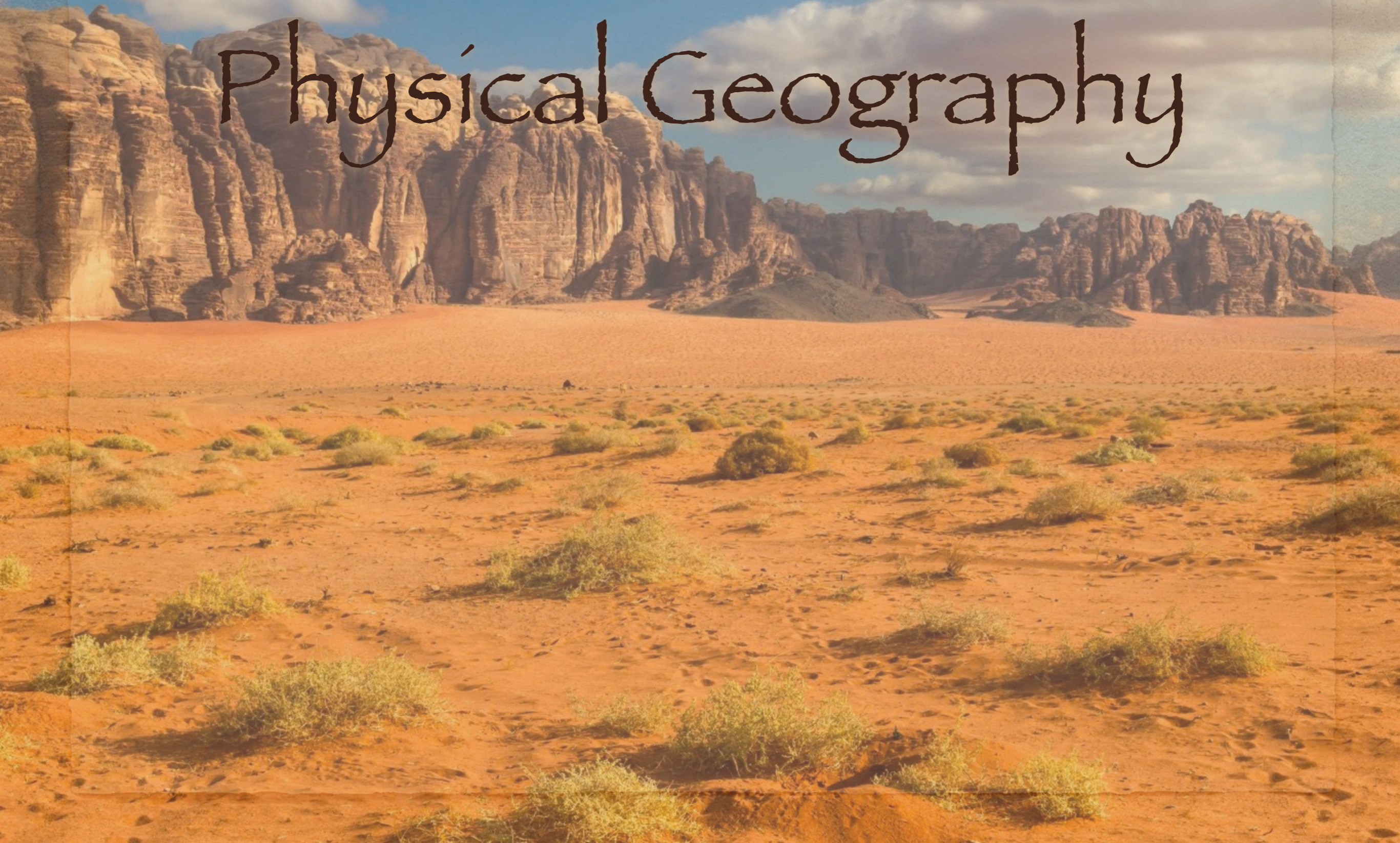


Southwest Asia

Physical Geography



GEORGIA

ARMENIA

AZERBAIJAN



TURKEY

SYRIA

LEBANON

ISRAEL

JORDAN

SAUDI

ARABIA

YEMEN

OMAN

IRAQ

IRAN

KUWAIT

BAHRAIN

QATAR

UNITED

ARAB

EMIRATES

(UAE)

AFGHANISTAN

OVERVIEW

- ◆ **Southwest Asia** is where Asia meets Europe and Africa
- ◆ They share **similarities in physical geography** such as mountains and plateaus as well as dry, desert climates



MOUNTAINS + PLATEAUS

- ◆ **Mountains** and **plateaus** dominate Southwest Asia.
- ◆ The highest mountains belong to the **Hindu Kush range**, which stretches across much of **Afghanistan** and along its border with the South Asian country of **Pakistan**.



