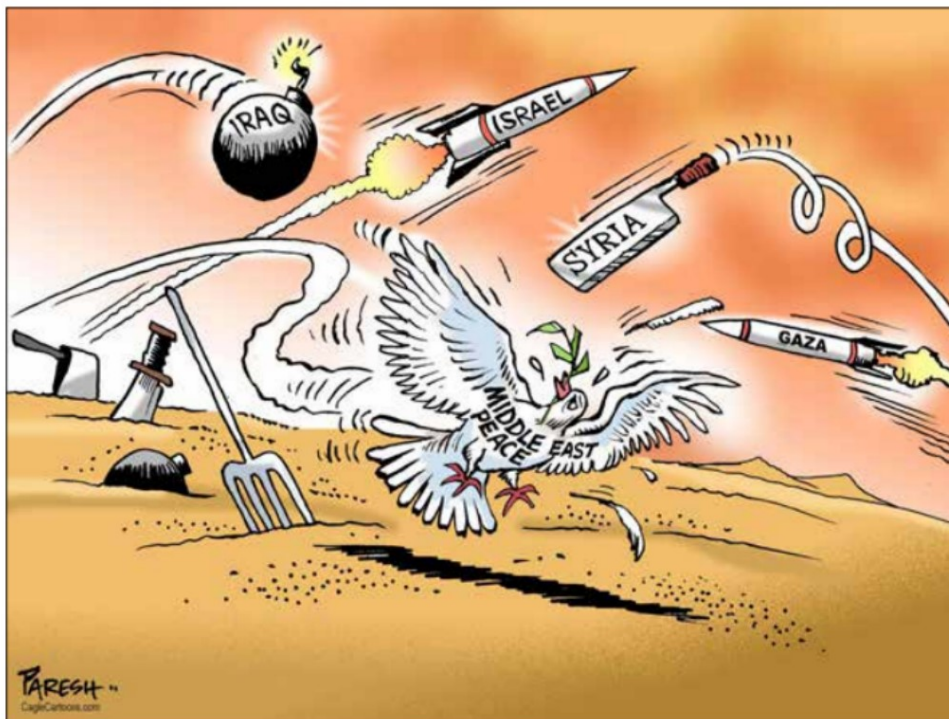


1. Fill in planner

2. Homework is in Global Studies packet

**Activator:** Please answer the following in your journal. What are some of the objects you notice flying through the air? What do they represent? What does the dove symbolize?



PARESH NATH • CAGLE CARTOONS

# How the Middle East got that way?



via Wikipedia Commons

Mapmakers: Sir Mark Sykes of Britain (*left*) and François Georges-Picot of France



Jim McMahon

The Ottoman Empire

- During World War I, diplomats Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and François Georges-Picot of France sat down with a map and reached an agreement that would, at war's end, divide the Arab lands that had been under Ottoman rule into British and French "zones of influence."
- The map lines they drew created arbitrary new borders - and are at the root of many of today's conflicts in the Middle East.

# Review the MAP as a class - next slide has big map

**1916**

## How the MIDDLE EAST Got That Way

A century ago, two diplomats carved out lines on the Middle East map, creating new nations and sowing the seeds for much of the strife in the region today by **JOSEPH ROSEN**

Violence, ethnic clashes, political instability. Have you ever wondered why the Middle East is such a mess? It may be hard to believe, but a lot of it goes back 100 years. In 1916, two men sat down and sketched out lines on a map that basically carved out much of today's unstable Middle East. World War I (1914-18) was still going on, and the Ottoman Empire was about to fall. Diplomats Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and François Georges-Picot of France set the boundaries for modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and much of the land that Israel and the Palestinians are still fighting over. They worked in secret to create an agreement, which was called the Sykes-Picot agreement. The agreement mostly ignored the competing interests and wishes of the many ethnic and religious groups who had been living there for centuries. These included the Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, Christians, and Jews.

