

Where in the world is?

The Middle East



The Middle East

- Common term for the arid region consisting of **Southwest Asia** and parts of **North Africa/ Southeast Europe**.



Middle of What?

Strategically located at the crossroads of 3 continents

East of What?

Eurocentric by nature- The term was created in 1902 by the British to describe the area between the **Near East** (Balkans and Ottoman Empire) and the **Far East** (India and China)

Commonly used description today, even used within the region itself

What countries are included?

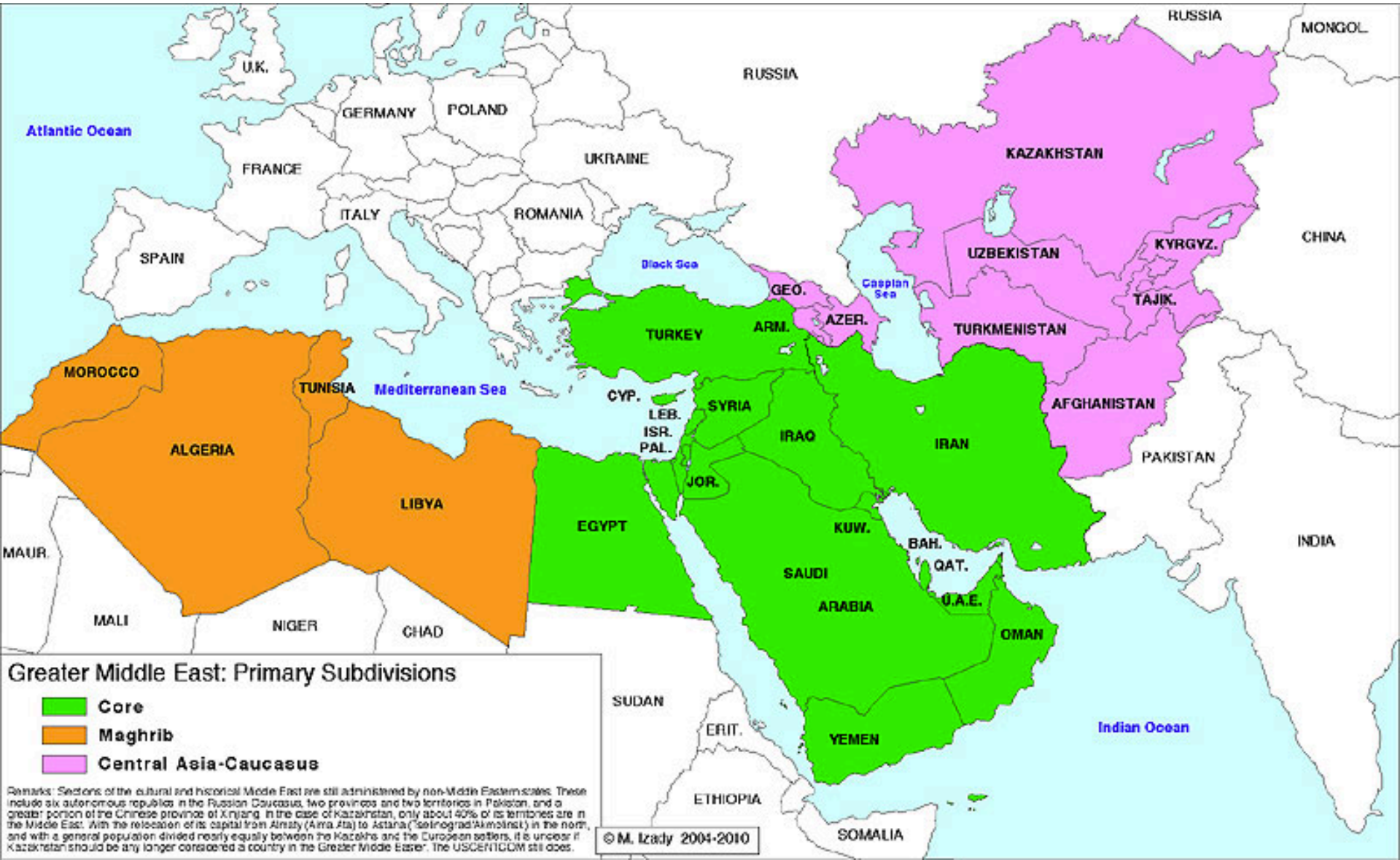
Definitely Included

- Bahrain
- Egypt
- Iran
- Iraq
- Israel
- Jordan
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Syria
- United Arab Emirates
- Yemen

Possibly included

- Turkey
- Morocco
- Algeria
- Libya
- Tunisia
- Cyprus
- Afghanistan
- Pakistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan
- Tajikistan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Kazakhstan




Why the debate?



