



Southwest Asia in Review

Water Situation

- Water is a natural resource that is distributed unevenly in Southwest Asia.
- Turkey and Iraq have major rivers that provide enough water for farming communities.
 - *Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.*
- Israel, Syria, and Jordan share the Jordan River.

Water Situation

- The climate of most Southwest Asian countries tends to be hot and dry.
 - *Because mountain ranges (such as in Turkey) block the winds from the ocean, most of the interior of Southwest Asia is desert.*
- Because water is in short supply in so many parts of Southwest Asia, irrigation has been necessary for those who want to farm and raise animals for market.
- People must live where there is water.
 - *However some people, such as the Bedouins, traditionally make their living in major desert areas by trading animals and hand-made goods.*

CRCT Questions #1-4

- 1. Describe the climate of much of Southwest Asia.
- 2. Because mountains block winds coming from the oceans, much of the interior of Southwest Asia is _____.
- 3. The “Bedouins” are Southwest Asians who have traditionally lived in and around _____.
- 4. People living in the deserts of Southwest Asia have usually made their living by _____.

Background

- There are many serious environmental problems today in the Southwest Asia.
- Governments play a role in both causing and trying to solve these problems.
- *Many of the political problems that stem from the use of water occur when a country builds a dam for their region, cutting off water supply to other areas.*

CRCT Question #5

- 5. How have the major rivers of Southwest Asia become part of political conflict?

Irrigation

- Many types of irrigation can be found in Southwest Asia as farmers struggle to bring water to their fields from local rivers and from underground aquifers (layers of underground rock where water runoff from rains and streams is trapped).
- Some farmers use water from wells that tap into fossil water (water that has been underground for centuries).
 - *Rains and streams do not replace this water and once it is used, is gone forever.*
- Farmers in very rural areas still use methods used by their ancestors for irrigation, including water wheels, ditches and canals, qanats (underground tunnels that bring water from the hills to the dry plains) and animal power to lift water from underground wells.

CRCT Question #6

- 6. People living along the rivers of Southwest Asia have built canals, qanats, and water wheels to use the water for _____.

Desalination

- Israel has very few fresh water sources.
- The Sea of Galilee provides its primary supply of drinking water.
- Many Southwest Asian countries must use desalination to get fresh water.
- Desalination is a process for removing the salt from salt water in order to make it suitable for drinking and farming.

Sea of Galilee



The Rivers

- The Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile rivers are the longest and most powerful in the region.
- Rivers are the main source of water for drinking and for power in many Southwest Asian countries.
- Countries without major rivers must also find other ways to generate electricity.

The Coastline

- Many of the largest Southwest Asian cities are located around ports of *major rivers*.
- Ports make it easier to ship the things produced by industries.
- Port cities with major industries usually pollute their water supplies.
- Oil is the main export in Southwest Asia.
- Huge ships and oil spills pollute the waters of the Persian Gulf.

CRCT Question #7

- 7. Many of the largest cities in Southwest Asia are located on or near _____.

Extraction

- The process of removing natural resources is called extraction.
- Oil is the largest natural resource in Southwest Asia.
- Drilling oil from the ground requires heavy machinery that often endangers the environment.

Pollution

- The process of refining oil also creates pollution.
- Refining oil means making oil from the ground ready to use in machines.
- Refining oil produces toxic chemicals.
- This is an enormous problem for the environment in the Southwest Asia.

Water Supply

- Southwest Asian countries often get into disputes over their policies on water rights and other natural resources.
- Water rights are agreements about how countries can use the water in a region.
- Water rights often cause political disputes.

Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians

- Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians on the West Bank, all depend on many of the same scarce water resources.
- Israel has the most power, so it has been most effective in claiming water.
- Much Israeli water is also cleaned after it is used once, and is then reused.

Euphrates River

- The *Euphrates River* flows through Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. It is also shared by Kuwait.
- These countries all rely on the Euphrates for farming and for electricity.
- Turkey built two dams on the Euphrates in 1984 to harness its power for electricity.

CRCT Question #8

- 8. Which river do Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Kuwait share?

