between Europe and Asia, by 1800 Europe sold its manufactured goods to the Middle East in exchange for raw materials and agricultural products. Europeans in Muslim lands were exempted from local taxes and legal jurisdiction; in the Ottoman Empire this exemption was guaranteed by treaties called Capitulations. Whereas once the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean were controlled by Muslim navies, now European sailing ships dominated the high seas. Whereas once the



Ottoman sultan could choose the time and place for an attack on Europe and could then dictate the peace terms, now his armies feared the mighty forces of Habsburg Austria and czarist Russia. The greatest shock came when Napoleon occupied Egypt in 1798, for France had long been an Ottoman ally.

### ■ Westernizing Reforms

As early as the seventeenth century, some Ottoman sultans and their ministers saw the need for internal change. At first they regarded reform as the restoration of the institutions and practices that had made their empire strong in the past. But defeat by Western armies taught them that conditions had altered, necessitating more drastic modifications. Reforms began in the military. Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807) tried to set up a new army corps trained and equipped in the European fashion. The janissaries, afraid that these interlopers would take away their power, rebelled, destroyed the new corps, and deposed Selim. The conservatism of the *ulama* and trade guilds blocked reform in other aspects of Ottoman life. Even the introduction of printing was long opposed by the *ulama* and scribes, the former condemning innovation and the latter fearing the loss of their jobs.

The failure of early reform efforts taught Muslim rulers that change could not be confined to the military. Only by centering power in the state could they resist European expansion. Reform meant autocracy, not democracy. Three Middle Eastern reformers serve as examples: Mehmet (Muhammad) Ali (r. 1805–1849) of Egypt, Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839) of the Ottoman Empire, and Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896) of Persia. Each tried to concentrate power in his own hands; each became hamstrung by European actions serving imperialist interests.

The ablest was Mehmet Ali, an Ottoman officer commanding an Albanian regiment sent to Egypt. He took control of that Ottoman province after Napoleon's forces pulled out in 1801 and proceeded to eliminate every rival for power. He massacred the Mamluks and curbed the *ulama*, who had enjoyed special power and prestige in Egypt, by exploiting their rivalries and seizing the endowments that supported them. Using French advisers and equipment, he built the region's strongest army and navy. He subordinated the rural aristocracy to the state by taking control of all farmland.

Under Mehmet Ali's rule, Egypt became the first Middle Eastern country to make the transition from subsistence to market agriculture. Tobacco, sugar, indigo, and cotton became Egypt's cash crops, earning revenues to fund his ambitious projects for industrial development and military expansion. The first non-Western ruler to recognize the Industrial Revolution, he set up textile mills and weapons factories, sent hundreds of his subjects to Europe for technical or military training, and imported European instructors to staff schools and military academies in Egypt. He even conscripted Egyptian farm-

ers as soldiers. Officered by Turks, they became such a potent force that Mehmet Ali's son, Ibrahim, conquered Syria in 1832 and would have taken over the whole Ottoman Empire in 1839 if Britain had not intervened. Although the Ottoman Empire recognized Egypt's autonomy in 1841, Mehmet Ali felt that his ambitions had been thwarted and let his reforms lapse. However, his heirs ruled Egypt, with only nominal Ottoman control, up to the British occupation in 1882, and the monarchy remained part of Egypt's political structure until King Farouk was overthrown in 1952.

Mehmet Ali's Ottoman contemporary, Sultan Mahmud II, also tried to reform his state but first had to wipe out the janissary corps, the main obstacle to change. His efforts were hampered by the diversity and extent of his domains, local revolts, the lack of a loyal and trained bureaucracy, the Greek independence war (backed by Britain, France, and Russia), and the growing need of industrialized states to buy Ottoman raw materials and sell their own manufactures. After Mahmud's death, his son issued a reform decree that began the *tanzimat* (reorganization) era, one of intense centralization and Westernization. The *tanzimat* did not protect the Ottomans against Russian expansion in the Balkans, so Britain and France helped them defeat Russia in the Crimean War (1853–1856). The Europeans then made the Ottomans issue another decree that gave Christians and Jews legal equality with Muslims.

Persia was the only core Middle Eastern state never to fall under Ottoman rule. Its rulers' revival of ancient Persian customs preserved a national identity. This was reinforced by their adherence to Shi'ism, whereas the Ottomans were Sunni Muslims. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Persia flourished under the Safavid shahs, who adorned their capital at Isfahan and formed commercial and diplomatic ties with the European countries needing allies against the Ottoman Empire.

Persia, too, declined. The Qajar dynasty (1794–1925) resisted dissolution from within and Russian and British encroachments from without. During the first three years of Nasir al-Din Shah's reign, his energetic chief minister began a series of military, financial, and educational reforms. But in 1851 the shah executed his minister, and tribal and religious uprisings broke out. Later in his reign, Nasir al-Din began selling concessions to British investors and hiring Russian officers to train his army. Instead of reforming his government to protect Persia from foreigners, the shah let them take over. His subjects rejected his policies; a nationwide tobacco boycott made him cancel one of his most lucrative concessions, and he was finally assassinated. Later Qajar shahs proved even more submissive to foreign interference.

### ■ European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century

If European power inspired Middle Eastern reform, European policies and actions kept it from succeeding. From 1815 to 1914, European govern-

ments preserved peace among themselves by keeping a balance of power. For the Middle East, this meant that neither Britain nor Russia could let the other become supreme. Fearing that breaking up the Ottoman Empire would give Russia control of the Balkans and of the straits linking the Black Sea to the Aegean, Britain usually tried to uphold the empire's territorial integrity. Thus the British led European opposition to Mehmet Ali's threat in Ottoman Syria in 1839, Russia's occupation of the Romanian principalities in 1853, which led to the Crimean War, and Russia's frequent efforts to exploit nationalism in the Balkans. In addition, Britain backed reforms that would enable the Ottoman Empire to resist Russia, especially those during the *tanzimat* era that promised equality to non-Muslims. By contrast, Russia's expansionist aims, its claim to protect the sultan's Orthodox Christian subjects, and its support of Balkan nationalist movements served to thwart Ottoman reform efforts.

While guarding its routes to India, Britain also vied with France for power in the eastern Mediterranean; it fought to expel Napoleon from Egypt and later to remove Mehmet Ali from Syria. Britain signed treaties with tribal leaders in the Gulf and occupied Aden in order to outflank Mehmet Ali and his French allies. A British company started steamship navigation on the Euphrates River in the 1830s; another built the first railroad from Alexandria to Cairo in 1851. But it was a French diplomat, Ferdinand-Marie de Lesseps, who won a concession from Egypt's viceroy to cut a canal across the Isthmus of Suez, joining the Red Sea to the Mediterranean and slashing travel time between Europe and southern Asia. Britain tried at first to block this mainly French project, but it became the Suez Canal's main user after it was opened in 1869. France expanded across North Africa, taking Algeria in a protracted war (1830–1847) and establishing protectorates over Tunisia in 1881 and Morocco in 1912.

### ■ The Middle Eastern Reaction to the West

By the 1860s a number of Middle Easterners were wondering whether Westernization had gone too far. In the Ottoman Empire, many Muslims espoused pan-Islam, the idea that all Muslims should unite behind the sultan to counter outside threats and the divisive nationalist movements of non-Muslim Balkan subjects. Pan-Islam reaffirmed the tradition of Muslims uniting to defend the *ummah*, but this doctrine took on a new meaning: the Ottoman sultan claimed for himself the caliphate, hence the allegiance of all Muslims, regardless of who actually ruled them. Because Britain, France, and Russia all had Muslim subjects within their empires, Europeans soon saw the fearsome potential of pan-Islam.

Westernizing reforms, especially in education and military training, led to the growth of liberal and nationalist movements among young Egyptians, Ottomans, Arabs, Persians, and Tunisians. These new groups challenged their

rulers' monopoly on power and called for constitutional government. None wholly succeeded.

### ■ The Beginnings of Egyptian Nationalism

Mehmet Ali's grandson, Isma'il (r. 1863–1879), resumed Westernizing reforms and secured Egypt's autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. He sent explorers to find the sources of the Nile River and army expeditions to conquer the Red Sea coast and the southern Sudan. Sections of Cairo and Alexandria were transformed by broad boulevards, public gardens, and huge mansions. Factories and public works built up the economy as a cotton boom caused by a drop in U.S. production during the Civil War, the growing availability of European capital, and the construction of the Suez Canal made Egypt an attractive field for investment.

Egypt's economy skyrocketed, but so did Isma'il's problems. In 1866 he set up a representative assembly to advise his government and raise revenue. Timid at first but later incited by a burgeoning press, this new body began calling for constitutional government. Isma'il borrowed vast sums from foreign banks to cover his expenditures. Unable to repay his debts, he sold his government's Suez Canal shares to Britain, accepted British and French control over Egypt's finances, and finally admitted representatives of these two creditor states into his cabinet. Egyptians resented these changes. The assembly demanded a council of ministers responsible to itself and purged of Europeans, a say in the government's budget, and an end to the budget cuts that harmed many Egyptians. In 1879 Isma'il dismissed his "European cabinet" and named one that heeded the assembly's call for constitutional government, whereupon the European powers ordered the Ottoman sultan to replace Isma'il with his son, Tawfiq.

