Regions
Egypt and the Lower Nile Basin: 
Gift of the Nile

- **Irrigated farming**
  - *Basin irrigation* used since ancient times:
    - Crop fields were surrounded by earthen ridges to trap the Nile’s annual floodwaters.
  - *Perennial irrigation* used today:
    - Permanent dams along the Nile help control the annual flood and expand cultivatable area.
Figure 7B-2
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Egypt and the Lower Nile Basin: Gift of the Nile

Valley and Delta

- The Nile Delta
  - Area of extensive farmlands
  - Environmentally troubled:
    - Upstream water use and silt build up are depriving the delta of replenishment
    - Low-lying delta at risk of subsidence and sea-level rise leading to salt-water
  - The *fellaheen*, or subsistence farmers, rely on the land for their survival:
    - Still use ancient farming methods and reside in rudimentary dwellings

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Among the Realm’s Great Cities: Cairo

- Egypt’s primate city:
  - Among the world’s 20 largest
  - Focus of government and religion
  - Port, industrial, and commercial center
  - Problems and social contrasts:
    - Overcrowding, crumbling infrastructure, substandard housing and lacking services
    - Waterfront skyscrapers and cemetery squatters
- Cultural capital of the Arab world:
  - Education, museum, theater and music
  - Mosques and Islamic learning centers
Egypt and the Lower Nile Basin: Economic and Political Discontent

- Economic growth and development:
  - Exporter and tourist destination
  - Literacy and local consumption have increased

- Economic inequality remains:
  - Main beneficiaries of growth are wealthy and upper-middle class
  - More than half of population are under 25 and lack economic opportunity

- Inequality and autocratic repression have long sowed discontent
Followed Tunisia into the “Arab Spring”
- President Mubarak resigned after about a month of protests and violence.

Post-Mubarak Egypt: a future in the making:
- Military leaders took control.
- Constitutional amendments were voted on and parliamentary elections scheduled.
- Considering the *Turkish Model* as a multiparty democracy including, but not dominated by, Islamic parties.
Egypt and the Lower Nile Basin: North Sudan

- South of Egypt: twice its area, but smaller population
- Confluence of White and Blue Nile: Khartoum
  - Surrounded by sizable agricultural area where cotton has remained significant since colonial times
- Most is desert, with irrigated agriculture along the banks of the White and Blue Nile
- Was typical of an energy-poor country of the realm:
  - Exchanged sheep, cotton and sugar for oil
- Drained by a civil war after colonial independence
Egypt and the Lower Nile Basin: North Sudan

Oil in the Transition Zone

- Discovery of significant oil reserves and overnight transformation from importer to exporter:
  - Foreign investors overlooked human rights violations by the regime based in Khartoum.
  - Oil wealth brought forced relocations, wealth to a few.
  - Oil fueled an independence movement and eventual split.

- Political Split: North and South:
  - North has a larger territory and is Islamic.
  - Followed six decades of conflict.
  - Most oil fields are in South; export pipelines in the North.
Darfur is a western province split between Arabized pastoralists in its north and settled farmers in its south.

Khartoum regime suspected the locals of sympathizing with anti-Islamic rebels in Southern Sudan.

Encouraged pastoralist militias to attack those locals:

- Tensions between pastoralists and farmers were worsened by the stressed environment they shared.
- Livelihoods were destroyed, millions displaced, and hundreds of thousands more lives were lost.
The Maghreb and Its Neighbors

- **Maghreb** is the collective name for the countries of Northwestern Africa.
- Full Arabic name, “Jezira-al-Maghreb,” or “Isle of the West” refers the Atlas Mountains.

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Facilitate settlement in the Maghreb:
- Orographic rainfall helps sustain life in the valleys.
- Good soils support productive farming.

Southwest–northeast alignment of Atlas ranges
- In between are foothills and intermontane basins.

Rain shadow effect of drier downwind areas:
- Intermontane valleys
- Steppe-like vegetation and pastoralism
The Maghreb and Its Neighbors: Colonial Impact

- European settlement, commercial and urban life:
  - Dominated trade, commerce and integrated North Africa with Europe

- European agriculture:
  - Established prosperous farms in favored lands of the *tell*
    - Lower Atlas slopes and narrow coastal plain
  - Mediterranean-style farming:
    - Vineyards and wine
    - Citrus groves
    - Olives and olive oil
The Maghreb and Its Neighbors:

The Maghreb Countries

Morocco

- Conservative and economically weak kingdom:
  - Core area is in the north around four major cities.
  - Aims to absorb its southern neighbor, Western Sahara.
  - Many migrated to nearby Spanish exclaves or Canary Islands.