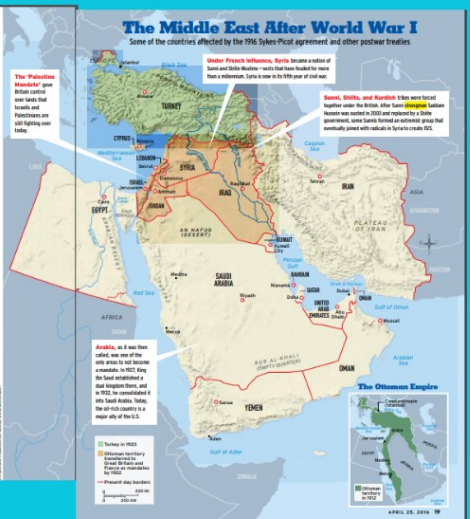
"Sykes-Picot is at the root of many of today's conflicts in the Middle East," says David L. Phillips, a Middle East expert at Columbia University in New York who has authored the last three presidential administrations. The effects of the borders the two men created can be felt everywhere. Syria is stuck in a civil war that began soon after the treaty was signed. Iraq is a mess of warring sects. Israel is struggling to get rid of the Palestinian group and Egyptian Jews, and the Ottoman Empire, which was a mix of Sunni and Shia Muslims, is still a major ally of the U.S.

**The Ottoman Empire**  
Beginning in the 15th century, the region was known as the Middle East. It was the center of the Ottoman Empire. This was a large Turkish empire that at its height also controlled much of southeastern Europe and northern Africa, Mesopotamia.

**The Sykes-Picot agreement**  
The agreement was signed in 1916. It was a secret agreement between Britain and France. It divided the Ottoman Empire into British and French spheres of influence. It also created the borders of modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan.

**The British Mandate for Palestine**  
The British Mandate for Palestine was established in 1920. It gave Britain the right to administer the region. It also created the borders of modern-day Israel and the West Bank.

**The French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon**  
The French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon was established in 1920. It gave France the right to administer the region. It also created the borders of modern-day Syria and Lebanon.



According to this article - What three tribes or groups of people at in conflict as a result of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916?

They had betrayed. France and Britain had promised them, independent states in exchange for fighting against the Ottoman Empire. But the Turks had won a final blow during World War I. That's when they made the mistake of joining Germany and Austria-Hungary. This ended up being a losing battle against Britain, France, Russia, and the United States. The British and French were the two major European powers at the time. After the war, they split up the Ottoman Empire's territories, based on the work of Sykes and Picot. The men had met in Paris and London from November 1915 to March 1916. They marked off areas for the British and French to control at the end of the war (see map, p. 12). Britain and France were mainly focused on advancing their own interests, like tapping the Middle East's newly discovered oil reserves. They ignored the complex ethnic and religious legacy of the people living there. "The great powers carved up the Middle East into areas of influence, without consultation and without regard to local needs," says Phillips. When the Sykes-Picot agreement was revealed, Arab leaders were angry.

modern, non-religious nation states. But Shaul Hanafi of the Brookings Institution points out that the people who used to live under Ottoman rule didn't really think of themselves as nations with firm borders. They thought of themselves as tribal and religious groups. "The sense of being a citizen did not exist," says Hanafi. "It was about being a religious community, that's how you identified."

**Sunni and Shiite Muslims**  
Sunni and Shiite Muslims, for example, are two distinct groups that have been at odds since 632. That's when Islam's founder, Muhammad, died and disagreement arose over who should replace him. Today, most of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims are Sunni. Shiites are the majority in only Iran and Iraq. Fearing rival ethnicities together into newly formed nation states led to power struggles. Many are unresolved today. Here's how the events unfolded.

