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PART II
**THE MIDDLE EAST:
EAST:**

THE CLASH OF HISTORY

For centuries, the Middle East, situated at the cross-roads of Asia, Africa and Europe, has enjoyed tremendous strategic and economic importance. Fought over and conquered frequently by outsiders since ancient times, it has also given rise to advanced civilizations that profoundly influenced successive waves of invaders. This documentary, which includes a concise, historical introduction to the region, provides essential information for understanding the connections between its present and its past. Reviewing the cultural cross-fertilization and conflicts that have indelibly marked the area over the centuries, it also traces later developments that gave impetus to Arab-Israeli hostilities between the 1940s and the last decade. Valuable as a background resource for high-school age and adult audiences, the video will assist viewers in grasping some of the complex issues behind today's headlines.

Disponible en français sous le titre
Le Moyen-Orient : le choc de l'histoire.

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PART II

The problems of the Middle East have their roots in history. This documentary illustrates why this area has always been the site of conflict and tension. An overview of its great civilizations explains the cultural cross-pollination that has contributed to the area's diversity. Situated at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe, birthplace of three major world religions, invaded and overrun by successive armies, the Middle East is a tinderbox of disparate peoples. Included in this survey are the impact of the Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Empires on the Middle East; the rise of Islam and advancements in science, law and philosophy during its Golden Age; and European involvement in the region from the Crusades through the aftermath of World War II. The 20th century has been particularly turbulent: the carving up of Arab kingdoms into European-style states, the rise of nationalism, the creation of the state of Israel, and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict have all left their mark on the pages of history.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. *Why has the Middle East always been so important?*
2. *Discuss some of the ancient rivalries in the area and the powers that competed for control of the region.*
3. *How and when did Islam become the dominant religion in the area and a unifying force for most of its inhabitants?*
4. *In what ways did Islamic civilization contribute to thought and culture in Europe during its Middle Ages and Renaissance?*
5. *What role did the Ottoman Empire play in Middle Eastern history?*
6. *When did Europe start to exert a strong influence on the Middle East? What were the effects of this influence in the region?*
7. *When did the nations that presently make up the region gain their independence?*
8. *What relationship did the influx into Palestine of Jewish refugees from Nazism have to the Balfour Declaration and the founding of the modern state of Israel?*
9. *How and when did Palestinians become refugees in the area?*
10. *What functions did the United Nations assume in the region between the 1950s and the mid-1980s?*

**Middle East Series
Selective Chronology**

B.C.

- c. 8000** Human settlements appear in Jericho.
- c. 3500-2500** City life develops in valleys of Nile and Tigris-Euphrates rivers. Beginning of Egyptian and Sumerian (Mesopotamian) civilizations.
- c. 3000** King Menes unites Upper and Lower Egypt into one nation.
- c. 2600-1200** Egypt dominates Syria-Palestine.
- c. 1728-1686** Rise of Babylonian Empire.
- c. 1600** Canaanites in Syria-Palestine.
- c. 1400** Hittites from Asia Minor conquer Babylon (Syria). Phoenicians establish coastal settlements in present-day Lebanon, Israel, western Syria and Jordan.
- c. 1200** Jewish exodus from Egypt and conquest of Canaan.
- c. 1029-922** Twelve tribes of Israel united under Kings Saul, David and Solomon. Solomon builds first temple at Jerusalem.
- c. 930** Division of Israelite nation into kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
- c. 883-612** Assyrians gain control of Syria-Palestine and Egypt and destroy Israel.
- c. 612-538** Neo-Babylonian (Chaldaeian) Empire. Chaldeans take Jerusalem and conquer Judah.
- c. 586** Jewish Diaspora begins.
- c. 550-485** Persian Empire under Cyrus II and Darius I conquers most of Middle East.
- c. 332-323** Greeks under Alexander the Great overthrow Persian Empire, incorporate much of the Middle East as part of Hellenistic Empire.

29 B.C. -14 A.D.

Reign of Roman Emperor Augustus.
Roman Empire controls all of the Middle East, except for Persia and present-day Iraq.

c. 4

Birth of Jesus.

* * *

A.D.

- c. 30** Crucifixion of Jesus.
- c. 30-95** Preaching of Christianity by the Apostles.
- 313-337** Christianity gains strength throughout Middle East under the Roman Empire. Roman Emperor Constantine founds city of Constantinople and Byzantine Empire.
- c. 500** Byzantine Empire controls most of the Middle East.
- 534-628** Persians repeatedly invade the area, conquer Egypt and Asia Minor.
- c. 570-571** Birth of Muhammad.
- c. 600-632** Spread of Islam throughout the Arabian peninsula.