Algeria

- Former French colony:
  - Agriculture drew many European settlers.
  - Millions have migrated to France.
  - Today, economy is based primarily on oil and gas reserves.
  - Occasional skirmishes occur between Islamists and secularists.
Tunisia

- Outranks surrounding Maghreb countries:
  - Higher urbanization, higher social indicators, and lower population growth rate.
  - Productive capacity lies in the hinterland of the historic capital, Tunis.

- Launched the Arab Spring:
  - Revolt against repressive and corrupt government finally ousted the dictator of the totalitarian police state.
  - Must deal with the power vacuum and dysfunctional government system.
Libya’s economy:
- Limited agriculture
- Oil as main economic driver

Fight for the Arab Spring:
- Gadhafi’s iron-fist response to protests
- Underlying tribal divisions
- Some tribes in support of and others repressed by Gadhafi

Led to civil war
- Rebel forces fought to take cities
- Help of NATO forces
- Gadhafi killed
The Maghreb and Its Neighbors: Adjoining Saharan Africa

Mauritania
- Miniscule population overwhelmingly Muslim
  - Half concentrated around fishing fleet coastal capital
- Infamous as modern day toleration of slavery
  - Banned in 1981, still continues despite crackdowns

Mali
- Multicultural state of many types of Muslims and some Christians
- Relies on Niger river for irrigation
- Population clustered in the African Transition Zone
The Maghreb and Its Neighbors: Adjoining Saharan Africa

Niger
- Niger River lifeline for irrigating this mineral-exporting country
- Former French dependency

Burkina Faso
- No river, no coastline, and few prospects
- Destructive floods and severe drought

Chad
- Split by the African Transition Zone
  - In turmoil, between religious divisions, attempts to overthrow the government and spillover from Darfur
The Middle East: Crucible of Conflict

- Middle East
  - Originated when Europe was the world’s dominant realm
    - Naming was from the European perspective: near, middle, and far from Europe
  - Meaning today:
    - Very commonly used
    - Middle of the vast Islamic realm
  - An important region for world affairs
The Middle East: Crucible of Conflict

Iraq’s Enduring Importance

- Pivotal site and situation
- Territory, Arab population, energy, and agricultural resources
- Geopolitical bonds with six neighbors and the world
- 2003 U.S. military invasion
  - Portion of the Kurdish stateless nation
- Nearly landlocked, but for a small Gulf outlet:
  - 1990, tried to annex Kuwait

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Discordant Cultural and Political Geographies

- Politically divided into three cultural domains:
  - Shi’ite, Sunni, and Kurdish
  - Domain borders are transition zones with varying size overlaps
  - Also, smaller culture groups throughout
IRAQ

POPULATION
- Under 50,000
- 50,000–250,000
- 250,000–1,000,000
- 1,000,000–5,000,000
- Over 5,000,000

Limit of strong Kurdish regional influence

National capitals are underlined

Domains depict prevailing majorities; minorities (Turkmen, Assyrians) not shown. Borderlands between domains have mixed populations.

Figure 7B-5
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The Middle East: Crucible of Conflict
Iraq’s Enduring Importance

- Discordant Cultural and Political Geographies (cont.)
- 2003 invasion aftermath:
  - Destabilization led to sectarian violence
  - al-Qaeda terrorist activity
  - Free elections
  - More open economy
- In 2010, U.S. mbcoat role ended
The Middle East: Crucible of Conflict Syria

- Ancient lands
  - Long history of agriculture in its two river valleys
  - Long-inhabited cities
- Minority rule: Alawites
  - Family of a Shi’ite sect rule over Sunni majority
- “Arab Spring” protests faced brutal crackdown:
  - Similar reasons as others: government failures, oppression

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The Middle East: Crucible of Conflict Jordan

- Vagaries of relative location:
  - Territorial losses to Israel and Palestine
  - Outnumbered by Palestinian refugees
  - Oil-poor; survival by aid
- A mild “Arab Spring”
  - Relative support for the monarchy and its programs
  - Some protest, but quelled by placation
The Middle East: Crucible of Conflict Lebanon

- “Garden without a fence”
- Lengthy oil-rich coastline and fertile hinterlands
- Turmoil out of changing cultural demographies:
  - Growing Muslim sector
  - Palestinian refugees
- At the mercy of realm’s geopolitics:
  - Syrian occupation
  - Hizbollah terrorism
  - Israel and Palestine

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Lands identified by the UN as Arab territories were also Arab territories.