Dam Buiding

- These dams make the river less powerful. Syria also built a dam on the Euphrates.
- By the time the river reaches Iraq, it is much smaller and less powerful than it was originally.
- Water supply in Iraq is also diminished and farming is very difficult.
- In 1975, a war almost broke out between Syria and Iraq over water rights.

Oil Industries



- The 2 most valuable natural resources in Southwest Asia are oil and natural gas.
- Disputes over access to other natural resources, like oil, also cause conflict.
- The largest source of oil in the world is the region bordering the Persian Gulf. (***Over 50% of the world's oil comes from Southwest Asia!***)
- Many wars have been fought over oil in Southwest Asia.
- These wars have had a major impact on the environment, economy, government and population in these areas.

CRCT Questions #9-10

- 9. What are the two most valuable natural resources in Southwest Asia?
- 10. How much of the world's oil supply is found in Southwest Asia?



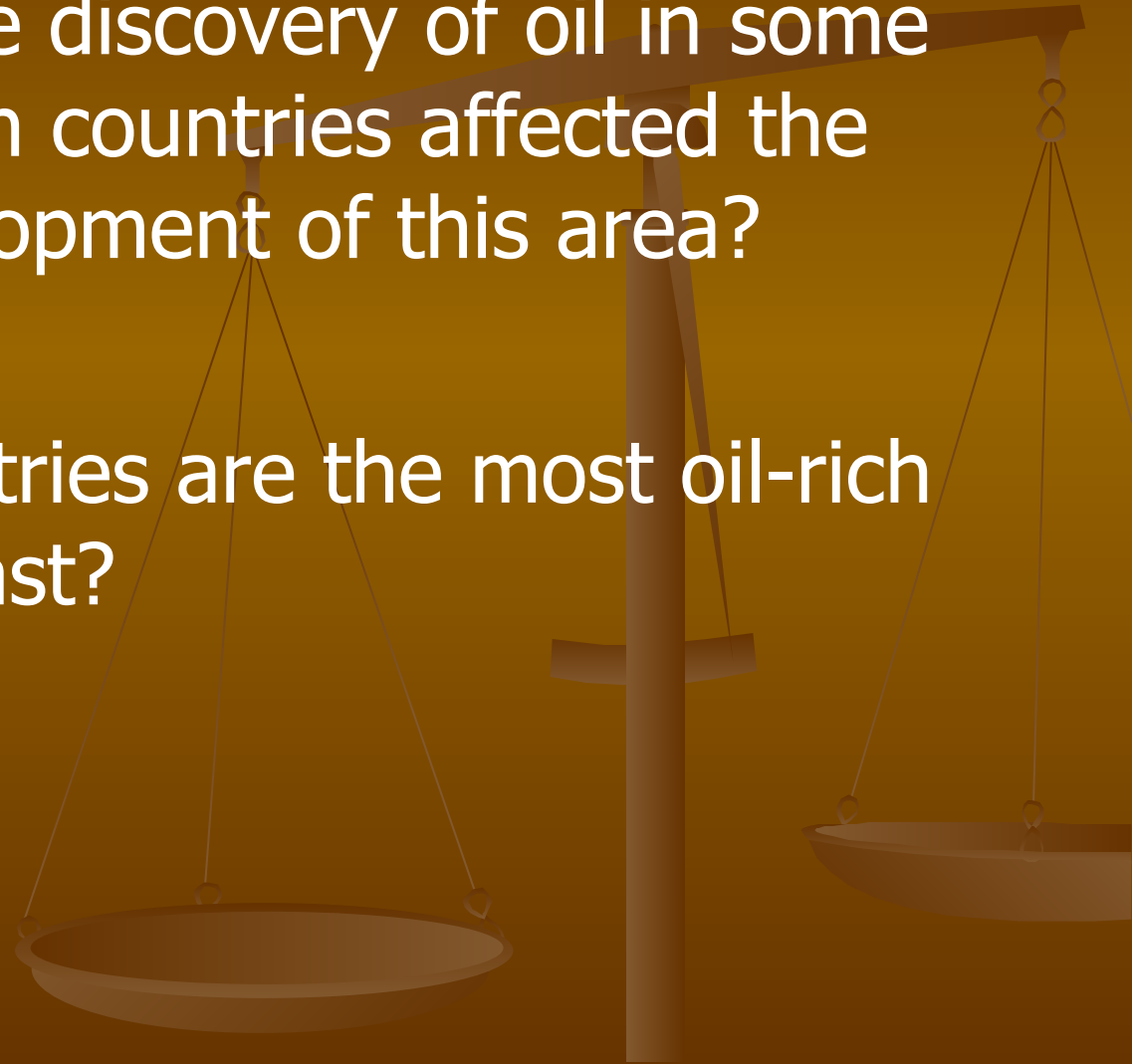
Oil and the Economy

- *Those countries with oil reserves are much richer than those countries that have not found oil in their territory!*
- *Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran* and *Kuwait* are the most oil-rich countries in Southwest Asia!