**IRAQ:** The clashing Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish tribes that the Sykes-Picot agreement forced together were mostly ruled by a series of autocratic dictators and kings. Among them was dictator Saddam Hussein, who came to power in 1979. In 2003, he was overthrown by an American-led group. The group claimed he had weapons of mass destruction. (No such weapons were ever found.) Old ethnic divisions soon resurfaced. Americans tried to establish a coalition government of Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds. But Shiites ultimately took over. That led some Sunnis to form a group that eventually joined with radicals to form ISIS. The goal of the Sunni Muslim militant group is to get rid of Shiite Muslims, Kurds, and Westerners and

start its own brand of radical Islam in the Middle East. ISIS has been remarkably successful at recruiting recruits from around the world, including the U.S. In December, a married couple inspired by ISIS killed 14 people at an oil party in San Bernardino, California.

**SYRIA:** Even though most of the people living in this region were Sunni, French powers installed Western-friendly leaders from the Alawite sect of Shiite Islam. In 1971, Hafez al-Assad became president. He kept the country stable, often through brutal control. In 2000, he was succeeded by his son, Bashar al-Assad. He is Syria's current president. After the Arab Spring, a wave of democratic protests that reached the Middle East beginning in 2011, and war broke out in Syria. So far, it has cost more than 250,000 lives. It has also allowed ISIS to conquer some Syrian territory.

Sunni and Shiite groups are fighting to overthrow Assad. Powers like the U.S. and Russia have been offering military help. (The U.S. has supported moderate rebels. Russia has supported Assad.) Meanwhile, millions of refugees have been fleeing both Syria and Iraq. They're also being pushed into a huge immigration problem for their neighbors and for Europe.

**LEBANON:** France carved out Syria's coastal region into the separate state of Lebanon. This was meant to be a safe haven for the Christian group of the Ottoman Empire. The country gained independence from France in 1943. But from 1975 to 1990, it was ravaged by a civil war between Christians and Muslims that led to 250,000 deaths. Today its multi-religious government still struggles under a fragile power-sharing formula.

**'THE PALESTINE MANDATE':** The British mandate over Palestine included present-day Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza. In the time, the majority of the population living there was Arab. Most Arabs opposed the Zionist movement, which called for a Jewish state in Palestine. But world powers to create a Jewish homeland increased after World War II (1939-45). That's because 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. In 1947, Britain, with approval from the United Nations, came up with a partition plan. It would create the nation of Israel and Palestine. The Jews accepted the plan. But the Palestinians and surrounding Arab countries rejected it. They fought an unsuccessful war against the newly declared state of Israel in May 1948. In 1967, in the Six-Day War, Israel expanded territory under its control by capturing lands where many Palestinians were living. For decades, Israel and the Palestinians have been locked in a conflict that sometimes explodes into violence. At least nine American presidents have tried to broker a peace agreement. The occupied Palestinians



continue to demand a state of their own. One hundred years after Sykes-Picot, most all experts agree that it is to blame for the Middle East's troubles. Robert Davis, of the Council on Foreign Relations, notes that many nations with random boundaries in other regions of the world have managed to live in relative peace.

**Learning from the Past?**  
Still, many experts and Arab nations see Sykes-Picot as the starting point for a lot of the region's problems today. Rose, of the University of Texas at Austin, says that as the U.S. and other world powers struggle to figure out how to best handle crises like the Syrian civil war, the mistakes colonial powers made in 1916 should serve as a lesson. "We can't have a peace conference where the world powers sit down and say, 'You, here, here we're going to solve your problems,'" says Rose. "We can help, we can aid, we can partner, we can support, but we have to be a player in how the settlement is worked out."

