The Middle East after World War I:
Drawing Boundaries, Dividing a Region And Creating a Crisis

(A Secondary Unit for High School World and American History)

I cannot lay claim to this lesson plan,
I am not sure of its origin.
I have added and deleted from the original plan but
I do not claim to be its author.
The Middle East after World War I

Drawing Boundaries and Dividing a Region and Creating a Crisis

Overview: The Middle East, as we know it today, was created out of the six-hundred year-old Ottoman Empire. The empire came to an end at the conclusion of World War I. This geography and history simulation examines why the Allied Powers drew the boundaries and divided the region as they did, with little understanding of the populations alienated or the political tensions created.

In Part I, the history/geography introduces the region to the learner. Part II uses this information in a role play. Within their roles, participants are asked to analyze the level of frustration or ‘fever’ their region experiences, because of the decisions made and the actions taken by the Allied powers. They register their rising frustration on a ‘fever’ chart. The unit concludes by analyzing whether the ‘fever’ charts reflect where actual conflicts and wars have broken out in the past 70 years, since the drawing of the boundaries and the dividing of the region.

Content Standards:

- NCSS: 1) Time Continuity and Change, 1) People Places and Environment, 3) Power Authority and Governance, 4) Science Technology and Society, 5) Global Connections
- Other

Objectives of the Unit are to:

1. Understand the Middle East as a region of diversity.
2. Examine the historic/geographic reasons for the present boundaries.
3. Enhance understanding of the role of the West in creating some of the present-day tensions in the Middle East.
4. Encourage a greater appreciation of this region.

Level and Content Area: 10th through 12th grades, American and world history

This unit was designed for the textbook unit study on World War I and its treaties. It can also be used in a world problems course or any study of the Middle East.

Time Needed:

- Part I - History and Geography: 2-4 days
- Part II - Simulation: 3-5 Days

Materials Needed: Duplicate copies of the following:

- Handout 1 - Introduction to the Unit (optional for use by the students)
- Handout 2 - Part I Background Information: Peoples of the Ottoman Empire (1 copy per student)
- Handout 3 - Background Information: Lands of the Ottoman Empire (1 copy per student)
- Handout 4 - Anatolia
- Handout 5 - Greater Syria
- Handout 6 - Mesopotamia
- Handout 7 - Arabian Peninsula
- Handout 8 - Simulation Roles (1 set of roles for each group’s region)
Procedures: (The teachers' materials are numbered with Romans numerals; students' materials have Arabic numerals. Students should be made aware that throughout the unit the terms CE and BCE are used rather than AD and BC, CE means Common Era, and BCE is Before the Common Era. These terms, now widely used, are equivalent to AD - Anno Domini or in the Year of our Lord, and BC - Before Christ. Since we are examining the Middle East, we will use CE and BCE.)

Part 1: Background Historical Information and Geography

1. Handout 1 can be used by the teacher to introduce the unit. By preparing a transparency 01 p. 1, the students can readily see the question raised, 'Why is it called the Middle East?'
2. Handouts 2 and 3 can be assigned as homework to be discussed in class, or read in class and discussed after each topic heading.
3. You may wish to cover each of the four regions as a class, or assign students to 4 groups or regions and have them 'teach' the other groups about their region. It is important that the students have a good grasp of the geography and information about each of the regions. They will be using this information in the simulation.

Part II, Role Play and 'Fever Chart' Simulation

4. Explain to the students that the purpose of this role-play simulation is to experience how the actions taken by the Allied Powers affected each of the ethnic/religious groups within the Ottoman Empire.

5. Each participant is assigned a role within one of four groups and given a role description. Participants will be role playing various ethnic/religious groups within each of the four regions of the Ottoman Empire at the time of World War I - Anatolia and the Mediterranean Islands, the Fertile Crescent - Syria, the Fertile Crescent - Mesopotamia, and the Arabian Peninsula.

Each role description provides the beliefs or historical background for that particular role. This information, along with the material in Part I, should help the participant determine how he/she would have reacted to each Allied action as it is presented.

6. Each group receives a copy of the document and historical context for each round. The simulation has four rounds. Each round begins with the teacher/facilitator clarifying the document for the participants.


Round 2: Winter 1917-18, publication of the Balfour Declaration and release of information about the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916

Round 3: Fall 1920, release of information about the San Remo Conference Agreements, April 1920; revelation of Secret Agreements made between 1915-17 resulting in the Treaty of Sevres, August 1920.

Round 4: Early Fall 1923, Treaty of Lausanne, July 1923

7. Each participant/role decides what effect the action described in the document would have on his/her ethnic or
religious group. By openly discussing within the group, the individual participant can better see the effects on the ethnic or religious group he/she represents. Each participant should feel free to consult with other members with that particular role in other groups.

8. Students, within each of the groups representing the four regions, discuss among themselves within the group, the effect of the Allied actions or decisions on their region as a whole. They then mark the “Fever” Chart. The numbers on the chart represent the role number within that group. It is important to register each member’s reaction for visual understanding. At what level is the region as a whole affected? If there is enough strong reaction from two or more members of the group, then the response as a region should be above the midpoint. If there is a strong possibility for conflict within that area, then the fever chart should reflect this. The simulation continues on for the next four rounds.

9. In the Debriefing, the following questions can serve as a focus for the discussion.

a. While in your role, how did you feel about the actions taken by the Allied Powers? The United States? How did you personally feel? Generally speaking, how do you think the people of the Middle East feel about the West now?

b. All foreign policy is based on national security and self-interest. Based on what was happening in the war in Europe and other conditions in the early 1900s, what justifications could one use for these Allied actions? Are they reasonable?

c. In which regions and in what ways did these actions raise the level of frustration and anger of the people of the Middle East?

d. Is there any relationship between the high levels marked on the ‘fever’ charts and the outbreak of actual hostility and conflict in this half of the century?

e. Have you come to some definition of what citizenship means? How important is choice in determining an individual’s commitment to the nation in which he/she lives? Is there more to being a citizen than simply accident of birth within the region? If so, what other elements need to be present? What elements are necessary for a nation-state to succeed?

10. Each group or participant receives the Postscript. The Postscript provides information as to what actually happened in the Middle East after the last Allied action was taken. It provides closure for the simulation and a clarification of the historical factual information.
Bibliography
(These sources were read in part or in their entirety in preparation of this unit)


The Middle East after World War I
Drawing Boundaries and Dividing a Region Creating a Crisis

During the Gulf War in 1991, the world's attention was focused on the Middle East: Iraq had invaded and occupied Kuwait in 1990; Saudi Arabia asked for United Nations intervention to protect them from a possible Iraqi invasion; Syria would not join the war against Iraq; and Turkey reluctantly allowed U.N. forces to use Turkish air bases.

The Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s killed hundreds of thousands of young men. The Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979, American embassy workers were taken hostage, and the Ayatollah returned to Teheran. In Lebanon, a civil war in the 1970s turned the beautiful capital city of Beirut, "the Paris of the Middle East" into rubble, and a bomb exploded during a mass in a Beirut Christian Maronite church in early 1994, killing and injuring worshippers. Saddam Hussein of Iraq used poison gas against the Kurds in northern Iraq in 1990, and then slaughtered thousands of Shi'i Iraqis in the south in 1994.

"We asked, "What is going on with these people?" in response to these events. Why are they fighting each other? Aren't they all Muslims and Arabs?" Well, no and no.

The causes of these on-going Middle Eastern incidents are seldom understood by people outside of the region. Events there seem confusing and mysterious, and are often interpreted by what we want them to be rather than what they actually are. For example, why do we call the region the Middle East? East of what or whom? In looking at the following map, we must remember that directions are relative to our geographic locations.

Map 1) The Middle East in Its World Setting
After examining the map, you soon notice that the Middle East is not in the middle of what we generally think of as the East or Asia. It is actually located in northern Africa and southwestern Asia. So, why do we call this region - 'the Middle East?'

American Admiral Alfred T. Mahan and British Lord George Nathaniel Curzon started using the term at the turn of the century to refer to the region between the Arabian peninsula and India. (1) East of Great Britain, this region was of geo-strategic importance; Suez, Egypt, and the Persian Gulf were midway between Britain and its possessions in India and further East. The Middle East was used as a convenient term, not as an accurate geographic description. So, what does this tell us about some of our other beliefs or assumptions about this region?

**About the Following Unit of Study:**

To examine the events in the Middle East today as a legacy of World War I, we must go back to the break-up of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the boundaries within the Middle East as we now know them. The peace settlements, imposed by the Allies after World War I, collected diverse peoples and cultures of the former Ottoman Empire into what would become nation-states. Some ethnic groups believed that they would be given their own nation-states; instead, they found themselves minorities within others. Religious and ethnic differences were ignored. Regions were carved up with little regard for their geography or history. This new "Middle East" was left with conditions that would breed resentment and alienation at best, conflict and war at worst.

Part I of the unit provides background information through interpretive map study. Part II examines the process by which the existing nation-states were created in the postwar period. Through interactive role play and the use of a "fever" chart, we gain insight into the feelings of the People of the Middle East. We experience the politics involved in the era of World War I, as the Allied Powers reveal secret bilateral agreements, negotiate treaties, and draw the boundaries of the regions that would become nation-states within the Middle East.

In 1993, a U.S. traveler in Istanbul, Turkey, asked a man born and raised there, "Do you consider yourself a Turk?" "No," was his reply, even though he had known no other home. He was "Caucasian, not Turkish" because his ancestors had come from the region of the Caucasus Mountains. It struck the American visitor as odd, because the concept of citizenship to a U.S. citizen is very different from that of a Turk.

This story raises interesting questions. What does citizenship mean? How important is choice? Does one choose to be a citizen of a nation, to identify with it, to tie oneself with its fate? Is there more to creating nation-states than simply drawing boundaries or living within a specific region? What elements are necessary for a nation-state to succeed? These are some of the questions we must keep in mind as we examine the process by which the Middle Eastern nation-states were created.
Part One: The Middle East in the Era of World War I:
Background Information

The Middle East of Mahan and Curzon's day was a region that had been dominated by the Ottoman Turks for over five centuries. At the height of its power in 1683, the Empire stretched from the Persian Gulf to western Algeria in Africa, from the outskirts of Vienna to the Aegean Sea. Even though it steadily shrunk in size after 1683, the Ottoman Empire was still ruling or controlling a very large area in 1914. (an area approximately five times that of Texas).

