

Full scale war looms in the Middle East

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Fire and fury: Thousands have fled their homes as wars ravage four different nations. They may be thousands of miles apart, but experts argue the wars can be linked.

Can two simple stories explain it? Israel has invaded southern Lebanon overnight. So how did we get to this moment?

What's happening?

It is the moment so many feared. All-out war in the **Middle East**, as **Israel** launched a ground invasion against **Hezbollah** in **Lebanon** last night and expanded its strikes from **Gaza** and the **West Bank** to **Yemen**.

Israel has **eliminated** the leadership of **Hezbollah** with bombings that have also killed well over a thousand people and forced many more to leave their homes. In Yemen it struck a port controlled by another group, the **Houthis**.

Find out more

But this is not just a local battle. Both groups are close **allies** of **Iran**.

The Americans might tell one story. The **USA** wants to put its focus onto **Asia**, but it keeps ending up being involved in Middle Eastern politics because of its enemy, **Iran**.

Some now hope that if **Israel** can defeat **Iran**, other Arab nations will begin to support **Israel**.

Defeating **Iran** will in turn weaken **Russia**, which relies on Iranian weapons for its war on **Ukraine**. That will free the **US** finally to make its "pivot to **Asia**".

This is one story. In the Arab world, however, the view is quite different. Many Arab nations feel strongly in favour of the **Palestinian** cause.

They see **Israel** as a **coloniser** of **Palestine** that due to American backing, can attack Arab states.

Only 13% of people in Arab countries think there will ever be a possibility for peace with **Israel**.

For much of the Arab world, then, the epic struggle is not between the **US** and **Iran**. They feel it is their own struggle for freedom.

And that may doom any American plan.

Can two simple stories explain it?

Some say

Yes! For the **USA** and **Israel**, this is a chance to reshape the world to their **advantage**. But people in Arab nations believe in a very different story.

Others think

No! This is more complex. Starting a big war will have **consequences** that nobody can imagine now. There are far more than two stories here.

Six steps to discovery

Some people say

"If we don't end war, war will end us."

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - What do you feel when you think about what is happening in the Middle

HG Wells (1866 – 1946), English author

Empty heading

What do you think?

East?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: How many wars have there been in history?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure from this story.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Do you think America should be involved in the Middle East? Why or why not?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Organise a class debate on the question, "Will we ever end all wars?"

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Imagine you are going to interview a child in Lebanon. What five questions would you ask them?

Glossary

Middle East - The lands around the east of the Mediterranean Sea and Arabia.

Israel - A country in the Middle East, and the only Jewish nation in the modern period. It is seen by Jews, Christians and Muslims as the Holy Land.

Hezbollah - A militant organisation based in Lebanon, classified in the UK as a terrorist group. It has made direct attacks on Israel and is believed to have been responsible for assassinating Lebanon's former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri.

Lebanon - A small country on the eastern Mediterranean coast that has been in the grip of an economic crisis for over a year. It has a native population of just 4.7 million, but migrants and refugees have brought its total population up to almost 7 million.

Gaza - The smaller of two Palestinian territories, home to two million people. It is located on the Mediterranean coast, bordered by Israel and Egypt.

West Bank - A landlocked territory bordered by Israel, Jordan and the Dead Sea. It is the largest of the Palestinian territories.

Yemen - The poorest country in the Gulf region is in the midst of a humanitarian crisis.

Eliminated - Get rid of all examples.

Houthis - An Islamist rebel group that controls a large part of Yemen. They are allies of Hamas in Gaza.

allies - An ally is someone that aligns with and supports a cause with another individual or group of people.

Iran - A country in Western Asia, officially called the Islamic Republic of Iran. It has a population of 84 million.

USA - The United States of America is a country in North America. It has a population of 329 million.

Russia - The largest country in the world by area. It has a population of 144 million people.

Ukraine - A country in Eastern Europe. It was invaded by Russia in February 2022.

Palestinian - Palestine is an area of the eastern Mediterranean region, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip and parts of modern Israel. It has been fought over by Arab and Jewish national movements for many years.

Coloniser - A country that takes over and rules another country.

Advantage - Something (such as a good position or condition) that helps to make someone or something better or more likely to succeed than others.

Consequences - The result of an action.