Determining Regions

- How do we determine what a region is?
 - Location
 - Near enough to be considered connected
 - Physical Characteristics
 - Contains similar naturally occurring features
 - Climate
 - Vegetation/Wildlife
 - Continuous physical features like deserts, lakes or mountain ranges
 - Human Characteristics
 - Similar cultural traits common throughout the area
 - Political control
 - Shared History
 - Language
 - Religious beliefs
 - Race/ethnicity

Shared History

- Birth place of three of the worlds largest and most influential religions
 - Judaism 
 - Christianity 
 - Islam 
- The continued conflict over which of these groups is right and which group should control what land has led to numerous bloody conflicts even until today
 - IE: The Crusades, Arab-Israeli War, etc...

Shared Language

- Almost all of the countries of the core Middle East have Arabic speaking majorities
- The exceptions being
 - **Israel (Hebrew as the official language)**
 - **Iran (Farsi; the modern form of Persian spoken)**
- Further from the core region, more diverse languages tend to be common

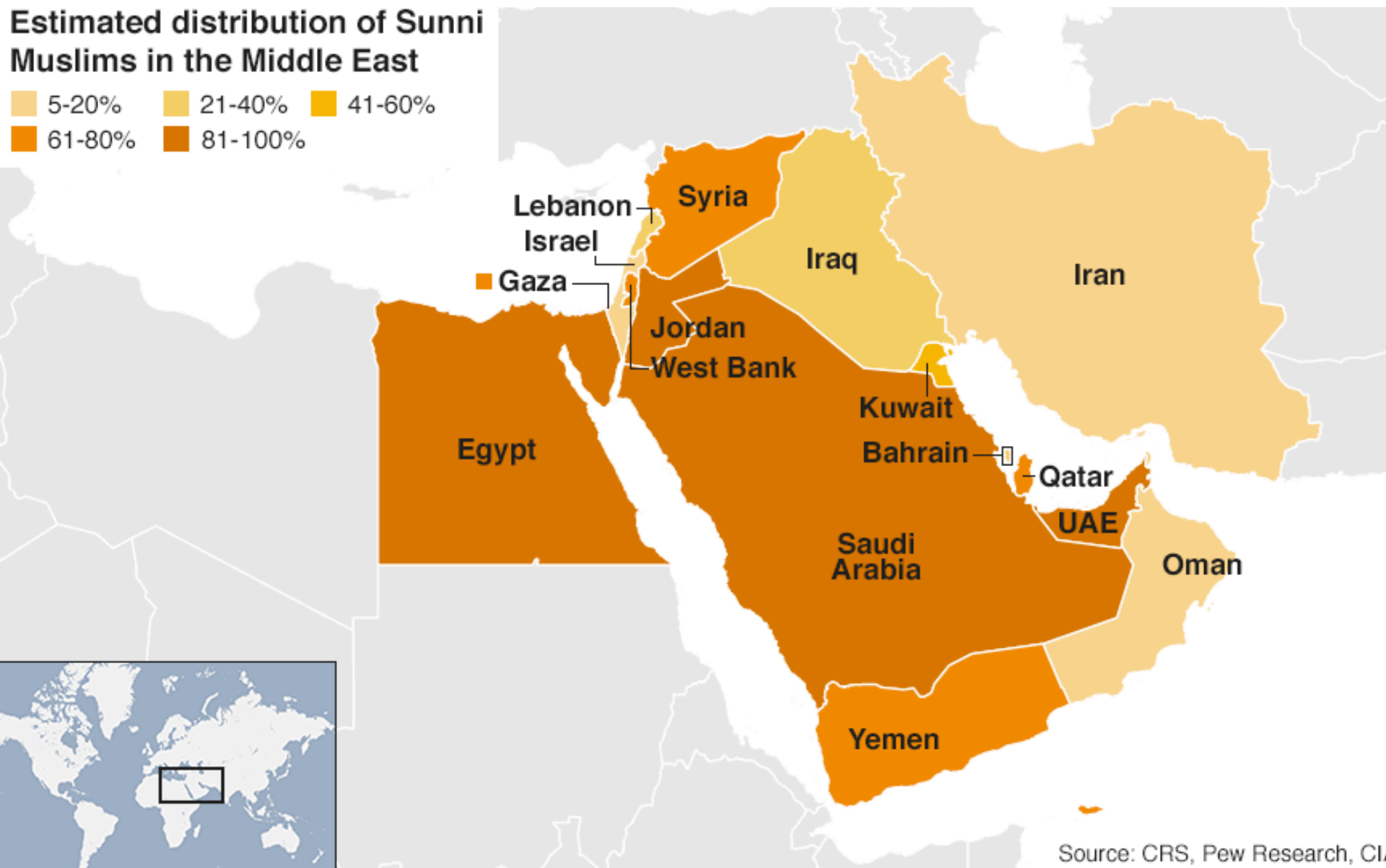
Shared Religion

- The majority of people in the Middle East are **Muslims** (followers of Islam)
 - The populations of the core nations are between 70-100% Muslim (with the exceptions of Israel 17%)
- However, all of the countries in the region allow some diversity of religion with the exception of Saudi Arabia
 - **Saudi Arabia** is an **Islamic Theocracy** where practicing other religions is against the law

Shared Religion

- **Islam**- The belief that **Allah** (God) revealed the true religion through his prophet Muhammad
- Followers of Islam are referred to as **Muslims**
- There are two main Muslim groups
 - **Sunni**: Make up about 85% of the Muslims in the world
 - **Shia**: Make up about 13% of Muslims in the World