The Ottoman Empire included: **Anatolia**, the area we now call Turkey; the **fringes of the Arabian Peninsula**; and the **Fertile Crescent**, which included Greater Syria and Mesopotamia.

(Map 2) The Ottoman Empire in 1683 compared to 1914
Greater Syria included the entire region along the Mediterranean coastline and extended south. It contained what is today Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan. (Please again refer to Maps 1 and 2) The region of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers was called Mesopotamia in 1914. Even though the people who lived there called their region Iraq, the British and other Europeans of the period called it by its Greek name, Mesopotamia. We will refer to it as Mesopotamia for the purposes of this unit.

We will not be examining North Africa, Iran or Afghanistan in this study. Even though North Africa was officially part of the Ottoman Empire, North Africa had fallen under the control of the European powers. Iran (Persia) and Afghanistan were independent and not a part of the Ottoman Empire in 1914.

Iran and Afghanistan, however, were the focus of British and Russian imperial rivalry because they were so close to Russian Central Asia and British India. Russia needed warm water ports. Pakistan was a part of India at that time, and Britain wanted to protect its Indian colony from Russia. Also, Britain and Russia were interested in the region because of written reports in the 1890s stating that there was vast oil potential in Iran. (3) The rivalry was partially resolved by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, dividing Persia and Afghanistan into 'spheres of influence.'

I. The Peoples of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire was ruled by a Turkish king called Sultan and a bureaucratic ministry. The Turks were politically dominant over other groups in this multi-ethnic empire. Some groups claimed that they suffered some discrimination from the Turkish majority. (It is important to note that many Arabs today consider the four hundred years of Ottoman domination as a dark period in their history)(4) Ethnic origin, however, was not a good basis for discrimination since few among the Ottoman ruling class could claim pure Turkish parentage.

Turkish, Arab), Persian, Byzantine (Greek), Armenian, and Kurdish populations within the Empire had been intermarrying for centuries. There had also been a Mongolian invasion. Like all empires of the time that had been crossroads for migrations and invasions, the population of the Ottoman Empire was a mix of ethnic and racial groups. Language and religion, therefore, served as bases for ethnic identity.

Group Identity Within the Ottoman Empire

Turkish was the official language of government and the army. Arabic, however, was also used in religion and law, as well as Persian in literature. Even so, minority communities continued to speak their own languages and identify with their own groups. As stated above, it was difficult to classify populations within the Ottoman Empire through parentage; therefore, ethnic identity was partially based on the primary language spoken.

Turkish speakers made up roughly 45\% of the Empire’s population of some 21 million; Arabic: speakers were 30\%. Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities accounted for some 17\%, the Kurds 7\%, and other minorities existed in very small numbers.(5) (Please note on Map 3 where the populations were concentrated.)
The importance of each minority's determination to speak its own language may be better understood if we remember that language can give an ethnic minority a sense of personal history, identity and self-esteem. This is particularly important if the ethnic minority considers itself discriminated against, as was the case for some minorities within the Ottoman Empire. For example, in the United States, Spanish-speaking populations throughout the nation continue to maintain their language, as do many other ethnic and racial groups.

The **Turkish speakers** were concentrated in Anatolia. The **Arabs** were spread throughout Mesopotamia, Syria (which included Palestine), Arabia and North Africa. Some **1,500,000 Greeks** lived in the coastal region of western Anatolia, the Dodecanese and Aegean islands, and Cyprus. Greeks had lived here for almost 3,000 years. (7)

Estimates vary, but some 2 million **Armenians** lived in a region south of the Caucasus Mountains. Based on continuous occupation of this area, their claims for a homeland dated back almost 2,700 years.(8) **South and southwest of this region lived approximately a. million Kurds.** *(9)* These ancient, tribal mountain people inhabited an area they called Kurdistan. Kurdistan had no officially recognized borders or existence, and the Kurds had no unified political system.
By 19010, there were some half a million Jews in the Ottoman Empire. They were concentrated in large and small communities within the cities of Istanbul, Bursa, and Izmir (Smyrna) in Anatolia, as well as in the cities of Mosul and Baghdad in Mesopotamia. There had been a continuous Jewish habitation throughout North Africa for close to a thousand years and in Yemen for over two thousand. Approximately 56,000 Jews were living in Palestine by 1918.

Religious Identity in the Ottoman Empire in 1914

Three great religions of the world, based on monotheism or the belief in one god were born in this region: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Using the map below, locate the religious groups described in the text that follows.

Information on religious identity within the Ottoman Empire can only be estimated. This map is based on the historical activity attributed to these groups.

The Sunnis formed the majority within Islam. Islam was the religion revealed to the Arab prophet, Muhammad, in the 7th century. The Turks and most of the Arabs within the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Kurds, were all Sunni Muslims. Other Sunni sects existed as well. For example, the Wahhabis in the Arabian Peninsula were strict Sunni revivalists or reformers and had an important influence on the way Saudi Arabia developed in the 20th century.

The Shi'is were the majority in Arab Mesopotamia (Iraq), as well as in Iran (Persia). The Druze in Lebanon formed an off-shoot Shi'i sect. Another small sect called Ibadism grew in North Africa, Yemen, and Oman. (Ibadism is Oman's state religion.)

The Sunnis and the Shi'is

Because Sunnis and Shi'is represent important religious forces in the Middle East today, it is important to know something about their differences. The Sunnis recognized the Caliph (“successor” of Muhammad) as the supreme authority and leader of the Islamic community. Much later, the Ottoman sultans claimed to be the Caliphs of Islam. In each local community, there is a leader of prayer for the Friday services in the mosque (14) something like a local priest or minister.

Shi'is did not recognize the Caliph as their authority in the late 7th century Shi'is split away over their belief that rightful religious authority belonged to leaders called Imams. To the Shi'is Imams were the successors or descendants of Muhammad; the first Imams were Ali - Muhammad's first cousin, foster brother, and son-in-law and Ali's sons. Ali and other recognized Imams were believed to have superhuman knowledge and authority. For most Shi'i the last Imam disappeared from earth; Ayatollahs (signs of God) claimed religious authority on behalf of the Imams.

Some of the early Imams were killed by rival Muslims in the late 7th century. The Shi'is accepted collective guilt for their betrayals and deaths. As an annual observance of their symbolic guilt, many Shi'is engage in self-inflicted wounding as atonement. This practice has continued to the present day.

(An example of a similar practice can be seen in the Pentitentes of northern New Mexico who also used flagellation during the Christian Holy Week as atonement for the crucifixion of Jesus. That practice continued well into the mid 20th century.)

These annual observances of repentance set Shi'is apart from the majority Sunnis and provided a common identity for the minority Shi'is scattered throughout the Empire. These religious divisions caused on-going, bitter conflict within the Islamic world. We can better understand by recalling parallels in Christianity. Christianity was permanently divided in the 11th century into Roman Catholic and the Eastern or Greek Orthodox. In the 16th century, Protestants left the Roman Catholic Church in protest of its authority, beliefs, and practices. Protestantism, in turn, splintered into many different sects. Religious conflict resulted in the 17th century Thirty Years War and has caused bloodshed and strife in Northern Ireland.
II. The Lands at the Ottoman Empire

In comparing the Middle East of the 1914 period with the same region today, which nations were not in existence in 1914? The North African states were still a part of the Ottoman Empire in name only. Spain and France claimed Morocco; France was in Algeria and Tunisia. Italy had occupied Libya, and Egypt was controlled by the British.

The Ottoman lands, therefore, will be examined in four sections: 1) Anatolia and Mediterranean Islands; 2) the Fertile Crescent-Greater Syria; 3) the Fertile Crescent - Mesopotamia; and 4) the Arabian Peninsula.
**Anatolia and the Mediterranean Islands:**

A. As you have discovered, **Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Israel** did not exist as separate nations in 1914. Using Map 5 below, locate the geographic sites and cities in bold print. By placing Map 5 on top of Map 6 and holding them to the light, you can see the elevation of entire geographic regions in relation to the cities and sites.

B. **Anatolia** was one of the names for what is now Turkey. There are two main mountain systems - the **Pontus Mountains** in the north, toward the **Black Sea**, and the **Taurus Mountains** in the south. Each consists of several ranges. The two systems come together in eastern Turkey in a complex of ranges with **Mount Ararat** in the middle. Anatolia had a long history as a crossroads between East and West with such early inhabitants as Hittites, Greeks, Persians, Romans, and Byzantines.

(Map5) Anatolia and Mediterranean Islands
Armenians lived in the eastern region for over 2,500 years; some say they were them 800 BCE. (CE means Common Era and BCE is Before the Common Era. These terms, now widely used, are equivalent to AD - Anno Domini or in the Year of Our Lord, and BC - Before Christ Since we are examining the Middle East; we will use CE and BCE.) In this area is Mount Ararat (where some believe they have found the remains of Noah's ark) and Lake Van (Turkey's largest lake). The Armenians lost part of their historical homeland in Eastern Anatolia when the region came under the control of the Ottoman Turks from the west and the Persians from the east. The eastern sector went under Russian rule in the 19th century. Many Armenians remained in the eastern sector until 1915; others lived in Adana and Tarsus in the province of Cilicia and in Istanbul (Constantinople).

Eastern Anatolia was also the home of the Kurds. The region of the Kurds is called Kurdistan. It forms an arc of mountainous territory from Western Iran through northern Iraq and Syria, to eastern Turkey. Not much was known about them except that they spoke a language related to Persian. Kurds were historical enemies of their neighbors, the Armenians. They competed in areas around Lake Van, Bitlis, and Diyarbakir.

(Map 6) Elevation Map of Anatolia and the Mediterranean Islands
The southern region, bordering Arab lands, was dry and poor. It was through this region that the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers flowed into Arab lands. The city of Urfa was a crossroads between Anatolia and Arab lands to the southeast. Here was Mosul, a town/region of growing importance because of the discovery of oil. To the southwest lay the Syrian city of Aleppo, an important trade center.

When Turks (the Seljuks) moved into old Armenia in 1071, many Armenians fled to Cilicia and established new Armenian communities. The province of Cilicia had much earlier become famous for Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul who helped establish Christianity in Asia Minor. (It was on the road to Damascus where it was said that he had his “conversion experience.”) Close by was Adana on the Seyhan River. Northwest across the Taurus Mountains was an important city of the interior, Konya.