Decades of conflict for the realm:
- Complicated history of territorial swapping and peace treaties
- Provoked an outflow of Arab refugees constituting a stateless nation of discontinuous territories

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The Middle East: Crucible of Conflict

Israel and the Palestinian Territories

- Jewish state of Israel at center of Arab World:
  - Surrounded by "enemies"
  - Powerful military and democracy with strong Western ties
  - Allied with United States through aid and policy
The Middle East: Crucible of Conflict
Israel and the Palestinian Territories

Geographic Obstacles:

1. The West Bank: Jewish immigration and settlement made any possibility of a future Palestinian state problematic.

2. The Golan Heights: strategic territory claimed by Syria, but occupied by Israel. Area includes Israel’s main water reservoir and Jewish settlements.
Geographic Obstacles

3. Jerusalem: a formerly UN “international city” due to its complex, culturally rich mosaic of sacred sites:

- Israel claimed the west part as its capital, making it a forward capital located squarely in contested territory.

- To reinforce its claim, Jewish settlements have been constructed in East Jerusalem.
The Middle East: Crucible of Conflict
Israel and the Palestinian Territories

Geographic Obstacles

4. The Security Fence: massive wall around the West Bank built as a response to terrorism. It annexed additional lands and interrupts Palestinian livelihoods.

Remaining problematic issues:
- Water rights
- Compensation for lands expropriated by Israel
- Arab “right of return” to pre-refugee homes
- Form of a future Palestinian state
- Iran’s express threats to destruction of Israel
- Discovery of natural gas fields adjacent to disputed areas and aggressive neighbors
The Arabian Peninsula: Saudi Arabia

- Saudi Arabia occupies most of the oil-rich peninsula:
  - Dominated by desert
  - Might have one-fifth of world’s liquid oil deposits
  - Economic activities concentrated in the “waist” of the peninsula
- In remote areas, Bedouin nomad caravans
**Disparities and Uncertainties**

- Uneven economic and infrastructural development:
  - Expensive efforts to reduce disparities
  - Improvements being made
- Uncertain geopolitical future:
  - Western relations and social contrasts amid the realm’s uprisings
The Arabian Peninsula: On the Peninsular Periphery

Kuwait

- Ministate with some of world’s largest oil reserves:
  - Efforts to diversify its economy into oil refining
  - Large foreign workforce laboring under poor conditions
  - Some social breakthroughs for women
Bahrain

- Island-state with dwindling oil reserves:
  - Diversified into an important banking center
  - Large foreign workforce
  - 2011 demonstrations met with suppression, which complicates its relationship with the United States
The Arabian Peninsula: On the Peninsular Periphery

Qatar

- Gulf peninsula wealthy with oil and natural gas reserves
- Focused on economic, social, and political reforms
- Global center for financial deliberation
**The Arabian Peninsula: On the Peninsular Periphery**

**United Arab Emirates (UAE)**
- Political federation of seven emirates
- Uneven distribution of oil: Abu Dhabi and Dubai
- Transformation of Dubai:
  - Cutting-edge architecture and engineering
  - Tourism, international transit, banking and trade
The Arabian Peninsula: On the Peninsular Periphery

Oman
- Fragmented Sultanate
- Part forms the Hormuz Strait **choke point**

Yemen
- Relatively new state and borders
  - Early political stability succumbs to centrifugal forces/terrorism
- Overlooks Bab el Mandeb **choke point**
- “Arab Spring” continuing clashes
The Empire States: Turkey

- Environmental and economic diversity

**Capitals New and Old**
- Ankara and Constantinople/Istanbul:
  - Strategic threshold location

- Modernization of Turkey:
  - Secularization
  - Some westernization

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Among The Realm’s Great Cities: Istanbul

- Formerly Constantinople
- Center of Byzantine and Ottoman Empires
- Incomparable site and situation:
  - Europe meets Asia
  - Black Sea and Mediterranean
- Cultural and commercial headquarters of Turkey
- Urban problems
The Empire States: *Turkey*

**Turkey and Its Neighbors**
- History of intolerance to minorities
  - Armenian population
  - Modern harsh treatment of Kurds
    - Suppression in Turkey and across the border in Iraq
    - Awarded rights and freedoms to noninsurgent Kurds