Obedying his European advisers, Tawfiq Pasha purged the dissidents from his regime and tried to pay back some of his father's debts. But many Egyptians, harmed by European meddling, called for independence. Their main backers were some Egyptian army officers led by Colonel Urabi, who wanted Egypt freed from both Turks and Europeans. In 1881, Urabi's troops surrounded the palace and called for a new cabinet responsible to an elected parliament. Tawfiq gave in, and soon Egypt had a constitution. Nationalism's triumph was brief; its leaders were split, the Europeans threatened to intervene, and Tawfiq turned against the nationalists in 1882. The British landed in Alexandria, invaded the Suez Canal, and marched into Cairo. Urabi yielded, ending Egypt's first constitutional era.

When Britain occupied Egypt, it promised to pull its troops out as soon as order was restored to the country. It was easy to defeat the nationalists and prop up Tawfiq on his throne, but it was harder to remedy the causes of Egypt's disorder: huge debts, a peasantry burdened by high taxes, and a revolt

in Sudan. The longer Britain stayed on to tackle Egypt's problems, the harder it was to leave. A talented administrator, Lord Cromer, became Britain's diplomatic representative in Cairo. Backed by British troops, he reformed Egypt's finances and administration and gradually emerged as its ruler in all but name.

Although the country prospered, British advisers sapped the authority of the Egyptian ministers. The British claimed to be preparing the Egyptians for self-rule, but in fact Egypt became a training ground for British colonial administrators. They often forgot that Egypt was not a British colony; rather it was an autonomous Ottoman province under temporary occupation. The extension of irrigation under British rule was not paralleled by expanded education or industrial development. Cromer became autocratic and spiteful in undercutting Tawfiq's son, Abbas II. When Abbas succeeded Tawfiq in 1892, he gathered a cabal of young Egyptians to help him thwart Cromer's power. Their spokesman, an articulate lawyer named Mustafa Kamil, founded the National Party. The Nationalists urged Britain to withdraw its forces from Egypt and later demanded a new constitution. Cromer ignored them, but his successor promised to hasten Egypt's progress toward self-rule. Unfortunately for the Nationalists, Mustafa Kamil died prematurely in 1908, and his followers split. A more repressive British policy forced the leading Nationalists into exile. At the outbreak of World War I, the British declared a protectorate, deposed Abbas, and severed Egypt's ties with the Ottoman Empire.

#### ■ Liberalism and Nationalism Within the Ottoman Empire

As the *tanzimat* era wound down, a group of Westernized intellectuals and army officers known as the New Ottomans called for a more liberal regime, which to them meant a constitution. In 1876, amid Balkan revolts, growing state indebtedness to Europe, and threats of a Russian invasion, a military coup placed a liberal sultan on the throne. He was soon replaced by Abdülhamid II, who issued a constitution in December of that year to forestall a Russian attempt to break up his empire. For about a year, the Ottoman Empire had a popularly elected parliament, but as Russia attacked anyway and advanced on Istanbul, Abdülhamid shut it down and suspended the constitution. For thirty years the sultan further centralized state control and stifled nationalist and liberal movements. A group of Westernized students and army officers, convinced that the empire could be saved only by restoring the 1876 Constitution, formed the Committee of Union and Progress, or the Young Turks. In 1908 they forced the sultan to restore the constitution and hold elections; in 1909, after an abortive countercoup, they deposed him. But the Young Turk regime soon became a military junta. As Balkan revolts and Western imperialism took one Ottoman province after another, the leaders increas-

ingly adopted Turkish nationalism, offending those subjects who did not identify with Turkish culture.

Among the Ottoman subjects who resisted Turkish nationalism were those who spoke Arabic. Long divided by local, sectarian, or family rivalries, the people of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Arabia began to view themselves as one Arab nation. Arabic-speaking lawyers, teachers, students, and army officers formed nationalist societies in the main Ottoman cities. Some wanted internal autonomy and equal status with the Turks as Ottoman subjects; others demanded Arab independence from Turkish rule. Some called for restoring the caliphate to an Arab ruler. Although Arab nationalism had only a few adherents at first, its ideas helped spark the Arab Revolt during World War I.

#### ■ Persian Constitutionalism

Persia's Qajar shahs were autocratic and weak. They could not protect the farmers and city dwellers from nomadic tribes, nor could they stop Russian military incursions or the commercial ascendancy of the British and other Europeans. In reaction, the idea of constitutional government arose within three groups: merchants, Shi'ite *ulama*, and Westernized intellectuals. The merchants resented the shahs' concessions to foreign companies, which threatened their livelihood; the *ulama* feared that Westernization would undermine Islam generally and their own influence in particular; and the intellectuals, influenced by Western liberalism and nationalism, viewed the shah, backed by foreign advisers and money, as an obstacle to reform.

These groups wanted different things. United by nationalism, however, they engineered the 1892 tobacco boycott and a national revolution in 1906. The shah responded to the latter with a constitution that provided for a popularly elected parliament (*majlis*), but in 1907 his successor called in Russian troops to suppress the *majlis* and its revolutionary backers. But outside the capital the Constitutionalists continued their struggle. A prominent tribal leader helped them retake Tehran, and they replaced the shah with a more docile relative.

Once in power, the Constitutionalists failed to implement their reform program. Their political revolution did not change social and economic conditions, they were split into factions, and outsiders exacerbated their problems. The British government mainly sought to protect commerce and defend India. For Russia, expansion into Persia was a continuation of its policy of taking Central Asia. Meanwhile, a British firm received a concession to explore southern Persia for oil. The first major discovery came in 1908, and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was formed the next year. Soon it built a refinery at Abadan, and when Britain's fleet switched from coal to oil in 1912, Persia's new role as an oil producer made it central to British imperial strategy.

Britain and Russia had agreed in 1907 to define spheres of influence within Persia. Russia's sphere covered the country's northern third, including Tehran. Britain, whose area bordered on northwestern India, allowed the Russians to tighten their grip on Persia's government before and during World War I. Even the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the consequent withdrawal of Russian troops only briefly interrupted their efforts to control Persia.

### ■ World War I, the Ottoman Jihad, and the Arab Revolt

World War I completed the continuing subordination of Middle Eastern peoples to Western domination. Since the eighteenth century, Russia had won control over the lands north of the Black Sea, the Caucasus Mountains, most of the Caspian Sea coast, and vast stretches of Muslim Central Asia. Persia was virtually a Russian protectorate. The czarist regime hoped to gain Istanbul and the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits in the war. France ruled North Africa. Britain held Egypt, the strategic Mediterranean island of Cyprus, and Aden at the southern entrance to the Red Sea; it also had treaties requiring it to protect most of the Gulf rulers. British and French capitalists had huge investments in Middle Eastern land, buildings, factories, railroads, and utilities. In 1914, Germany was the likely protector of the remnants of the Ottoman Empire; a German military mission was reorganizing its army, and German capital was financing construction of a rail line from Istanbul to Baghdad, raising its influence in the Ottoman interior.

Istanbul's decision to enter World War I as Germany's ally sealed the fate of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman proclamation of jihad (struggle for Islam) failed to rally the Muslims under Allied rule to rise in rebellion. As Britain repulsed Turkish attacks on the Suez Canal and sent expeditionary forces into Mesopotamia and Palestine, the Arabs' loyalty to the Ottoman sultan waned. Husayn ibn Ali, the emir (prince) of Mecca and sharif (leading descendant of Muhammad) of the prestigious Hashemite family, negotiated secretly with Sir Henry McMahon, Britain's high commissioner in Egypt, who pledged British support for Arab independence if Husayn rebelled against the Turks. He reserved Baghdad and Basra for separate administration, however, and excluded Mersin, Alexandretta, and "portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo" from the areas to be granted independence. These terms fell short of the nationalists' dream of independence for all the Arabic-speaking Ottoman lands. Although Husayn was disappointed, the Ottoman government's repression of the Arabs in Syria enraged him and led him to proclaim the Arab Revolt in 1916. Together, the Arabs and the British drove the Turks from Palestine and Syria, while Anglo-Indian troops took Mesopotamia (Iraq). The Ottoman Empire surrendered in October 1918.

Because the Arabs predominated in Palestine, Syria, and Iraq, their leaders expected Britain to grant them independence in return for their support during the Arab Revolt. U.S. president Woodrow Wilson urged autonomy for these former Ottoman lands in the twelfth of his Fourteen Points, which Britain and France accepted as the basis for making peace. According to the Husayn-McMahon correspondence, confirmed in 1918 by new British and French assurances to the Arabs, the Fertile Crescent and the Hejaz were to be ruled by Sharif Husayn's family, the Hashemites.

But this was not to be. During the war Britain had made conflicting commitments to other interested parties. In a series of secret pacts, the Allies had agreed that the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits, Istanbul, and eastern Anatolia were to go to czarist Russia, portions of western Anatolia to the Greeks and the Italians, and most of the Arab lands to Britain and France. The 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement designated part of the Syrian coast for direct French control and a larger zone of French influence in the Syrian hinterland as far east as Mosul. Britain was to govern lower Iraq and to have a sphere of influence over the rest of Iraq and Palestine, except that the Christian holy places would be under an international administration. Only in the desert were the Arabs to be free from Western rule.

