Chronology:

Some major events and dates related to topics in this work

1921: Proclamation of the Kingdom of Iraq headed by King Faisal I under British mandate.
1920-1946: Syria and Lebanon under French mandate.
1923: Turkey renounces the Caliphate system and becomes the Turkish Republic under Kemal Ataturk.
1925: Reza Shah overthrows the Qajar dynasty and establishes the rule of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran.
1930: Iraq gains independent and enters the League of Nations.
1941: Reza Shah, suspected by the British of pro-Nazi sentiments, is deposed and his son, Mohammed Reza accedes to the throne.
1946: Syria and Lebanon gain independence and establish parliamentary republics.
1948: Proclamation of the State of Israel.
1949: The principedom of Transjordan declared the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan under King Abdullah I.
1949: A Coup d’état overthrows the parliamentary rule in Syria.
1950: Return of parliamentary rule to Syria after a counter coup.
July 1952: A coup in Egypt overthrows King Farouq of Egypt and appoints a regent.
September 1952: A Land reform act passed by the Egyptian military leadership.
1952: Dr. Mohammed Mosaddegh elected prime minister of Iran. Nationalization of Iran’s oil industry.
1953: The CIA sponsors a military coup that deposes Dr. Mosaddegh and oil nationalization revoked.
1953: The Egyptian military proclaim Egypt a republic.
1954: The ‘democracy crisis’ in Egypt. General Mohammed Neguib is deposed and Gamal Abdul Nasser takes the lead.
1954: A third coup overthrows parliamentary rule in Syria.
1955: return of parliamentary rule to Syria.
1955: Britain, Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan sign the Baghdad Pact to form an anti-Soviet alliance. The US joins as an observer.
1956: Abdul Nasser nationalizes the Suez Canal.
1956: Israel, Britain and France launch a tripartite invasion of Egypt, but are forced to withdraw.
1958: Syria merges with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic.
1958: General Qassim overthrows the monarchy in Iraq, declares a land reform act and gets Iraq out of the Baghdad Pact that will be renamed ‘the CENTO Pact’.
1960: Qassim declares law no. 80: all Iraqi territory that had not been explored by the oil consortium regained by Iraq and will be explored by a newly established National Iraqi Oil Company.
1960-1961: The ‘Socialist’ decrees in Egypt and Syria. Scores of private establishments are nationalized, the unique party renamed the ‘Arab Socialist Union’, but in the meantime harsh persecution of thousands of Egyptian and Syrian communists.
1961: The Communist party of the USSR under Nikita Khrutschev formulates the theory of the ‘non-capitalist path’ to socialism: the petty bourgeoisie can lead the road to socialism without necessarily organizing a communist party. The alliance with anti-communist Egypt is legitimated.
1961: A coup d’état in Syria takes the country out of its union with Egypt. A right-wing parliamentary regime follows.

1961-3: Mohammed Reza Shah initiates a ‘white revolution’; a mild land reform to preempt radical changes.


Nov. 1963: A pro-Nasser coup in Iraq overthrows the Ba’thist regime.

1964: Iraq follows Egypt in nationalizing local establishment and establishing an Arab Socialist Union. The Oil Consortium left intact.

1966: The Ba’th Party splits into rival ‘left’ and ‘right’ wings. The left wing overthrows the right and undertakes radical measures in Syria.

1967: The Arab-Israeli war ends up with a humiliating defeat of the nationalist regimes of Egypt and Syria, as well as Jordan. All historic Palestine plus the Syrian golan Heights and Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula is under Israeli occupation.

July 1968: The ‘right-wing’ Ba’th takes power in Iraq.

1970: Gen. Assad overthrows the left-wing Ba’th in a ‘correctional move’ and eases pressures on private sector.

1970: Death of Abdul Nasser. President Sadat renounces Egypt’s alliance with the USSR and ‘the socialism of poverty’ and initiates an ‘Infitah’ (open door) economic policy.


1973: OPEC countries manage to raise oil prices dramatically: the beginning of the ‘oil boom’ in the Arab world.

1978: Under pressure from Iran’s Shah, Iraq ousts an Iranian exile, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, from the holy city of Najaf.

1979: A popular revolution overthrows the monarchy in Iran. An Islamic republic is declared.

1979: The Iraqi vice-president Saddam Hussein takes over presidency.


1987: Iraq begins a sweeping privatization campaign under the rubric ‘the administrative revolution’. The official General Federation of Trade Unions is dissolved. The Labor Act is amended: abolition of minimum wage and maximum work time conditions. Private banks are legalized.

1991: Syria adopts Law no. 10 that removes limits and constraints on private sector’s activity.