Geography of the Middle East

Overview:
Students will be better able to understand the causes and potential consequences of conflict in the Middle East if they know some of the basic geography of the area. The following version of a “I have, Who has?” activity helps push students to look closely at the Middle East map to find and use basic geographic information.

Connections to the Curriculum:
geography, world awareness

Connections to the Michigan Curriculum Standards:
II. 1: People, Places, and Cultures
II. 5: Global Issues and Events

Grade Level: 4-12

Time: 1 class period (but may be repeated).

Materials required:
National Geographic *Iraq and the Heart of the Middle East* map
A worksheet of the questions below *without* the answers for each team
A card (or strip of paper) with an answer to a previous question, and a question to ask, (for each student)

Objectives:
Students will locate countries, cities, and bodies of water in the Middle East

Procedure:
Give each group of students a worksheet with the entire set of questions (without the answers). Have them use the NGS *Iraq and the Heart of the Middle East* map to answer the questions as a group. (Some of the answers are on the map, and some are in the text box descriptions of the countries on the other side of the map.)

After the class has completed the task, put the worksheets away, and give each student a card or strip of paper with a location and a question (I Have, Who Has)

Have any student ask a question. The student with the answer on the card can state the answer and, if possible, point it out on a map. Then that student asks the question on his card. This round-robin activity ends with the student who asked the initial question having the last answer.

Assessment:
The activity can be used at the end of the unit as a partial review, and the questions can be the basis of a unit test.
Student Worksheet:
The West Bank is the West Bank of what?
The Jordan River flows from the Sea of Galilee into what?
Which City is holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims?
Which country contains the East Bank?
Which people had a country before World War II, and now don’t?
Which people had no country before World War II, and now have one?
Which country is a federation of sheikdoms?
Which country is an archipelago?
Which country is very poor, isolated, and religiously conservative?
Which country touches the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea?
Which country touches Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf?
Which two occupied areas contain about two million Palestinian refugees?
Which country is focused along the Tigris-Euphrates Rivers?
Which rapidly developing sultanate is largely Ibadhi Muslim?
Which small peninsular country contains the world’s largest natural gas field?
Which country shares a concern about the Golan Heights with Israel?
Which country is a mixture of Druze, Christians and Muslims?
What are Islam’s two most holy cities?
Which body of water separates Egypt from Saudi Arabia?
The Suez Canal connects which two bodies of water?
Which country is in both Asia and Africa?
Which two countries might limit Iraq’s accessibility to the Persian Gulf?
Which country has a high per capita GDP without any oil reserves?
Which country is in both Asia and Europe?

K:\MGA\Workshop Activities\MiddleEastLessons\GeogofMiddleEastwksht.doc
I Have, Who Has....

Turkey. The West Bank is the West Bank of what?
The Jordan River. The Jordan River flows from the Sea of Galilee into what?
The Dead Sea. Which City is holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims?
Jerusalem. Which country contains the East Bank?
Jordan. Which people had a country before World War II, and now don’t?
Palestinians. Which people had no country before World War II, and now have one?
Jews. Which country is a federation of sheikdoms?
United Arab Emirates. Which country is an archipelago?
Bahrain. Which country is very poor, isolated, and religiously conservative?
Yemen. Which country touches the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea?
Saudi Arabia. Which country touches Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf?
Iran. Which two occupied areas contain about two million Palestinian refugees?
West Bank and Gaza Strip. Which country is focused along the Tigris-Euphrates Rivers?
Iraq. Which rapidly developing sultanate is largely Ibadhi Muslim?
Oman. Which small peninsular country contains the world’s largest natural gas field?
Qatar. Which country shares a concern about the Golan Heights with Israel?
Syria. Which country is a mixture of Druze, Christians and Muslims?
Lebanon. What are Islam’s two most holy cities?
Mecca and Medina. Which body of water separates Egypt from Saudi Arabia?
The Red Sea The Suez Canal connects which two bodies of water?
The Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Suez. Which country is in both Asia and Africa?
Egypt. Which two countries might limit Iraq’s accessibility to the Persian Gulf?
Kuwait and Iran Which country has a high per capita GDP without any oil reserves?
Israel Which country is in both Asia and Europe?
Interpreting Middle East Data

Overview:
The text boxes on the National Geographic Map *Middle East: Crossroads of Faith and Conflict* contain a wealth of statistical information about each of the countries. These data can reveal a great deal about the differences within a region that many students think of as being homogeneous. This lesson will help students change the data into graphs in order to make comparisons among the countries.