Meanwhile, there was another group, the Jewish nationalists, or Zionists, who were pressing the Western powers to recognize their claim to Palestine, or Eretz Yisrael. Beginning in the 1880s (in part due to the Russian pogroms against Jews), some European Jews settled in Palestine, which was still under Ottoman rule and inhabited mainly by Arabs. During World War I, Chaim Weizmann, a distinguished chemist and Zionist leader living in England, made his views known to the cabinet, which authorized Foreign Secretary Sir Arthur Balfour to declare the British government's support for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people. He cautioned that nothing should be done to prejudice the civil and religious (but not political) rights of Palestine's "existing non-Jewish inhabitants," who then comprised over nine-tenths of its population. The 1917 Balfour Declaration was a major victory for the nascent Zionist movement.

### ■ The Postwar Peace Settlement

All of these contradictory commitments were aired at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Sharif Husayn's son, Faisal, spoke for the Arab provisional government that the Hashemites had set up in Damascus. Seeking to learn what Arabs in Syria and Palestine wanted, President Wilson sent out the King-Crane Commission, which found that the Arabs opposed French rule and Zionist colonization and strongly desired independence. Its report was ignored. The British let the French troops enter Beirut and later acceded to

French control over Syria, including Lebanon but not Palestine. Arab nationalists in Damascus declared Syria's independence in March 1920 and vowed to resist, but the French defeated their forces in July and toppled the Arab provisional government.

By this time, the Allies had agreed on how to divide and rule the conquered Ottoman provinces. Respecting President Wilson's principle of self-determination, Britain and France did not annex these territories, as earlier conquerors had done. Rather, under the League of Nations Covenant, Ottoman lands captured during the war were designated as countries that had developed enough so that their independence could be provisionally recognized, subject to a brief period of foreign tutelage under League supervision. Accordingly, France became the mandatory power in Syria and Lebanon and Britain in Iraq and Palestine. In principle, the mandatory powers were to administer these mandates to benefit the inhabitants and to prepare them for self-rule. In practice, the mandates benefited mainly Britain and France, not their new and resentful subjects.

France split Syria into smaller administrative units to ensure its control, thus embittering the nationalists. Faisal, ousted from Damascus, was crowned in Baghdad in 1921 as the British tried to suppress a general revolt in the new state of Iraq, a hastily cobbled combination of the Ottoman provinces of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra, minus the emirate (principality) of Kuwait. For Faisal's brother Abdullah, who had been promised the throne in Iraq, the British created the emirate of Transjordan, a desert land inhabited by bedouin tribes. Britain helped Abdullah weld his new state into a cohesive unit by forming the Arab Legion, a camel corps made up of men from most of the tribes and led by British officers. The Zionists protested that Abdullah's kingdom was not open to Jewish colonization, and Arab nationalists decried the fragmentation of what they felt should have been a unified Syria. Abdullah himself hoped that, once the French left Syria, he could move from dusty Amman to historic Damascus.

### ■ The Middle East Since World War I

When Europe's armies laid down their weapons at the war's end, Britain seemed to dominate the Middle East. Its troops patrolled western Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, some of Persia, parts of the Caucasus long under czarist rule, and the Turkish straits. But the rise of nationalism limited Britain's ability to rule the Middle East. Egypt and Iraq were soon convulsed by nationwide revolutions against the British occupying forces. The Arabs rioted in Palestine against the Jewish immigrants and in Syria against the French colonists, for they viewed both groups as serving British imperial interests.

Deserted by its Young Turk leaders, the defeated Ottoman government let the British and French occupy the straits, but Ottoman attempts to demobilize the Turkish army as Greek forces invaded western Anatolia set off a mutiny led by its ablest general, Mustafa Kemal (later named Atatürk, "Father of the Turks"). Soon Kemal's followers set up in Ankara a nationalist government that replaced and then abolished the Ottoman sultanate. The new Republic of Turkey rejected the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, imposed by the Allies, and negotiated with them three years later at Lausanne to gain a more acceptable treaty.

In Persia, Britain drafted a treaty with the Qajar rulers that would have turned their country into a British protectorate, but the *majlis* rejected the pact and revolts broke out in various parts of Persia. In 1921 an officer in the shah's guard, Reza Khan, took control and set up a military dictatorship, reducing Britain's role to protecting its oil fields in southwest Persia.

### ■ Western Imperialism in the Arab Lands

After the war, the British managed to keep their communication links across the region to India. Egypt's revolutionaries did not win the independence they had sought in 1919, but the British did promise in 1922 to end the protectorate and let the Egyptians draw up a formal constitution, creating a parliament that would vie with the king for power. British troops remained to guard Cairo, Alexandria, the Suez Canal, and such vital infrastructure as airports and radio transmitters. Sudan remained under a formal Anglo-Egyptian condominium, but the British held almost all the power. London also reserved the right to defend Egypt against outside aggression and to protect foreigners and minorities from nationalists or Muslim extremists. Under the new constitution, the Egyptians held parliamentary elections in 1923, and their former delegation (in Arabic, *wafd*) to the Paris Peace Conference turned into the overwhelmingly popular Wafd Party.

Palestine came under the direct control of Britain's Colonial Office, with a high commissioner governing in Jerusalem. The Jewish community had a Jewish Agency and an elected assembly to manage its internal affairs. The Muslim and Christian Arabs had no such organizations, and their leaders rejected a proposed legislature in which they would not have been given majority control reflective of their population. Jews and Arabs spoke different languages, lived in distinct villages or separate neighborhoods, and related as little as possible to each other as communities, although some got along well on the individual or family level. Jewish immigrants from war-torn revolutionary Russia or central Europe viewed local Arabs as threatening brigands, greedy landlords, or backward peasants. The Palestinian Arabs feared that the Zionist movement would dispossess them of their lands and their homes. Jews

and Arabs, both having long memories of powerlessness, showed scant sympathy for each other as they began their contest for Palestine.

The French accepted control over Syria but resented having to forgo Palestine and oil-rich western Iraq. France was determined to parlay its League of Nations mandate over Syria into a colony. Soon after French troops had driven out the Arab nationalists, France divided the country into districts: Damascus, Aleppo, the north Mediterranean coast for the Alawis (a breakaway Shi'ite sect), the highlands south of Damascus for the Druze (also a past offshoot of Shi'ism), and a special Republic of Lebanon.

This last-named state, the only one of these fragments to outlive the French mandate, was the enlarged version of the Ottoman province of Mount Lebanon, which had enjoyed autonomy under European protection between 1860 and 1914. Mount Lebanon's inhabitants had been mostly Maronite Christians (who had broken away from Greek Orthodoxy and later entered into communion with Roman Catholicism). The French hoped that, by enlarging Lebanon, they could preserve a Maronite plurality large enough to give them effective control over its other inhabitants, be they Druze, Sunni or Shi'ite Muslim, Greek Orthodox, or adherents of other Christian sects. The Republic of Lebanon, which in the 1920s had a slight Christian majority, soon won substantial autonomy under Maronite leadership. French rule in Syria benefited farmers and merchants, as the mandatory regime invested in roads and other public works, but did not allay the chagrin of the nationalists who had craved Arab independence.

In North Africa, the French treated Algeria as an integral part of France: European settlers held most of the cultivable land, dominated political life, and controlled Algiers and the other major cities. The Algerian Muslims, mainly Berber but including many Arabs, had no political rights and only belatedly formed a secular nationalist party. A Muslim bey (governor) ruled in Tunisia and had Muslim ministers, but real power was held by the French governor-general and his advisers. The presence of European settlers was less visible than in Algeria, however, and opposition to French rule came from an emerging professional class, which formed the Destour (Constitution) Party.

Morocco, which unlike the rest of North Africa had never been under Ottoman rule, was now divided between a Spanish enclave in the north, the international city of Tangier, and a French protectorate over most of the country. A French governor-general advised the sultan and his ministers, who normally obeyed. A large-scale rural rebellion was suppressed in 1925 only with great difficulty. Although Morocco's urban nationalists formed the Istiqlal (Independence) Party, the French invested heavily in agriculture and mining, expecting to remain. Italy, which had seized Tripolitania from the Ottoman Empire in 1911, slowly took Cyrenaica and the Fezzan as well, creating what is now Libya. Its administration was especially brutal. Efforts to colonize Libya with Italians displaced many Arabs but attracted few settlers.

## ■ Independence in Turkey, Iran, and the Arabian Peninsula

It is one of the great ironies of Middle Eastern history that most of the Arabs, who had thrown in their lot with the Allies during World War I, did not achieve their political goals after 1918, whereas the Turks, who had joined the Central Powers and shared in their defeat, managed to retain their independence once the war was over. The Turkish-speaking lands of Anatolia and Thrace could have been divided among Britain, France, Greece, Italy, and possibly even the United States. The Treaty of Sèvres might have awarded some eastern areas to Armenians and Kurds. Instead, Kemal led a nationwide revolt that gradually won the support of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), France, and Italy, expelled the Greek invaders who had occupied much of western Anatolia, and persuaded the British to withdraw their troops from the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits. The new treaty signed at Lausanne in 1923 freed Thrace and Anatolia (with no special enclaves for the Armenians or the Kurds) from foreign rule and accepted Turkey's abolition of the Capitulations that had long exempted European expatriates from Ottoman control.