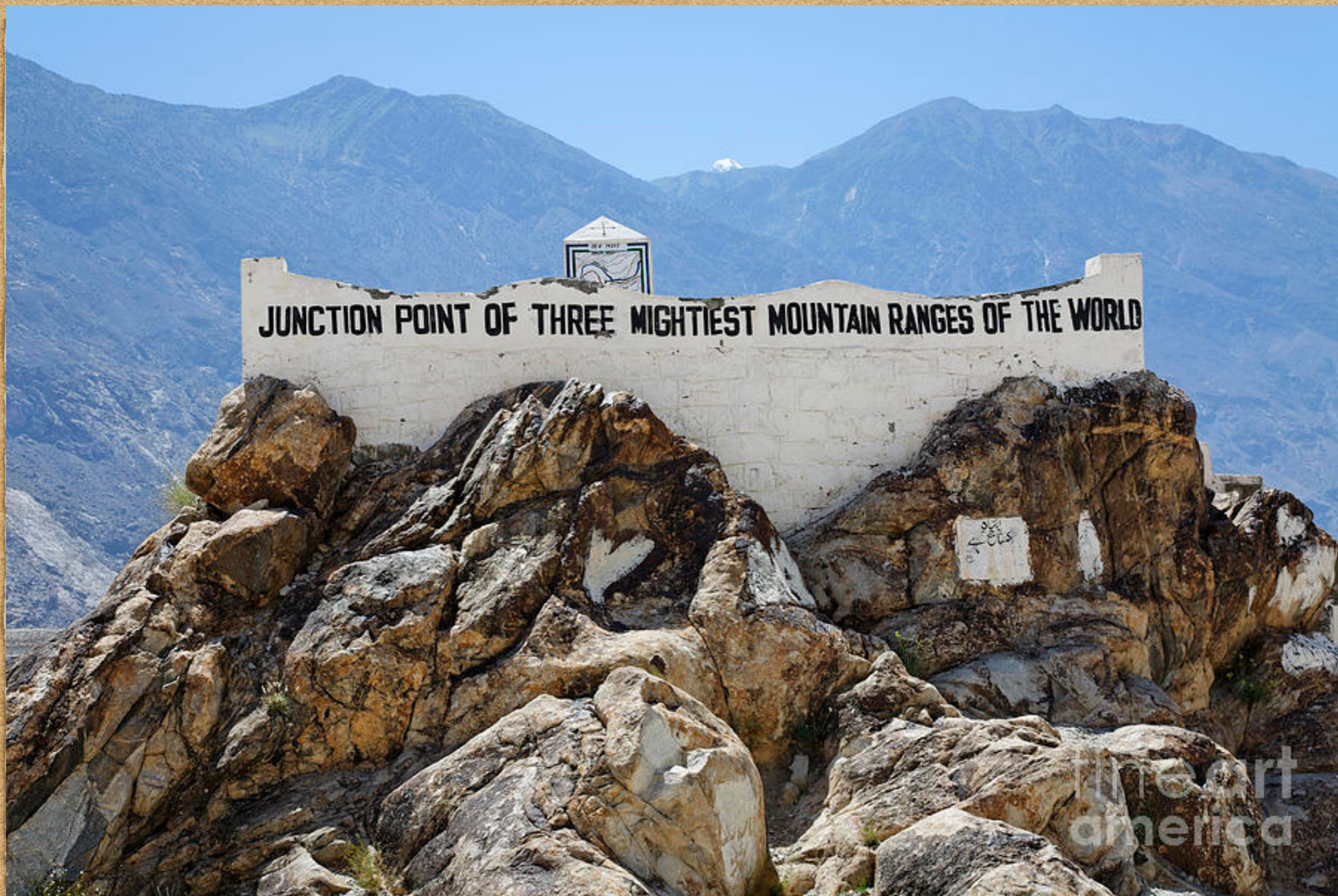


photo in Pakistan where the
Karakoram, Himalaya, and Hindu Kush ranges meet

MOUNTAINS + PLATEAUS



- ◆ **Mountains form natural barriers to travel and trade.**
- ◆ **Mountain passes**, such as the **Khyber Pass** which links Kabul, Afghanistan to Peshawar, Pakistan, have been important to this area for thousands of years.

MOUNTAINS + PLATEAUS



- ◆ A vast plateau, the **Iranian Plateau**, is encircled by high mountain ranges and covers much of central Iran.
- ◆ An elevated area known as the **Anatolian Plateau** spreads across central and western Turkey.

PENINSULA



- ◆ The **Arabian Peninsula** consists of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).



BODIES OF WATER

- ◆ The region of Southwest Asia has **thousands of miles of coastline.**
- ◆ **SEAS**
 - ◆ **Mediterranean Sea:** Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel
 - ◆ **Black Sea:** Turkey
 - ◆ **Red Sea:** Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen
 - ◆ **Arabian Sea:** Yemen and Oman
 - ◆ **Caspian Sea:** Iran
- ◆ **Suez Canal** runs through Egypt and connects the **Red Sea** to the **Mediterranean Sea**
- ◆ **Strait of Hormuz** connects the **Persian Gulf** to the **Indian Ocean**
- ◆ **Persian Gulf:** Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran



Strait of Hormuz



BODIES OF WATER



The water is so salty, a person can float on top!



- ◆ The **Dead Sea** is landlocked between Israel and Jordan. It is smaller than the other seas in the region and one of the world's lowest bodies of water at 1,300 feet below sea level.



BODIES OF WATER

- ◆ Southwest Asia's two longest and most important rivers are the **Tigris** and **Euphrates**.
- ◆ In their lower courses, they flow parallel to one another across a broad alluvial plain, a plain created by sediment deposited during floods.
- ◆ The plain covers most of **Iraq** as well as eastern **Syria** and southeastern **Turkey**.
- ◆ This area has been known since ancient times as **Mesopotamia**, which is Greek for "land between the rivers." Thousands of years ago, **one of the world's earliest civilizations** took root in the fertile lands of Mesopotamia.



