

The Euro Gulf History Portal Timeline

(16 May 2022 Update)

Pre-Islamic Era

326-324 BC: After Alexander the Great's Indian campaign, his admiral Nearchus led an exploration fleet via the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf to the Tigris and Euphrates. Nearchus visited Bahrain (Tylos in Greek), a flourishing commercial island, which was then colonised by the Greeks and Hellenised much like Kuwait (Larissa) and the Failaka Island (Ikaros).

7th-13th Century

624, March 13: Muhammad ibn Abdullah (Prophet Muhammad) and his Medina-based followers defeated Mecca's ruling Quraysh tribe in the Battle of Badr in today's Saudi Arabia. The subsequent war between the two sides resulted in Muhammad's victory, expansion of Islam and the establishment of the first Caliphate.

628, April: In the Battle of Khaybar, the Jewish tribes living in Khaybar near Medina were defeated by the Muslim forces, led by Prophet Muhammad. The Muslims then allowed the Jews to stay in exchange for half of their produce. The agreement served as a precedent for the status of non-Muslims under Muslim rule in Islamic Law.

633, April: The Rashidun Caliphate defeated the Sassanian Empire in the Battle of Chains near Kazima (today's Kuwait). It was the first direct encounter between the Muslim and Persian armies. The Caliphate further expanded its territory and began the conquest of Iraq and Syria.

711, April 30: Troops of the Umayyad Caliphate, led by Tariq ibn Ziyad, began the seven-year conquest of Hispania, which ended the Visigothic Kingdom, established Al-Andalus and brought much of the Iberian Peninsula under centuries-long Muslim rule. Tariq and his Berber troops landed at Gibraltar, which was named after him.

756, May 15: Abd al-Rahman I, a surviving member of the Umayyad dynasty overthrown by the Abbassids, defeated the last governor of Al-Andalus (now Spain and Portugal) and established the independent Emirate of Cordoba (later Caliphate), which ruled most of the Iberian Peninsula for some three centuries.

893, mid-May: The Abbassid Caliphate's army, led by the governor of Al-Bahrain province, Muhammad ibn Nur, conquered the first Ibadi Imamate of Oman with the capture of the Imamate's capital, Nizwa, and the killing of Imam Azzan ibn Tamim Al Kharusi. The Abbasids invaded Oman upon an invitation from the Nizaris who were in civil war with Al Azd and allies.

1193, March 4: Saladin, the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and the first Sultan of Egypt and Syria, who abolished the Fatimid Caliphate and fought against the Crusaders, died. His Sultanate

encompassed the Hejaz with Mecca and Medina and he was the first ruler titled the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

1258, January 29: Mongols, led by Hulagu Khan, besieged and later plundered Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, and killed its last Caliph Al-Musta'sim, making it part of the Mongol Empire's Ilkhanate, also known as Iranzamin. As a result, the Egypt-based Mamluk Sultanate's influence over the Hejaz and the Holy Places grew.

16th Century

1515, April 1: The Portuguese, led by Alfonso de Albuquerque, recovered Hormuz from the Safavid Persia after seven years and established a century long domination over the Gulf's maritime trade routes. Portugal then formed an alliance with Persia against the Ottomans and Oman and assisted the Shah in invading Bahrain and Qatif.

1515, April 15: The Omani coast came under the Portuguese Empire's control following the reconquest of Hormuz. The Portuguese later based themselves in Muscat, developing trade in the Gulf and competing with the English and Dutch, until they were ejected from the Omani coast by the Yarubids in 1650.

1517, January 22: After the victory over the Safavids and annexation of northern Iraq, the Ottomans continued their expansion under Sultan Selim I and made their first gains in the Arabian Peninsula, defeating the Cairo-based Mamluk Sultanate in the Battle of Ridaniya and incorporating Egypt, the Levant and the Hejaz in western Arabia as Ottoman provinces.

17th Century

1622, January 9: Persia and the English East India Company joined forces to capture Hormuz from the Portuguese that seized it in 1507 and controlled trade in the Gulf. The Persian Shah then allowed the Company to establish an office in Bandar Abbas, thus opening the Gulf trade to the British.

1622, February 9: A month after the Anglo-Persian pact, forces of the Safavid Persia supported by the English East India Company launched a three month siege of Hormuz to oust the Portuguese.

1622, April 23: Following the weeks-long Anglo-Persian siege of Hormuz, the Portuguese surrendered and retreated to Muscat. Persia restored control over Hormuz after more than 100 years. The Portuguese Empire's power declined and its domination of maritime trade routes between India and Europe was replaced by the English and Dutch.