Kemal also abolished the sultanate and the other political institutions of the moribund Ottoman Empire in 1923. Ankara became the capital of Turkey, the first republic in the modern Middle East. More drastic reforms followed, as Kemal ended the Islamic caliphate and dismantled Turkey's Muslim institutions, including its *sharia* courts and schools, its dervish and Sufi orders, and even its holidays. The Arabic alphabet, in which Turkish had been written for a thousand years, was replaced by the Roman one. The Gregorian calendar and Western clocks became standard, as did the metric system of weights and measures. Kemal discouraged women from veiling their faces and ordered men to wear hats with brims in place of the fezzes that had become the customary head covering for Muslim officers and officials. The *ulama* lost most of their power as judges and educators. Kemal wanted to wrest Turkey out of the Middle East and make it a part of Europe. Because he had saved his country from a hated Allied occupation, most Turks adored and obeyed him.

Kemal had an imitator in Persia, the country now called Iran. Reza Khan had taken power in 1921. When civilian politicians proved too quarrelsome and the shah incompetent, Reza took power into his own hands. Crowning himself as the new shah in 1925, he founded the Pahlavi dynasty and declared that Persia should be called Iran (meaning land of the Aryans). Like Kemal, Reza Shah weakened the *ulama* and secularized their courts, schools, and welfare institutions. He outlawed the veiling of women and required both sexes to wear European-style clothing. The new shah also curbed the nomadic tribes that had dominated most of rural Persia by forcing them to settle down as

farmers. Trying to strengthen state control over the countryside, he extended the telegraph lines and road network and decreed the construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway. The presence of the Anglo-Iranian (formerly Anglo-Persian) Oil Company, owned and managed by the British, limited Iran's economic sovereignty, but Reza Shah did manage to renegotiate its concession to the host country's benefit. As oil output expanded, more and more Iranians went to work for the company. As nationalist feelings spread, many Iranians began to ask why such a vital resource should be controlled by foreigners.

Petroleum exploration began in other Middle Eastern countries as well. British companies found new deposits in Iraq and Kuwait, as did U.S. companies operating in Bahrain. A coalition of U.S. firms that became the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) prospected for oil in the deserts of Arabia. This peninsula had long been dominated by feuding Arab tribes, but in the early twentieth century a remarkable military leader named Abdul Aziz ibn Saud took over much of Arabia. Having subdued most of the tribes in central and eastern Arabia, Ibn Saud managed to take Mecca and Medina from the Hashemites in 1925. After conquering Asir, Ibn Saud proclaimed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. His country remained poor until ARAMCO struck oil; it was only much later that Saudi Arabia evolved into an economic giant.

Yemen remained a separate state under a hereditary dynasty of Zaydi Shi'i imams (religious leaders), mountainous and colorful but lacking education, healthcare, industry, and oil. To the south of Yemen, where the Red and Arabian Seas meet, lay the British colony of Aden. The tribal shaikhs near the coasts of the Arabian Sea and the Gulf had made treaties that placed them under British protection. Oman, which in previous centuries had been an autonomous actor in regional affairs, had also become a British protectorate. Oil was found in some of these areas, too, but no significant amounts were extracted or sold until the 1960s.

### ■ The Retreat of Western Imperialism

With the spread of education and communications, nationalism grew among the Arabic-speaking peoples under British and French control. This feeling was expressed either as Arab nationalism, the idea that all people who speak Arabic should be united in one nation-state, or as a more localized patriotism. As more Arabs attended schools and colleges and as a burgeoning press fueled their desire for independence and unity, they openly attacked the British and French mandates in the Fertile Crescent and the prolonged British domination over Egypt and Sudan. Indeed, the British themselves wanted to prepare Iraqis, Transjordanians and Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese, and Egyptians and Sudanese for self-rule and eventual independence, but as separate countries, not as a single united state (as Arab nationalists wanted).

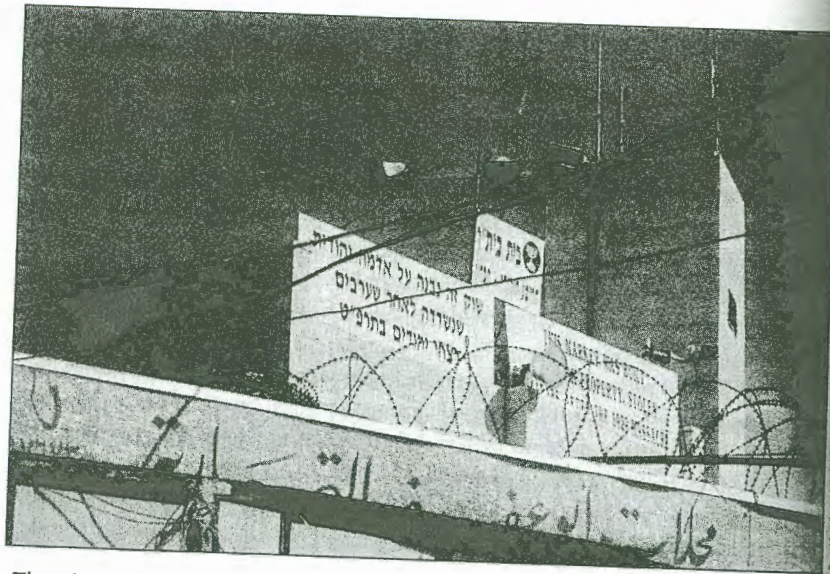
Leading the Arabs' march to independence was the Kingdom of Iraq. Although its subjects were less advanced than the Syrians or Egyptians, the British were prepared to certify that Iraq was ready for sovereign statehood. In 1932 Iraq achieved formal independence and was admitted to the League of Nations. The next year King Faisal I died suddenly and was succeeded by his minor son. A rebellion by the Assyrians (Nestorian Christians) was suppressed by Iraqi troops, who massacred many villagers. Other ethnic minorities (mainly non-Arab Kurds and Turcomans living in the north, who made up one-fifth of Iraq's population, but also Jews in Baghdad) were barred from power. Most of Iraq's Arab Muslims were Shi'a, who also suffered from discrimination.

Iraq's parliament was dominated by landowning tribal leaders, and certain aristocratic families monopolized cabinet posts. A series of military coups brought various army officers to power, culminating in an Arab nationalist government that was toppled in 1941 by a British military intervention in 1941, leaving a legacy of anti-Western hostility that would resurface under such leaders as Abd al-Karim Qasim (1958–1963) and Saddam Hussein (1979–2003).

The brother of Iraq's King Faisal I, Abdullah, managed to unite Transjordan, which became formally independent in 1946. Its most viable institution, the Arab Legion, had helped the British suppress riots in Palestine west of the Jordan, the area subject to the Jewish-Arab struggle for the "twice-promised land."

The Zionist movement had hoped to persuade enough Jews to immigrate to Palestine to form a Jewish state. During the 1920s, however, few came, lulling the Arab majority. But in 1929 a quarrel at the Western Wall sparked large-scale rioting in which many Arabs and Jews were killed or injured. The British government sent out an investigating commission, which reported that sales of Arab-owned lands to Jewish settlers were taking many Palestinian Arab farmers' tenancy rights and hence their livelihoods. The Jewish settlers blamed Arab violence for the riots and claimed they had brought prosperity to Palestine.

The Nazi takeover in Germany speeded up Jewish immigration in the 1930s, fueling Arab fears that they would soon become a minority. In 1936 the Arab political parties, hitherto divided on family and religious lines, united as the Arab Higher Committee, which organized a general strike against the mandate. A three-year civil war ensued. A British commission of inquiry visited Palestine in 1937 and recommended forming separate enclaves in Palestine for Jewish immigration and settlement. Palestine's Arabs, backed by newly independent Iraq and Egypt, opposed the partition, as did a meeting of the Zionist Congress, albeit for different reasons. The British revised their proposal and then, anxious about their strategic bases in Egypt and Iraq in case war with Germany broke out, issued the May 1939 White Paper, which



The sign, in English and Hebrew, reads: "This market was built on Jewish property stolen by Arabs after the 1929 massacre." It hangs on the wall of a controversial Jewish settlement building in the West Bank city of Hebron/Khalil. The area was previously part of a Palestinian market.

restricted Jewish immigration and land purchases in Palestine. The Zionists felt betrayed, for Europe's Jews were in mortal peril and no other country would admit them. Palestinian Arabs, for their part, doubted British promises of independence, even though they constituted a majority in Palestine, and argued that Zionism was another manifestation of Western imperialism.

If the British were distrusted in Palestine, the Arabs hated France's mandates in Syria and Lebanon. Only the Maronites wanted the French presence, most other Christians and virtually all Muslims in Syria wanted Arab unity and independence. During an interval when a leftist government held power in Paris, the French offered independence, only to retract it when a more conservative cabinet took over. France's sudden defeat by Nazi Germany in 1940 enabled Britain and the United States to pressure the anti-Nazi Free French to recognize the independence of Syria and Lebanon in 1943, but it was another three years before the last French troops left.

At the end of World War II, Egypt was the most populous Arab state. It had the most newspapers and magazines, the leading universities, the largest cinema and record companies, and the most influential writers. Yet it lagged behind the other Arab countries in gaining independence. While the Wafd and other political parties vied for popular support in parliamentary elections, King Fu'ad I used his influence with the *ulama*, the army, and sometimes the village leaders to increase his own power. Both contended with the continued

British occupation of Egypt and Sudan. Only in 1936 did Britain and Egypt come to terms because both feared Italy's rising power in Libya and Ethiopia, countries that bordered on Egypt and Sudan. The British agreed to limit their forces to the Suez Canal zone, Cairo, and Alexandria, reducing them to 10,000 men in peacetime. Sudan, claimed by Egypt, remained under an Anglo-Egyptian condominium.

