

## Chapter 31



**U.S. president Jimmy Carter applauded when Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin signed the Camp David Accords. Why was this important?**

### Chapter Learning Objectives

- Tell why Jews considered Palestine their homeland.
- Tell why Arabs thought that Palestine should be theirs.
- Explain why Palestinians ended up in refugee camps.
- Describe the results of Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977.
- List the conflicts that continue in the Middle East today.

## The Middle East today



### Map Skills

Name the country that borders the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Turkey borders which two seas?

## A Jewish Homeland in Palestine

In ancient days the Jews considered Palestine their homeland. They called it a land promised to them by God. They built a temple in Jerusalem, the holy city.

But almost 2,000 years ago, the Romans drove the Jews out of Jerusalem. Some Jews settled in an area of Palestine called Galilee. But most of the Jews fled from Palestine. They scattered around the world.

Many Jews never gave up their dream of the promised homeland. In the late 1800s, Jews in Eastern Europe were persecuted. Some Jews started a movement called **Zionism**. Their goal was to make Palestine an independent Jewish nation. Jews from Europe began to settle in Palestine, which at that time was ruled by the Ottoman Turks.

This scattering of the Jews is called the *diaspora*.

By 1914 about 85,000 Jews had returned there. After World War I, Britain promised to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Meanwhile, the Arab population of Palestine had been increasing, too. And the Arabs living there did not like the strangers in their land.

After World War II, Zionism became more popular. Jews who had felt Hitler's persecution were ready for a homeland of their own. Many came to Palestine.

## The State of Israel

In 1947 the United Nations voted to end British rule over Palestine. The United Nations knew there was a conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. Arabs said that the land had been theirs for 2,000 years. Jews said that it had been theirs even before the Arabs had settled there. So the United Nations divided Palestine into two parts. One part was for Jews and the other for Arabs. The Jews agreed to the U.N. plan. But the Arabs were angry. They wanted all of Palestine to be an Arab state.

On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion, the Zionist leader in Palestine, read a declaration of independence. He declared that the Jewish part of Palestine was the new state of Israel.

Israel was recognized immediately by the United States and then by the Soviet Union. The Arabs, however, declared war on Israel. On May 15, 1948, Israel was invaded by armies from the Arab nations of Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan.

## Refugees of War

The Israelis were greatly outnumbered. And they had a shortage of weapons. But Israel won the war by the end of 1948. The state of Israel was firmly established. The lands left to the Arabs became part of Jordan.

Do you think the U.N. was wise to divide Palestine into two parts?

About 700,000 Arabs fled Israel, becoming refugees. The homeless Palestinian Arabs lived in crowded refugee camps outside of Israel. Many live there still. These Palestinian refugees believed that their homes were stolen. Some of them formed a group of fighters called the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Their goal is to win back their land.

After the war in 1948, about 700,000 Jews living in Arab nations were forced to leave. Jews left Iraq, Libya, and other countries. Most went to live in Israel.

Israel had won the 1948 war. But the problems of the Middle East were far from settled.

### Middle East Tensions

Soon the superpowers became involved in the Israeli-Arab conflict. In 1955 the Soviets offered to sell arms to Egypt. This was followed by a conflict over the Suez Canal.

In 1956 Egypt took over the canal from Britain and France. Britain, France, and Israel then attacked Egypt. The United Nations arranged a cease-fire. The Suez Canal was held by Egypt. But the Arabs became even more **hostile** toward Israel.

In June of 1967, another war began. Israel fought the Arab nations of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. In the first few minutes of the war, Israeli planes attacked the Arab airfields. Almost all of the Arab airplanes were destroyed on the ground. Then the Israeli army pushed through the Sinai Peninsula all the way to the Suez Canal. The war was over in six days! Israel occupied all of the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. The West Bank was the section of Palestine that had become part of Jordan. And Israel also took control of East Jerusalem.

Arab nations grew angrier. [In 1973 Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq launched a surprise attack on Israel. It was called the *Yom Kippur War*.] This was because the Arabs attacked on the Jewish holy day called *Yom Kippur*. This time, the Arabs almost won. Israel managed to defend itself. But it paid a high price in the number of lives lost.

What do you think  
could have happened  
if Israel had lost  
the war?