1625, February 12: The battle of three islands, the largest naval battle in the Gulf was fought between the Portuguese forces that sought to reconquer the Hormuz, and allied forces of the Dutch East India Company and English East India Company. It ended with a Persian-Portuguese cease fire.

1650, January: The Portuguese were expelled from Muscat by the forces of Yarubid Ibadi Imam, Sultan bin Saif, after almost 150 years. Oman then defeated the Portuguese in East Africa, expanding the Omani Empire and becoming a major Indian Ocean power.

18th Century

1727, February 20: Muhammad bin Saud Al Muqrin ascended to power in the town of Diriyah in central Arabia after his father, Saud bin Muhammad, died. He founded the First Saudi State that expanded across the Arabian Peninsula until the Ottoman conquest in 1818 and is considered the first ruler of the Al Saud dynasty.

1776, April 16: After a one year siege, the Persians captured the southern Iraqi city of Basra from the Mamluks and the Ottoman Empire amid the Ottoman–Persian wars. Many merchants from Basra fled to Kuwait and Zubarah, contributing to their economic development.

19th Century

1806, February 6: After the first British naval expedition against the Al Qasimi of Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah, the UK and Al Qasimi signed the first peace treaty to cease attacks on maritime shipping that intensified amid the latter's conflict with the British-allied Muscat.

1811, April: Bahrain's Al Khalifa, assisted by Al Sabah from Kuwait, repulsed the forces of the Emirate of Diriyah, which were commanded by Rahmah bin Jabir Al Jalhami, pirate ruler of Dammam and Khor Hassan, in the Khakeekera naval battle, preventing the invasion of Bahrain.

1814, May 3: The third ruler of Kuwait from the Al Sabah dynasty, Jaber bin Abdullah, ascended to power following the death of his father, Abdullah I bin Sabah, and ruled until 1859. He was opposed to the British and aligned with the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, resisting British attempts to turn Kuwait into a protectorate.

1818, April: Egyptian forces of Ibrahim Pasha began the siege of Diriyah, the capital of the Emirate of Diriyah (the First Saudi State). The siege, which lasted several months, was part of the Ottoman Empire's Najd campaign against the Al Saud and led to the end of the First Saudi State.

1819, May: Abdullah bin Saud Al Saud, the fourth and the last ruler and Imam of the Emirate of Diriyah (the First Saudi State), was executed by the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople.

1820, February 5: Rulers of Khatt and Fahlain, Jazirah Al Hamra, Abu Dhabi, Rams and Al Dhayah, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, and later also Bahrain, signed the General Maritime Treaty (dated 5 February) with the British, which sought to end maritime hostilities and protect trade.

1840, late April: Ahmad bin Na'aman Al Kaabi, envoy of Sultan Said bin Sultan of Oman, Muscat, and Zanzibar, arrived at the port of New York aboard the Sultanah ship carrying goods from Muscat

and Zanzibar. It was the first official visit by an Arab emissary to the United States. Lasting several months, it aimed to bolster commercial ties.

1844, March 15: Persian Prime Minister Aghassi used the name "Persian Gulf" to claim sovereignty over the entire Gulf, including all islands under Arab jurisdiction, namely Bahrain. Persia laid over ten claims to Bahrain between 1822-1957 and later seized Emirati islands. Thus, the GCC countries use "Arabian Gulf" and Iran insists on "Persian Gulf".

1853, May 4: The British and the Rulers of Ajman, Dubai, Umm Al Quwain, and Chiefs of Joasme (Al Qasimi) and Bani Yas, later collectively known as the Trucial States, signed the Perpetual Maritime Truce. Building on the 1820 General Maritime Treaty and several pearling season truces, it prohibited acts of aggression at sea and all disputes had to be referred to the British for judgement.

1861, April 6: The Omani Empire was partitioned into two Sultanates – Zanzibar, and Oman – as the British mediated a succession struggle between the sons of Sultan Said bin Sultan Al Said. The end of the Omani maritime empire boosted British influence in the Indian Ocean and allowed them to eventually extend control over both Sultanates.

1862, March 10: Britain and France agreed to respect the independence of Sultan of Zanzibar, Majid bin Said, and Sultan of Muscat and Oman, Thuwaini bin Said, following a power struggle that led to the division of the Omani Empire. Thuwaini initially refused to recognise Majid and planned to retake Zanzibar.

1865, January 19: Telegraph Agreements with Sultan of Oman and Muscat allowed the UK to use its territories in Arabia and Mekran to connect the Iraq telegraph line with India via the Gulf. Stations were built at Musandam and Gwadar and a submarine cable ran through Al-Faw, Bushehr, Musandam and Jask.

