

International Diplomacy

*Contemporary United States
(1968–Present)*



Realpolitik

The Middle East

End of the Cold War

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will learn about the origins of the conflict in the Middle East and how far it has been solved:

- The Arab-Israeli conflict
- Carter's human rights foreign policy
- Camp David Accords
- Iran hostage crisis.



The Arab-Israeli conflict



The **Arab-Israeli conflict** has been an important part of global affairs since the mid-20th century.

Watch this animation to find out about the origins and early years of the conflict.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Although it was primarily divided along religious lines, the Middle East also became a Cold War arena. President Truman recognized the state of Israel the day it declared its independence and the U.S. became its strongest ally.



America's ties to Israel also became stronger after Egypt and Syria began to drift politically toward the Soviet Union in the 1950s, especially after the Suez Crisis.

The Soviets sent both countries enormous amounts of military aid and funding for the **Aswan High Dam** in Egypt.



The Six Day War

In 1967, Syria and Israel engaged in skirmishes along Israel's northeast border, the Golan Heights. Egyptian intelligence warned that Israel was massing troops on its border.

Although this information later proved to be false, Egypt responded by deploying troops in the Sinai Peninsula and closing the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping again.



On May 30, Jordan and Egypt signed a defense pact. Israel prepared for war and, in a massive preemptive strike, launched air attacks against the air forces of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq on June 5, starting the **Six Day War**.



Outcome of the Six Day War



Israel then launched ground attacks on Egypt, Syria and Jordan. These assaults succeeded quickly due to the preemptive air strikes. All four nations signed a ceasefire on June 11.

The Six Day War left Israel with a much larger territory, including Sinai, the Gaza strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Over a million Arabs were now under direct Israeli control in the new territories.



What were the effects of the Six Day War for the Middle East and for the U.S.?



The Yom Kippur War

On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel, now called the **Yom Kippur War**. They chose the date to coincide with Yom Kippur, Judaism's holiest day, in the expectation that Israel would be vulnerable then. Complacent after the Six Day War, Israel was unprepared.

Egypt attacked the Sinai Peninsula while Syria invaded the Golan Heights. The invasions were initially successful, but the Israeli forces soon rallied and the war became a stalemate.



A ceasefire was called on 22 October, but fighting continued.



Outcome of the Yom Kippur War



The U.S. supported Israel and the Soviet Union supported Egypt and Syria in the war. Tensions mounted as the Soviets accused Israel of violating the ceasefire and threatened to intervene.

The U.S. declared it if the Soviets intervened, then it would too. Both superpowers put pressure on their allies to agree to a new ceasefire on October 25, 1973. Very little territory changed hands after the war.



How did the war damage the U.S. economically?



The question of oil



As a response to American support of Israel during the Yom Kippur war, many Arab nations declared an oil **embargo** to America. This caused a significant increase in the price of oil.



The embargo lasted from October 1973 to March 1974 and caused an energy crisis in the U.S. as supply was reduced, but demand remained the same, causing oil prices to soar and gas to be rationed.

This represents the first time Arab nations had used oil as a political and economic weapon.





James “Jimmy” Carter was elected president in 1976. He moved away from realpolitik and focused his foreign policy on promoting human rights. He criticized and refused to deal with countries that violated human rights.



“Our policy is based on a historical vision of America’s role. Our policy is rooted in our moral values, which never change. Our policy is designed to serve mankind.”

Which previous president’s foreign policy does Carter’s moral approach remind you of?



Carter's administration pursued policies that sought to use the influence of the U.S. to end human rights violations around the world. It drew attention to these issues and took action, with varying degrees of success.

Can you match the following countries to the U.S. foreign policies towards them under Carter?

Press **start** to begin.

start



Did a complete move away from realpolitik happen?



After decades of fighting, President Carter helped to negotiate peace between Egypt and Israel. The **Camp David Accords** were an important milestone for peace in the Middle East. Press the buttons to find out about the Camp David peace talks and the two agreements.

Press **start** to begin.

start



Why were the Camp David Accords so important?



In 1979, a revolution in Iran overthrew the existing regime and replaced it with a religious government. The **shah**, the former ruler, was an American ally, so was let into the country. In response, armed revolutionaries seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took 66 people hostage.

They wanted to trade the shah for the release of the hostages. After failed negotiations and rescue attempts, there was a year-long standoff.



The hostages were released on January 20, 1981, just after President Reagan had been sworn into office.

How did the crisis highlight the limits to U.S. power?