The westernmost part of the Ottoman Empire of 1683 had extended into the Balkans in Europe until 1913. Because of the Balkan Wars in 1912-13, the Ottoman Turks had lost a but eastern Thrace. The small region on the European side was the site of the capital, Istanbul (Constantinople). A little south lay the cities of Bursa, a center of the silk trade, and Izmir (Smyrna), an important commercial and shipping center, North on the Black Sea was the Greek-populated port of Trabzon. Historically, goods from the East were loaded on ships here to go to the Mediterranean and beyond.

Cyprus was strategically located in the eastern Mediterranean, close to Suez and the Middle East. Settled by Greeks over 2,500 years ago, it still had an 80% Greek population. It had been occupied by the British in 1878 and formally annexed in 1915. The Dodecanese Islands”, with its 90% Greek population,” fell to the Italians in 1912.

In 1908, a politically powerful group called the Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.), better known as the ‘Young Turks,’ took control of the Ottoman government. They were trying to reform the government, to create a new Ottoman nation which would have more western aspects to it. Europeans believed the Ottoman Empire to be weak and behind the West in development and referred to it as “The Sick Man of Europe.”

During World War I, some of the C.U.P. officials began to fear they might lose the war. The goal of some of these C.U.P. officials turned to creating a Turkish nation. The different ethnic groups would have to give up their culture, customs, and languages and become Turks. They had become concerned about the loyalty of some of the minority groups within Anatolia. They believed that some of the Armenians and Greeks were helping the Allies, in order to break up the Empire and get their own homelands.

According to Armenian accounts, between 1894-96 one hundred thousand Armenians were killed by mobs of Turks and Kurds; another 20,000 in 1909 around Adana in Cilicia. When in 1915 the Russians were about to invade eastern Turkey the C.U.P Ministers of War and Interior feared the Armenians were helping the Russians. They ordered the entire eastern Armenian population deported from Anatolia. Raped, beaten and starved, Armenians were driven into the desert in the region of Aleppo. Armenians estimate that between 1 - 1.5 million died of starvation or were killed, some 400,000 mom in Syria and Iraq.”
C. The Fertile Crescent - Greater Syria:

As you have discovered, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Israel did not exist as separate nations in 1914. Using Map 7 below, locate the geographic sites and cities in bold print. To see its area in context please look at (Map 8)

The Fertile Crescent contained the regions known as Syria and Mesopotamia or Iraq, as the Arabs called it. Greater Syria was the region along the coast and to the northeast which included the present-day nations of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan. The 3,000,000 or so inhabitants were Arabic in language. About one quarter were Christians divided into ten sects, the most important being the Maronites. There were five Muslim sects. One sect, the Druze, had formed its own religion, not recognized by either the Sunnis or Shi’is. And, there were Jews. This complex mix of religions is better understood by realizing that it was in this region that two of the three great monotheistic religions - Judaism and Christianity - were born.
Physical Map of the Fertile Crescent
When this area was a part of the Roman Empire, the Jews were expelled from the region for having revolted against Roman rule. In the years 66 and 133-135 CE, Jews were scattered throughout the Middle East and into Europe as a result of the Jewish 'Diaspora' (dispersion). A few Jews stayed in Palestine. From then on, the uprooted Jews dreamed of returning to their 'homeland' in Palestine.

(CE means Common Era and BCE is Before the Common Era. These terms are equivalent to AD - Anno Domini or in the Year of Our Lord and BC - Before Christ and are now being widely used. Since we are examining the Middle East; we will use CE and BCE.)

By the end of the 2nd century CE, a large number of Christian churches had been established in Greater Syria. The great cities of Antioch, Damascus, and Jerusalem had become important religious centers through the efforts of teachers such as Paul of Tarsus. In the 4th century, the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as the state religion. As the Roman Empire became divided into East and West, so did the Christian Church with centers in Istanbul (Constantinople and Rome).
Then, Islam, the third great monotheistic religion, spread from its founding place in the Arabian Peninsula. By the end of the 7th century, Arabs had conquered Syria and Mesopotamia, establishing Islam as the main religion. Arab Muslims encouraged religious tolerance since all three religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - traced their heritages from Abraham. Then, in the mid-11th century, the Seljuks, a Turkish nomadic group originally from Central Asia, gradually conquered the Middle East. The Seljuks and the Arabs bitterly fought for control of Greater Syria, causing the Christian states of Western Europe to believe this gave them an opportunity to recapture the Holy Land.

The Crusades began when western European Christians waged a Holy War in 1096 against the 'infidel' Muslims. The Crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099. Saladin, a Kurdish king, retook Jerusalem and most of Greater Syria in 11187. After the Crusades, some Crusaders stayed on and intermarried with the Arabs. The Christian church became permanently divided into two major groups: Eastern Orthodox under the Patriarch of Constantinople and Roman Catholic under the Pope. Other Christian's sects continued to exist.

Because of the French Crusaders, France had maintained a special relationship with the Roman Catholic Maronites in the part of Syria called Mount Lebanon. France had been supporting them with money and missionaries since the 17th century. Later on, Russians had insisted on acting as protectors for the Eastern Orthodox. (18) This became an important excuse for these European nations' interest in Syria in the WWI era.

The Muslim Ottoman Turks established their rule in Syria in the early 1500s. Ottoman Turkish rule continued for four hundred years until the time of World War I. Even though the lives of Arabs and Turks were so intertwined, the Arabs had kept a sense of being a separate people. World War I awakened Arab nationalism and a demand for self-rule. Arabs considered Greater Syria to be central to an Arab nation.

The important seaport of Iskenderun, (Alexandretta), in the province called Hatay, gave the easiest access to eastern Anatolia and the region of Mesopotamia. Turks made up some 40% of the inhabitants. (19) There were two other important corridors of access. One north-south corridor existed along the Mediterranean seacoast of Syria. The other lay between the hills and mountains to the west and the Syrian Desert to the east. The inland towns of Aleppo-Homs-Hama-Damascus were located in this north-south corridor.

The region that came to be known as Palestine was made up of land on both sides of the River Jordan. (The British, not the inhabitants of the region, used the name Palestine. It was a Greek-Roman name derived from 'Philistines,' early occupants of this region)”20” The part of Palestine known as Trans-Jordan was the region that lay across the River Jordan. All of Palestine had important religious significance for the three religions.

In the 19th century the international Zionist movement was organized for the purpose of regaining a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The movement took its name from a hill in Jerusalem called Zion, the location of the Jewish Temple. In 1897 Theodore Herzl held the First Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, to gain international support. From congresses and other efforts, support slowly developed.
C. **The Fertile Crescent - Mesopotamia:**

As you have discovered, *Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan,* and *Israel* did not exist as separate nations in 1914. Using *Map 9* below locate the geographic sites and cities in bold print. By placing *Map 9* on top of *Map 10* and holding them to the light, you can see the elevation of entire geographic regions in relation to these cities and sites.

*Mesopotamia* (*Iraq was the Arab name*) had been inhabited by Arabs, Iranians (Persians), and conquering Turkish and Mongol tribes, the last being the Ottoman Turks in the early 1500s. The land and people were dominated by the important *Tigris* and *Euphrates Rivers* with head-waters located in the Anatolian mountains to the north.

Over time, silt from these mountains was deposited on the plains below making them fertile and productive. Since these plains were flat and without much change in elevation, carefully maintained irrigation canals were critical for getting water to the farms.

(Map 9) Political Map of the Fertile Crescent, Mesopotamia
The two rivers merged, forming what was called the Shatt al-Arab, which ran into the Persian Gulf. Basra, a port located on the Shatt al-Arab close to the Persian Gulf, was a junction point. From Basra, goods and people from the Syrian Desert to the south could be shipped by water to destinations to the east. There had been long struggles with Iran over coastal regions which Iraq had lost. It had been left with a very short coastal front on the Persian Gulf.

Further north was the important city of Baghdad, an important Islamic capital. Located on the Tigris where the two rivers come close together, it also served as one of the two great Jewish cities of Asia, the other being Jerusalem.

(Map 10) Elevation Map' of the Fertile Crescent· Mesopotamia
(The region around present-day Baghdad had been settled by Jews after 'the Babylonian Captivity' in the 7th century BCE. (CE means Common Era, and BCE is Before the Common Era. These terms, now widely used, are equivalent to AD· Anno Domini or in the Year of Our Lord, and BC· Before Christ. Since we are examining the Middle East, we will use CE. and BCE.) The Biblical account tells of the Jewish refusal to pay tribute to the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. The King hastened to Jerusalem and took the Jewish king and his family back to Babylon as prisoners. Many Jews stayed on after their king was released and allowed to return to Palestine.)

Whatever the specific facts, a center of Jewish life shifted to this region sometime around 600 BCE. Jews have argued that they were settled here a thousand years before the coming of the Arabs in 634 CE. (21) For a time, there was religious tolerance for both Jews and Christians because of the common heritage of Abraham. In Iraq, before the war, about 120,000 Jews lived in flourishing communities, (22) along with much smaller Christian communities.

**Mosul** was the important commercial center in the north, because of its location as a junction point. From its position on the Tigris, it connected land routes from the east and west with the river communities to the south. In addition, it was believed to contain vast quantities of oil. It was in a Kurdish region, and had a large non-Arab population. The Jews, as well as Armenians forced out of Anatolia, shared some of the responsibility for Mosul's commercial success. Assyrian Christian refugees, also forced out of Turkey, (23) added to this interesting mixture. The majority Shi'i and the Sunnis made up the rest of the population.

It was here in Iraq where the Shi'is broke with the Sunnis over the question of religious authority. **Karbala** on the Euphrates was the sacred Shi'i city where Husayn (the Prophet Muhammad's grandson) and other close relatives were slain. The day of the slaying marks the high point in the Shi'i religious year. It was commemorated by processions, self-flagellation for repentance for this treachery, and 'cursing of the Sunnis' for their role in the murders?" If the Shi'is harbored any intense feelings toward the Sunnis, they were minor compared to the bitterness felt toward the Saudis from Arabia.

From the earliest days of Islam, reform or revivalist groups emerged. These groups were trying to return Islam to the purity of the earliest days of the Prophet. The Wahhabis represented such a movement. It came out of Arabia from the Najd in the 18th century. Early in the 19th century, Wahhabi religious extremists advanced into the Iraqi city of Karbala, and destroyed the tomb of Husayn, the grandson of Muhammad. The Wahhabis believed that shrines, worshipped for themselves, removed concentration on the one God. The tomb had become a shrine, a major Shi'i holy place and center for pilgrimages. (25) This act by the Wahhabis was never forgotten or forgiven by the Shi'is in Iraq. It affected their attitude toward the Wahhabis of modern-day Saudi Arabia.