Egypt's King Fu'ad died in 1936 and was succeeded by his teenaged son, Farouk, who was initially adored by his subjects. But he lost popular support in 1942 when the British made him appoint a cabinet that would back their presence in Egypt during World War II. Egypt was occupied by even more British imperial troops during World War II than during World War I, as Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany invaded from Libya, and the Suez Canal had to be defended at all costs. Antidemocratic groups such as pro-Fascist Young Egypt, the Communists, and the Muslim Brothers vied for Egyptian support. The Wafd and other parliamentary parties seemed outdated. Once the war ended, Egyptians demanded that British troops leave their country, including Suez and Sudan.

### ■ The Struggle Between Arab Nationalism and Zionism

The idea of Arab unity won growing support in the Fertile Crescent, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula during World War II. Arabs had decried the division of the Fertile Crescent into British and French mandates and hoped that independence would soon lead to unification. Nuri al-Said, Iraq's prime minister, proposed a union of Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Palestine with his own country. But King Farouk of Egypt and King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia also wanted to lead the Arabs. Egypt, therefore, called for a looser organization for all sovereign Arab states. The Arabs accepted the latter alternative, and the Arab League came into being in 1945, with its headquarters in Cairo and an Egyptian as its secretary-general. The Arab countries also joined the United Nations (UN) that same year. Although Arab peoples still craved unity, their governments went their separate ways.

The issue that seemed to unite all Arabs was Palestine. Europe's Jews, decimated by the Nazi *Shoah* (Holocaust), sought a safe haven, but Palestine's Arab majority feared a flood of refugees who would demand statehood at their expense. As the British continued to enforce the immigration restrictions in their 1939 White Paper after World War II, some Jews resorted to terrorism. The British government became ever more hostile to Zionism and to Jewish settlement, and fighting intensified among Jews, Arabs, and British troops.

In 1947 Britain announced that it could no longer govern its mandate and submitted the Palestine issue to the United Nations. The UN General Assembly set up a special committee, which went to Palestine to look into the problem and recommended that its lands be divided into seven parts, three for the



Jews and three for the Arabs, leaving Jerusalem and Bethlehem as a separate area under the control of the United Nations. The Arab states opposed this plan, which awarded more than half the territory (including the fertile coastal area) to the Jews, who had only a third of the population and owned about 7 percent of the land. Pressured by the United States, more than two-thirds of the General Assembly voted for the partition proposal.

Despite threats by Egypt, Iraq, and the other Arab states to intervene militarily against partition, British troops prepared to pull out of Palestine, and the UN debated how to restore order. On May 14, 1948, when the British left Jerusalem, the Jewish Agency met in Tel Aviv to declare the independent State of Israel within the lands that they controlled. The United States and the USSR recognized the Jewish state, even as the Arab states sent their armies to destroy it.

Israel's creation was a revolutionary event for both Jews and Arabs. There had been no Jewish state for millennia; now one existed as an enclave in an overwhelmingly Arab region. As the armies of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Transjordan failed to take Palestine, most Palestinian Arabs fled to the neighboring states, driven either by the fatuous hope that the Arab armies would bring them back or by the realistic fear that the Israelis would drive them out. The result was the emergence of more than 750,000 Arab refugees, who were placed in camps in those areas of Palestine—the West Bank and the Gaza Strip—not captured by the Israelis or in the neighboring countries, mainly Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. These Palestinian refugees refused assimilation into the Arab countries and demanded the right under international law to return to their homes. Israel offered to readmit a few of these refugees, but only as part of a general peace settlement. The Arab states signed separate armistice agreements with Israel in 1949 but did not recognize the new state. Israel declared that all Jews had the right to become citizens, took in survivors of the *Shoah*, and gave refuge to Jews from Arab lands.

### ■ Political Changes in the Arab Countries

The defeat of the Arab armies in the 1948 Palestine war was one of the causes of the army coups that afflicted some Arab countries, starting in 1949 with three successive revolts in Syria. Arab monarchies were toppled in Egypt in 1952, Iraq in 1958, Yemen in 1962, and Libya in 1969. The demand for greater popular participation and for a fairer distribution of each country's resources probably did more to cause these revolutions than the Palestine problem, but the general trend was toward government by an officer corps coming from middle-class (as opposed to landowning) backgrounds and committed to reform. The presence of Palestinian refugees reminded Arabs in many countries of their old regimes' failure to defend them against Zionism and imperialism. The Palestinians themselves, although lacking the economic

advantages and political rights of their Arab hosts, became increasingly educated and politicized. They often pressed the Arab governments to restore their rights by fighting Israel.

Revolutionary Arab regimes espoused socialism, a policy viewed as neutral between the communism of the USSR and the capitalism of the West, and Arab unification. The leading proponent of these policies was Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser. Nasser had led the officers' conspiracy that ousted King Farouk in 1952, but his emergence as the Arabs' champion was gradual. He negotiated a new pact with Britain in 1954 securing the latter's evacuation of the Suez Canal zone. He also renounced Egypt's claims to rule Sudan, which became independent in 1956.

Nasser resisted Western efforts to draw him into an anti-Communist alliance in 1955 but agreed instead to buy \$200 million worth of arms from the Soviet bloc, a move that aroused Western fears of Communist gains in the Arab world. The U.S. government, working with Britain and the World Bank, offered to lend Egypt the money to build a new dam near Aswan that would control the Nile floodwaters and greatly increase the country's farmland and hydroelectric generating capacity, but it later retracted its offer in order to punish Nasser for his pro-Communist policies. Nasser responded in July 1956 by nationalizing the Suez Canal Company. The British and French governments denounced the seizure and conspired with Israel to attack Egypt. Although the attackers retook the canal, they were opposed by nearly every UN member, including the United States. Ultimately, they had to withdraw, and Nasser emerged as an Arab hero for standing up to the West.

Early in 1958, Egypt acceded to Syria's request to form an organic union of the two countries, which they called the United Arab Republic (UAR). Many nationalists hoped that other Arab states would join the new political entity. Instead, Jordan and Iraq formed their own federation, which soon foundered when a coup overthrew the Iraqi monarchy. A civil war broke out in Lebanon between Arab nationalists (mainly Muslim) who sought closer ties with the UAR and Lebanese particularists (mainly Christian) who wanted independence from the Arabs. U.S. troops occupied Lebanon in July 1958 and helped restore order.

The general trend seemed to be toward pan-Arabism, as north Yemen federated with the UAR, the army seized power in Sudan, and even Saudi Arabia replaced a weak king with a brother who was thought to favor Nasser. Not only was Arab unity strong in the late 1950s, but many governments followed Nasser's lead in redistributing large estates to hitherto landless farmers, nationalizing companies owned by foreign or local capitalists, and expanding public education and welfare institutions. The watchwords of the day were "neutralism" and "Arab socialism."

Like the eastern Arab world, North Africa was also emerging from colonialism. Libya, ruled by Italy up to World War II, was the first to gain inde-

pendence, in 1951. France gave up its protectorates over both Tunisia and Morocco in 1956, but hesitated in Algeria. More than 1 million European settlers wanted to keep Algeria a part of France, but a nationalist revolt broke out in 1954 and continued for eight years. The French government and army grew tired of fighting rearguard colonial wars, and in 1962 President Charles de Gaulle granted independence to Algeria. Its leaders soon declared their support of Nasser and Arab socialism.

### ■ The Northern Tier

As stated in the introduction to this book, not all Middle Eastern states are Arab. Turkey and Iran, although predominantly Muslim, are proud of their distinctive cultures and heritages. Both managed to stand up to the British and kept their independence after World War I. Both bordered on the USSR and had to come to terms with it. Although the Soviets helped Turkey to resist the Greeks and the British during the rise of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the 1920s, the Turks resumed the Ottoman policy of opposing Russian imperialism. İsmet İnönü, who had succeeded Atatürk as president, kept Turkey out of World War II and prevented the Allies from using the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits to supply the USSR. Stalin's postwar demand to station Soviet troops on the straits led the United States to back Turkey in the 1947 Truman Doctrine.

In 1952, Turkey joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), having committed troops to defending South Korea against the Communists. İnönü's government even allowed a rival political party to form, only to oust it from power in 1950. Turkey has continued to industrialize its economy and modernize its society, but its recent history has been punctuated by military coups and by challenges from militant Marxists, Muslims, and Kurdish separatists. Turkey remains a bridge between the West and the Middle East and has become a link to the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan and to Central Asia.

Iran also had to protect its independence from the USSR. Even though the two countries had signed a pact that authorized the Soviets to enter Iran whenever it was occupied by troops hostile to the USSR, Reza Shah's government sought to limit the Soviet Union's influence. In the 1930s, Iran drew close to Nazi Germany, whose doctrines of Aryan supremacy appealed to local pride and offered a means to fight Anglo-Russian control. When the Nazis invaded the USSR in 1941, the Soviet and British governments demanded the expulsion of German advisers from Iran and seized control of the Trans-Iranian Railway to ship Western munitions to the beleaguered Soviets. Reza abdicated in favor of his son Mohammad and went into exile. At the war's end, British troops left Iran, but the Soviets tried to set up puppet regimes in Kurdistan and

Azerbaijan. It took a general UN condemnation, U.S. threats, and clever Iranian diplomacy to oust the Soviet army.