What country is this?

IRAQ

Where is

the alluvial plain?

in dark green

Describe the climate

that covers

most of the map.

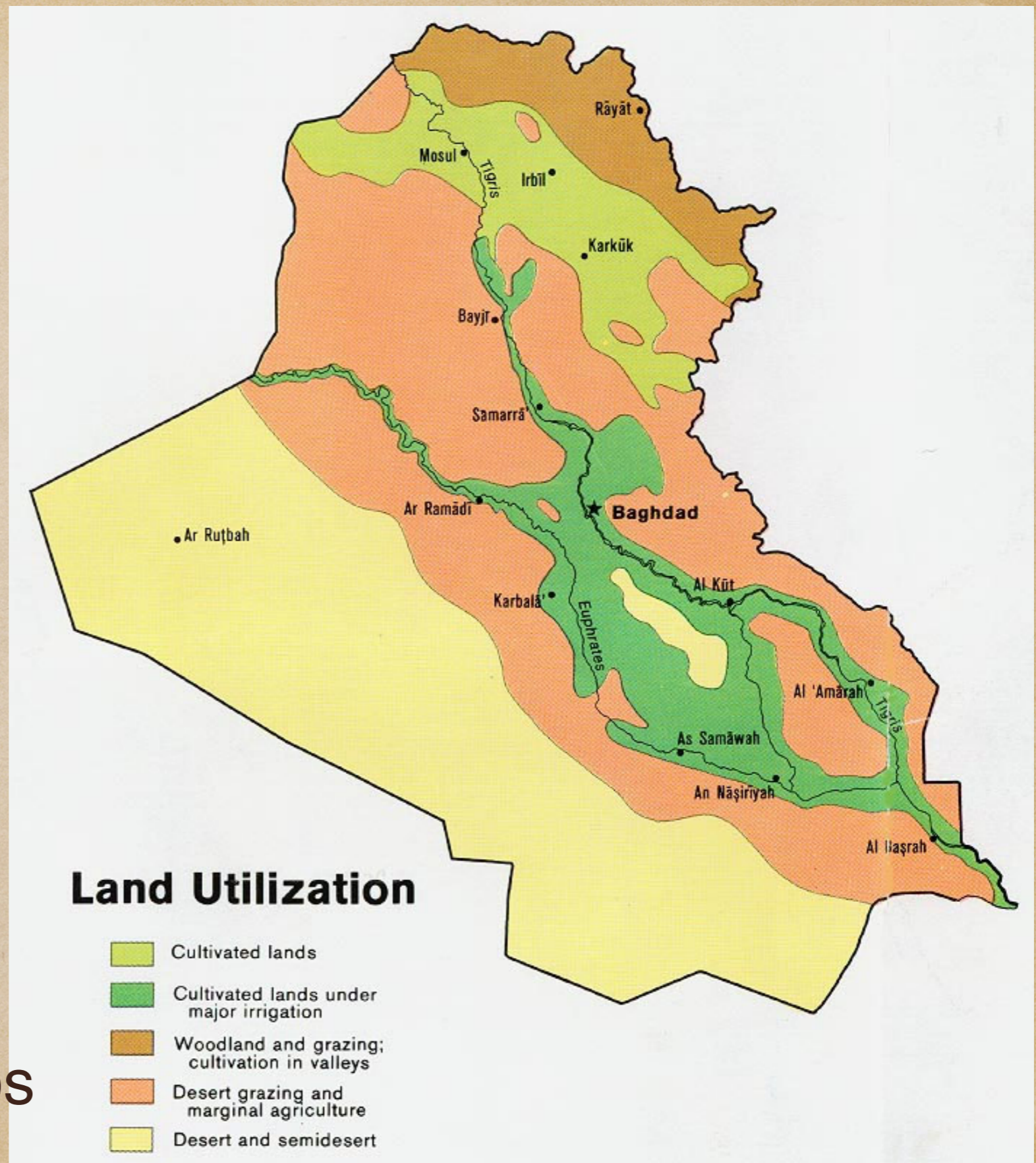
desert/semidesert

Why are the

Tigris and Euphrates

important rivers?

water source for crops



DESERTS

- ◆ **Desert** covers most of Southwest Asia.
- ◆ **The Arabian Desert** in the Arabian Peninsula is the largest in the region and one of the largest in the world.
- ◆ In the southern part of the peninsula lies the largest sand sea in the world: the **Rub' al-Khali**, or **Empty Quarter**. Winds sculpt its reddish-orange sands.
- ◆ The climate is so **dry and hot**, it cannot support permanent human settlements. In some areas, nomadic people known as the **Bedouin** keep herds of camels, horses, and sheep.



DESERTS

- ◆ The Arabian Desert is a harsh environment, but plants thrive in oases. An **oasis** is an area in a desert where underground water allows plants to grow throughout the year.