In Mesopotamia at the time of WWI, 75% of the population was tribal. Over time, there had been minimum Ottoman rule in the region, providing no real experience in obeying a central authority. It may have been referred to in the West as 'Mesopotamia,' but, in fact, there was no sense of being one political entity or region, at all. They were not a people to be easily united into one government (26)
D. Arabian Peninsula:

As you have discovered, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia did not exist as separate nations in 1914. Yemen, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait were principalities under British control. Using Map 11 below locate the cities and geographic sites in bold print. By placing Map 11 on top of Map 12 and holding them to the light, you can see the elevation of entire geographic regions in relation to these cities and sites.

Arabic-speaking Muslims were the inhabitants of this vast region of principalities. Notice the bodies of water that surround the peninsula on three sides -- the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean.

(Map 11) Political Map of the Arabian Peninsula
The western coast contains the hilly region called the Hijaz. The sacred cities of Mecca and Medina, the birthplace of the Islamic religion, were located here. The Asir, the coastal region south of the Hijaz, continued southeast to Yemen with its mountains rising over 12,000 feet (4,000 meters). The port of Aden had been occupied by the British since 1839. The entire coastal region from Yemen up into the Persian Gulf was made up of several small independent principalities that had come under the protection of Britain - Oman in 1891, Bahrain in 1880, Qatar in 1916, and Kuwait in 1819.

The interior region was made up of the Nafud or Syrian Desert, a sandy desert in the north. The Rub' al-Khali, a vast 'empty quarter' of sandy desert to the far south, had dunes more than 700’ high. The rocky desert region in the central part of the interior was called the Najd.
In the interior was the rocky desert and steppe region of the Najd. Riyadh was the capital of the Najd. These vast, treeless plains with scattered oases were the homes of the Bedouin. Bedouin tribes were clusters of several clans. Clans were made up of groups of related families, much the same as the Native American Indian tribes. The Bedouin tribes’ principle sources of livelihood were herding, agriculture, trading, and raiding; Rival Bedouin chiefs or sheikhs vied for supremacy. Ottoman rule was minimal with a governor in Jidda on the coast.

Muhammad had belonged to the Hashim clan within the large, powerful Quraysh tribe. Mecca had been a center of trade and commerce. Medina was an important agricultural settlement. As these cities shifted their importance from commerce and agriculture to that of Islamic sacred cities, the Hashimites gained in influence. The Hashimites became the Sharifs of Mecca, hereditary rulers of the holy cities. Sharif, meaning ‘nobleman’ or ‘highborn,’ was a title often given to descendants of Muhammad. At the time of the war, the Sharif was Husayn ibn Ali. (Husayn is also spelled Hussein, Husayn, or Husain). Sharif Husayn’s sons, Abdullah and Faysal, also played important roles.

Ibn Saud controlled the central part of the Najd in 1914 and was a follower of the Muslim Wahhabi sect. To understand the Saudi Arabia of today, one has to understand what this means. Just as in Judaism and Christianity, there have been reform or revival movements within Islam trying to return to the purity of the earliest days. The Wahhabis represented such a movement. It came out of Arabia in the 18th century when the Wahhabis joined a local tribal chief, Muhammad Ibn Saud. A militant, reformist movement began. They meshed the power of missionary zeal with warriors called the Brotherhood and began mastering large areas of Arabia.

They viewed the burial places of the Prophet and his family as a threat to the belief in one God because ‘these shrines had come to be worshipped for themselves. As a result, they tried to destroy the sacred tombs of Mecca and Medina, including those of the Prophet and his companions. They went on to Karbala in Iraq and destroyed the tomb of Husayn, the grandson of Muhammad, a major Shi’i holy place and pilgrimage center. This was an act that has never been forgotten by Shi’is in Iraq, and has affected their attitude toward the modern-day Saudi Arabia.

The movement was stopped by larger forces within the Ottoman Empire; it remained quiet for much of the 19th century. The Saudi family was in exile in Kuwait until a son of the Saudi house began to rebuild, using the Wahhabi Brotherhood. In the 20th century, they launched a second great expansion. In 1902, they captured Riyadh” the capital of tile Najd, and sent a holy man among the tribal chieftains to convince them to join the movement, Ibn Saud gradually spread his rule over much of Arabia, which ultimately ended up as Saudi Arabia.

In 1914, however, this had not yet happened. Ibn Saud was poised to challenge Sharif Husayn for control of the Hijaz and the sacred cities, the symbolic center of all Islam.
Part II. Simulation Roles:

A. Anatolia, and the Mediterranean Islands:
These role descriptions should be used as a guide to develop your own persona. Role-playing allows you to get outside of your own prejudices and biases, and to ‘get inside the head of another.’ This is a means of understanding events from a different perspective, one you may never examine, otherwise. The roles were created from a composite of historical information from that time period. Keep in mind that the various ethnic/religious groups lived together in small communities within the larger. A Turk may live close to a Jewish or Greek community, but within his own community. They dealt with each other in the public spaces, but went home to their own communities to socialize and to worship in their own mosques, synagogues, or churches.

1. Turk in Istanbul: You are a ‘Young Turk,’ a member of the politically powerful group also called the Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.) The C.U.P. took complete control of the government in 1908, trying to reform it. You knew Turkey had fallen behind the West. You would like to preserve the Ottoman Empire, but above all, you want to protect Anatolia from the Allies. Your goal is to be a part of a new nation of Turkey made up of Turks. (The minorities must choose - become Turkish, by subordinating their cultures and languages, or leave.) You distrust the Greeks and Armenians in particular; they sympathize with the Allies because they think the Allies will support them in carving homelands out of Anatolia When it looked as though the British would win at the Dardanelles, you saw Armenians openly celebrating.

2. Greek in Izmir (Smyrna): You and your family have been in the shipping industry for generations in Izmir, which you call Smyrna. You own a fleet of merchant ships which carry Middle Eastern goods to many other parts of the world - silks from Bursa, Turkish carpets, timber, tobacco, etc. Greeks have been in western Anatolia since remotest antiquity which makes you feel somewhat superior to the Turks and Arabs. There is archeological evidence that a Greek colony named Smyrna, after the myrrh which grew in abundance, was here in the 11th century BCE. Homer, it is believed, composed the Iliad here. The Greeks lost Smyrna to the Seljuk Turks in the 14th century. It is still one-half Greek, very Christian and Greek in all but government. Someday you hope Smyrna and other Greek areas will once again belong to Greece.

3. Turkish-Jew in Bursa: Your family has been in the silk business for several generations. In Bursa silk is bought and sold because of the productive silk-spinning mills nearby. Bursa was founded in the 2nd century BCE and was the earliest Ottoman capital (14th century). You love and feel a part of this uniquely Turkish city as a loyal Ottoman subject. The Muslim Turks have always treated you well. According to the Qur'an, you are a ‘people of the book.’ Jews and Muslims both claim Abraham as the father of their peoples. You feel loyal to this Ottoman Empire; it has made you comfortable and well-off. You know that of the Ottoman minorities, you are the least threatening. Others talk about parts of Anatolia becoming their own homeland. You would love to have your own Jewish homeland, perhaps in Palestine, but certainly not in Anatolia You might go to Palestine if it became a Jewish homeland once again.

4. Turkish-Arab farmer living in Urfa: You live in the ‘Eye of Mesopotamia,’ between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, at the junction of ancient Syria, Armenia, and Mesopotamia It is believed to be the birthplace of Abraham. You speak Turkish and Arabic, but don’t think of yourself as Turk or Arab. You just want to be left alone to make a living. Politics don’t interest you. You irrigate your fields of green peppers, tomatoes, and eggplant from the river than runs close by, which then joins the Euphrates. Your family lived among an Armenian population in this area, until a conflict broke out between them and the Kurds. Armenians were driven out and killed in 1915. You heard that the Armenians were helping the Russians who were attacking the Empire from the east. Horrible things happen in wartime; Turks have suffered and died too.
5. **Kurd in the mountainous region between Bitlis and Diyarbakir, west of Lake Van**: You live close to the Tigris River, in the Bitlis Mountains south of Lake Van. You herd sheep and goats, moving them from pasture to pasture between Bitlis and Diyarbakir. Diyarbakir is an ancient walled city on the Tigris River and, you feel, is historically a part of Kurdistan. You distrust the Turks. Even though you are Sunni Muslim, just like the Ottoman Turks, they don't treat you well. You don't speak Turkish; you speak Kurdish which is related to Persian. The Turks in Urfa discriminate against you for not being Turkish. They accuse you of being wild and uncivilized. You know your people were here, in this region you call Kurdistan, long before the Turks; yet, you can't rule your own homeland. By rights, your Kurdistan should include Mosul in northern Iraq. That oil potential, that the West wants, would raise the Kurds out of poverty. You distrust the Armenians because you have historically competed with them for control of the land in eastern Anatolia.

6. **Armenian living in Adana in Cilicia since 1915**: You were born and raised in Van, east of Lake Van, the first Armenian city. You fled from Van in 1915 and sought help from your well-to-do family here in Adana. After the Armenians were overrun by the Ottoman Turks, Iranians and later the Russians, you lost your historic lands near your beloved Mt. Ararat and Lake Van. Your people became scattered throughout the Ottoman Empire. However, many Armenians remained in the east until 1915. From 1894-1915, it is estimated that 1.5 million Armenians died of starvation or were killed. You hate and distrust the Kurds, and those Turks who are hate-mongers, especially the C.U.P. But many Turks helped you escape from Van and to reach Adana. Others protected your family in Adana from the Turkish mobs there. Officially, now there are no Armenians in eastern Anatolia: Turkish Armenia was destroyed and half of your people killed. The Allies must give your people your own homeland!! Otherwise, your people will perish.

7. **Turk living in Trabzon on the Black Sea**: You work for a Greek merchant/shipping company. You load and unload goods from the East on the ships going from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The Greeks and Armenians are great business people and craftsmen. You are grateful for the prosperity coming from shipping abroad because of the demand for Ottoman goods. You don't approve of some of the ideas of the Young Turks. They talk about a new Turkish nation; you don't even know what that means. Aren't you all Ottomans? You speak Turkish and Greek, because a lot of the people of Trabzon are Greek; you depend on each other.