**Turkey and the EU**
- Potential eligibility for EU membership
  - Obstacles: Cyprus, Kurds, and Turkey’s human rights record
  - Progress: secular democracy and improving minority relations
The Empire States: Iran

A Crucial Location and Dangerous Terrain

- Controls the corridor between the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf
- Mountainous, geologically active, and arid heart

City and Countryside

- Ancient cities dependent on *qanats*, underground tunnels carrying water from the mountains
- Tehran: internal contradictions
  - Modernization in the cities
  - Surrounded by an unchanged countryside
The Empire States: *Iran*

**The Ethnic-Cultural Map**

- Persian unified center
- Three corners of non-Iranians:
  - Kurds and Azeris in the northwest
  - Arabs in the southwest and south
  - Baluchis from Pakistan in the southeast

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The Empire States: Iran

Energy and Conflict

- World’s 2nd largest reserves
  - Not enough wealth to transform the large and populous country
- Conflict added to failures:
  - War with Iraq left Iran weaker, poor and aimless
  - Conservative political authority
  - Pursuing nuclear and regional ambitions
Turkestan: The Six States of Central Asia

- **Turkestan**: still-evolving region
- Overlapping cultural landscapes
  - Russian into the region
  - The region into China
  - No longer visible in Afghanistan
- Diverse ethnic groupings
  - Ethnolinguistics
  - Many minority groups within majority groups

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Turkestan: The Six States of Central Asia
Turkestan: The Six States of Central Asia:
The States of Former Soviet Central Asia

- From Soviet suppression to Islamic revival:
  - Islamic dress, symbolic gestures of national leaders
  - Observance of Islamic holidays
- Residual Russian influence:
  - Reviving links with Moscow
  - Continuing economic and cultural ties
  - Weak representative government
Turkestan: The Six States of Central Asia: The States of Former Soviet Central Asia

Kazakhstan

- Heavily Russified: culturally and its infrastructure links
- *Forward capital* of Astana in the heart of the Kazak-Russian Transition Zone
**Uzbekistan**

- Heart of Turkestan, bordering all regional neighbors
- Crowded and stressed environment
  - Shrinking Aral Sea
- Problems of Sunni revivalism and Wahhabism
Turkestan: The Six States of Central Asia: The States of Former Soviet Central Asia

**Turkmenistan**

- Small, autocratic desert republic
- Economic efforts: canals, increasing oil, and gas outputs
Turkestan: The Six States of Central Asia: The States of Former Soviet Central Asia

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

- Mountainous landscapes lead to complex cultural and political geographies:
  - Enclaves and exclaves link neighbors
  - Topography a barrier to multicultural integration
  - Growing Islamic revivalism
  - Governments plagued by conflicts between ethnic groups
Turkestan: The Six States of Central Asia: Fractious Afghanistan

- **Buffer state** between British and Russian competition
- **Landlocked and Fractured**
  - Divided by mountains
  - No ethnic majority

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Turkestan: The Six States of Central Asia: Fractious Afghanistan

The Cold War and the Emergence of the Taliban and al-Qaeda

- Soviet intervention and U.S. supported mujahideen
  - Eventually Soviet’s withdrew; factions fought each other.
- Emergence of the Taliban
  - Aim to end factionalism, corruption; institute Islamic law
    - Imposition of Sharia, Islamic Law was uncompromising
    - Illicit weapons and drugs supported militants
  - Headquarters of al-Qaeda terrorist organization
Turkestan: The Six States of Central Asia:
Fractious Afghanistan

The Rise and Fall of Usama bin Laden

- Part of the U.S.-supported anti-Soviet campaign
- Eventually turned on the United States
- Formed al-Qaeda network, founded terrorist training camps
- Ultimately made its base in Afghanistan, where he directed terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001
- Evaded U.S. efforts to find him for nearly a decade:
  - Was thought to be hiding in the mountainous border zone between Pakistan and Afghanistan
  - Found and killed in a Pakistani compound by U.S. forces
Clouded Future

- U.S. government military efforts:
  - Plagued by U.S. preoccupation with Iraq, entrenched hold of the Taliban
- Afghan complexities have been an obstacle to control and/or stability throughout its history:
  - Social complexity
  - History with foreign influence
  - Warrior culture
  - Islamic intensity and traditional male dominance
  - Endemic corruption
Clouded Future

- Afghan complexities have been an obstacle to control and/or stability throughout its history
  - Physical geography
  - Limited subsistence opportunities for most Afghan people
  - Entrenched narcotic agriculture and illicit economy