

September 11th Unit Supplement/Enrichment Notes

- Most of the Middle East region is covered by deserts, semi-arid plains, and mountainous terrain
- The main bodies of water in the region are the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Caspian Sea, and Aral Sea
- The primary natural resource in the region, by far, is **petroleum**. Petroleum accounts for about 73% of Iran's exports and about 99% of Iraq's exports!

- This region was home to some of the world's earliest and most powerful civilizations, such as Mesopotamia and the Persian Empire.
- The vast majority of the population in the Middle East practices the religion ISLAM.
- Some Muslims in the region want their society to adopt more modern, "Western" styles of living and culture.

- Other Muslims in the Middle East favor strict preservation of traditional, “old school” culture. Fundamentalists
- Taliban- group of fundamentalist Muslim leaders who at one time had control of the government in Afghanistan.
- Most governments in the Middle East are one-party systems or military dictatorships.

- **Afghanistan became the home base for international Muslim terrorists after the Taliban came to power there in 1996. That year, Saudi Arabian millionaire Osama bin Laden moved to Afghanistan and established training camps for his global terrorist network, al-Qaeda, “the base.” These terrorist groups oppose Western influence in Muslim lands and American support for the Jewish state of Israel.**

- In response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush formed a coalition of nations including Canada, Great Britain, China, Pakistan, and Russia. In October 2001, this coalition combined with anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan to drive the Taliban from power and destroy al-Qaeda.