Estimated distribution of Sunni Muslims in the Middle East



Boundaries

- Regions are often decided based on boundaries
 - **Physical Boundaries**
 - Naturally occurring barriers which are physically apparent
 - Oceans, Rivers, Lakes, Mountain Ranges, Deserts
 - **Political Boundaries**
 - Dividing lines established by people/governments and are typically unseen
 - Countries, States, Cities,
- Sometimes Physical boundaries are used as political boundaries

Think-Pair-Share

List as many examples of physical boundaries that are also political boundaries as you can.

- Much of the southern border of the USA follows the Rio Grande River
- The Mediterranean Sea for all of the Countries bordered by it
- The Pyrenees Mountains that separate France and Spain
- The Andes Mountains separate Chile and Argentina
- Africa is often divided into two halves, Saharan and Sub-Saharan

Conflict over Boundaries

- In officially determining regions by establishing political boundaries, conflicts often arise.
 - Iran-Iraq War (1980-88)
 - Arab-Israeli Conflict (1948-Present)
 - Iraqi-Kurdish Conflict (1919-2003)
 - Kurdish-Turkish Conflict (1978-Present)
 - The Gulf War (1990-91)
 - Iraqi Civil War (2014-2017)

FREE
PALESTINE



The Kurds

A stateless nation

- **The Kurds**- an ethnic minority who live in a region that is part of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Armenia, and Turkey
- While culturally different from many in the region and occupying a land commonly referred to as “**Kurdistan**”, they remain largely under the control of other nations.



The Kurds

A stateless nation

- On area of Northern Iraq has gained **autonomy** (self government) called the Kurdish Regional Government or **KRG**.
- The KRG control the **Peshmerga**, a Kurdish military organization that has actively aided the United Nations in their efforts against the Saddam Hussein Regime and ISIS in Iraq