But Britain still controlled Iran's oil, and in 1951 a cabinet headed by Mohammad Mosaddeq nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Iran's nationalists were elated, but Western countries supported Britain by refusing to buy any oil from Iran. In 1953 an army coup, engineered in part by British and U.S. intelligence agencies, overthrew Mosaddeq's government. The shah, who had fled the country during the turmoil, regained his throne. He began a policy of concentrating control in his own hands at the expense of Iran's landowners, merchants, and *ulama*. He also signed an anti-Communist alliance with Turkey, Pakistan, Britain, and Iraq. Britain and the United States saw Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan as a bulwark against a possible Soviet drive toward the oil-rich Gulf. The West sold vast quantities of weapons to these countries, but skeptics wondered whether those arms would just be used to keep their regimes in power.

### ■ The Intensification of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Israel's conflict with its Arab neighbors seemed to die down as Arab states tried to unite and leaders struggled for power. The United Arab Republic lapsed when Syria broke away in 1961. A popular nationalist movement, the Ba'ath Party, committed to Arab unification and socialism, seized power successively in Iraq and Syria early in 1963. The Ba'ath tried to form a new Arab union with Egypt, but the talks broke down. An army coup had ousted the Yemeni monarchy in 1962, but the new republican regime sought Egyptian military aid and troops to stay in power, while Saudi Arabia began backing tribes loyal to the ousted imam. A draining civil war ensued in Yemen.

What brought the Arabs back together was Israel's completion of a development scheme that took large quantities of water from the Jordan River to irrigate new agricultural lands within the Jewish state. Early in 1964, Nasser invited the other Arab heads of state to Cairo to discuss ways of countering the Israeli scheme, which would deprive Jordan and other Arab states of fresh water needed for their irrigation projects. The Arabs agreed to prepare for future action against Israel and formed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to unite the Palestinian Arabs politically. Meanwhile, Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat, launched commando raids inside Israel. Although abetted by Syria, these attacks tended to come from the West Bank, which was controlled by Jordan. To deter future raids, Israel's army attacked West Bank villages late in 1966, yet some Israelis blamed Syria.

An aerial dogfight broke out between Israel and Syria in April 1967. The USSR told Egypt that Israeli troops were massing for an attack on Syria.

Nasser, anxious to remain the champion of Arab nationalism, ordered the UN to withdraw its peacekeeping forces, which had patrolled the Sinai and the Gaza Strip since the 1956 war. As Israel mobilized its reserves, Egypt declared a blockade in the Gulf of Aqaba against Israeli shipping. Arab governments, their press and radio stations, and their people all called for defeating Israel and restoring the Palestinians to their homes.

Although many in the United States and Western Europe favored Israel, their governments hoped to avoid war by taking the issue to the UN. Israel, fearing an Arab offensive, decided to launch a preemptive strike. On June 5, 1967, Israeli fighter planes struck at Egypt's military airfields and wiped out most of the Egyptian air force. Before the Arabs could hit back, the Israelis bombed the other Arab air forces. They invaded the Egyptian Sinai, Gaza, the Jordanian-ruled sector of Jerusalem and the West Bank, and finally Syria's Golan Heights. In six days, using its superior technology, organization, and mastery of the air, Israel defeated Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, tripling the area under its control.

Although the Arab states agreed to UN-mediated cease-fires, they refused to make peace. At a summit held in Khartoum, Sudan, the Arab leaders agreed not to negotiate with Israel, but to rearm and regain their lost lands by force. The PLO tried but failed to mobilize the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, numbering more than 1 million people under Israeli military rule, to rebel. After five months of debate, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 242, which called on Israel to withdraw from lands occupied in the recent war but also ordered all countries to recognize the right of "every state in the area" to exist "within secure and recognized boundaries." Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, as UN members, were all bound under the UN Charter to accept Security Council resolutions, but each made its own interpretation of this one, to which all member states have paid lip service since 1967. Resolution 242 did not mention the Palestinians, who felt that neither the major powers nor the Arab governments really cared about their interests.

In 1969, Arafat was elected chairman of the PLO, the umbrella group for most Palestinians. Some became guerrillas and resorted to acts of violence against not only Israel but also any Arab government that worked closely with the West, notably Jordan and Lebanon. Palestinian guerrilla groups seemed to resist Israel more effectively than had the armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in 1967. Despite Israeli-inspired propaganda attacks against "Arab terrorism," most Arabs flocked to support the PLO.

Nasser launched his 1969 War of Attrition against Israel's troops in the Sinai partly to counter Palestinian claims to military leadership. Israel's counterattacks obliged Egypt to seek more military aid from the USSR, leading to aerial dogfights over the Suez Canal. U.S. secretary of state William Rogers proposed a peace plan that would halt the War of Attrition and set up indirect talks to bring Egypt and Israel to a peace settlement based on Resolution 242.

Nasser accepted the Rogers Peace Plan but indirectly undercut it by moving Soviet missiles up to positions near the Suez Canal. Meanwhile, Palestinian guerrillas threatened to take over Jordan, but the Jordanian army, loyal to King Hussein, crushed them. Nasser's efforts to restore peace among the Arabs contributed to his fatal heart attack on September 28, 1970. His funeral in Cairo inspired demonstrations of grief all over the Arab world because of his heroic stand against Western imperialism. Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, vowed to continue the fallen leader's policies of Arab nationalism, opposition to Israel, nonalignment, purchases of Communist arms, and socialism. Soon, however, Sadat began liberalizing Egypt's economy and society and ordered most Soviet advisers to leave the country in 1972.

The Rogers Peace Plan collapsed in 1971 as both Israel and the Arabs refused to make the necessary concessions. Sadat threatened to renew the war against Israel if it did not withdraw from the Sinai and recognize Palestinian political rights. He also tried to cement a union with Syria, Libya, and Sudan. Neither his threats nor his union scheme worked. Palestinian commando groups carried out terrorist actions against civilian Israelis and foreigners, hoping to convince Israel and its backers that the Arab lands captured in 1967 were not worth keeping. But Israel believed that it had to retain the territories until the Arabs were willing to negotiate for peace. As the Arabs quarreled among themselves and Egypt distanced itself from its erstwhile Soviet backers, Israel and its backers became overconfident.

Israel's complacency was shaken on October 6, 1973, when Egypt and Syria attacked Israeli positions in the Sinai and the Golan Heights. Although poorly prepared, the Israelis called up their reserve soldiers and brought them to both fronts. By the second week, Israel was driving back the Syrians and Egyptians. The Soviet Union and the United States rushed to rearm their Middle Eastern clients on a massive scale. Then the Arabs decided to unsheathe an economic weapon. In 1960, the leading nonindustrialized oil producers had created the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which tried to limit oil supplies and set common prices. OPEC had begun to affect the world oil market in 1971, and the October 1973 war gave it a pretext to drive up prices 400 percent. The Arab members of OPEC announced that they would sell no oil to the United States and the Netherlands and would reduce supplies to other oil importers until Israel pulled out of all occupied lands and recognized the Palestinians' political rights. So vital had Arab oil become to Europe and Japan that many countries made political promises to ensure winter supplies. The UN Security Council adopted Resolutions 338 and 340, calling for a cease-fire and for immediate negotiations between Israel and the Arabs.

The Israelis had won the war, but as other governments turned against them, they felt that they had lost politically. U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger worked to disentangle the Egyptian and Israeli armies and to set up

a general peace conference that met briefly in Geneva in December 1973. Kissinger began flying between Jerusalem and Cairo, dealing with Egypt's and Israel's leaders separately. Finally they agreed to separate the Israeli and Egyptian armies by creating demilitarized zones between them. After that, tensions lessened and the oil embargo ended. Kissinger engineered a similar agreement between Israel and Syria. Both agreements enabled the Arab states to regain some of the lands Israel had taken in 1967 or 1973. Both sides took steps that, it was hoped, would lead toward future peace talks.

A second agreement between Egypt and Israel in 1975, also brokered by Kissinger, led to a further Israeli pullback and to an Egyptian renunciation of force to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both sides feared political deals: the Israelis might jeopardize their security by conceding too much to the Arabs; Egypt and Syria feared making concessions that might anger other Arabs, especially the Palestinians. In 1974, the Arabs agreed that only the PLO could speak for the Palestinians, but Israel refused to talk to what it viewed as a terrorist group. When an ultranationalist coalition, led by Menachem Begin (who had played an active role in the underground paramilitary group Irgun Zvai Leumi up to 1948), won Israel's 1977 election, the country seemed to be on a collision course with the Arabs. U.S. president Jimmy Carter wanted to reconvene the Geneva Conference (with the Soviet Union) and to include Palestinians in the new talks, to Israel's dismay.

Then Egyptian president Anwar Sadat surprised everyone by announcing that he would go to Jerusalem to parley with Israel's government. Although startled, Begin agreed to receive him and a new peace process began, leading to U.S. mediation and finally to an extraordinary summit held at Camp David with Carter as host and Sadat and Begin as chief negotiators. A tentative agreement was reached for peace between Egypt and Israel, and the three leaders signed the pact in September 1978. Diplomats ironed out the details, and the final Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was signed in March 1979. The treaty provided for Israel's phased withdrawal from the Sinai, full diplomatic relations between Jerusalem and Cairo, and ongoing negotiations about the status of Palestinians under Israeli occupation. The other Arab states and the PLO denounced Sadat's policy, broke diplomatic ties with Egypt, and vowed to continue their opposition to Israel.