Israeli soldiers searching a Palestinian youth in the Gaza Strip

### History Practice

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Write answers to the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why did the Jews consider Palestine their homeland?
  2. Why did the Arabs think Palestine belonged to them?
  3. Why was the war in 1973 called the Yom Kippur War?
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## GREAT NAMES IN HISTORY: Anwar Sadat

Israel had completely withdrawn from the Sinai Peninsula by 1982.

In 1977 Egypt's president Anwar el-Sadat visited Israel. His visit surprised the world. It was the first move toward peace with Israel that any Arab leader had ever made. Then U.S. president Jimmy Carter invited Sadat and Israel's prime minister Menachem Begin to the United States. There the three leaders held discussions on how to end the Israeli-Arab conflict. These meetings led to the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1979. Israel promised to return all of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in exchange for peace. Israel also promised to allow the Palestinians in Gaza and on the West Bank to govern themselves. This part of the treaty has yet to be put into practice.

Much of the world praised Sadat. In 1978 Sadat and Begin shared the Nobel Peace Prize. But many Arab nationalists were angry. They said that Sadat was a **traitor** to the Arab cause. In 1981 Sadat was assassinated by Moslem fanatics.

## Middle East Conflicts Today

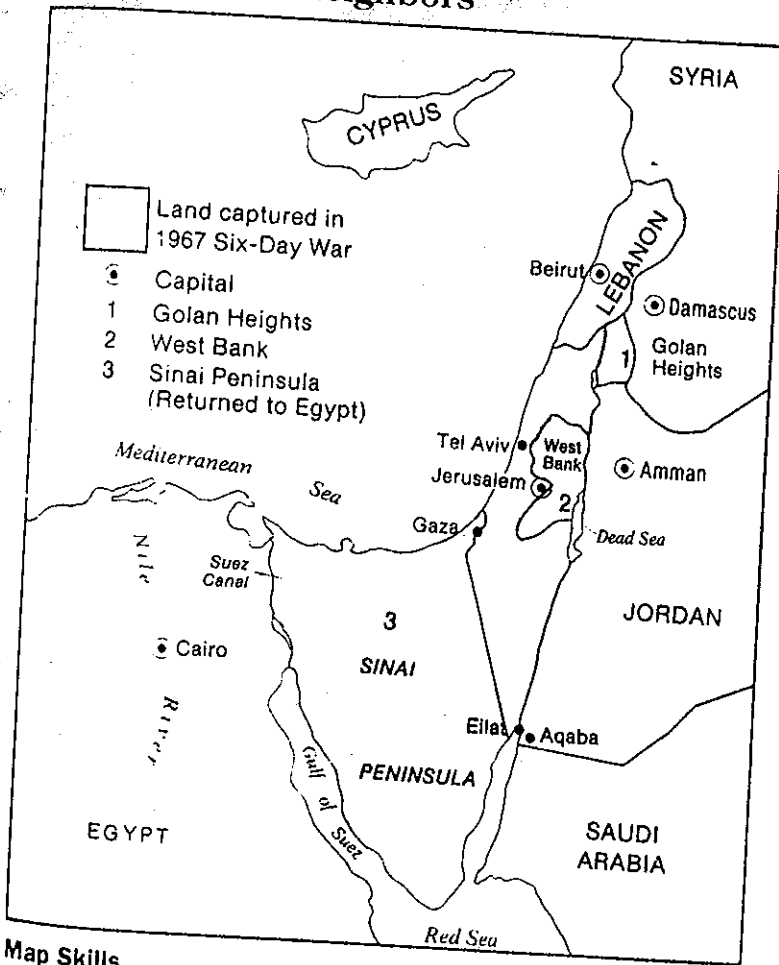
The fighting in the Middle East is not over. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) still seeks a home for Palestinians. In 1970 the PLO was forced out of Jordan. In 1975 it became involved in a civil war in Lebanon.

Do you think that anyone ever has the right to carry out terrorist actions?

From bases in Lebanon, the PLO carried out **terrorist attacks** into Israel. Palestinian terrorists over the years have also been active in other parts of the world.

In 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon in order to destroy PLO bases. The PLO was forced to leave Lebanon. But once the Israeli army withdrew from Lebanon, the PLO came back.