*Joseph Rosen is a former reporter for The New York Times.*

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**Palestine Mandate'**  
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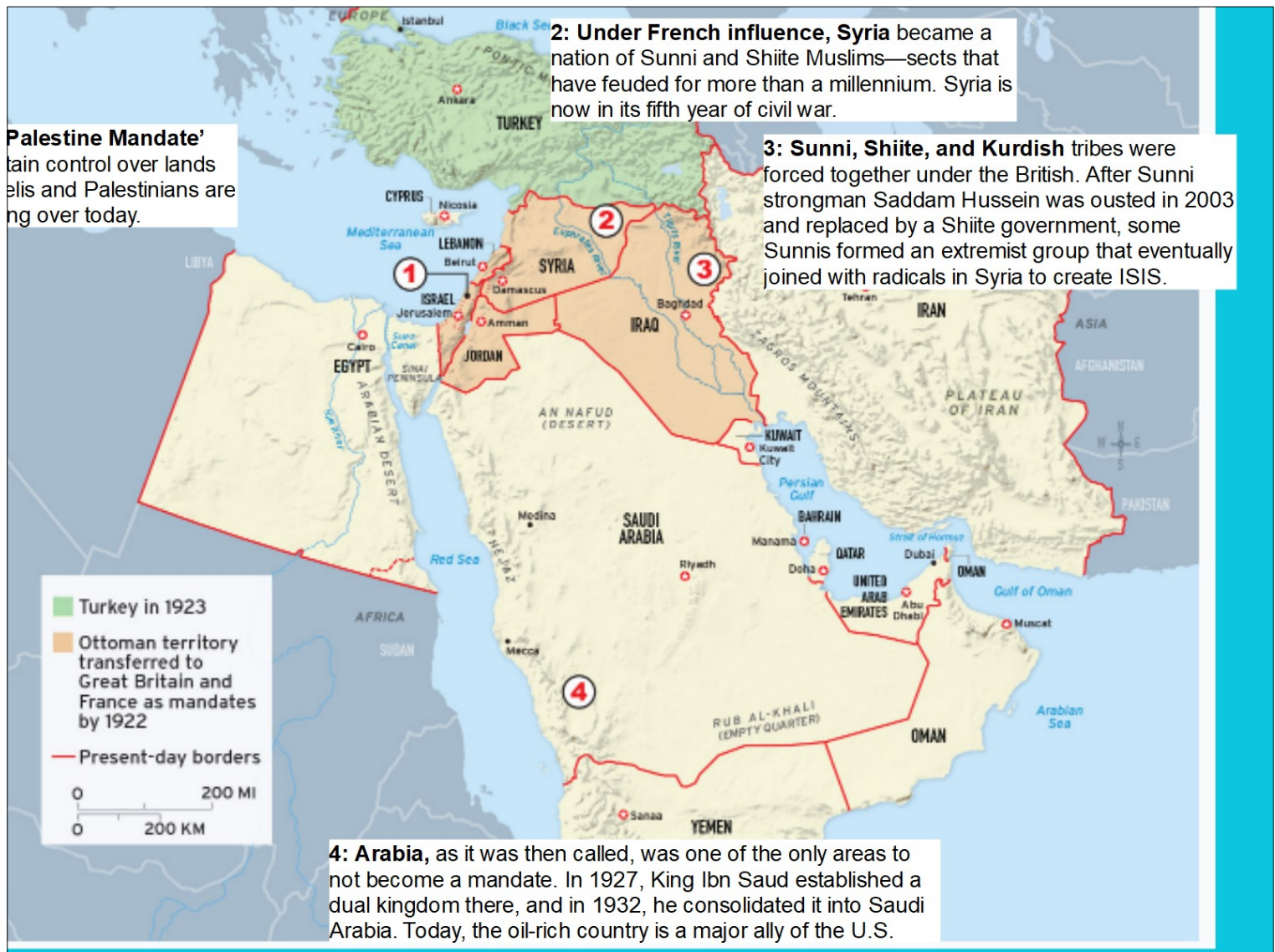
**2: Under French influence, Syria** became a nation of Sunni and Shiite Muslims—sects that have feuded for more than a millennium. Syria is now in its fifth year of civil war.