1869, May 12: Forces of Salim and Ibrahim bin Sultan Al Qasimi of Sharjah sent to retake Ras Al Khaimah from Humaid bin Abdullah Al Qasimi, who proclaimed independence from Sharjah, were forced to withdraw by the British political resident, who demanded the restoration of maritime truce. RAK retained independence throughout Humaid's reign (1869-1900).

1871, January 30: Turki bin Said Al-Busaidi, supported by interior tribes, Dubai, Ajman, Ras Al-Khaimah and the Na'im, led a successful revolt against Imam Azzan bin Qais, who deposed the previous Sultan and established religious rule. After the victory, Turki bin Said became Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

1871, May 13: Kuwait's naval forces, led by Abdullah II Al Sabah, landed at Ras Tanura to help the Ottomans conquer the Al Hasa province. Taking advantage of an internal Saudi power struggle in the Emirate of Nejd, the Ottoman governor of Baghdad, Midhat Pasha, re-established Ottoman control over Al Hasa. Kuwait's ruler Abdullah II was then named kaymakam (Ottoman provincial governor).

1872, January: Qatar became part of the Ottoman Empire as a kaza of the Al-Hasa province after it submitted to the Ottomans in exchange for protection against external attacks and Ottoman forces

settled on the peninsula. Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani was later named Qatar's kaymakam (district administrator).

1891, January 21: In the Battle of Mulayda, the Al-Rasheed, allied with the Ottomans and commanded by Muhammad bin Abdullah (Emir of Hail), defeated the Al-Saud, led by Abdulrahman bin Faisal (the last Emir of Nejd and father of the first King of Saudi Arabia). The Second Saudi State ended and the Al-Saud was ousted to Kuwait.

1892, March 7: Between 6-8 March, the Trucial States' Rulers signed an Exclusive Agreement with the UK, which competed for influence notably with France and Russia. In exchange for protection, they agreed not to cede territory to and form relations with foreign governments without the British consent.

1893, March 14: In the Battle of Al Wajbah, Qatari forces, led by Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani, defeated the Ottomans, who came to punish Jassim for defying the Empire. After the battle, Qatari tribal leaders were freed, the Al Thani pardoned, Basra's governor replaced and the Ottomans retained control.

1899, January 23: Kuwait's ruler Mubarak Al-Sabah signed an agreement with the United Kingdom, promising that Kuwait would not cede territory or receive foreign powers' representatives without the UK's consent in exchange for territorial protection. Kuwait remained a British protectorate until 1961.

20th Century:

Early 1900s

1900, January: German official, Herr Stemrich, arrived in Kuwait—with the Ottomans' approval—to select a terminus for the extension of the Berlin-Baghdad railway. Kuwait's ruler, bound by a secret protection treaty with the UK, refused. Tensions with the Ottomans, who viewed Kuwait as part of its Empire, increased.

1901, March 17: The Emirate of Hail, led by Abdulaziz bin Mutaib Al Rashid, defeated Kuwait, led by Mubarak Al Sabah, in the Battle of Sarif. It halted Kuwait's offensive in central Arabia and reversed the course of the Kuwaiti-Rashidi war. The Emirate of Hail then sought Ottoman help to invade Kuwait but was forced to retreat.

1902, January 13: During the Battle of Riyadh, Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud, recaptured Riyadh from the rival Al-Rasheed rulers of the Emirate of Jabal Shammar, loyal to the Ottoman Empire. It marked the beginning of the Third Saudi State.

1903, January 26: The first hospital in Bahrain, the Mason Memorial Hospital (later the American Mission Hospital), was opened by the Reformed Church of America and led by doctors Sharon and Marion Thoms. It also served the neighbouring countries without medical facilities.

1905, February 11: Britain formalised policy to protect the Arab Gulf pearling industry from foreign rivals, entitling the tribes of the Arabian Coast to the exclusive use of pearl fisheries within the three mile limit. Since 1914, the granting pearling and sponge fishing concessions had to be consulted with the British.

1909, April 27: The Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II, the last Ottoman Caliph to hold power over the government, was dethroned by the Young Turks. His reign was marked by decline and fracturing of the Empire. He initiated the Hejaz railway and approved Germany's railway plans to the Gulf.

1910s

1916, May 16: The United Kingdom and France, in coordination with Russian Empire and Italy, secretly signed the "Sykes-Picot Agreement" dividing the spheres of influence in anticipation of the Ottoman Empire's defeat and partition. Although the agreement partially influenced the post-war creation of borders, it was never fully implemented.