### Israel and its neighbors



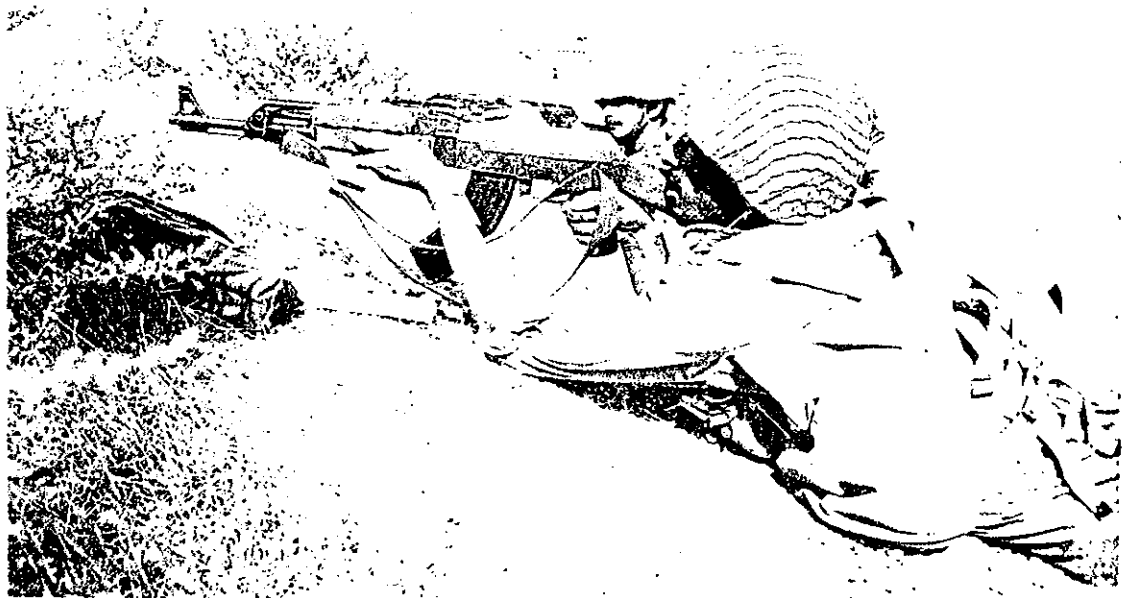
#### Map Skills

Name the lands captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War.  
Which land did Israel return to Egypt?

In December 1987 violent protests by Palestinians broke out in the West Bank and Gaza. The uprising, known as the *intifada*, has continued. The Palestinians want an independent state. They are especially angry that Israel has allowed Jewish settlers to take away some of their land. Most Palestinians regard Yasser Arafat, the head of the PLO, as their leader.

Arafat has agreed to stop acts of terrorism, and he seeks to negotiate with Israel. [Israelis have a difficult choice to make. They can give up the occupied lands, and hope that this will bring about a lasting peace. Or they can continue to try to put down the Palestinian uprising by force.]

Lebanon's civil war is still going on. It is partly based on religion. Moslems battle Christians for power. And different Moslem groups battle each other. In 1983 the United States became involved in the war. U.S. troops entered Lebanon as peace-



Iraqi soldiers in Iranian territory



keepers. The troops were taken out of Lebanon only after many U.S. marines were killed by Moslem terrorists. Syria also sent troops into Lebanon, and they have become involved in the fighting.

The civil war has all but destroyed Lebanon, leaving its cities in shambles. Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, had been known as the "Paris" of the Middle East. Now much of it lies in ruins.

The country of Iran has seen conflict, too. Iranians were unhappy with their leader, the Shah. The Shah had a vicious secret police who made sure that he kept power.

In 1979, a 76-year-old Moslem leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini, returned to Iran from exile in France. Khomeini led a successful revolution against the Shah. He then set up a Moslem republic following strict Islamic rules. Khomeini's followers wanted the Shah to stand trial for crimes they said he had committed. But the Shah had fled the country. Then in November 1979, Iranians captured the American embassy in Teheran, Iran's capital. They took American hostages, and they demanded the Shah's return.

Much of the world was angered by the Iranian action. But Iran would not give up the hostages. The Shah died in Egypt in July 1980. And in January 1981 the American hostages were finally freed.