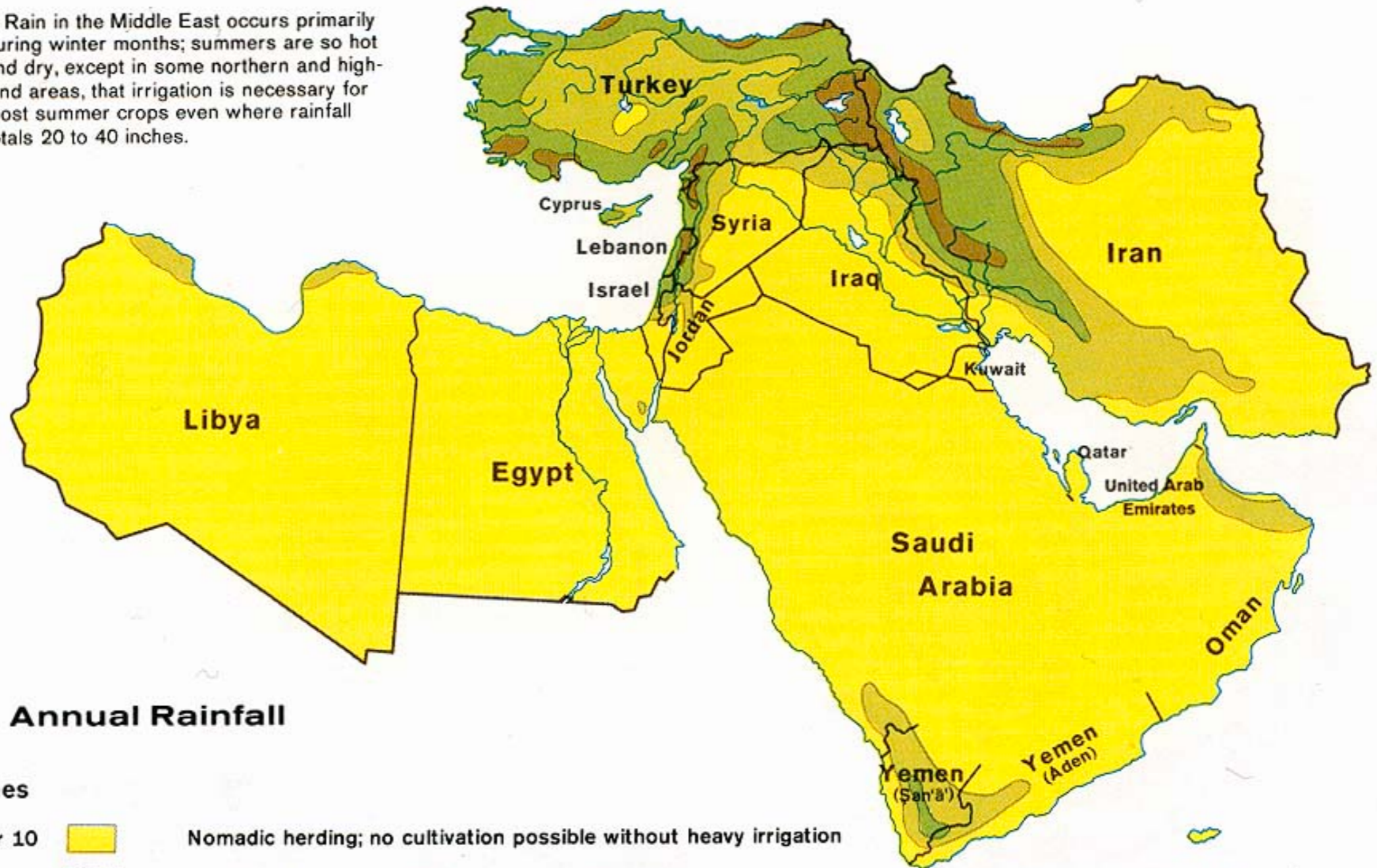
CLIMATE







- ◆ Although this region is surrounded by seas and gulfs, **water is a scarce resource**.
- ◆ Most of the region falls within an **arid**, or very dry, climate zone.
- ◆ **Deserts**, areas that receive **less than 10 inches** (25 cm) of annual rainfall, cover nearly the entire **Arabian Peninsula** as well as large parts of **Iran**.
Temperatures in the **Arabian Desert** can soar as high as **129°F** (54°C).

CLIMATE

Rain in the Middle East occurs primarily during winter months; summers are so hot and dry, except in some northern and highland areas, that irrigation is necessary for most summer crops even where rainfall totals 20 to 40 inches.



Mean Annual Rainfall

Inches		
Under 10		Nomadic herding; no cultivation possible without heavy irrigation
10 to 20		Wheat, barley, sorghums, dry beans, olives, almonds
20 to 40		Winter vegetables, maximum grain yields
Over 40		Corn, tobacco

The mean annual rainfall for Washington, D.C. is 40 inches.

CLIMATE

- ◆ Although rain is scarce in this region, rainfall can quickly transform the desert landscapes. Torrents of water race through wadis (WAH-deez), or streambeds that are dry.



CLIMATE

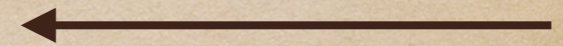
- ◆ At the margins of Southwest Asia's dry zones lie areas that are considered **semiarid** (seh-mee-AR-id), or somewhat dry. These areas are found in the highlands and mountain ranges.