1918, January 4: David Hogarth, Head of the UK Arab Bureau, brought a message to Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, explaining the Balfour Declaration, which contrasted the past British promise of supporting an independent Arab state in exchange for help against the Ottoman Empire in World War I.

1920s

1921, March 29: Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah became the 10th ruler of Kuwait, which he led until his death in 1950. During his reign Kuwait discovered and began exporting oil. He was the father of Kuwait's current Emir Nawaf and Crown Prince Mishal, as well as the late Emirs Sabah (2006-2020) and Jaber (1977-2006).

1920, April 25: At the post-World War I Conference in San Remo, the Allied Powers partitioned former territories of the Ottoman Empire as mandates. France was assigned Syria (with Lebanon), while Britain got Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Palestine (later also Transjordan). The redrawing of the borders led to many crises and is vital for understanding the region today.

1922, February 17: Ruler of Sharjah, Khaled bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, pledged not to grant oil concessions without consulting the UK if oil would be found in his territory. Similar pledges were later made by Ras Al-Khaimah (22 February), Dubai (2 May), Abu Dhabi (3 May), Ajman (4 May) and Umm Al-Quwain (8 May).

1923, January 10: Sultan Taimur bin Faisal (1913–1932) agreed that the Sultanate would not exploit oil or grant concessions for its exploitation without consulting the British Political Agent in Muscat and without the approval of the High Government of India.

1926, January 8: Following the seizure of Mecca and the expulsion of Ali bin Hussein, the last Hashemite Sharif of Mecca, Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud, the Sultan of Nejd, was crowned King of the Hejaz. A year later, Nejd also became kingdom.

1926, May 7: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Turkey was among the first countries to provide diplomatic recognition to the Kingdom of Hejaz, ruled by Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud, and deployed its first three diplomatic representatives to Hejaz, all of whom previously served in the region under the Ottoman Empire.

1928, January: Rashid bin Humaid Al-Nuaimi III became the ninth ruler of Ajman, ruling the emirate until his death on 6 September 1981. As one of the founding fathers of the United Arab Emirates, he oversaw Ajman's incorporation into the federation.

1928, January 18: The UK refused Persian territorial claim to Bahrain. Persia (later Iran) continued to claim the island state and unilaterally proclaimed Bahrain its 14th province in 1957. The Shah backtracked after the UNSC passed Resolution 278 but post-1979 revolutionary Iran renewed the claim to Bahrain.

1930s

1932, April 22: The Treaty of Friendship establishing formal ties between Italy (then the Kingdom of Italy) and Saudi Arabia (then the Kingdom of Nejd and Hejaz and its Dependencies) was ratified in Rome in the presence of Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Viceroy of Hejaz and the future Saudi Foreign Minister and King, during his first visit to Italy.

1933, January 7: The first air mail delivery arrived in Kuwait from Baghdad. The trip took three days. The next dispatch brought the first official air mail from New Zealand to Kuwait and took almost one month to reach its destination.

1934, February 2: The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) was incorporated by the Anglo-Persian Oil Co (now BP) and the Gulf Oil Corp (Chevron). KOC discovered Kuwait's first oil almost four years after receiving the oil concession. KOC came under Kuwaiti ownership four decades later.

1935, March 21: On Nowruz (Persian New Year), Persian government changed the country's official name to Iran ("Land of Aryans"), arguing with geographical, historical and racial reasons. The decision was influenced by the Nazi Germany and the proposal came from Persia's Embassy in Berlin.

1935, April 3: Saudi Arabia presented the "Red Line," a claim to move the Saudi south-eastern border with the British protectorates well beyond the Anglo-Ottoman border set before World War I. Ibn Saud claimed Khawr al-Udayd, Jabal Nakhsh, most of Rub al-Khali and Dhofar. Long British-Saudi negotiations began.

1935, May 5: Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, the third ruler of Qatar (1913–1949), renewed the 1916 protection treaty with Britain, which in turn promised to protect Qatar from land attacks in addition to attacks from sea. Twelve days later, Qatar signed its first Oil Concession Agreement with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

1938, February 22: The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) discovered Kuwait's first oil in the Burgan Field.

1938, March 3: The first oil was struck at the Dammam well number 7 in Dhahran in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province by the California Arabian Standard Oil Co. (CASOC), later renamed Aramco. Commercial oil production was announced seven months later and the first oil tanker shipment left in May 1939.

1938, May 10: In a letter to the British Political Agent, Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani laid Qatar's first claim to the Hawar Islands, which have been under Bahrain's sovereignty. A year later, the British Government ruled in favour of Bahrain as Qatar lacked evidence for its claim.