### ■ The Islamic Revolution in Iran

While the West watched the Egyptian-Israeli peace talks, a revolution was brewing against the government of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who had ruled Iran for almost thirty-seven years. The United States and most European countries had long backed the shah as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism and pan-Arabism, selling Iran billions of dollars worth of Western arms. Iran's surging income caused by the oil price hikes in 1973 drew U.S. and European

investors to Tehran, where the shah proclaimed grandiose development schemes. These plans, run from the top down, gave little attention to what the Iranian people needed. They stressed showcase projects instead of making basic changes in the villages where most Iranians lived or in the factories or on the farms where most Iranians worked. The shah tolerated no opposition to his policies; a large intelligence bureau, Sazman-e Ettelaat va Amniyat-e Keshvar (SAVAK), spied on dissidents and jailed or tortured his critics.

Opposition to the shah came from nationalists who had backed Mosaddeq in 1951–1953, Marxists, labor leaders, intellectuals, and students. None of these groups was strong enough to withstand threats of imprisonment, torture, or even death at the hands of SAVAK agents. The best-organized and most popular opposition came from Muslim leaders, in part because Iran is a Shi'ite country, and Shi'ism empowers its *ulama* to reinterpret Islamic law. One such inspiring leader was the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who inveighed in his sermons and writings against the shah's tyranny and U.S. interference in Iranian affairs. Exiled from Iran in 1964, Khomeini continued to stir up opposition from Iraq and later from Paris. His sermons were smuggled into Iran and passed from hand to hand; some were even read aloud in the mosques.

An attack on Khomeini in the Iranian press sparked popular demonstrations early in 1978, and government efforts to suppress them led instead to larger protests. Growing numbers of Iranians turned against the shah's government and demanded the civil liberties and human rights advocated by President Carter. Even many in the United States doubted that the regime could survive and called for a nationalist government that would unite the Iranian people. The shah, stricken with cancer and cut off from the people, appointed a nationalist premier and left Iran in January 1979, expecting the United States to restore his regime as it had done in 1953. This did not occur.

The Iranian people, elated at the shah's departure, staged demonstrations to bring back the ayatollah. In February Khomeini returned, the shah's army defected to the ayatollah's side, and the government turned over its power to the revolutionaries. A cabinet whose members held opinions ranging from nationalist to Marxist to ultra-Islamic temporarily took charge of Iran, and revolutionary *komitehs* (committees) rounded up SAVAK agents and the shah's supporters, trying many and jailing and executing some of them. A popular plebiscite backed Khomeini's demand that Iran become an Islamic republic.

The Iranian revolution was a turning point in modern Middle Eastern history. A government committed to rapid Westernization was toppled by a popular regime dedicated to making Islam the basis of its policies and the guide for its economy, society, and culture. The new regime vowed to export its revolution throughout the Muslim world. The emirates and shakhdoms of the Gulf, with their vast oil revenues and wide disparities between rich and poor,

were vulnerable. Some had large and oppressed Shi'i populations. Iran's seizure of the U.S. embassy and the taking of fifty-two hostages outraged Westerners, but it also empowered Muslims to criticize Washington and other Western governments viewed as hostile to Islam.

U.S. diplomatic and military efforts to secure the release of the hostages failed. Soviet troops, observing U.S. weakness after the Iranian revolution, occupied Afghanistan in December 1979. Military aggression seemed to be in fashion, as Iraqi president Saddam Hussein renounced a treaty he had signed with the shah's government in 1975 letting Iran share control with Iraq over the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, the Shatt al-Arab waterway, and proceeded to invade Iran in 1980. This dispute was a pretext for deeper antagonisms between the two countries: Iraq wanted to replace Egypt as the Arabs' leader; Iran called on all Muslims, especially Shi'a, to replace their secularized regimes with Islamic republics. Iraq attacked Iran's southwestern province, which contains most of its oil and has Arab inhabitants who might have rallied to Saddam's Arab nationalism.

Iraq made huge inroads into Iran at first, but the Iranians fought back and eventually regained the captured lands and even managed to take some strategic islands near Iraq's second largest city, Basra. Neither the Shi'i majority in Iraq nor the Arab minority in Iran rebelled against its government, but each state spent huge sums on weapons and suffered heavy losses of personnel and equipment, as well as destruction of oil refineries, homes, shops, and factories. Both sides drafted what males they could find, even foreign workers and young boys, into their armies to replenish their fallen soldiers. Both, especially Iraq, fired missiles at the enemy's cities and used poison gas in combat.

Iran soon realized that it would have to release the U.S. hostages to gain international support for its war effort. Algerian diplomats mediated the dispute and secured the release of all fifty-two hostages after 444 days in captivity. Although U.S. president Ronald Reagan's administration seemed to favor Iraq, it sold U.S. missiles and spare parts to Iran for secret funds that could later be used to finance anti-Communist rebels in Nicaragua. When Iran and Iraq attacked each other's oil tankers in the Gulf and then started firing on the ships of other countries, the U.S. government took to reflagging Kuwaiti tankers and using its warships to escort them. In 1988, the United States and Iran almost went to war with each other when a U.S. naval officer accidentally shot down an Iranian passenger plane over the Gulf, but Tehran found that almost no country would back it. The UN Security Council had passed a resolution calling for a cease-fire between the warring states. Iraq had already accepted the resolution, and in July 1988 Iran reluctantly followed suit.

The Iranian revolution had many repercussions beyond the war with Iraq. Between 1979 and 1987, Tehran tried to foment revolts throughout the Muslim world, using its Islamic Republican Party to export revolutionary ideas. Iranian guerrillas set up training camps for revolutionary groups as remote as

the Moros in the Philippines and the Polisario rebels opposing Moroccan control of the Western Sahara. Especially important, however, was Iran's aid to Lebanon's Shi'a, once poor and unheeded but emerging in the 1980s as a major player in that country's civil war.

### ■ Lebanon: Cockpit of Middle Eastern Rivalry

Ever since independence, Lebanon had presented one face to the West: that of a democratic, urbane society, the "Switzerland of the Middle East." To many of its own inhabitants, and certainly to other Arabs, however, it showed another face: one of unfair privileges enjoyed by its Christians at the expense of Lebanon's Muslims (both Sunni and Shi'i) and the Druze. As more Lebanese moved to the cities, where disparities of wealth and power were clearer, and as the Muslim percentage of Lebanon's population rose relative to that of the Christians, discontent mounted. Economic and social conditions improved after the 1958 civil war, but Lebanese Muslims and Palestinian refugees still resented their inferior status. Skirmishes sometimes broke out between Muslims and Christians or between Palestinians and Lebanese. Usually they were settled quietly, but in 1975 Sunni Muslim and Maronite Christian militias started fighting in earnest, the PLO soon joined in, and a major civil war began. In 1976, the Lebanese government invited Syria into the country to help suppress Muslim and Palestinian militias. Syrian troops did indeed buttress the Maronite-dominated government in 1976, but they stayed in Lebanon and soon shifted to the Muslim side. Early in 1978, Israel invaded southern Lebanon, partly to keep the Syrian army away from their northern border, but withdrew after the UN stationed a buffer force in the parts of Lebanon bordering Israel.

But low-intensity conflict dragged on. Ignoring the UN buffer, Palestinian commandos sometimes raided northern Israel; Israeli troops bombed suspected PLO bases in Lebanese villages and even Beirut neighborhoods. In 1982 Israel invaded southern Lebanon, repulsed the Syrian army and PLO militias, bypassed the UN force, and besieged Beirut. Lebanon's parliament elected a Maronite president aligned with Israel against the Palestinians and their Arab backers. When he was killed in an explosion, Israel's troops invaded Beirut. While they were there, Maronite militias invaded the mainly Palestinian neighborhoods of Sabra and Shatilla, where they killed hundreds of old men, women, and children. Appalled by the massacre, which Israel's army seemed to abet, the Western powers sent a multinational force into Lebanon.

Washington hoped to persuade Syria and Israel to leave Lebanon and the various militias to hand over their arms and their powers to a reconstituted Lebanese government. Instead, the Israelis and the multinational force angered not just the Sunni Muslims and Palestinians but also Lebanon's hith-



In 2002, a significant number of buildings in central Beirut, Lebanon, remained in a state of total disrepair, a visual reminder of the intermittent war that engulfed the country for more than two decades.

erto quiet Shi'i citizens. Soon Lebanese Shi'a, trained by Iranian revolutionaries, were driving trucks loaded with explosives into Western embassies, the barracks of the foreign armies, and Maronite strongholds, killing or injuring hundreds. These suicide squads wrought such havoc among the European, U.S., and Israeli forces that they withdrew, although Israel continued to occupy southern Lebanon for fifteen more years. Their success in ousting at least some foreign troops from Lebanon enhanced the prestige of these Muslim militants.