CLIMATE



glaciers in the
Hindu Kush



- ◆ Mountainous areas of Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan have **continental climates** in which temperatures vary greatly between summer and winter.
- ◆ The mountains of the **Hindu Kush** range in far eastern Afghanistan fall within **a highland climate zone**, and glaciers are found among the soaring peaks.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- ◆ **Scarcity of water** has shaped this region's human history and settlement patterns.
- ◆ Other natural resources, however, are found in abundance. The most important resources are two fossil fuels for which the world has a seemingly unquenchable thirst:

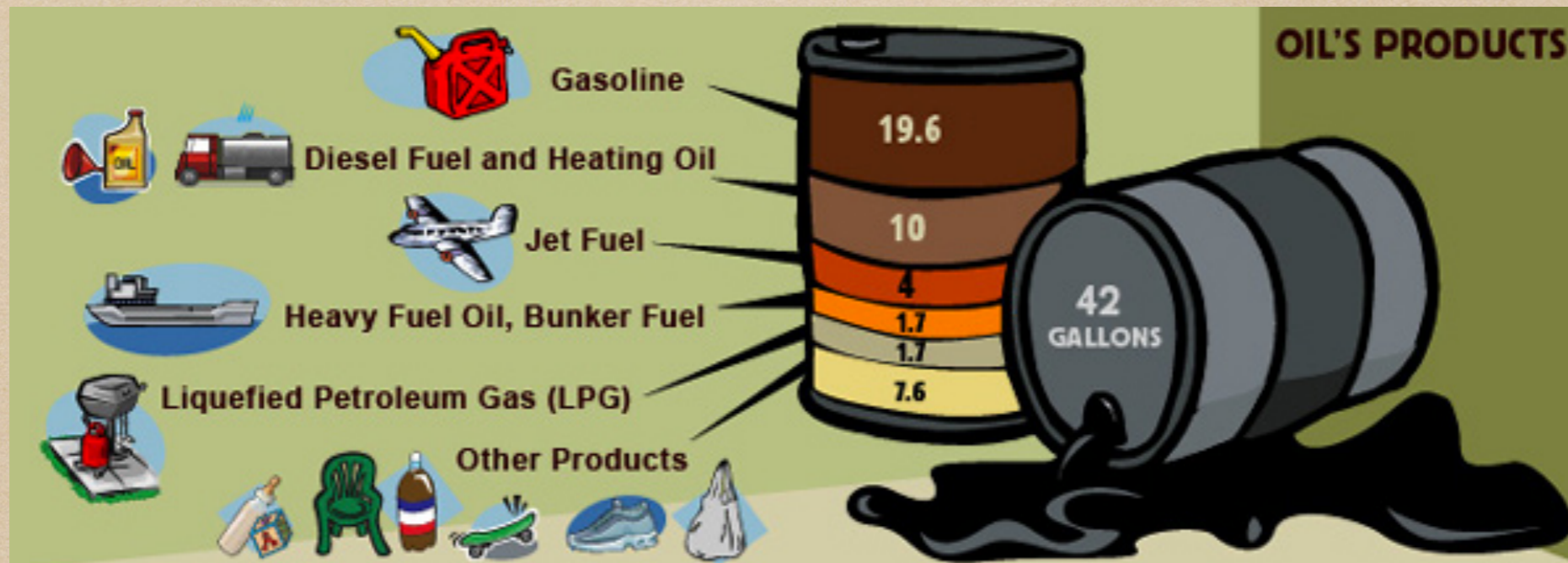
oil

and

natural gas.