8. **Turkish Scholar living in Konya**: You are a respected professor of history at Konya University, Konya was the capital of the Seljuk Turkish empire between 1011 and 1108. This is the Home of whirling dervishes, religious mystics who spin in a kind of ballet trying to achieve a mystical union with God.

You have studied the history of the rise of nationalism. You are interested in the ideas put forth by the C.U.P. on creating a Turkish nation in Anatolia out of the Ottoman Empire. But, most Ottomans don't understand what it is to be a nation or a citizen, it is a new idea to them.

The Ottoman Empire has never been a single community but a group of communities, each of which claims the loyalty of its members. That is unacceptable in the development of a nation-state. Nation-states must win loyalties away from the individual communities to a centralized government of the state. It must encourage the acceptance of all of its people and make sure that the rights and physical safety of all of its citizens are protected. This will be a real problem.

You are concerned with the C.U.P. insistence that it be a Turkish nation in which only Turkish is spoken; minorities must let go of their cultural identities, or leave. That will arouse the poor, unemployed, soldiers. They are coming back from the war front poor, defeated, disillusioned, and angry. In bad times, angry people often find scapegoats on whom to take out their anger. You are concerned.
Part II. Simulation Roles –

B. Fertile Crescent - Greater Syria:

These role descriptions should be used as a guide to develop your own role persona. Hole-playing allows you to get outside of your own prejudices and biases, and to get inside the head of another. This is a means of understanding events from a different perspective. One that may never be examined otherwise. The roles were created from a composite of historical information from that time period. Keep in mind that the various ethnic/religious groups lived together in small communities within the larger. They dealt with each other in the public squares, but went home to their own communities to socialize and to worship in their own churches, synagogues, or mosques.

1 Turk in Iskenderun working on the Berlin to Baghdad Railroad: Even though the population is 40% Turkish, Arabic is the language in this region. Here, there are Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox Christians, Armenians, Roman Catholics, and Jews. Iskenderun is one of the most culturally diverse and strategic regions in the Ottoman Empire. As an important, seaport connects Mesopotamia and eastern Turkey with the Mediterranean Sea. The Berlin to Baghdad railroad, which begins in Germany, runs through Istanbul, across Anatolia to Iskenderun and Aleppo, then to Baghdad. That is, when it is completed. At Aleppo, the railroad branches south to Damascus and Gaza. You want it to be a part of the new Turkish nation, whatever that will be. In any case, you don't want it to fall to the Arabs.

2 Arab Syrian Orthodox Christian in Aleppo: You are a farmer/merchant living on the outskirts of Arab city of Aleppo. You want your own Arab nation - one that extends from Arabia and includes all of Greater Syria and Mesopotamia. You are more convinced than ever that Arabs must separate from the Turks since the Armenian refugees from Anatolia have flooded into Aleppo. They have sought refuge in your church and told of Turkish and Kurdish atrocities.

    Arabs have been bargaining with the British to get their support for a new Arab nation. Even though you are a Christian Arab, you are an Arab first. You are willing to fight with the Allies to throw off Ottoman rule if they can assure you that you will have your Arab nation.

    Aleppo is an important political and military point. It is on one of two north-south corridors of civilization in Syria. The first north-south corridor is the Syria seacoast along the Mediterranean Sea. The other corridor is this series of four towns A leppo-Homs-Hama-Damascus. These towns define the agricultural region of inland Syria the Syrian Desert lies to the east. Your towns are also the four stops along the important railway branch line to Gaza, built by the French and opened in 1895. At Damascus, another line goes on to the Hijaz and Medina in the Arabian Peninsula. This line is important militarily and politically in working with Britain to fight against the Turks.

3 Arab Maronite, Christian in Beirut: You teach at a Catholic high school funded by France. You are grateful for the long history of French financial and spiritual support. But, you are concerned about the intervention of the Allied powers in the affairs of Syria. You want an independent Arab nation and do not want to be under French rule, if indeed the Ottoman Empire comes to an end. The Allied powers have been claiming the right to "protect" Christians: the Russians - the Greek Orthodox; the French - the Maronite Catholics; and the British - the Protestants. In fact, this 'protection' is generally unnecessary. You Arab Christians have lived in relative harmony with your Muslim neighbors, the intervention has actually upset this harmony and will, in the long run, endanger you minorities.

    You see Arab nationalism as a solution to these religious differences. All Arabs would be citizens by reason of nationality rather than religion. You believe President Woodrow Wilson's promise to you in the Twelfth point of his Fourteen Points: that people living in the provinces of the Turkish Empire have the right of self-determination. You hope the United States will make the Allies keep this promise. (26)
4. **Arab Muslim in Damascus:** You are a member of an Arab secret society called Al-Fatat, aimed at obtaining independence for all Arab provinces. Your organization called for a meeting - the Arab National Congress- which met in Paris in 1913. When the C.U.P. heard about it, they rushed someone to Paris to negotiate with you. They offered to reform the Ottoman government so that Arabs could participate more equally. They also gave in on the demand that Arabic be the official language in Arab lands and in your school, but they broke their promise. You are willing to fight with the British against the Ottoman Turks to achieve Arab independence. You are not concerned about rumors of Palestine becoming a Jewish homeland. The Jews have been good neighbors in Damascus. They are 'people of the book' and to be respected.

5. **Arab Muslim Farmer in Palestine:** As a Palestinian, you believe you can trace your ancestry directly to the Canaanites who were here when the Jews entered the 'Promised Land' at the time of Moses. The reason you know this, your last name is Kan'an, a common last name in Palestine. (27) Other Arab Palestinians are descendants of Muslim Arabs who conquered this region in the 7th century CE. You Arab Palestinians believe you have lived continuously in this land for over 3,000 years, and it is yours by right of occupation. Now, the Jews are coming in and claiming it's theirs by right of history. You are concerned because they seem to have a lot of money to buy the land from you Arabs. And, they pay high prices for it. They talk of this as their homeland. You don't want any more Jews here. You want Palestine, and all of Syria, to be a part of the new Arab nation that is being talked about.

6. **Jewish Farmer in Palestine near Tel Aviv:** You are a new settler in Palestine. You came from Russia in 1909 to escape the terrible persecutions and murders there. You helped settle Tel Aviv, the first entirely Jewish town. You purchased the land little by little from Europeans, Turks, and Arab landlords. You now live in an agricultural settlement, which is like a commune- a kibbutz- where everything is shared. You have found a peace of mind and security you have never known before. You have gotten along well with your Arab neighbors. You look forward to the time Palestine will be a true, Jewish homeland for all Jews now suffering persecution, as you once did. You strongly support the Zionist movement.

7. **Arab Muslim in Amman, Transjordan:** Your region makes up the larger part of the whole region now called Palestine. It is largely unpopulated but certainly figures in Biblical history with tribal names such as the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Amorites. It is essentially a region of rivalry between the settled population in towns, such as Amman, and the Bedouin tribesmen, who move about in the desert region. The Bedouin live off of plundering the peasants and from their flocks; and herds. You have little understanding or interest in what goes on in Turkey. The Ottoman Turks and the Empire have had little effect on you. But you do care about the Palestine across the River Jordan. You are one people- mostly Sunni Arabs. You look to your Arab brethren to the south of you for whatever influence you seek.

8. **Jewish Merchant in Jerusalem:** As an honest, fair merchant, you have peaceably lived among the Arabs for a long time. You believe your ancestors have been in Jerusalem since long before the Jews revolted against the Romans in 66 CE and again in 135 CE. The land, then called Judea, was almost depopulated of Jews and was renamed Syria Palestina by the Romans. Your Jerusalem ancestors survived the Arab Muslim conquest in the 7th century and even the Christian Crusaders from Europe when they massacred Jerusalem Jews in 1099. Some Jews even fought with the Muslims against the Crusaders. You have many Arab friends with whom you share a love for this holy city and a mutual respect for each other. The rumors of a Palestine, as a Jewish homeland once again, cause you some concern. How will it change your relationships with your Arab neighbors?
Part II. Simulation Roles –

C. Fertile Crescent - Mesopotamia:

These role descriptions should be used as a guide to develop your own role persona. Role-playing allows you to get outside of your own prejudices and biases, and to get inside the head of another. This is a means of understanding events from a different perspective, one that may never be examined otherwise. The roles were created from a composite of historical information from that time period. Keep in mind that the various ethnic/religious groups lived together in small communities within the larger. They dealt with each other in the public spaces but went home to their own communities to socialize and to worship in their own churches, synagogues, or mosques.

1. Shi’i Arab Merchant in Baghdad: You have a good business trading beautiful carpets. Carpets come from Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan. You then get them down to Basra where they are shipped all over the world. You are ill competition with Jewish merchants who have been in Baghdad for as long as anyone can remember. They have been important to business in Iraq. It is hard doing business there, because there are so many different tribes which are always at war with one another. Shipping overland can be very dangerous, you would like some kind of strong government in Iraq. The Ottoman rule is simply not strong enough.

2. Shi’i Arab Shipper in Basra: Basra is the only port for seagoing vessels. The Mesopotamian coastline is only 36 miles long, a very short coastline. You have a real grudge against the British who signed a treaty of protection with the Sheikh Sabah in Kuwait in 1897, to protect them against the Ottoman Turks. You understand that the British actually came in to keep out other European nations, namely the Germans, from having access to the Persian Gulf. The British concern was always their empire in the East. The Allied powers never seem to even consider what is best for the people who live there. Iraq is in an ideal place for a large shipping industry, but it can hardly prosper with one port, otherwise, it is landlocked!

3. Shi’i Arab Shopkeeper in Karbala: You are very devout Muslim living in this sacred city where Husayn was killed, the son of Ali and grandson of the Prophet. You make your living from selling trinkets to pilgrims. Yearly pilgrimages to these shrines bring lots of people into the city to mourn the day of Husayn’s death. As the period of mourning and repentance, this is the most important event of the year. Boys and men lash and whip themselves to atone for having abandoned Husayn to his enemies. These enemies were Sunnis. ~ The last thing you would ever want is to have a Sunni rule over you. It is bad enough that the Ottoman Turks are Sunni; however, they aren't very effective in ruling you.

4. Kurdish Tribesman in the Mosul Area: You have heard that the President of the U.S. has talked about the right of a people to determine their own rulers. You want an independent Kurdistan above all else. You do not want to be ruled by the Ottoman Turks or by Arabs. That is all you care about: an independent Kurdistan. You have been able to survive by raiding caravans traveling from Iran. With an independent Kurdistan that included Mosul, you would never have to raid again. With the oil that is in Mosul, you Kurds would be rich.