Connections to the Curriculum:
geography, current events, mathematics

Connections to Michigan Curriculum Standards
V.1: Information Processing
VI.1: Identifying and Analyzing Issues

Geographic Skills: Asking Geographic Questions, Acquiring Geographic Information, Organizing Geographic Information, and Analyzing Geographic Information

Grade Level: 5-12

Time: 1 class period

Materials Required:
NGS *Middle East: Crossroads of Faith and Conflict* map
Tables (included)
Graph Paper (Examples included)

Objectives:
Students will:
- Construct bar graphs and pie charts
- Compare economic, demographic, and military characteristics of countries in the Middle East
- Pose geographic questions pertaining to countries in the news

Procedure:
1. Review the types of information presented in the text inserts on the map. When appropriate describe what the terms mean, and the units of measurement of each.
   - **Population**
   - **Different religions** as a percentage of the total population
   - **GDP per capita**, which means the Gross (or total) Domestic Product of the country, per capita (which means per person), or the national total of goods and services produced divided by the population.
   - **Crude oil reserves**, which means the amount that has been discovered and is still in the ground.
   - **Troops**, or the military size, including both active and reserve army, navy, sailors, air force.

2. Have students make bar graphs using some of the data from the following table. Use these questions for discussion:
   - Who might need to use this information, and for what purpose?
   - How might this information be used to make political or economic decisions?
   - What are the political implications for U. S. support of a particular country?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population in thousands</th>
<th>GDP per capita in U. S. dollars</th>
<th>Crude oil reserves (millions of barrels)</th>
<th>Active Troops</th>
<th>Reserves</th>
<th>All Troops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71,800</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>100,200</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>135,200</td>
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<td>20,000</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>425,000</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
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<td>300</td>
<td>515,000</td>
<td>378,700</td>
<td>893,700</td>
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<td>Syria</td>
<td>17,200</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>321,000</td>
<td>354,000</td>
<td>675,000</td>
</tr>
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<td>71,200</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>443,000</td>
<td>254,000</td>
<td>697,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
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<td>4,000</td>
<td>54,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>94,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5,500</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43,000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>618</td>
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<td>15,200</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
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<td>6,400</td>
<td>89,700</td>
<td>513,000</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>863,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
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<td>96,500</td>
<td>15,500</td>
<td>23,700</td>
<td>39,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>97,800</td>
<td>65,000</td>
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<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,074,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>10,600</td>
<td>261,800</td>
<td>126,000</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>201,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Making graphs of more than one characteristic will lead to comparisons and questions for students to pose to the class. For example:

A. Make a graph showing population and GDP, and compare Turkey, Egypt and Iran with countries like Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. (See sample graph 3A) What characteristics do countries with high population, low income have in common? What is the basis of their economy?

B. Using the population statistics and military troops, students can compute the percent of population available for military duty. (See sample graph 3B) Is there a relationship between stability and availability of troops? Or is the availability of troops an added characteristic of stability? Why does Israel lead the other nations in troops?

C. Is there a relationship between per capita income and oil reserves? (See sample graph 3C) Why or why not?

D. 95% of the Middle East oil reserves are in 5 countries: Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates. (See sample graph 3D) What might this mean?

E. Have students make a pie graph of the percentage of the population that practices each religion in each country. Cut them out and put them all on the map. (See table and sample graphs 3E, along with proportional circles for population of each country)
SAMPLE GRAPHS:

3A

Population and GDP in the Middle East

3B

Troops as Percentage of Population

3C

GDP per capita in U. S. dollars
Crude oil reserves (millions of barrels)

3D

Percent of Oil Reserves in Middle East
### Religions in Middle Eastern Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population in thousands</th>
<th>% Jewish</th>
<th>% Christian</th>
<th>% Muslim</th>
<th>% other</th>
<th>% Hindu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>96</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>17,200</td>
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<td>89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>18,600</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>65,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
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<td>UAE</td>
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<td>Iraq</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Religion in Lebanon**

Population-proportioned circle graphs:

- **Turkey, Iran, Egypt**
- **Iraq, Saudi Arabia**
- **Syria, Yemen**

**Religion in the Middle East**

- Lebanon
- Jordan
- Israel
- Bahrain
- Turkey
- Syria
- Egypt
- Yemen
- Oman
- Qatar
- Iran
- Kuwait
- UAE
- Iraq
- Saudi Arabia
Nation, State, Country and Nation-State Stability

Overview:
Many things affect the stability of a nation-state. This lesson plan will help students define the concepts of nation, state, country and nation-state more precisely, develop some generalization factors which can influence nation-state stability, and have them apply those generalizations to the Middle East.

Connections to the Curriculum:
geography, government, current events

Connections to the National Geography Standards:
Standard 13: Students will understand how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of earth’s surface.
Standard 18: Students will understand how to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Grade Level: 9-12

Time: 1-2 class periods

Materials required:
National Geographic Map, *Middle East: Crossroads of Faith and Conflict*
Worksheet with generalizations about nation-state stability.
Transparency of terms and generalizations.