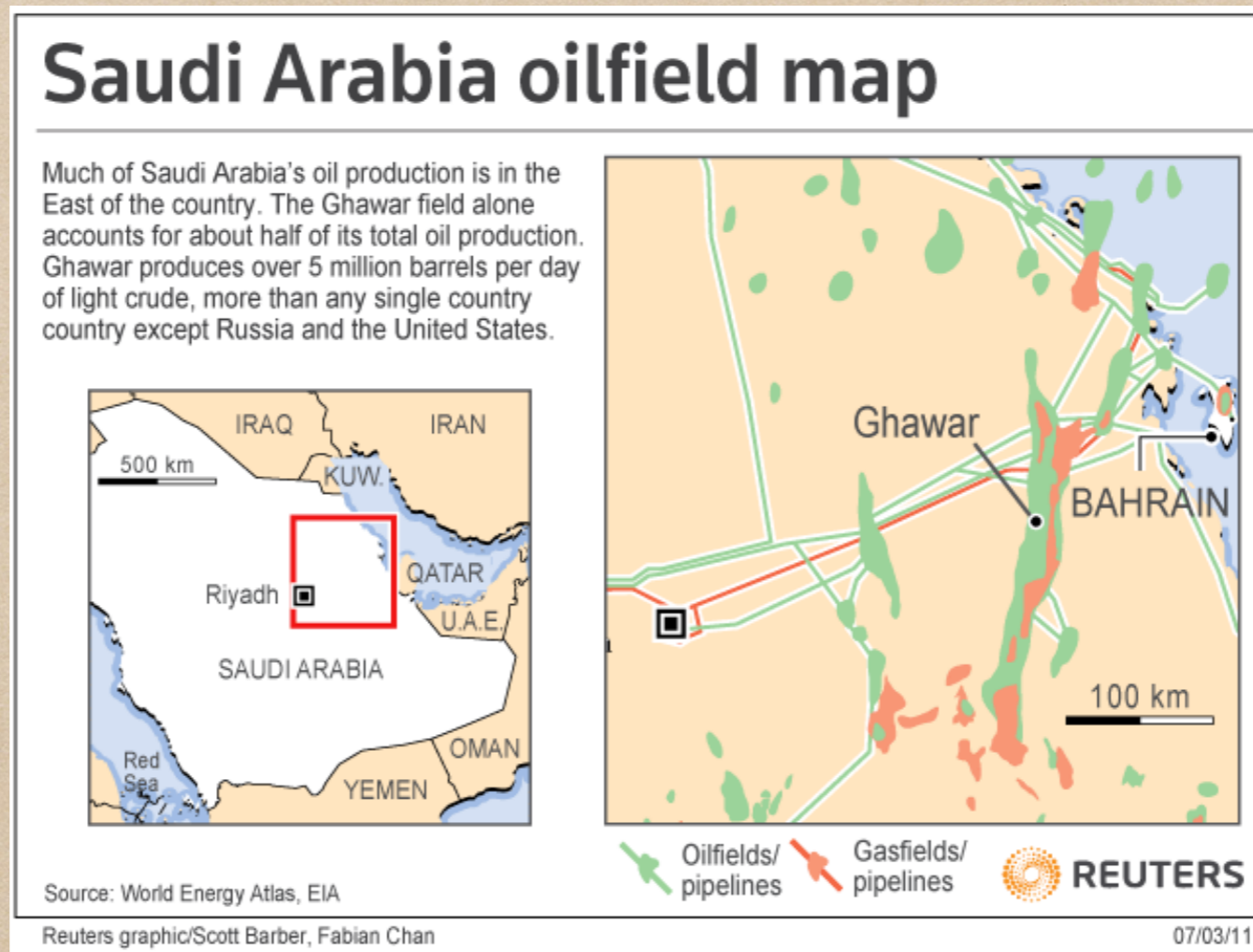
NATURAL RESOURCES



- ◆ The gaseous form of petroleum is called **natural gas**, and the liquid form is called **crude oil**, or simply **oil**.
- ◆ Crude oil is refined to produce energy sources such as **gasoline, diesel fuel, heating oil, and industrial fuel oil**.
- ◆ **Petroleum** is also the basic raw material used to make many other products, such as plastics, bicycle tires, and cloth fibers.