5. Jewish Merchant in Baghdad: You Jews believe that you have been in Mesopotamia since the 7th century BCE. The so called ‘Babylonia Captivity’ of your King of Judea brought many of your ancestors to that region. You have been there ever since. There is a large Jewish population in Iraq, some 120,000. You have been invaluable to the prosperity of the region. Yet, you have been persecuted over and over. From 1750 to 1830 under Ottoman rule, the anti-Jewish measures were so horrible that many Jews fled to Iran and India. If ever a homeland for Jews in Palestine became a reality, you would be out of Baghdad in a week. Then let the Shi’i Arabs come to understand what you have done for the city.
6. **Assyrian Christian in the Mosul Region**: You claim that you are descended from the ancient Assyrians who lived in this region in the 8th century BCE. Your ancestors dominated much of the Middle East until they were destroyed in the 7th century BCE. Your group of Christians took part in the first major split in Christianity in the 5th century CE. You Assyrian Christians do not accept the dual nature of Christ. You do not believe that he is both divine and human, a position held by the Catholics and Protestants. Instead, you believe that Christ was of a single nature - divine. Your church, at one time, was spread throughout much of the civilized world; now you number 250,000 worldwide, with around half of you right there in the Middle East. You are worried as to what will happen to this region. You would most like to have Mosul as a part of a new Armenia. The Armenian Orthodox are also believers in the single nature of Christ. You would best be protected under Armenian rule. You fear becoming a part of Iraq, because the Shi’is are much more intolerant of you than are the Sunnis. So, you would prefer to have the Mosul region be a part of Turkey, when all of this fighting is over. You certainly do not want to be a part of Kurdistan.

7. **Sunni Turk in northern Mesopotamia**: You are a geologist/archeologist working in the region. You live in the fertile land between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. This region was called Mesopotamia in ancient times; it ill; Greek for "between the rivers." It is here that the earliest recorded civilizations existed, with artifacts dating back some 9,000 years. Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian civilizations existed here. You want to live in a region under a Turkish government.

You have hopes of being able to work with the western nations in getting funding for archeological digs. Your hopes would be better fulfilled in a new nation of Turkey, than they would be as a part of a new section of Iraq. You have lived among Kurds and Arabs, all of your life. But, if this region was ever ruled by a Shi'i majority' or by the Kurds, you would be afraid. The Shi'is in the Karbala part of the region are not too happy with you Sunnis, and the Kurds are, in a sense, raiders with no sense of what it takes to be a nation-state.

8. **Sunni Arab Bedouin Tribesman living in the Syrian Desert**: You live southwest of Baghdad in a tightly knit clan of Bedouins. You move your herds of goats around to various waterholes. Yours is a life of total freedom without obligation to any government, you know that the Ottoman Turks are supposed to be ruling you. But, they have never bothered you, and you never bother them. You have heard rumors that this war, that has been going on for so long, is going to change your life. There is talk of a new Arab nation. That would be fine just as long as it was run like the Ottoman Turks ran theirs. But, you don't want any of those fancy city people telling you how to live. You don't want any Shi'is or those crazy Wahhabis under Ibn Saud telling you how to live either. No one had better try to make you pay taxes.
Part II. Simulation Roles –

D. Arabian Peninsula:

These role descriptions should be used as a guide to develop your own role persona. Role-playing allows you to get outside of your own prejudices, and biases, and to 'get inside the head of another.' This is a means of understanding events from a different perspective, one that may never be examined, otherwise. The roles were created from a composite of historical information from that time period.

1. Hashemite Arab Merchant in Mecca: Because every Muslim must make a pilgrimage to Mecca some time during his life, you have hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. The pilgrimage is one of the five pillars of faith within the Muslim religion. It is called the Hajj. You are responsible for making food available for the pilgrims. It is an enormous task, but profitable, you are proud that you are of the Hashim clan of the Prophet Muhammad. You respect very much the Sharif of Mecca, Husayn. You have heard that he will someday be king of all of the Arabs. You would support him in this.

2. Arab Bedouin’ outside of Riyadh: You live outside of Riyadh, the capital of the Najd. You remember well in 1902 when Abd al-, Aziz Ibn Saud and his followers came into Riyadh in a daring night raid. He was the 21-year-old leader of these missionary-warriors. All of you were forced to accept the revivalist or reform beliefs of the Wahhabis, or else. But, you have been impressed, because he is a gifted leader. He has won you over. He controls all of the Najd and a good part of central Arabia. You know that never there is an independent Arabia; Ibn Saud would be the new leader, not Sharif Husayn of the Hijaz.

3. Wahhabi Arab Warrior in the Najd: You were one of many who became a Brother within the Wahhabi movement, under the leadership of Ibn Saud. He is a magnificent leader, and you would take up arms anytime to support his becoming the leader of all of the Arabs. You have never bothered much about being a part of the Ottoman Empire. It hasn’t affected you there in Arabia. But, if ever an army were raised to throw off Ottoman rule, you would want to be a part of it. You want all of the Middle East to be under the control of the Wahhabi.

4. Zaydi Shi’i in Yemen: you have been relatively independent for a long time. Yemen is a mountainous region, and your tribesmen have been able to go into the mountains any time the Ottoman Turks tried to be too much in control. So, now they leave you alone. Yours is one of the very few areas that are Zaydi Shi’i. The Shi’is split just as did the Christians. You are not the same as the Shi’i in Iraq. Religion separates you from the rest of the Arabian Peninsula. You do not want to be a part of an Arab nation. You certainly do not want an Arab nation under: Hashemite rule. You are an enemy of the Hashemite Sunni Sharif Husayn. Nor, are you friendly with the Wahhabi Ibn Saud.

5. Follower of Ibn Rashid of Shammar Province: You are in competition with Ibn Saud over the central part of the Arabian Peninsula as Bedouins in the desert; you haven't had to worry about European interference in your lives. The Europeans have only been interested in the coastal region. But, you have been in deadly competition with Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi. You are Sunnis more like the Hashemite of the Hijaz. You would support Sharif Husayn as head of a unified Arabia before you would support Ibn Saud. The most desirable thing for you would be rule by the Ibn Rashid within your province.
6. Arab Merchant in Aden: You have been dealing with the British for a long time. When the British took over Aden in 1839, it was nothing more than a fishing village, of some 500 residents. The British were interested in your region of Aden because of its geographic location. Your region became a means of protecting the British sea route to India as the Suez Canal became important later in the 19th century, the route from the Mediterranean into the Red Sea, around the Gulf of Aden could all be protected by the British navy. Pirates in the region could be controlled. You have prospered under the British. You certainly don't want to be ruled by the Hashemite Husayn or the Wahhabi Ibn Saud.

7. Muhammad al-Idrisi, Ruler of Asir: You have been a strong supporter of the Ottoman Empire. You are an enemy of Husayn, Sharif of Mecca You do not want any part of being an independent Arab nation under Husayn nor under many of the Hashimites. You are of a different clan and tribe. You have been long rivals of the Hashimites. You certainly do not want to be a part of the Wahhabi rule under Ibn Saud. You are better off under the Ottomans because your tribal identity and self-rule will be protected. You will not support any agreements made by the British with those two Arabian Sheikhs.

8. Kuwaiti Merchant: Sheikh Mubarak the Great was your outstanding ruler from 1896 to 1915. He broke away and proclaimed the independence of Kuwait from the Ottoman Empire. Because you were so small in population and in territory, you asked the British for protection. The British were delighted to come in because they were afraid another European power would take over this important region at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. It is believed that oil exists there in Kuwait; you want the British to develop it and make you a modern country. The British want to do that for you. As Iraq grows more powerful, you worry about your future. You are afraid that Iraq will lay claim to Kuwait as a part of the old province of Basra. Iraq has a coastline of 36 miles; whereas, your coastline is 310 miles long. Therefore, you are glad to have the British there in Kuwait to protect your small sheikhdom, thanks to the Anglo-Kuwait treaty of 1899.
### Part Two: Simulation

**'FEVER CHART'
Middle Eastern Reactions to Allied Decisions and Treaties**

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*Middle Eastern Reactions to Allied Decisions and Treaties*
Part II. Simulation Rounds

Round 1: *Spring 1917*. Release of Information about the *Husayn-McMahon Understanding of July 1915 - January 1916*

Britain pledged support to Husayn for an independent Arab nation, in exchange for an Arab revolt against: the Ottoman Turks. A series of letters were written between British Sir Henry McMahon and Sharif Husayn of the Hijaz in 1915 to 1916. These letters resulted in an 'understanding' and an Arab revolt against the Turks. Britain wanted to protect its interests in the region during and after the war. Husayn wanted British help in creating an independent Arab nation.

1. Husayn proposed British support for creation of an area that would be an independent Arab nation; it would include all of what is now Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and all of the Arabian Peninsula except for Aden, a British colony.
2. The British agreed to the proposals but with crucial revisions: 'The district of Mersin and Alexandretta (Hatay), and portions of Syria lying to the West of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hamil and Aleppo, cannot be said to be purely Arab,' and had to be left out of the independent Arab nation.

Also, it left out the Persian Gulf region where there were existing British treaties with Arab chiefs. The British also excluded the Baghdad and Basra regions because of a wartime need to protect oil sources.

1. Husayn accepted the revisions regarding Mersin and Alexandretta; he agreed to a short British occupation of Baghdad and Basra; he did not agree to the modifications regarding Syria, west of the line from Damascus to Aleppo). He never accepted nor rejected the Syria west modification but put the issue on hold.

Husayn Proposal for Independent Arab Nation
(included all of this area except Aden)

Area that Britain wanted excluded:
A Districts of Mersin and Alexandretta (Hatay)
B Portions of Syria lying to the West of Damascus, Homa, Hama, and Aleppo
C Regions of Baghdad and Basra
D Persian Gulf Region with Existing Treaties
Background information for Round I:

In World War I the Ottoman Empire had joined the side of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria) against the Allies (Great Britain, France, Russia, Romania and Italy). The British knew the only way they could protect India and their oil supplies in the Persian Gulf was by occupying Mesopotamia. Large quantities of oil had been discovered in southern Iran in 1908. (From 1904 on, the British had been converting their fleet from the use of coal to oil for power.) It was believed that neighboring Mesopotamia was also rich in oil. A small expeditionary force had landed and occupied Basra in late 1914.