**3: Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish** tribes were forced together under the British. After Sunni strongman Saddam Hussein was ousted in 2003 and replaced by a Shiite government, some Sunnis formed an extremist group that eventually joined with radicals in Syria to create ISIS.

**4: Arabia**, as it was then called, was one of the only areas to not become a mandate. In 1927, King Ibn Saud established a dual kingdom there, and in 1932, he consolidated it into Saudi Arabia. Today, the oil-rich country is a major ally of the U.S.

■ Turkey in 1923  
■ Ottoman territory transferred to Great Britain and France as mandates by 1922  
— Present-day borders

0 200 MI  
0 200 KM





**A Syrian Kurdish boy**  
in the Syrian town of Kobani,  
which was destroyed by ISIS  
before the terrorist group  
was driven out last year.

# Parnter Work

- Read article silently or together
- **TOGETHER** Answer questions on QUIZ (1-10)
- Go back thru article if necessary
- One quiz for each set of partners
- **TURN IN** at end of class

For use with "How the Middle East Got That Way" on p. 18 of the magazine

## How the Middle East Got That Way

Choose the best answer for each of the following questions.

**QUIZ**

**CHECK COMPREHENSION**

- At the beginning of World War I, the area now known as the Middle East was part of
  - a Britain.
  - b France.
  - c the Ottoman Empire.
  - d the Mughal Empire.
- According to the article, which is true of the Sykes-Picot agreement?
  - a it was accepted by Arab leaders as a path to peace.
  - b it was created in secret.
  - c it was based on long-standing divisions between ethnic and religious groups.
  - d all of the above
- Britain and France had promised Arab leaders autonomous lands if the Arabs would
  - a give Britain and France access to the oil reserves in the Middle East.
  - b put aside ethnic and religious differences and work toward peace.
  - c denounce Russia and its rulers.
  - d join Britain and France in fighting against the Turks.
- At the end of World War I, the League of Nations authorized mandates that
  - a gave Middle Eastern countries complete independence.
  - b gave Britain and France some control over policy and trade in the Middle East.
  - c dictated which ethnic and religious groups could live in which Middle Eastern country.
  - d none of the above

**ANALYZE THE TEXT**

- The central idea of the article is that
  - a political instability in the Middle East is here to stay.
  - b the Middle East should return to its pre-World War I borders.
  - c an agreement carved out during World War I may have a lot to do with the problems in the Middle East today.
  - d the possibility of peace in the Middle East is currently in the hands of British and French diplomats.
- The article discusses the spoils of World War I. The word *spoils* as used here means
  - a goods or lands that are taken forcibly.
  - b deaths and serious injuries.
  - c intense power struggles.
  - d devastating effects.
- You can infer from the article that the U.S.'s stand on the Middle East immediately following World War I was that
  - a the League of Nations must squash conflicts between rival religious groups.
  - b the Middle East belonged under Turkish rule.
  - c the Middle East lands should be autonomous.
  - d the Sykes-Picot agreement was fair and necessary.
- Which phrase from the article best supports your answer to question 7?
  - a "Sunni and Shiite Muslims . . . are two distinct sects that have been at odds for centuries."
  - b "...Americans tried installing a coalition government of Sunnis, Shites, and Kurds..."
  - c "...Wilson advocated for self-determination of these lands in his Fourteen Points."
  - d "The U.S. has supported moderate rebels..."

IN-DEPTH QUESTIONS Please use the other side of this paper for your responses.

- How were tribal and religious differences kept in check in Iraq for decades following World War I? What eventually caused these differences to resurface?
- Based on the article, how do you think the U.S. and other world powers should deal with the Syrian civil war?

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<https://upfront.scholastic.com/issues/2015-16/042516/how-the-middle-east-got-that-way.html#1460>



## HOMEWORK: Global Studies Article READ - "Forgotten Victims of War"



Ten-year-old Nour lost 19 members of her family in a 2017 attack in Mosul that left her with terrible scars. zo/The New York Times/Redux