Objectives: Students will:
- Differentiate among the terms country, nation, state and nation-state
- Describe some characteristics of stable nation-states
- Explain how these characteristics apply to countries in the Middle East

Procedure:
Indicate that the terms nation, state, country are terms that are often, and appropriately, used interchangeably, but to understand the source of some of the conflicts in the Middle East, it is helpful to know some of the distinctions which can be made between the terms.

*What is a country?* It is the territory of a nation or state, as in “Our country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty.” Of the three terms, country is the most geographic.

*What is the state?* It is the government, as the State of Israel, or the U.S. State Department (as the department which represents the government overseas). The term has the clearest political connotation.

*What is a nation?* Nation often refers to a group of people with common customs and origins (who may or may not be the inhabitants of territory), as the Nation of Islam or Indian nation. The term has the clearest cultural connotations.

*What is a nation-state?* This term implies all three of the concepts above: a group of people (a nation), a government (a state) and territory (a country).

Nation-states are most stable, peaceful, and effective when the nation of people share important characteristics (their nationality), are well represented by the government (the state), and inhabit a clearly defined and generally agreed upon territory (a country). Internal or external political problems
often arise when culture, government and geography do not correspond. Unfortunately, in many areas, especially those formerly ruled by colonial powers, territory, culture and government do not correspond.

Distribute the worksheet with generalizations about nation-state stability and indicate students will need to use the NGS map *Middle East: Crossroads of Faith and Conflict*, along with the text boxes describing each country, to find a country for which this characteristic applies or does not apply, and explain why. Have all students work on the following statement, and share the answers as a model.

*Stable nation-states often have a compact, contiguous shape with clear boundaries.*

Possible examples include:

- **Bahrain** is compact and has clear boundaries, which enhance its stability.
- **Israel** is shaped like a barbell, with a very narrow central area bordered by the occupied West Bank, which is a major security concern.
- **Oman** is broken up into three separate areas, the two smallest of which are surrounded by **U.A.E.**, which might cause problems.

Discuss the examples of each of the generalizations. (Possible ideas on the completed worksheet.)

**Assessment:**

No one factor can predict stability or instability. The United States has two relatively distant territories (Alaska and Hawaii) but is not in danger of breaking up. Use the generalizations developed in this lesson to answer the following:

Saudi Arabia is an important ally of the United States in the Middle East. Use the concepts and generalizations developed to evaluate the stability of Saudi Arabia as a nation-state.
Use the NGS Middle East: Crossroads of Faith and Conflict map and the text box descriptions to identify a nation-state which is either an example of how the characteristic fosters stability, or how the lack of the characteristic is leading to instability.

1. The people of stable nation-states tend to have a relatively clear sense of nationality, and the bulk of the population shares a set of common cultural characteristics.

2. Stable nation-states have government systems that are supported by population.

3. Stable nation-states tend to have an undisputed claim to their territory.

4. Stable nation-states tend to have governments that are perceived to be representative.

5. Nation-states are more easily defensible when they have a clear core area away from boundaries with potentially hostile neighbors.

6. Stable nation-states tend to have political borders that correspond with cultural boundaries, or go through areas, which are neither well populated nor valuable.

7. A people without a country will often work to get one.
1. The people of stable nation-states tend to have a relatively clear sense of nationality, and the bulk of the population shares a set of common cultural characteristics.

Iran is populated largely by members of the Shiite Islam, who speak Parsi. Most of the rest of Southwest Asia and North Africa is Sunni Islam, and speak Arabic. Israel has a clear sense of national unity and a clear cultural distinctiveness, although Jews have migrated from all over the world, and speak many different languages.

2. **Stable nation-states have government systems that are supported by population.**

Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Turkey tend to have governmental systems that have lasted through a variety of governments and leaders. Syria has had coups in 1949, 1954, 1961, 1963, 1966, 1970, and a rebellion in 1982. Saudi Arabia is ruled by as a Sheikdom of the family of Saud, which does not have universal support.

3. **Stable nation-states tend to have an undisputed claim to their territory.**

The core area of Egypt has been relatively stable for centuries. The borders and existence of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel and Kuwait, not to mention Saudi Arabia, have been relatively recent creations.

4. **Stable nation-states tend to have governments that are perceived to be representative.**

Dissension within Iran between the elected moderates and the Islamic Clerics is ongoing. The Iraqi government represents neither the Kurds nor the Shiite population.

5. **Nation-states are more easily defensible when they have a clear core area away from boundaries with potentially hostile neighbors.**

Iraq is clearly more defensible than Kuwait, and the location and control of Jerusalem will continue to be problematic for Israel.

6. **Stable nation-states tend to have political borders that correspond with cultural boundaries, or go through areas that are neither well-populated nor valuable.**

About 30 miles across the mouth of the Tigress-Euphrates river separates Kuwait, Iraq and Iran - Iraq has gone to war with each country during the past 20 years. Israel’s borders have changed dramatically, and Israeli settlement of the West Bank has increasingly mixed Israelis and Palestinians. On the other hand, the exact boundaries of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Oman, and U.A.E run through Ar Rub al Khali, the empty quarter, one of the world’s driest and most sparsely inhabited areas.