Arab nationalism was growing in Syria. At the outbreak of the war, one of the three top Committee of Union and Progress members (Young Turks) had been appointed governor and commander-in-chief of the Ottoman forces in Syria. The C.U.P. meantime had become aware of the large-scale Arab anti-Turkish activities. So, a secret emissary from the Arab nationalist societies in Syria had gone to Sharif Husayn of Mecca and the Hijaz. They assured Husayn that the Arabs of Syria would take part in a British-backed revolt against the Turks, if they could get Britain to support an independent Arab nation. “They would accept Husayn as a 'spokesman for the Arabs.'”

Sharif Husayn decided to bargain with the British, and in July 1915 the correspondence with McMahon began. Husayn also tried to get the opinions of the leading Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula outside of the Hijaz. Ibn Saud in the Najd was willing to support the British. They had already thrown off Ottoman rule in 1915. Ibn Rashid of the Shammar region was an arch enemy of Ibn Saud over control of the Najd. Rashid was pro-Ottoman, as was the chieftain of Asir.

Meantime, the C.U.P. governor in Syria seized prominent Arab civilians, charged them with treason because of some incriminating documents, and promptly executed eleven in August 1915. Twenty-one more were executed in January 1916. A large Turkish-German force was about to leave Syria for Mecca, via the railway, on its way to Yemen, to link up with the Turkish units there. The Husayn-McMahon correspondence had reached some 'understanding' but nor on Syria. Because Husayn had to act, he had to put the negotiations with Britain about the area west of Syria “on hold.”

Husayn now raised the banner of revolt by symbolically firing a rifle at the Turkish barracks in Ml3cca. First Mecca, then Jidda fell to the rebels. In October 1916, the British arrived from Cairo bringing with them ‘Lawrence of Arabia.’ Lawrence used Faysal, the third son of Husayn, as the acknowledged leader of the revolt. Faysal’s forces advanced into Palestine with the British. Together they kept the Turkish-German forces in Syria from linking up with the Turkish garrison in Yemen. And, thus began the legend of Lawrence of Arabia.

In November 1916, Sharif Husayn was declared 'King of the Arab Countries' by his followers. The French Allies refused to recognize him because they did not want a Hashimite leader from Arabia to be king of Syrian Arabs. They had other things in mind for Syria. A compromise was reached in January 1917. Both Britain and France recognized Husayn as King of the Hijaz. (29) It is now Spring 1917. How do you react to the Husayn-McMahon Understanding?

The Balfour declaration pledged British support for a Jewish Homeland in Palestine. The rights of the existing non-Jewish population would be respected. It was published in November 1917 by a statement of British government policy. It was issued as a letter from the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, to a leading British Jew, Lord Rothschild.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 was a decision to divide the whole of Iraq and Syria into spheres of British and French control or influence. Jerusalem and part of Palestine was to have some form of international administration. This secret British-French-Russian agreement was reached in May 1916. It was made public in late 1917 by the new Bolshevik government in Russia. The Communists passed copies of the secret agreement to the Turks. The Turks passed them to the Arabs.

1. Balfour Declaration. His Majesty’s Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political Status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

2. Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916. France was to have the coast of Syria as far south as Acre, and interior land stretching to the Tigris River. Great Britain was to have the Mediterranean ports of Acre and Haifa, and a portion of Mesopotamia between Baghdad and the Persian Gulf.

It was agreed that certain Arab regions were to be under direct French or British rule. Other regions were to be divided into spheres of influence, in which the holders were to have "prior rights over local resources and loans" and to "furnish foreign advisers and officials." Other powers were excluded from any rights in the old Turkish empire, including the new Bolshevik government.
Background Information for Round 2:

The Balfour Declaration:

At the time the Balfour Declaration was issued, Palestine or the Holy Land, was not a geographically or politically defined region. The Ottoman government had not organized it as a separate unit for administrative purposes, within the empire. Palestine included territory vaguely understood to be south of Damascus and northeast from the Sinai Peninsula, including what is today known as Israel and Jordan. Boundaries between Palestine and Arabia were also vague.

Based on a British census estimate in 1918, the constant inhabitants of Palestine were 700,000 Arabs and 56,000 Jews. The Jews mainly lived in Jerusalem. Some were, from families that had existed there since before the Diaspora (scattering) and after the last desperate revolt against the Romans in 135 CE. Some had remained after the Babylonia Captivity in the 7th century B.C., when the King of Judea and many of his followers were captured and taken to Babylonia.

But many of the 700,000 Arabs claimed that their families had lived in Jerusalem and Palestine since before the time of Moses. They claimed they were there when Moses led the Jews out of bondage in Egypt and came into this 'promised land.'

After Jews had been scattered, because of the Diaspora, they found new homes along with new forms of persecution. Over 600,000 had fled to the United States after massacres in Russia and had succeeded in establishing rich and influential communities. Even so, many German or Russian Jewish writers believed the only true security for Jews was a homeland where the culture, religion, language, and physical safety could be insured. That was to be Palestine. The British government supported these efforts of these influential Jews for many reasons. One was for reasons of national security. A Jewish Palestine, supported by Britain, would act as a guard for the Suez Canal, the British life-line 'to its colonies in the East.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement:

In understanding the impact of this agreement, it should be understood that of all the most advanced regions of the Arab lands, Britain and France were to have either full control over them or a sphere of influence within them. Arabia, the region that was the least advanced, was to be given its independence from foreign rule. It must also be understood that all nations take actions that are considered to be in best interests of their national security. National security is based on physical security -- security of national boundaries, colonies" dependencies, etc. It is also based on economic security. All nations determine what must be done to provide economic stability for the peoples within their borders, or within regions that are vital to their economic security. A nation's foreign policy is then based on this.

Important: Consider how these agreements conflict with the Husayn-McMahon understandings. Read carefully the text describing what the British want left: out of the Arab nation in the Syrian area. Does it say 'west of Damascus' or 'south of Damascus?' Notice where Jerusalem is - that is the area of Palestine. Is there room for misunderstanding between the British and the Arabs? Analyze how each side would be thinking.
Fall of 1920. Release of Information about the San Remo Conference Agreements, April 1920; Revelation of Secret Agreements made between 1915 - 1917, resulting in The Treaty of Sevres, August 1920

The provisions of the Treaty of Sevres were based on: 1) the assumption that Turkey was entirely at the mercy of the Allies. The Allies could do whatever they wanted with Turkish territory; 2) secret agreements made during the war- mainly Sykes-Picot; Russian agreements were null and void because the Bolsheviks had taken power; 3) agreements made by Britain and France at the San Remo Conference.

**Anatolia:**
(A) Izmir (Smyrna) - western Anatolia to be administered by Greece for 5 years; then a vote to determine if to be a part of Greece or Turkey.
(B) Dodecan Isles under Italian control; most of the Aegean Islands and eastern Thrace ceded to Greece; Straits of Dardanelles under international control.

**Fertile Crescent:**
(C) Armenia to be granted independence mandate to U.S. Self-rule for
(D) Kurdistan. Remainer of Turkish speaking Anatolia to remain independent under Ottoman Sultan
(E) Syria and Lebanon to France as mandate.
(F) Palestine - a British mandate. Balfour promise written into mandate - Jewish Homeland. (G) Mesopotamia - British mandate. All to become independent.

**Arabian Peninsula**
(H) Arabia to be independent under British rule-influenced monarchs;(I) Gulf Coast under Britain.
In 1917, the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies, but did not declare war on the Ottoman Empire. The stalemate in Europe was broken. By this time, the Allies had already achieved some important victories against the Ottoman Empire. Baghdad fell in the spring of 1917 to a British army. They captured Jerusalem in 1917 and moved on into northern Syria in the following year to take Damascus. Faysal, son of Sharif Husayn, was allowed to enter Damascus first as the victor and was received amid much rejoicing. He was accepted as the King of the Syrians. But only briefly.

The Turks were now ready to admit defeat and agreed to sign an armistice on October 30, 1918. While a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire was being drawn up, Arabia, Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia were occupied by Allied troops. Anatolia was occupied by French, Italian and Greek forces. The British army had an occupation force of 1,084,000 men in Syria and Mesopotamia.

At the Paris Peace Conference, the Versailles Treaty with Germany was written first. In writing that treaty, the Allies created the League of Nations. The Covenant of the League of Nation was incorporated into the treaty as Part I. Article 22 of the Covenant provided for the establishment of a system of mandates. The former territories of the Turkish Ottoman Empire were made 'A' Class Mandates, which meant they would soon become independent.

Faysal, Sharif Husayn's third son, was to be named the King of Syria. But, the French refused to accept him. Faysal then appealed to the United States, reminding Wilson of his statement in the Fourteen Points of the 'right to self-determination.' He proposed that a commission be sent to Syria to find out what the people wanted. The French and British did not want this; nonetheless, the American appointees went to investigate.

The King-Crane report acknowledged that the people of Syria did not want the Mandate system but did understand that they needed some kind of outside assistance. The Syrians suggested that the assistance come from the United States, and secondly, from Britain. Under no circumstances did the people of Syria want France. They also wanted Faysal as their king. As to Palestine as a Jewish homeland, the y did not object to the plan as originally intended; however, they were now convinced that tile Zionists wished to displace the non-Jewish inhabitants. The Allies ignored the report.

The Hashimites from Arabia were willing to cooperate in carrying out the Balfour Declaration. They had no choice but to reach an agreement with the Zionist to "encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale...In taking such measures, the Arab peasants and tenant farmers shall be protected in their rights..." Faysal added a codicil in his own Arabic handwriting, (Like a postscript or proviso) "Provided the Arabs obtain their independence as demanded ...I shall concur in the above articles. But if the slightest modification or departure were to be made, I shall not then be bound by a single word of the present agreement..." Sometime later, after the San Remo Conference, a French force marched on Damascus and ousted King Faysal. How do you react to the Treaty of Sevres and the secret agreements?
Round 4: *Early Fall 1923. The Treaty of Lausanne, July 1923*

The Treaty of Sevres was signed by representatives of the Ottoman Sultan, but the treaty was never put into effect. A leader emerged called Mustafa Kemal. This hero of the Battle of the Dardanelles refused to go along with the defeatist attitude of the Sultan and his government. Kemal got himself into positions of influence. He rallied Turkish opinion to support a new national government and to give up the idea of an empire. He denounced the Treaty of Sevres. In the process, he laid the foundations for a new nation called Turkey, and brought an end to the sultanate. After more than six hundred years, the Ottoman Empire had come to an end. A new nation called Turkey had come into existence. A new treaty with the former Allied powers had to be negotiated and signed -- the Treaty of Lausanne.