Palestine

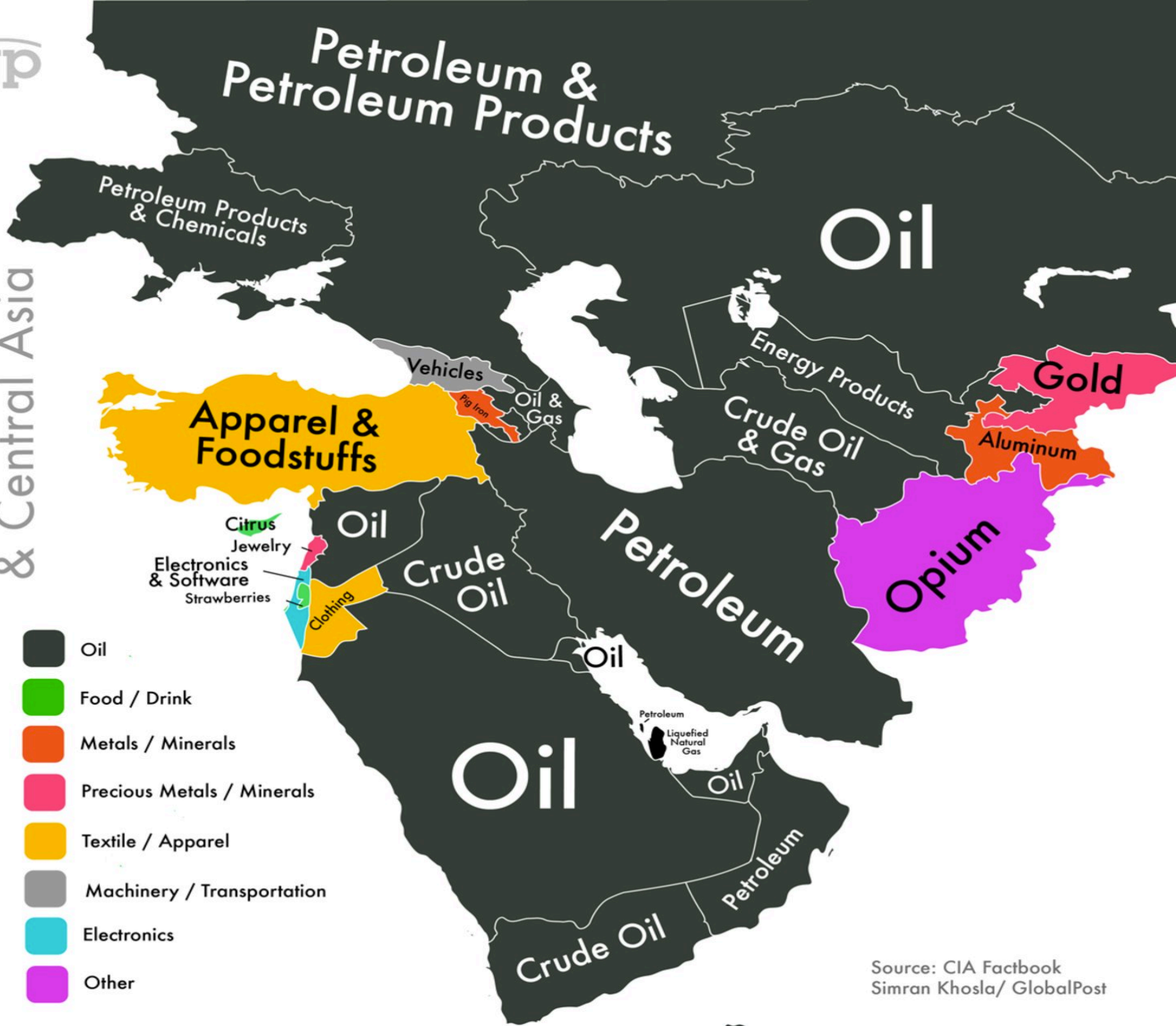
- An area on the eastern Mediterranean coast, often referred to as **Israel, The Holy Land**, or **Canaan**
- Historic home of the **Hebrew people** (Jews)
- Under Muslim control since the 7th century C.E.
- Much of the territory was given back to the Jews after WWII and the Holocaust



DISAPPEARING PALESTINE



Middle East & Central Asia



Source: CIA Factbook
Simran Khosla/ GlobalPost

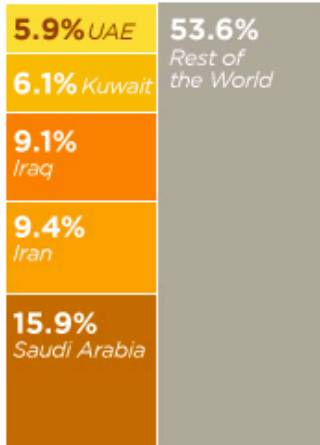
Natural Resources

- The Middle East is an area of the world rich in some of the world's most valuable assets.
- Most middle eastern economies rely heavily on the **export** (sale of goods to other countries) of these goods.
 - Oil
 - Natural Gas
 - Industrial Metals
 - Phosphates
 - Gems
 - Food Products
 - Textiles/Clothing