Meanwhile, in 1980, Iran was attacked by its neighbor, Iraq. There had been bitter disputes over territory. Iraq hoped to win a quick victory over Iran. Saddam Hussein, leader of Iraq, thought that Iran had been weakened by the Islamic revolution. But neither Moslem nation could beat the other. The war dragged on for many years.

There were huge land battles. Then both sides began firing missiles at each other's cities. And each country began to attack oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. In 1987 the U.S. sent its navy to the Gulf to protect the flow of oil.

Finally, in 1988, the United Nations was able to arrange a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq. Both countries had suffered such huge losses that they were willing to begin talking about ending the war.

### The Persian Gulf War

In August 1990, Iraq invaded the small neighboring nation of Kuwait. Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein wanted to make Kuwait and its rich oil fields a part of his country. Kuwait fell only hours after the Iraqi attack.

The United Nations protested Iraq's capture of Kuwait. When Iraq threatened the border of Saudi Arabia, the United States and other nations sent their own military forces to the Persian Gulf. They were ready to defend Saudi Arabia against a possible Iraqi invasion and to liberate Kuwait.

The take-over of Kuwait gave Saddam Hussein control of 25% of the world's oil resources. Why would that make Hussein a powerful force in the world?



Saddam Hussein

On November 29, 1990, the United Nations sent Hussein a warning. They would use "all necessary means" if Iraq did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. Hussein did not respond to the warning, and, by the evening of January 16, bombs and missiles rained down on Iraq. A ground war began on February 23. By February 28, Kuwait was free and a cease-fire had begun.

The Gulf War ended when Kuwait was freed. The war did not, however, destroy Saddam Hussein's control over Iraq nor his threats of aggression. It did not end tensions in the Middle East.

### **Peace Talks Bring Little Progress**

In 1991 and 1992, the United States and Russia sponsored peace conferences between Israel and the Arab nations of the Middle East. Israeli, Palestinian, and Arab leaders agreed to meet to try to cool heated conflicts and make the Middle East more stable. There have been several meetings, but agreements have been few and progress slow. Representatives of each nation have made demands that their neighbors do not want to meet.

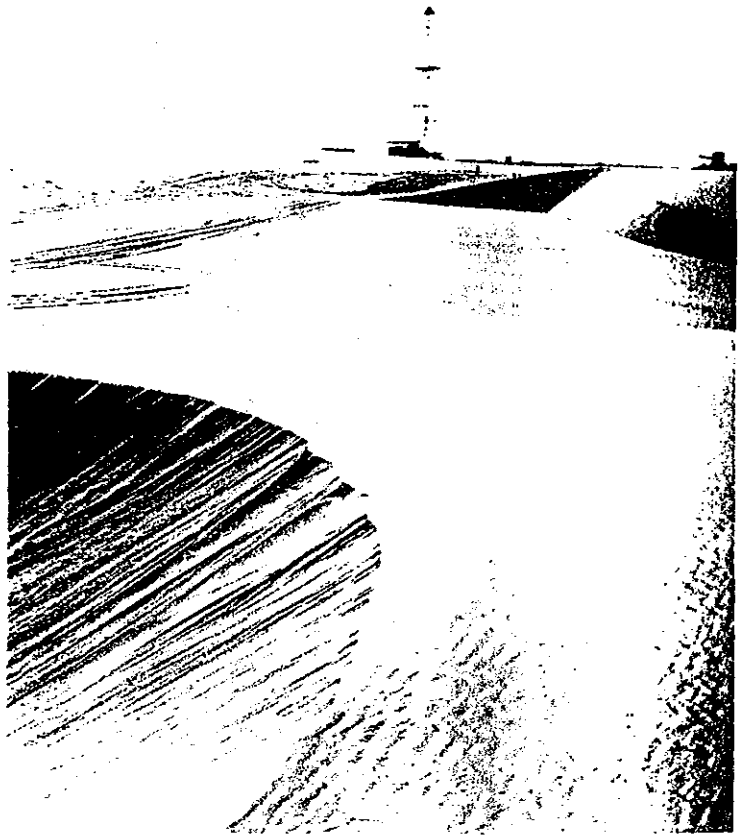
### **Oil Power**

Much of the Middle East has oil. All nations need oil, and world supplies are limited. Their oil fields give the Arab countries power.

