

in Southwest Asia: w "Black Gold" s Shaped a Region

Introduction

In change in 50 years. Fifty years ago in the United States, there were computers, no cell phones, and no Internet. Only a few American homes or televisions. However, some parts of the world, such as Southwest Asia, have changed even more dramatically.

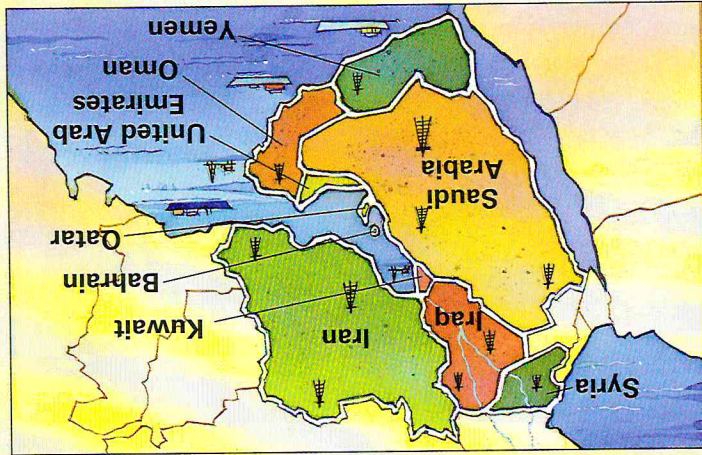
Look at the two photographs of the port city of Dubai on the facing page. Dubai is one of the seven states that make up the United Arab Emirates. Fifty years ago, it was a small town, and electricity had only recently been introduced. Bedouin nomads roamed the nearby. Today, Dubai is a modern, prosperous city with one of the largest human-made harbors.

Southwest Asia provides much of the oil that is used in the world today. Southwest Asia has the world's largest known **oil reserves**. This term refers to round oil, or petroleum, that has been discovered but remains unused. There are also large reserves of **natural gas**, which is gas found within the crust, or outer layer. Money from the sale of oil and natural gas is used to pave roads and construct modern buildings throughout Southwest Asia. In addition, the money has provided medical care that will help people live longer.

In this chapter, you will learn how vast oil and natural gas reserves have shaped Southwest Asia's economic development. You will also discover how resources have changed the lives of many people in the region.

Essential Question

How might having a valuable natural resource affect a region? This diagram shows 10 oil-rich countries in Southwest Asia. Together, they export millions of barrels of oil each year. The life of this valuable natural resource has changed life in these countries. Keep this map in mind as you try to answer the Essential Question.



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