#### ■ The Iraq-Kuwait Crisis and Israeli-Arab Negotiations

Iraq has long suffered from always being the number two Arab state, whether subordinate to Egypt as the Arabic cultural center or second to Saudi Arabia as the area's largest oil producer. Iraq's own potential has gone unrealized, and its war against Iran in the 1980s left it heavily indebted to Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf states. Iraqis also believe that Kuwait was created by British imperialism, a dynastic enclave that serves the interests of Western oil importers. At times Iraq has tried to annex Kuwait, hoping to enlarge its coastline and become the leading power on the Gulf. In July 1990, Iraq accused Kuwait of "slant-drilling" for oil under Iraqi territory and of demanding repayment of loans it had made to Iraq during the war against Iran. Other

Arab governments tried to mediate the dispute, but Saddam ordered Iraqi troops to occupy Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

Iraq failed to foresee that U.S. president George H. W. Bush would fiercely oppose its annexation of Kuwait. Once Arab pressure had failed to make the Iraqis withdraw, the Bush administration began an intense campaign to liberate Kuwait, initially by diplomacy and later by sending troops and matériel to Saudi Arabia in what came to be called Operation Desert Shield. Economic sanctions backed by increasingly strident UN Security Council resolutions warned Iraq to remove its troops from Kuwait. Kuwaitis who escaped to other Arab lands called for military measures instead of economic sanctions. Saudi Arabia, hitherto opposed to any concentration of foreign troops in its territory, which includes the two holiest Muslim cities, became a base for a U.S.-led coalition of Arab and foreign forces opposed to Iraq's action.

Far from being intimidated, Saddam warned that any attempt to dislodge the Iraqis from their reclaimed province would lead to the torching of Kuwait's oil fields. Nevertheless, the coalition attacked Iraq on January 16, 1991, launching Operation Desert Storm. When six weeks of intense allied bombing did not lead to Iraq's retreat from Kuwait, the coalition forces began a ground war that succeeded, within 100 hours, in expelling Iraq's forces. Bush then stopped the hostilities, even as the allied coalition was entering southern Iraq. Some critics argue that the troops should have occupied Baghdad and deposed Saddam, but the UN resolutions called only for the liberation of Kuwait.

Shi'a in the south and Kurds in the north revolted against Iraq's central government, but the help that they needed from the United States and its allies never came. Both uprisings were suppressed. Any dissident officers in the Iraqi army who sought to topple their leader were killed, jailed, or driven from Iraq. The UN sanctions remained in effect, keeping Iraq from importing consumer goods for its people, but Saddam stymied the UN inspectors who could have certified the destruction of his nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. It was a hollow victory for the allied coalition.

As he had promised (to gain Arab support for the war against Iraq), the Bush administration did convene a conference, initially in Madrid and later in Washington and then Moscow, at which Israeli and Arab delegations met to talk peace. Although Israel refused direct talks with the PLO, representatives from the Occupied Territories were admitted into a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. While public talks dragged on, representatives of Israel and the PLO met secretly in Oslo and hammered out an agreement that surprised everyone when it was first announced in 1993. The public signing of a Declaration of Principles by Israel and the PLO in the presence of President Bill Clinton led to intense negotiations, focused initially on the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and Jericho.

After many delays, Israel reached an agreement in May 1994 with Palestine's "self-governing authority," enabling Arafat to return to Gaza. Israel could

still manipulate the supposedly autonomous Palestinians by retaining troops in Gaza and the West Bank and by barring Palestinian workers from entering Israel during times of crisis. Few jobs were available to them in the autonomous areas. Some frustrated Palestinians forsook the PLO for more radical movements such as Hamas. Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty in October 1994, and several North African and Gulf states entered into diplomatic or commercial relations with the Jewish state. Israel reached a further agreement with the PLO in September 1995, providing for troop withdrawals from major West Bank population centers, but Jerusalem's status was left for future negotiations, and most Palestinian lands remained under Israel's control. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by an Israeli who believed that his government had already given up too much to the Arabs. A new government, headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, was elected in 1996. It stepped up Jewish settlements in the West Bank and repressive policies against Palestinians. Only intense U.S. pressure made Netanyahu give up part of Hebron in 1997 and a few other occupied lands in 1998. His fragile coalition eventually collapsed, forcing him to call for early elections.

In 1999, the Labor Party leader, Ehud Barak, won by a narrow margin. He offered to cede most of the West Bank and Gaza to Yasser Arafat during negotiations at Camp David and Sharm al-Shaikh in 2000, but the Palestinians could not accept a deal that would have obliged them to give up their right of return to other lands now part of Israel. Palestinians and Israelis both stepped up attacks on each other, and a new Palestinian uprising broke out in September 2000. The hawkish general, Ariel Sharon, accused of fomenting the 1982 Palestinian massacre at Sabra and Shatilla, defeated Ehud Barak in a special election in 2001 and spearheaded an Israeli drive to intimidate the Palestinians by reoccupying most of the West Bank and Gaza.

In 2002, the European Union, the United Nations, and the governments of Russia and the United States proposed a "road map to peace." By mid-2003, however, the plan had foundered on the intransigence of the Jewish settlers in the Occupied Territories; Israel's construction of a "security fence" on the West Bank, its "targeted killings" (assassinations) of Palestinians, and its armed incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas; and the inability of the Palestinian Authority to curb ongoing attacks on Israeli civilians by Palestinian "suicide bombers."

### ■ Terrorism in the Middle East (and Elsewhere)

Terrorism became the last resort of increasingly desperate Arabs, who sent suicide bombers into Israel to kill civilians, blew up U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, damaged a U.S. Navy warship in Yemen, and on September 11, 2001, launched a dramatic hijacking of four U.S. civil airliners to attack New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington,

D.C. The group behind these attacks was Al-Qaida (The Base). Its headquarters was in Afghanistan, from which it had expelled the Soviet forces in the late 1980s, but its members were mainly Arab and its leader, Osama bin Laden, came from Saudi Arabia. Indeed, the nineteen hijackers involved in the September 11 attacks were all Arabs, mostly citizens of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. They protested U.S. favoritism toward Israel, U.S. influence over many Arab regimes, and the domination of U.S. culture in many parts of the Muslim world. U.S. president George W. Bush declared a "war against terrorism" and directed U.S. forces to bombard and occupy Afghanistan to capture bin Laden and destroy Al-Qaida.

His administration identified Iraq as a major supporter of terrorism and demanded that it fulfill the UN Security Council's Gulf War resolutions to destroy its weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical, and biological. If the Iraqi government failed to prove that it had done so, and the UN inspectors could not verify their absence, the U.S. armed forces, aided if possible by its allies, would invade Iraq and oust Saddam's government. On March 20, 2003, the United States and Britain attacked Iraq, bombarded and occupied the country, and drove Saddam's regime out of power. Yet in the months following, the United States and Britain found it difficult to restore stability or to ensure supplies of gasoline, food, and medicine to most Iraqis. Creating a new government to represent Iraq's diverse mix of Sunni and Shi'i Muslim Arabs, Kurds, Turcomans, and Christians took longer than expected; meanwhile, dissidents launched assaults on foreign troops and exploded a number of bombs aimed at both local and foreign targets.

### ■ Conclusion

The peoples and the countries of the Middle East are not at peace, either with one another or, indeed, with themselves. Secular nationalism competes with Islam as the leading ideology for many Middle Eastern Arabs, Iranians, and Turks. The breakup of the Soviet Union has drawn some Middle Eastern countries into competition over the new republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Cold War may have ended, but Washington articulates its Middle East policy goals not by diplomacy, but by force. Borders between countries, drawn mostly by Western imperialists for their own interests, rarely reflect natural frontiers and are often violated by the armies of strong states preying upon weaker ones. Many Middle Eastern peoples have moved into burgeoning cities, acquired years of schooling, and been exposed to radio and television propaganda, swelling their ambitions beyond what their societies actually have to offer. Young adults feel especially frustrated, a feeling often enhanced by their migration from countries of high population and little oil (such as Egypt) to others that are poor in labor but rich in oil (such as Saudi

Arabia), separating them from their parents, spouses, children, and friends. Other chapters will show that no other area poses so great a danger to world peace as the volatile Middle East.

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# 4

## Middle Eastern Politics

Deborah J. Gerner

Syria Watches Nervously as Rival Baath Party Next Door in Iraq Is Dissolved . . . Israel Seals Gaza Strip . . . Mass Grave Discovered in Iraq's Holy Shiite City . . . Iran's President Arrives for Talks in Lebanon . . . Algeria Says It Frees 17 Missing European Tourists in Commando Raid . . . Four Explosions Rock Riyadh . . . Deadly Suicide Attacks Stun Morocco . . . Turkey to End Travel Ban on Greek Cypriots . . . Qatar's Emir Gives Bush Arab View on Iraq

—Associated Press, May 2003

Viewed from the perspective of daily headlines, politics in the Middle East appear confused, chaotic, and often violent. When asked why they are interested in taking a course in Middle Eastern politics, students often say they want to be able to understand the news stories they listen to or read but don't know where to begin. This chapter focuses on the current political situation of the Arab world, Iran, Israel, and Turkey. It first describes several general factors that influence the contemporary Middle East, such as its colonial legacy, the evolving international context, and the level of economic development, and then reviews a variety of political institutions and ideologies that function in the region. Particular attention is given to clarifying those characteristics of Middle Eastern domestic politics that are relatively unusual, for example, the prevalence of ruling monarchies, from those attributes that are more common, such as close relations between the state and the military establishment. The critically important issue of gender, which is only touched on here, is treated more comprehensively in Chapters 9, 10, and 11.