

22. South-West Asia

= *Middle East, cradle of civilisation* (ancient Mesopotamia)

Location and physical borders

Northern belt: Turkey and Iran

Southern plateau region: Arabian Peninsula

Mountain ranges: Taurus, the Kuzey Anadolu Dağları (Northern Anatolian Mountains), and the Zagros ring vast, high, arid plateaux in the northern sector.

Large salt-water lakes: Lake Van and Lake Urmia.

Syrian-Arabian plateau = subtropical desert climate that receives very little precipitation. This land is inhabited by nomadic Bedouin groups.

Well-watered southern coastal fringe of the Arabian Peninsula = lush vegetation covers the land and fruit trees flourish. Established communities in this region make their living mostly through agriculture. This southern region is bordered by several large bodies of water – the *Mediterranean Sea* to the NW, the *Red Sea* to the W, the *Gulf of Aden* and the *Arabian Sea* to the S and the *Persian Gulf* and the *Gulf of Oman* to the E. Narrow mountain ranges define its W + S + SE edges, and the historically significant Fertile Crescent lies between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, to the north-east (Figure 1).

Figure 1: South-West Asia (Middle East)



Turkey (Asia Minor)

= more secular Muslim country in comparison to other countries of SW Asia

Cities: Ankara, Izmir, Istanbul

Economy:

- 50% of Turkish population is employed in agriculture but low agricultural outputs ⇔ inefficient methods, small farms (growing of cereals, sugar beet,



fruit and vegetables, tobacco)

- World's importance in mineral production: e.g. lignite, coal, crude oil, chromite, bauxite, lead, zinc, copper
- 30 % of electricity production from hydro-plants
- import (oil, machines, fertilizers) > export (vegetables, textile, cotton) => *low-road economy*

Occupation of Cyprus (northern third of the island) – as response to Greek coup (upheaval, revolt)

Kurdish resistance = Kurdish nationalists (Marxist terrorist groups) trying to win autonomy for 15 million Kurdish people. Kurdistan = SE Turkey. Kurdish resistance (unofficial war) consisted mainly of terrorist methods (murders, bomb attacks, etc.). Turkey was criticized for apparent abuses against the Kurdish community.

Why Turkey should/shouldn't join European Union?

Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan

Israel (capital = Jerusalem)

- Only 17% of arable land covers its total area => intensive agriculture (high inputs and high yields) – irrigation programmes. Extraction of salt from the Dead Sea.
- *Light industry* (beverages, food processing, tobacco) and *heavy industry* (chemical, coal, metal products, glass and ceramics, jewellery) concentrates to Tel Aviv-Yafo and to Haifa.
- import of rough diamonds, military equipment, iron and steel > export of processed diamonds, citrus fruits, flowers, clothing.

Israel has the biggest defence industry in the Middle East and is known to have a nuclear capability of both *atomic and hydrogen bombs*, comprising some 100 warheads – USA support

Arab and Jewish conflicts

= main political, ethnic and religious tension. **1947** – Israel was created => great emphasis put on defence system => conscription of men and women => army was a source of knowledge and information for thousands of immigrants in the country's Hebrew culture.

The Six-day war: After the Suez-Sinai war (to gain hegemony/dominance over the Suez Canal) Arab nationalism increased dramatically. The formation of a united Arab military command that massed troops along the borders, together with Egypt's closing of the Strait of Tiran led Israel to attack Egypt, Jordan, and Syria simultaneously on June 5 in **1967** → ended six days later with a decisive Israeli victory (Israel's French-equipped air force wiped out the air power of its antagonists and was the chief instrument in the destruction of the Arab armies).

The Six-Day War left Israel in possession of *Gaza* and the *Sinai Peninsula*, which it annexed from Egypt, Arab *East Jerusalem* and the *West Bank* of Jordan river, which it annexed from Jordan, and the *Golan Heights*, annexed from Syria. Land after the 1967 war = 4x the size of the area within its 1949 armistice frontiers. The occupied territories also included an Arab population of about 1.5 million => many local and regional conflicts, e.g. Gaza strip. Finally *Sinai peninsula* was given back to Egyptians.

Lebanon

= locating to north from Israel. Last 10 yrs. economy has been growing, before *radical Muslim* country. **1967** armed conflict with Israel.

= very *diverse geomorphology*: coastal areas (summer recreation) and Lebanon mountains (skiing, hiking).

Capital = *Beirut* (modern coastal city), URB = 80% = high, 40% Christians
Large modernisation of industry, education, health care, tourism.



Syria

= 9% Christians

Capital = *Damascus* (very close to Lebanon borders)

URB = 90% = very high

Very *religion-tolerable* country of Middle East.

Anti-Lebanon mountains = tourism.

1967 – loss of *Golan heights*, 1991 – treaty with Lebanon = cooperation in Gulf War against Hussein.

1 of the lowest GDP/capita in SW Asia (both with Iraq)



Jordan

= latest terrorist attacks => effects on tourism

Lot of Palestine refugees living there.

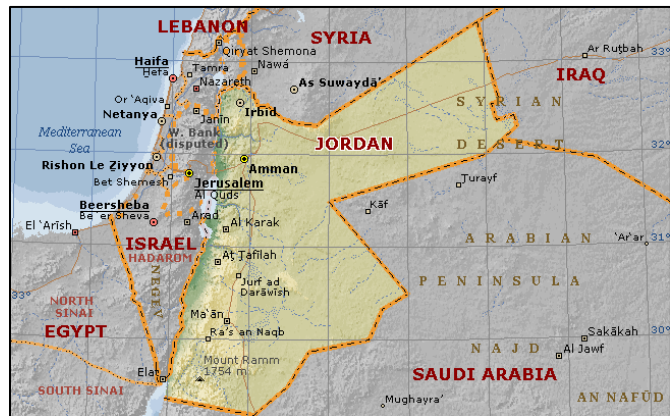
Capital = *Amman*

1967 – loss of *West Jordan Bank*

Very hot summers ⇔ large arid areas

Dependency on Iraq's oil imports.

>90% of total area = *deserts* => population concentrates along Jordan river. Production of phosphates and cement. Cultural sites (Petra).



Problem regions

Iraq

= important country of *oil extraction and oil processing* = largest oil reserves of the Middle East. Oil = reason of Iraqi (civil) war.

Nowadays very unstable political and economic situation. Former oppression of citizens by Hussein's rule => occupation of Kuwait => Gulf war.



Iran and Saudi Arabia

= repression of Christians, strictly Muslim countries, sparsely populated. Iran = typical theocracy country = society is ruled by Islamic priests.

Iran: capital = *Tehran*, populationa concantration and economy determined by Iranian plateau.

Saudi Arabia: capital = *Riyadh*, pilgrim places = *Mecca* and *Medina*

Extraction of crude oil, natural gas, iron, coal. Production of carpets, weaving, carpentry...

Wealthy oil countries

UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman

= very rich countries, high export value of crude oil and oil products. Widely-spoken English.

= small countries (Bahrain, Qatar) in Persian gulf

Countries' statistics

Country	GDP/capita	Number of inhabitants
Turkey	3,130	68,000,000
Syria	1,140	17,000,000
Lebanon	4,100	3,700,000
Israel	16,900	6,000,000
Jordan	1,600	5,300,000
Iraq	1,025	24,000,000
Iran	1,830	68,000,000
Saudi Arabia	6,210	24,000,000
Kuwait	13,500	2,000,000
Bahrain	8,320	660,000
Qatar	12,830	800,000
Oman	6,500	2,700,000
Yemen	260	18,000,000

