A Survey of the Political History of the Modern Middle East

• “The security environment in the Middle East after WWII was the product of four main developments. First, the imperial order established by the French and British was rapidly decaying, as the colonial powers relinquished control over the areas they had inherited from the Ottoman Empire after WWI” (Walt, p. 51).

• So, what was that “Ottoman Empire” and what were the contours of the “imperial order” that succeeded it in the region?
Where did I take this photo?
The Ottoman Empire at its peak
The Decline of the Ottoman Empire
The Encounter with the West: Napoleon in Egypt, 1798-1801
(Suez Canal, inaugurated in 1869 to the sounds of Verdi’s “Aida”)

![Map of Egypt and the Suez Canal](image)
Suez Canal, end of 19th Century
The Middle East in 1914
The M. East today: how does its political map differs from 1914?
British promises made during WWI

• Sykes-Picot agreement, 1916
• The Arab Revolt—promise of Arab state to Sharif Hussein of Mecca
• The Balfour Declaration (Nov. 2, 1917)
The Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916
Sharif Hussein of Mecca (L); T. E. Lawrence [of Arabia] (R)
World War I in the Middle East
The “Balfour Declaration”

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
The Middle East in 1920
Winston Churchill (Colonial Secretary in the early 1920s)—drew the current map of the Middle East
Iraq
(see Walt, 54-55)

- Prince Faisal, kicked out of Damascus by the French in 1920
- Crowned King of Iraq by the British authorities; receives 96% of the vote in a plebiscite (1921)
- 1932: Iraq gains formal independence, but Britain maintains air bases.
- 1958: Hashemites overthrown
The separation of Transjordan from the British Mandate of Palestine, 1921
Churchill and Prince Abdullah in Jerusalem, 1921
Saudi Arabia: created in 1932
The Oil Kingdom

- 1933: King Ibn Saud grants oil concession to Socal (today, Chevron)
- 1936: Texaco acquires 50% of concession
- 1938: discovery of oil in Dhahran
- 1950: completion of Tapline (R)
FDR and King Ibn Saud aboard the USS Quincy, Feb. 1945
The Ba’ath Party: emergence of Pan-Arabism

• Founded in Damascus in 1941 by young intellectuals (Walt, 54)

• Key founder: Michel Aflaq (b. 1910 in Damascus, d. 1989 Baghdad)

• Motto: “Unity [Arab], Freedom [from colonialism], and Socialism”

• Gained control of Syria in 1963, Iraq in 1968
Palestine/Israel: the “Green Line” (L); the 1947 UN Partition Plan (R)
The internationalization of the 1948-49 war (Israel’s “war of independence”)
The Palestinian *Nakb bah*: birth of the refugee problem
King Abdullah in Jerusalem, 1949

- Jordan gained independence in 1946
- Secret talks with Zionist leaders
- Annexation of West Bank around 1950
- King assassinated in Jerusalem in 1951, succeeded by 18 year old grandson, Hussein
The “free officers” (overthrew King Farouk in 1952)
Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918 - 1970)

- “During his lifetime, Nasser was the dominant figure in the Arab world” (Walt, top of p. 54)
- Signed arms deal with Czechoslovakia, 1955
The Aswan Dam (read about the withdrawal of US aid and extension of Soviet aid, pp. 62-63 and 75-76)
Nationalized by Nasser in July 1956
(Walt, 63)

Suez Canal
The Sinai Campaign, 1956
The six day war, June 1967
Anwar Sadat (1918-1981) with Nasser in 1969
October 1973 (Yom Kippur) war
Ceasefire Lines
Signing the “Camp David” accords, March 1979
Camp David Accords, 1979