(A) Dardanelles waterway: Declared open to all commercial vessels except when Turkey at war, and then Turkey could only interfere with enemy shipping. Shoreline demilitarized along waterway.

(B) Thrace and Isles: Got back East Thrace, four islands occupied by Greece. (C) Cyprus permanently with Britain, and Italy got Dodecanese.

(D) Izmir (Smyrna) and region: Turkish army retook it and ousted Greeks; allies did nothing. Exchange of populations dealt with separately. 1.3 million Greeks exchanged for 400,000 Turks.

(E) Hatay (Alexandretta) to Turkey. Still disputed.

Background information:

Throughout 1920, Kemal, better known as Ataturk (Father of the Turks), had to reorganize the army, try to restructure the government, and to push back the Greeks. The Greek armies, after occupying Eastern Thrace and eastern Anatolia in 1920, had been moving further into the interior. They were stopped by the new Turkish army. In 1922, the Turks reoccupied Izmir and the city went up in flames. Many people were killed, with much of the blame placed on the Greeks. The time was ripe to end finally the war between the Allies and Turkey, since the Treaty of Sevres had never gone into effect. The Lausanne Conference was called for 1923. A new, more dynamic nation had emerged from the dismembered Ottoman Empire. A confident Turkey faced the European powers.

At Lausanne, the question of Turkish sovereignty in the Dardanelles and the land areas surrounding the waterways, was in question. Turkey went along with the Allies in allowing free access except in time of war and demilitarizing the coasts along the waterways. These agreements were changed in 1936. Turkish sovereignty in the Dardanelles was recognized once again.

The Greeks returned four islands to Turkey, granted to them in 1920. Two of the four were close to the entrance to the Dardanelles. Turkey agreed to demilitarize these islands and respect the rights of the Greek inhabitants. The Dodecanese, with its 90% Greek population remained under Italian control. Cyprus with its 80% Greek population was annexed by the British. Ultimately, Cyprus and the Dodecanese would go to Greece. In 1960, Cyprus would become independent and face new problems.

Armenia, the region of Anatolia that had been set aside by Allies for a new Armenian homeland, was abandoned to Turkey. Originally the region was to have been held as a mandate by the United States. When the United States Senate failed to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, it also failed to join the League of Nations. This ended the plan for an Armenian mandate under the protection of the United States. Even so, the Armenians enjoyed a brief two year period of independence from 1918-1920. Then, they were once more a minority people. Turkey gave the city of Batumi to the new U.S.S.R. and got back Kars, thus setting the eastern boundary.

There was to be no separate Kurdistan either. Kurdish self-rule had also fallen by the wayside. The south border, that had earlier been pushed north, close to Urfa, under the Treaty of Sevres, was established further south. Mosul was temporarily within the Turkish region; however, it was made a part of Iraq in 1926 due to the influence of Great Britain. Turkey received some compensation. However, Iraq ended up with this oil-rich region. Turkey had to come to rely on Iraq for its oil in the latter part of the 20th century.

Turkey claimed Iskenderun and Hatay (Alexandretta); Syria also claimed this region. Turkey was able to get political recognition for its large Turkish population. The Turks became the dominant political force, and the region was renamed Hatay. The Syrians disputed these actions. In 1939, by political arrangement with France which had the region as a mandate, Hatay was annexed by Turkey. Syria has never recognized this annexation and still claims the region, including on all maps as a part of Syria.
You have been registering your reactions on your 'Fever' Charts. If by now they are registering in the upper levels, you have begun to understand why the Middle East has been a troubled region. President Woodrow Wilson had tried to set a standard at the peace conference for what he thought must happen in order to achieve a lasting peace. Nations and people were not going to be "bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were chattels or pawns of a game."

In speeches he gave before the end of the war, he presented a series of ideas and ideals for the world to consider. They were designed as much for the thoughts of minority peoples within empires, as they were for those Allies with empires hoping to enlarge them at the expense of the conquered.

These ideas raised questions such as, 'How do we achieve a lasting peace?' Is there a 'right of self-determination?' Ideas such as the 'right of self-determination' stimulated the thinking of subject peoples throughout the Ottoman Empire and roused them to action. Some minorities, such as the Arabs, initially won the right to determine their own futures. Others, such as the Armenians, didn't. Some still struggle, such as the Kurds.

The Arabs had been a dominate cultural and religious force in the Middle East from the 7th century on. When the Ottoman Turks came upon the scene, they stayed for more than six hundred years, The Turks and the Arabs' lives had been long intertwined, but the Arabs had their separate memory. World War I invoked their memory and their will. Nationalist movements began in Syria but were carried out from the Hijaz by the Hashemite descendants of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Husayn-McMahon Correspondence resulted in a British commitment to support an Arab nation. But, the commitment was unclear and unsettled as to what the British wanted to exclude when they wrote "portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus ... II Since Palestine lay to the south, the Arabs: were left to believe that it was to be included in an Arab nation. Was it an honest mistake by the British? Did they intend to exclude Palestine? It left a bitter impression with Arabs when shortly thereafter the Balfour Declaration was announced.

After the British announcement of the Balfour Declaration, Jews from all over the world began to go to Palestine, swelling the Jewish population. Problems increased and violence broke out between Jews and Arab neighbors, an ongoing tension in the Middle East. For the Jews, they had begun to experience once again a self-directed Jewish society after almost 2,000 years of being in Diaspora, a Greek word for dispersion. For the Arabs, it was a British betrayal.

 Shortly after the Balfour Declaration, the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement was released by the Bolsheviks, another blow to the Arabs. Instead of Arab independence, Syria and Mesopotamia were to be carved up into regions under British and French control. The Covenant of the League of Nations formalized these divisions into mandates.

The British had agreed to assist the Hashimites in the Arab Revolt and had promised the Syrian throne to Faysal, the third son of the Sharif of the Hijaz, Husayn
After the successful Arab revolt, Faysal was allowed to enter Damascus as an 'Arab liberator,' only to be removed from his throne by the French. Syria had become a French mandate.

The British were dismayed at the French rejection of Faysal. Faysal was then placed on the throne of Iraq; Iraq was now a British mandate. A Hashemite, Sunni Muslim was made king of a region with a large Shi'i majority.

Abdullah, Sharif Husayn's second son, had also helped in the Arab Revolt and was compensated for his role. The British held the mandate for the region of Palestine. Transjordan was split off from Palestine, and Abdullah was made ruler of Transjordan. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is ruled today by Abdullah's grandson, Husayn.

Iraq, however, emerged as a problem area. Rulers became dictators. The minority Sunnis were political leaders over the majority Shi'i. And, always, the Kurds remained in the north as a continuous problem for the Iraqi leaders who would not hesitate to use poison gas against them. When the boundaries of Iraq were firmly established, this oil-producing nation was left with a 3B mile coastline. Another small but oil-rich sheikhdom close by, under British protection, had a 310 mile coastline. It was called Kuwait. One may remember the Gulf War of 1990.

Another neighbor to the east was concerned about Iraqi dominance of the Shatt-al-Arab, the flow of water from the Tigris and Euphrates into the Persian Gulf. Iraq had only one port, Basra, to link it with the world beyond the seas. Iran to the east had a coastline of some 1,976 miles. The Shatt-al-Arab was the cause of a quarrel between Iraq and Iran in 1937. The World Court awarded navigation rights to Iraq. In the 1980's the quarrel erupted again into the devastating Iran-Iraq war.

To solidify his power, Ibn Saud used the Brotherhood, whose missionary zeal made them ready to die fighting for their puritan Islamic beliefs. There was no unity in Arabia until Ibn Saud conquered the neighboring Arabian regions, including the Hijaz in 1925. Ibn Saud proclaimed himself king of Arabia and gave the new nation his name... Saudi Arabia. Sharif Husayn, King of the Hijaz, had to go into exile in Cyprus. Ibn Saud imposed his reformist views on the religious practices in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

In the previous century, Wahabbis had destroyed the sacred tomb of Husayn in Iraq, son of Ali and grandson of the Prophet Mohammed. Long memories have assured that any dealings between Iraq and Saudi Arabia will be devoid of trust. In the Gulf War, the Saudis called upon the United Nations to prevent an Iraqi invasion.

As King Ibn Saud began to have more and more dealings with the West, he introduced modernization, such as motor cars and telephones, to Saudi Arabia. His reformist Wahhabbi Brothers objected to modernization and trouble erupted. Finally, Ibn Saud destroyed them in 1929, but left the Wahhabi beliefs as a framework for the new laws, government, and religious life in Saudi Arabia. It became a secularized Muslim state in the Middle East, unlike any other.
Over time, other independent Arab nations emerged. The French divided Syria in such a way as to create a Maronite Christian political majority in Lebanon. With its complex religious composition, it was only time of time before trouble would come. In the 1970s the world wept as Beirut was obliterated from within and without, rebuilt and obliterated, and rebuilt. Druze against Maronites against Shi'is, and on and on.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the war, the Turks gave up the concept of empire for that of nation-state under Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk). With Greeks traded 'for Turks, Armenians forced out, Turkey was left with only one significant minority, the Kurds. Turks achieved political stability far above any other Middle Eastern nation outside of Israel, however, achieved at a great cost in human lives and displacement.

Colonel Edward Mendel House was a friend and advisor to President Woodrow Wilson. Wilson showed him copies of the secret agreements that the Allied governments had entered into during the war. When House saw them in May 1917, he was very upset at the Allied plans to partition the Middle East. His following remark was a forecast for the future, "... They are making it a breeding place for future wars." (32) And so they did, and so it is.

The struggle for self-determination by the peoples of the Middle East has been long and costly in human life and human rights. But one thing is sure. The Middle East may indeed halve been "troubled," but it is because of a growing acceptance that all people have the right to be ruled by governments of their own choosing. It has become a guiding principle as fixed as the stars. This belief is also a legacy of World War I.
References Noted In Text


6. Ibid., p. 33.


12. This map is based on *Atlas of the Middle East and North Africa,* p. 39


15. Ibid., pp. 151 • 152.


23. Fromkin, pp. 503 - 504.


25. Ibid, p. 120.
30. Shabbas and Al-Oazzaz, p. 49.
32. Ibid. p. 201
33. Fromkin, p. 257