The Islamic Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, the Persian Gulf War, and OPEC

1. List a few actions that the Shah Muhammad Riza Pahlevi took once in office.

He took office through a coup supported by Great Britain and the US

He spent billions modernizing Iran, ruled as a dictator, used secret police (Savak) to suppress opposition, and gave women some rights that upset conservative Muslims

1. Who was Ayatollah Khomeini?

He was a Shiite Muslim leader who opposed the Shah, and was exiled because of that.

1. What happened in 1979?

In 1979 the Shah was overthrown because of religious tensions and anti-Western hostilites; The Ayatollah returned to Iran and declared an Islamic Republic=the Iranian Revolution or the Islamic Revolution.

1. What is Islamic fundamentalism?

Islamic fundamentalism is a movement based on the extremely strict following of Muslim religious traditions.

1. Describe what happened during the American Hostage Crisis

In November 1979 Iranian militants seized the American embassy in Tehran and took hostages, insisting on the Shah’s return from the US, where he was seeking cancer treatments. The Shah died in 1980. The 52 hostages were held for 444 day, released once Regan took office.

1. Why did Iran and Iraq go to war in 1980?

Iran and Iraq went to war over the Shatt-al Arab waterway, religious reasons, and oil. Also fought for dominance in Persian Gulf area.

1. What were the results of the war?

Fought for 8 years, millions killed, oil shipments disrupted. 1988 ended in stalemate, UN brokered a ceasefire agreement.

1. What did Saddam Hussein do in 1990? Why?

Hussein invaded neighboring Kuwait in 1990, and threatened to invade Saudi Arabia as well. He did this to seize oil reserves.

1. How did the US and the UN respond to Hussein’s actions?

UN condemned Iraq’s actions, imposed a trade embargo. The UN and its allies began air strikes against Iraq, and then sent ground troops. In Feb 1991 Kuwait was liberated.

1. What were the results of this Persian Gulf War?

Kuwait was liberated but oil wells damaged, causing environmental damage. Also Hussein stayed in power. Caused a split in the Arab countries

1. What is OPEC?

OPEC= the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Formed in 1960 in order to break Western influence. They set oil prices. Made up of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Venezuela, Algeria, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Angola, Ecuador, and Nigeria.

1. What are “oil politics”?

Oil politics refers to OPEC’s power to impact world affairs. For example, Saudi Arabia put an embargo on oil shipments to the US in 1973 bc the US supported Israel during the Yom Kippur War. This pressure was designed to force the US to behave in a certain way.