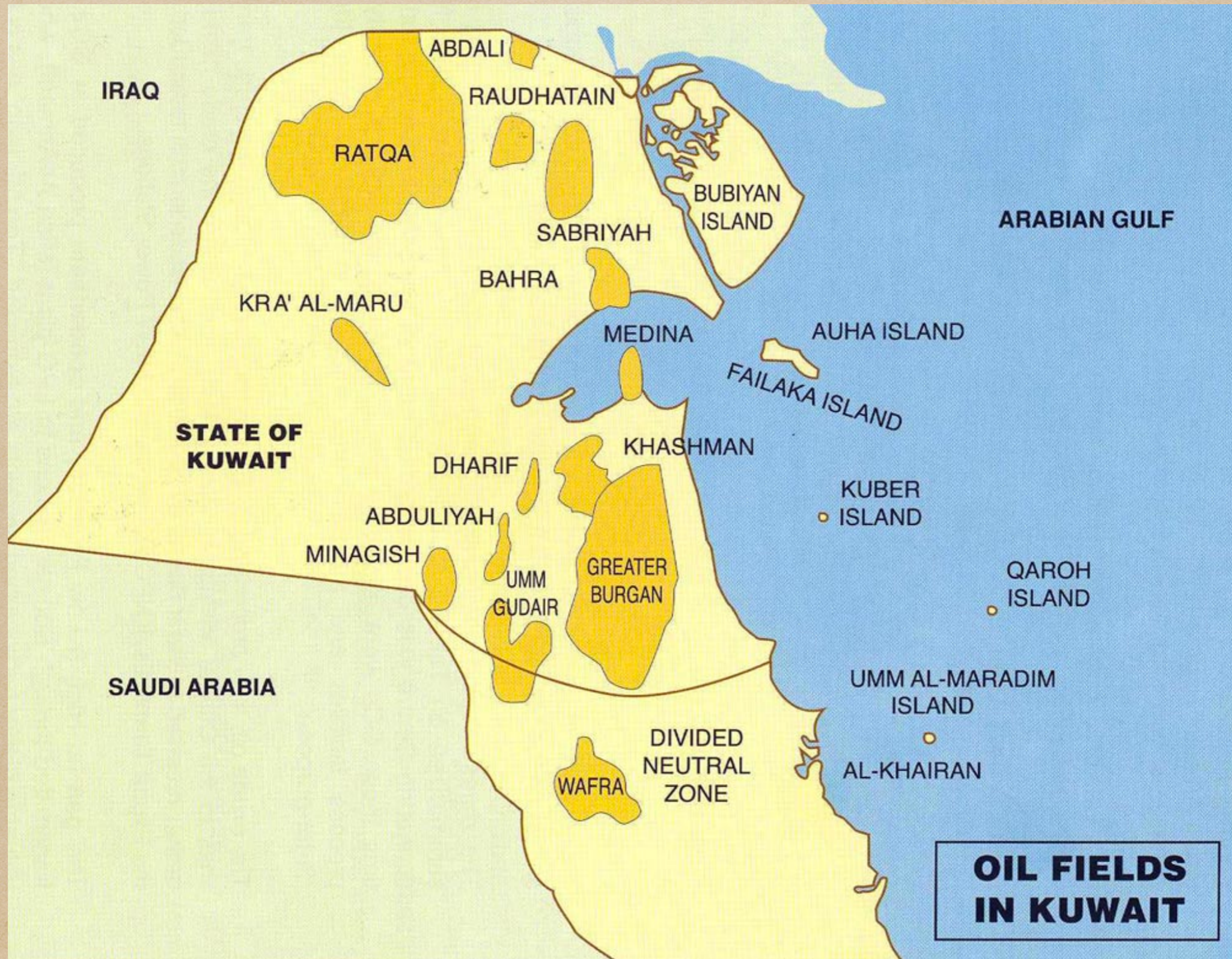
NATURAL RESOURCES

- ◆ The world's largest known deposits of petroleum are in Southwest Asia. Most are concentrated around and under the Persian Gulf.



- ◆ Together, five countries that border the gulf, **Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates**, hold more than half the oil that has been discovered in the world.

NATURAL RESOURCES



NATURAL RESOURCES


- ◆ 1991: Saddam Hussein orders burning of 700 oil fields in Kuwait



a full documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DoxBG5zdxg>

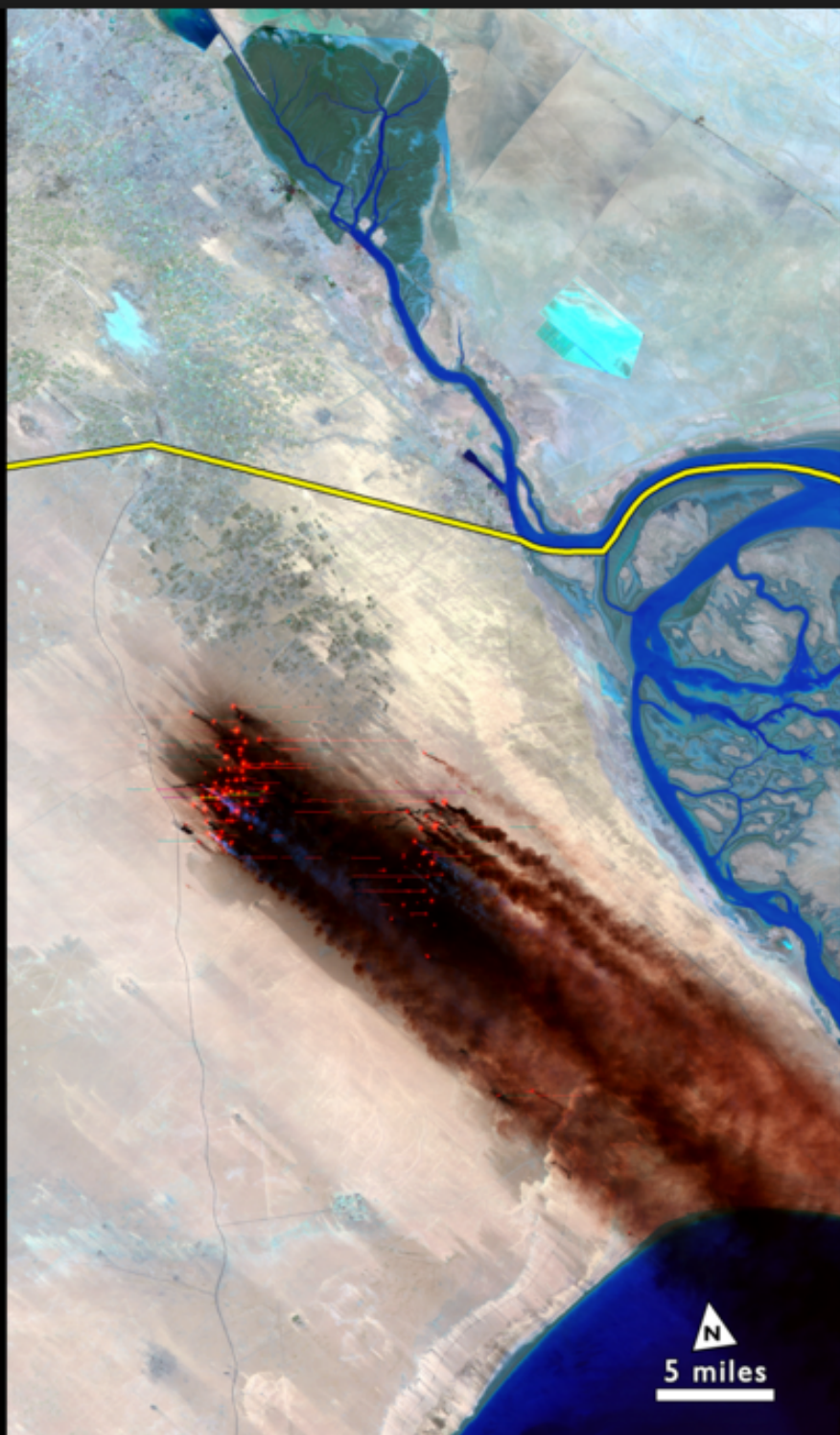
NATURAL RESOURCES

KUWAIT FROM SPACE



KUWAIT
BEFORE

A satellite image of Kuwait showing a lush landscape with a large green area in the north, a winding blue river system, and a yellow line representing a border. The terrain is mostly green and brown, indicating vegetation and arid land. A scale bar and north arrow are visible in the bottom right corner.