An organization called OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) manages that power. OPEC members include the oil-producing nations of the Middle East and the South American country of Venezuela.

OPEC sets the price of oil. OPEC can force up oil prices or withhold oil from certain countries. This gives OPEC tremendous power. During the Israeli-

Do you think it is good for the United States to be so dependent on Middle East oil?



**The world's richest oil fields lie beneath the sands of the Middle East.**

Arab wars of 1967 and 1973, the Arabs used their oil as a weapon. They cut off the flow of oil to the West. In 1973, this resulted in a severe oil shortage in the United States. Drivers were forced to wait in long lines at the gas pumps. And they had to pay a much higher price for each gallon they bought.

Some people in the Middle East are very, very wealthy because of oil. But the oil wealth remains in the hands of a few. Much of the profits from oil sales goes toward building a strong Arab military.

Most Middle East oil comes from Saudi Arabia. Another important oil producer is Libya. In 1969, Muammar al-Qaddafi came to power after he and his followers overthrew the king of Libya. Qaddafi has shown great interest in expanding his country's borders. He tried to seize territory from Chad, the country that borders Libya on the south.

Qaddafi has spent much of Libya's oil profits on new weapons and a stronger army. He has also supported terrorist actions against Americans and Israelis.

In April of 1986, a disco in West Berlin that was popular with American servicemen was bombed. Two people were killed and 200 were injured. The United States learned that Libya was responsible for this act. In retaliation, U.S. warplanes struck targets in Tripoli and Benghazi, Libya.

### **Life in the Middle East**

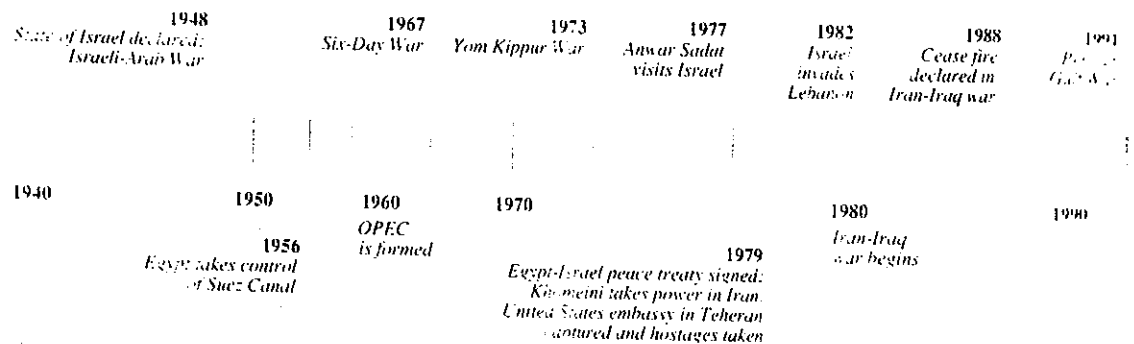
The Middle East is, without a doubt, a land of war and conflict. It faces serious problems that will have to be dealt with. Still, the Middle East has fine, modern cities, well-educated people, fertile farmlands, and productive industries.

One of the most industrialized and advanced nations of the Middle East is Israel. About 85 percent of Israel's people live and work in modern cities. Israel's farms are a source of pride. Most of Israel's land is poor. Some of the land is too rocky or steep for farming. Other areas get little rainfall. Only through hard work and agricultural know-how could those lands be productive. Still, Israel produces most of its own food.

Huge irrigation systems pump in water through underground pipelines. Scientists experiment with turning salt water from the Mediterranean and Red Seas into fresh water to soak their fields.

The Israelis have not won the perfect land. But they have worked hard to build their nation.

Long before the birth of Christ, the first civilizations were forming along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and along the Nile River. Those early people concerned themselves with producing food and irrigating dry land. They battled invaders who would take their lands. They argued over how they would worship their gods. In some ways, those people had much in common with today's Middle Eastern people.



## WHICH CAME FIRST?

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Use the timeline to choose the event or year that came first. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Six-Day War *or* OPEC is formed?
  2. Khomeini takes power in Iran *or* Iran-Iraq war begins?
  3. 1977 *or* 1967?
  4. Yom Kippur War *or* Israel invades Lebanon?
  5. Egypt takes control of Suez Canal *or* Egypt-Israel peace treaty signed?
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