622

Muhammad and followers settle in Medina. Beginning of Muslim Era.

632

Death of Muhammad.

c. 642-700

Muslim Arabs conquer Byzantine-controlled Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Islam spreads throughout the Middle East.

711

Muslim Arab army enters Spain.

750

Golden Age of Islam begins.

c. 1050-1100

Seljuk Turks from Central Asia assume control of Middle Eastern lands.

1095-1099

First Crusade.
European Christians capture Jerusalem from Seljuk Turks.

1147-1149

Second Crusade led by Holy Roman Emperor Conrad III and King Louis VII of France.

1187

Muslims under Kurdish leader Saladin recapture Jerusalem.

1189-1202

Third through Ninth Crusades.

c. 1220

Mongols under Genghis Khan invade Middle East from central Asia.

1244

Muslims seize Jerusalem from Crusaders.

1258

Mongols capture Baghdad.

1260

Mongols are defeated at Ain Jalout by Egyptian Mamlukes.

1291

Muslim victory at Acre and expulsion of Crusaders from Palestine.

1453

Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople. End of Byzantine Empire.

1516-1517

Ottoman Turks conquer Syria, Palestine, Egypt and begin four-century domination of the Middle East.

1520-1566

Reign of Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent. Height of Ottoman Empire.

1798

Napoleon Bonaparte invades Egypt, sets up military government of occupation.

1799

Bonaparte, defeated by the British, leaves Egypt.

1838

Europeans, under British leadership, initiate efforts to gain commercial domination over Ottoman Empire.

1861

Civil war between Maronite Christians and Druzes in Mt. Lebanon area of Syria. French intervene and establish Lebanon.

1868

Opening of Suez Canal.

1882

British occupy Egypt.
First large-scale immigration to Palestine by European Jews begins.

1891

Prominent Jerusalem Arabs petition Ottoman government to prohibit Jewish immigration to Palestine.

1909

Oil first discovered in Middle East in Persia.

1916

Arab revolt is launched by Sharif Hussein to secure independence for Arab provinces under Ottoman rule.

- 1916** *Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement divides up Middle Eastern parts of Ottoman Empire in Middle East between the British and French.*
- 1917** *Balfour Declaration issued by Britain supports idea of creating a national home for Jewish people in Palestine.*
- 1922** *League of Nations authorizes British mandate over Palestine, Iraq and Transjordan (Jordan). Establishment of French mandate for Syria and Lebanon.*
- 1933-35** *Over 100,000 European Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany and Poland arrive in Palestine.*
- 1936-39** *Palestinian Arabs revolt against Jewish immigration and land transfers; support creation of independent Arab state in the area.*
- 1936** *Anglo-Egyptian Treaty grants independence to Egypt.*
- 1943-45** *Syria and Lebanon gain independence from France. Formation of the League of Arab States.*
- 1947** *United Nations votes to partition Palestine into two separate states for Arabs and Jews.*
- 1948** *End of British mandate over Palestine. Establishment of state of Israel.*
- 1948-49** *First Arab-Israeli War. Seventy thousand Palestinian Arab refugees leave Israeli-held land.*
- 1952-56** *Egyptian Revolution. Gamal Abdel Nasser becomes President of Egypt.*
- 1956** *Egypt nationalizes the Suez Canal. Israel, Britain and France attack Egypt and occupy the canal area. Israel invades Sinai and Gaza Strip.*
- 1957** *United Nations oversees withdrawal of foreign forces from Egyptian territory and Gaza Strip. U.N. troops patrol Sinai Peninsula.*
- 1958** *Civil war breaks out in Lebanon.*
- 1964** *Founding of Palestine Liberation Organization.*
- 1967** *Arab-Israeli War (Six day War). Israel occupies Golan Heights, Gaza Strip, Sinai, and West Bank.*
- 1970-71** *Civil war breaks out in Jordan between Jordanians and Palestinians.*
- 1973** *Arab-Israeli War (Yom Kippur War). Egypt and Syria attack Israeli forces in the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights. Geneva Peace Conference.*
- 1974** *Arab summit conference at Rabat proclaims PLO sole representative of the Palestinian people. Sinai disengagement agreement signed by Egypt and Israel. U.N. observer forces stationed between Egypt and Israel.*
- 1975** *Renewed outbreak of civil war in Lebanon.*
- 1978** *Israel invades Lebanon in response to PLO attacks. U.N. peacekeeping force put in place following Israeli withdrawal. Egypt and Israel sign Camp David accords.*
- 1979** *Egypt and Israel sign peace treaty.*