KUWAIT
AFTER

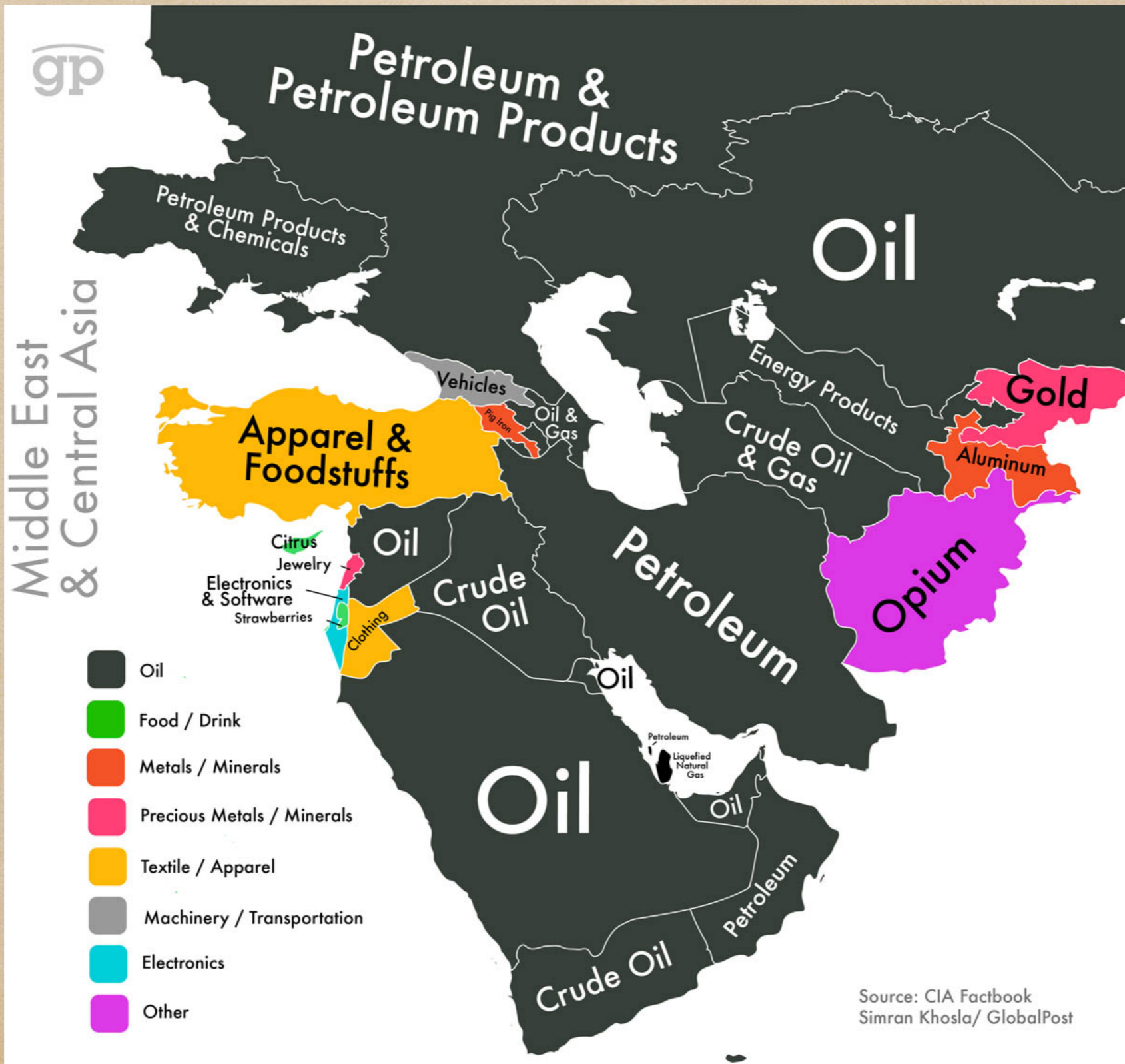
A satellite image of Kuwait during the war, showing a large, dark, irregularly shaped area in the center, likely representing a destroyed or heavily damaged area. The surrounding landscape is mostly brown and tan, indicating a desolate environment. A scale bar and north arrow are visible in the bottom right corner.

5 miles

5 miles

5 miles

NATURAL RESOURCES



NATURAL RESOURCES



Jeddah residents line up to request water (2008)



Prince Alwaleed topped Saudi 2011
Rich List with \$20.4bn

- ◆ Profits from selling petroleum to industrialized countries (such as the USA) have brought great wealth to a few.
- ◆ Only in few areas has this wealth been used to improve the lives of the people or bring about **modernization**.

NATURAL RESOURCES



coal miner in Iran



Rare Earth Metals

Southwest Asia also has a great variety of **mineral resources**.

Large **coal** deposits are found in Turkey and Iran.

Phosphates, used to make fertilizers, are mined in Iraq, Israel, and Syria.

American geologists surveyed Afghanistan and discovered enormous deposits of **iron, copper, gold, cobalt, lithium, and other minerals** such as **rare earth metals** used to make electronic devices.

Rare earth minerals, therefore, are *extremely* valuable.

(~1 **trillion dollars** according to NBC news in 2014).