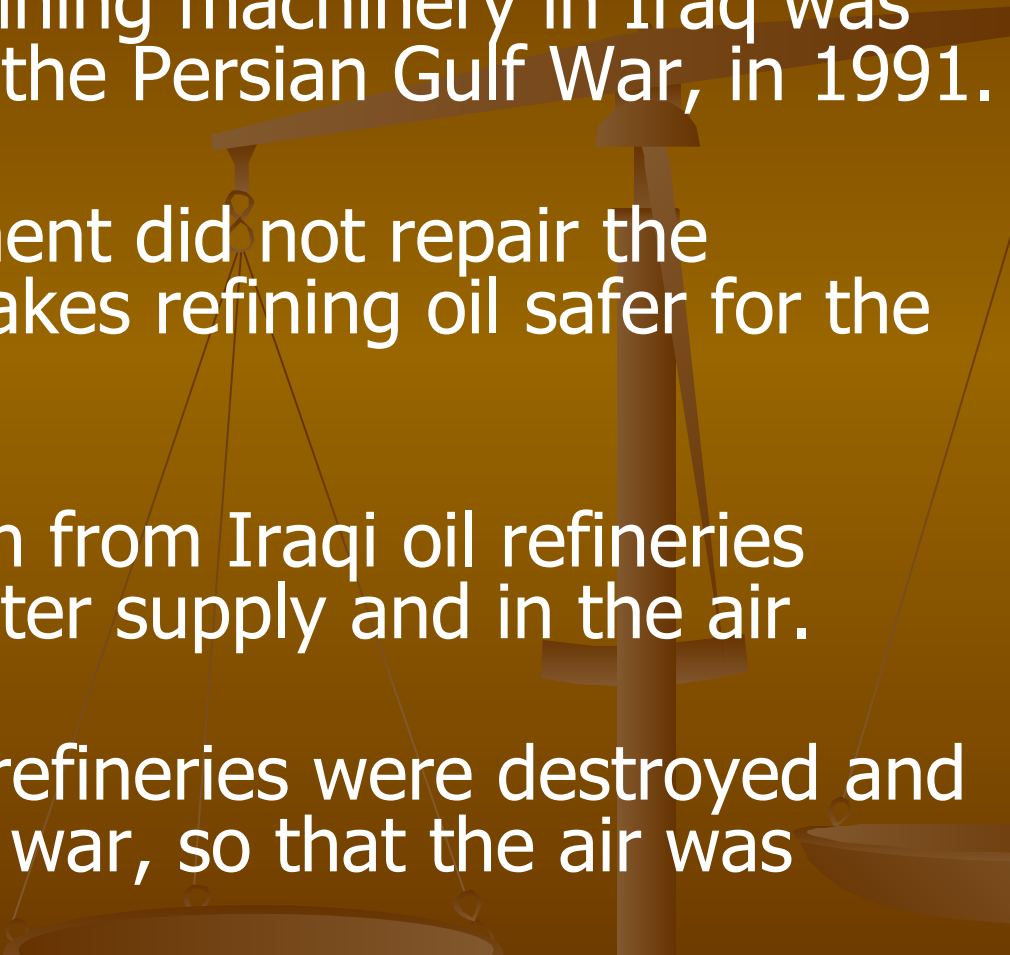


CRCT Questions #11-12

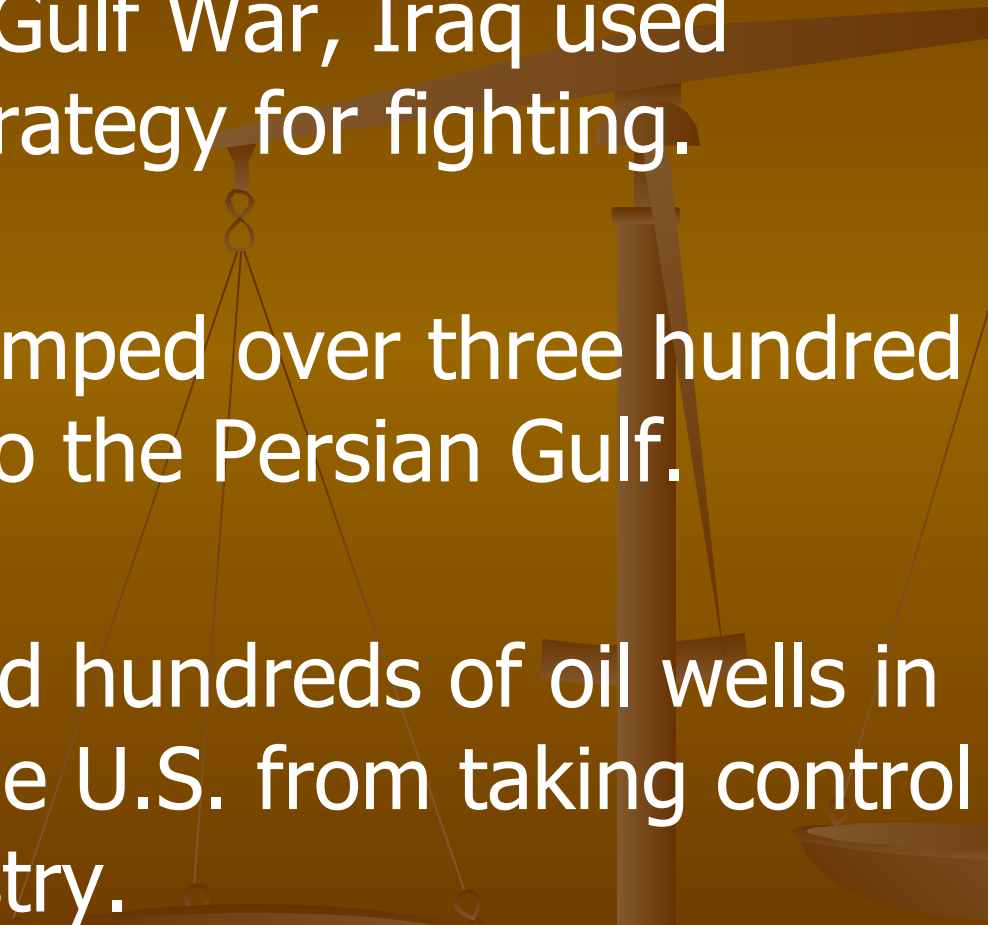
- 11. How has the discovery of oil in some Southwest Asian countries affected the economic development of this area?
- 12. Which countries are the most oil-rich in the Middle East?