7. **A people without a country will often work to get one.**

As did the Jews in forming Israel, as the Palestinians hope.
Objectives: Students will:

- Differentiate among the terms country, nation, state and nation-state
- Describe some characteristics of stable nation-states
- Explain how these characteristics apply to countries in the Middle East

What is a country?

What is the state?

What is a nation

What is a nation-state?

Nation-states are most stable, peaceful, and effective when the nation of people share important characteristics (their nationality), are well represented by the government (the state), and inhabit a clearly defined and generally agreed upon territory (a country).

Internal or external political problems often arise when culture, government and geography do not correspond.

In many areas, especially those formerly ruled by colonial powers, territory, culture and government do not correspond.
The people of stable nation-states tend to have a relatively clear sense of nationality, and the bulk of the population shares a set of common cultural characteristics.

Stable nation-states have government systems that are supported by population.

Stable nation-states tend to have an undisputed claim to their territory.

Stable nation-states tend to have governments that are perceived to be representative.

Nation-states are more easily defensible when they have a clear core area away from boundaries with potentially hostile neighbors.

Stable nation-states tend to have political borders that correspond with cultural boundaries, or go through areas, which are neither well populated nor valuable.

A people without a country will often work to get one.
Geography, Iraq and CDVs:
\textit{\textbf{Should the U.S. Act Unilaterally to Disarm Iraq?}}

Overview:
The text boxes on the National Geographic Map \textit{Middle East: Crossroads of Faith and Conflict} contain a wealth of statistical information about each of the countries. These data can reveal a great deal about the differences within a region that many students think of as being homogeneous. This lesson will give students practice in using map data to write a persuasive essay on a current event topic.

Connections to the Curriculum:
geography, current events

Connections to Michigan Curriculum Standards
V.1: Information Processing
VI.1: Identifying and Analyzing Issues
VI.3: Persuasive Writing

Grade Level: 8-12

Time: 1 class period

Materials Required:
NGS \textit{Middle East: Crossroads of Faith and Conflict} map

Objectives:
Students will:
\begin{itemize}
  \item Describe issues involved in the current news events in the Middle East
  \item Write a persuasive essay using MEAP criteria
\end{itemize}

Procedure:
Students work in groups to use the Middle East map and other classroom resources* to gather and organize information in the following categories pertaining to the question: \textit{Should the U.S. Act Unilaterally to Disarm Iraq?}:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Who and what are involved?} (People, organizations, principles, countries)
  \item \textit{Are where?} (locations)
  \item \textit{Why?} (historical and contemporary causes)
  \item \textit{So what?} (potential consequences for different people, groups, and countries).
\end{itemize}

Students discuss how the core democratic value of \textit{providing for the common defense} does or does not apply to this situation.

Students write a persuasive essay in which they 1) take a position, 2) support their information with data from the map, 3) explain how their position is consistent with the core democratic value of \textit{providing for the common defense}, 4) support their position with other social studies information or ideas they have gathered, and 5) explain how their position is superior to the alternative position.

*The US State Department website provides a good resource for up-to-the-minute facts: www.state.gov/

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Overview:
Diaspora has several meanings. It can refer specifically to Jews or Christians living outside Palestine, or it can refer in more general terms to a dispersion of any originally homogenous people. Students will make connections between who and from where migrations to Israel took place, and when and why, using world events.

Connections to the Curriculum:
Geography, global issues, history, government

Connections to the National Geography Standards:

Time: 1 to 2 class periods

Materials required:
National Geographic map, historical and current events sources

Objectives:
Students will:
- Locate countries of origin of Jewish immigrants to Israel
- Identify when the major migrations took place
- Describe world events at the time of the migration
- Explain how the migration impacted and was impacted by these events

Procedure:
Both Jews and Palestinians have been dispersed widely away from their homeland. The Religions insert map shows the migration of Jews back to Israel. The map shows who came from where, but not when or why. Listed below are the migration streams identified on the map, and the originating countries. Find these locations on a map. When did the bulk of the migration take place? What world events might have been associated with encouraging or allowing the migrations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who and how many?</th>
<th>From Where?</th>
<th>When?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jews Migrating to Israel</td>
<td>former Soviet Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,032,000</td>
<td>(other than Central Asia)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>681,000</td>
<td>Europe</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>424,000</td>
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<td>205,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>Ethiopia and South Africa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Palestinians have also been dispersed around the world. In 1990 there were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,700,000</td>
<td>West bank and Gaza Strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,400,000</td>
<td>Jordan, Lebanon and Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>Gulf States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>elsewhere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>