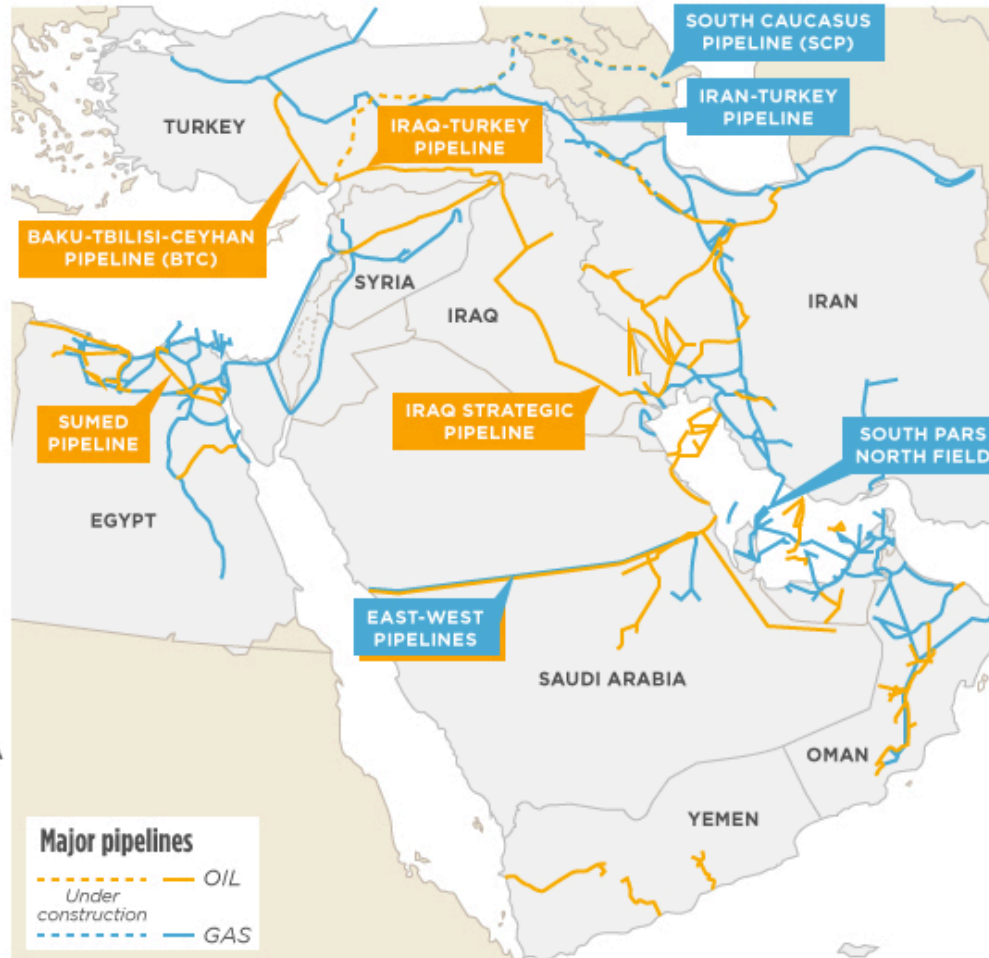
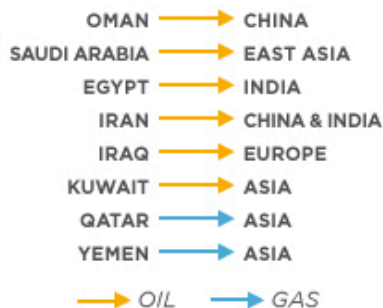
OIL AND GAS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East has almost half the world's known oil reserves. Take a look at which country in the region has what in terms of natural resources and where most of it goes.

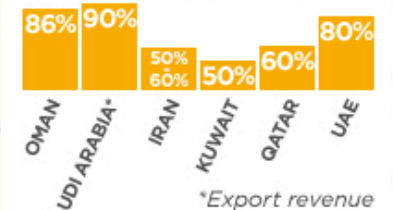
Share of world oil reserves



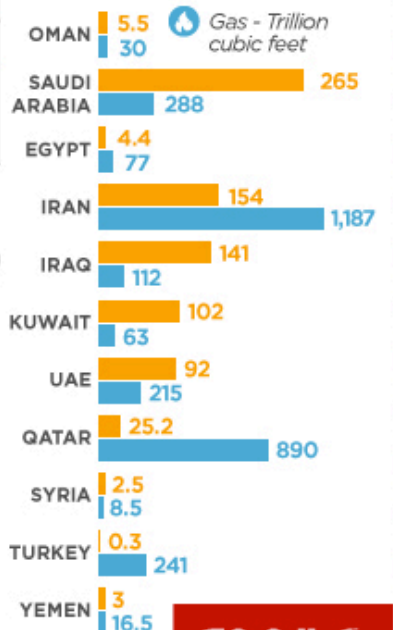
Oil: Main export destinations



Percentage of government revenues from hydrocarbon sector



Reserves



SOURCE: U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), OPEC, BP Statistical Review 2013
Designed by Inez Torre, Editorial by Dean Irvine/CNN