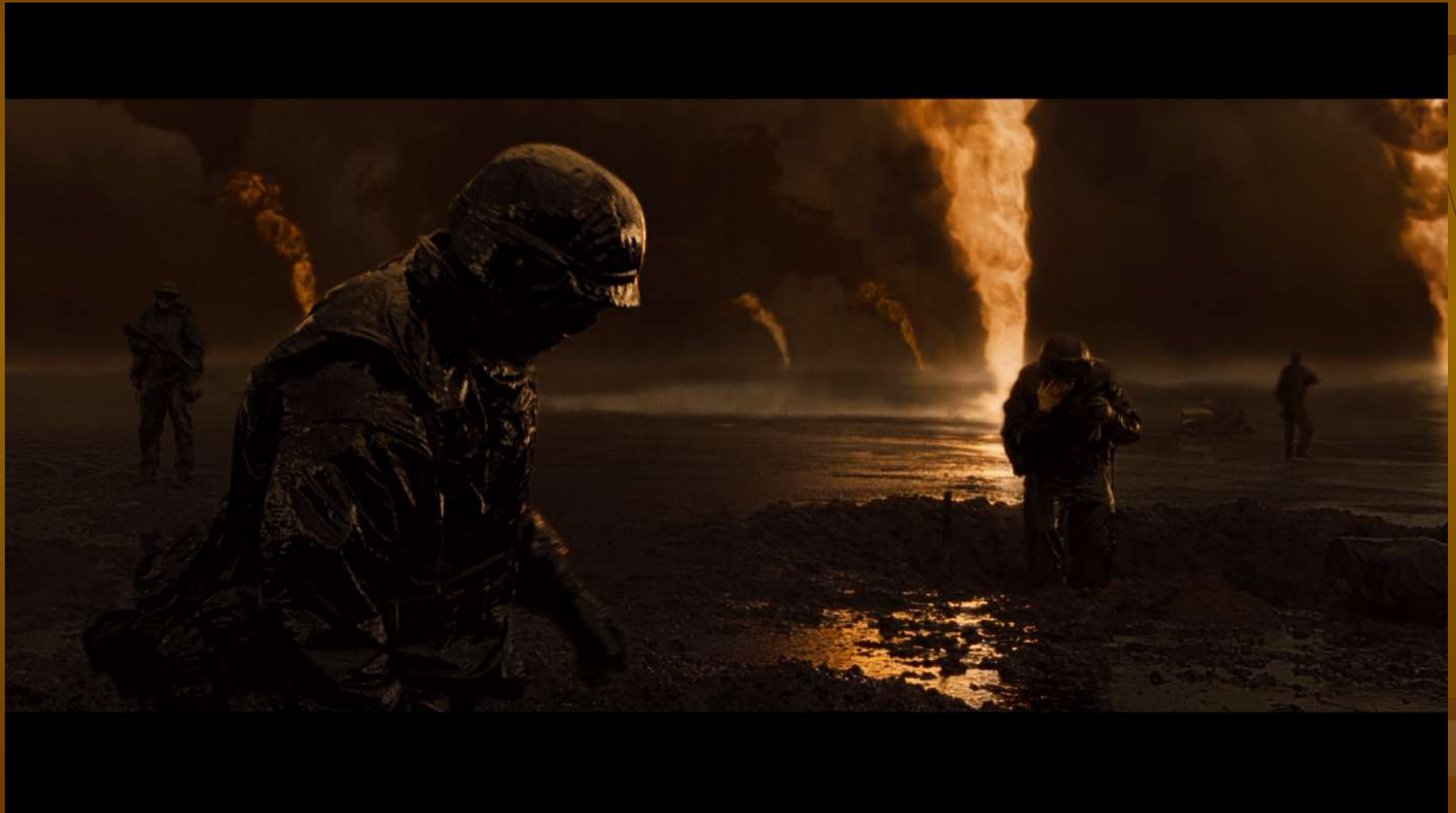
Persian Gulf War

- Much of the oil refining machinery in Iraq was badly damaged in the Persian Gulf War, in 1991.
 - The Iraqi government did not repair the equipment that makes refining oil safer for the environment.
 - For years, pollution from Iraqi oil refineries leaked into the water supply and in the air.
 - Many of Iraq's oil refineries were destroyed and burned during the war, so that the air was polluted.
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Oil in War

- During the first Gulf War, Iraq used pollution as a strategy for fighting.
 - Iraqi soldiers dumped over three hundred gallons of oil into the Persian Gulf.
 - They also burned hundreds of oil wells in order to keep the U.S. from taking control of their oil industry.
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Oil in War



Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

- Formed in the 1960's by oil-rich countries in Southwest Asia and throughout the world *to have more control over oil prices in the world market.*
 - Despite finding oil, some Southwest Asian countries still struggle to help their citizens make a decent living.
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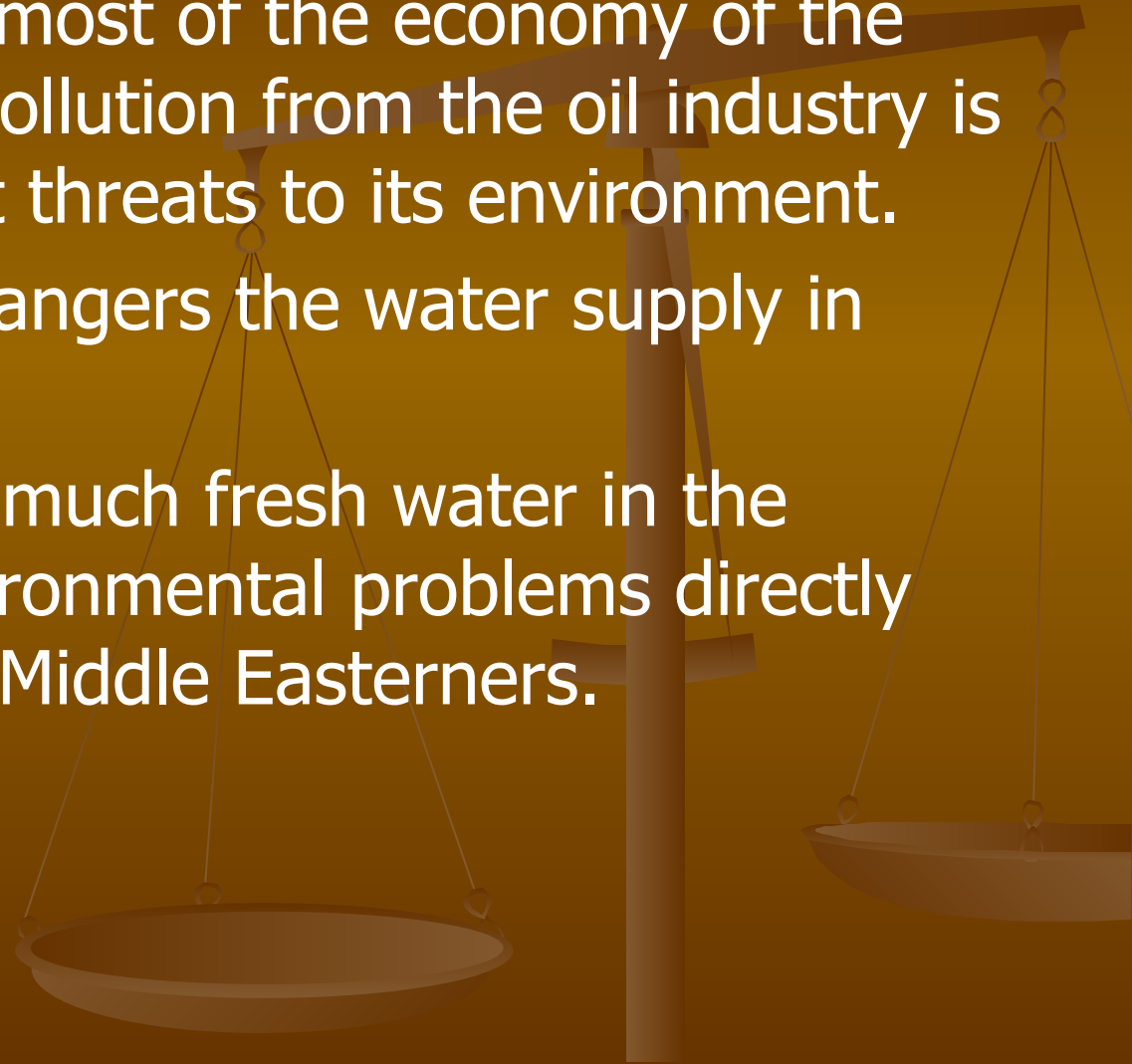
CRCT Question #13

- 13. Why does the organization of OPEC play a powerful role in the world economy today?



What to do?

- Oil is the basis of most of the economy of the Middle East, but pollution from the oil industry is one of the biggest threats to its environment.
- This pollution endangers the water supply in particular.
- Since there is not much fresh water in the region, these environmental problems directly affect the lives of Middle Easterners.



Summary

- Describe the major issues with water and oil as environmental problems in the Middle East.
- (2 paragraphs)