1939, May 1: During a landmark event celebrating the loading of the first oil tanker D.G. Scofield with around 90,000 barrels at the Ras Tanura port, Saudi Arabia's King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud opened the valve allowing the oil flow and inaugurated the first shipment of Saudi oil.

1940s

1940, January: Oil was discovered in Dukhan, Qatar. However, oil production was postponed for nine years due to the Second World War. The first crude oil shipment was dispatched from Umm Said port to Europe on 31 December 1949.

1941, March 31: Lt Cdr George Grove was appointed as the first US Naval Observer to Bahrain, with a consent of the British and Bahrain's ruler. His task was to observe UK's anti-submarine operations in the Indian Ocean and gather intelligence on German U-boats. Three months later, he died in a plane crash, becoming the first US officer casualty in Iraq.

1942, February 20: Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa succeeded his father, the late Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, as the eighth Hakim of Bahrain since 1783. He ruled Bahrain until his death in 1961 when he was succeeded by his son, Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, who led the country until 1999.

1944, January 31: The California Arabian Standard Oil Company (CASOC), established in 1933 following an oil concession agreement between Saudi Arabia and the Standard Oil Company of California (SOCAL), was renamed the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco).

1945, February 14: Saudi Arabia's King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud and US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt met for the first time aboard USS Quincy, laying the ground for the US-Saudi partnership. They discussed the future of Palestine and Jewish refugees, Syria and Lebanon, as well as agriculture.

1945, March 22: Kingdom of Egypt, Kingdom of Iraq, Republic of Lebanon, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Syrian Republic and Emirate of Transjordan, soon joined by Kingdom of Yemen, founded the Arab League, a regional organisation to enhance cooperation and coordination among Arab states, based in Cairo.

1946, March 2: The British forces left Iran, which was occupied by the Allied forces since 1941 due to the Shah's cooperation with Germany, but Moscow refused to honour the Tripartite Agreement withdrawal deadline. It was the first crisis brought to the UN Security Council.

1948, January 6: As the pearling industry continued to decline, local pearl merchants urged Bahrain's ruler to coordinate with other Gulf states to prohibit import of foreign pearls amid an influx of pearls from countries like Venezuela and a British embargo on exporting pearls to the newly-independent India.

1948, May 14: The end of the British Mandate for Palestine and the proclamation of the State of Israel, sparked the First Arab–Israeli War, involving Arab coalition forces from Iraq, Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The war resulted in Israeli victory and 1948 is often referred to as Nakba (disaster) by the Palestinians.

1950s

1950, February 25: Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah's ascension to power in Kuwait following the death of his cousin, Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has been marked as Kuwait's National Day to celebrate the independence from the United Kingdom under his reign in 1961.

1951, May 11: The Trucial Oman Levies (later Scouts) were established to ensure internal security in the Trucial States. Headquartered in Sharjah, they were raised as indigenous armed forces under British command. After the establishment of the United Arab Emirates, the Scouts formed the basis of the Union Defence Force.

1952, January 28: Dammam hosted a conference to resolve a long-standing territorial dispute over the Buraimi Oasis between Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Oman revived due to oil exploration. The initiative failed and Saudi forces invaded the Oasis, which was later reclaimed by the Trucial Oman Levies.

1952, March 23: The Trucial States Council, a consultative body founded to enhance cooperation among the rulers of the Trucial Shaikhdoms, held its first meeting, chaired by the British Political Agent. It was attended by seven rulers as the UK recognised Fujairah as a Trucial State two days earlier.

1956, February 26: An agreement delineating the underwater border between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain came to force. Negotiated amid offshore oil explorations, it was the region's first delineated continental shelf boundary and the world's first to establish a joint maritime zone with a unique sharing arrangement.

1956, April 21: Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Saudi Arabia's King Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Imam Ahmad bin Yahya Hamidaddin of Yemen signed a mutual defence pact in Jeddah. The move sought to consolidate the bloc opposed to the Baghdad Pact.

1958, February 1: Egypt and Syria proclaimed the United Arab Republic, a pan-Arab, socialist state. Alarmed by the move, the Hashemite Kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan formed the Arab Federation two weeks later and demanded Kuwait to join them. However, both entities were short-lived due to coups d'état in Iraq and Syria.

1958, March 8: The Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen and the United Arab Republic (a federation of Egypt and Syria) formed a confederation, the United Arab States, which lasted until December 1961. It came after a defence pact between the Kingdom of Yemen and Egypt and conflicts with Saudi Arabia.

1958, March 24: Saudi Arabia's King Saud bin Abdulaziz was forced to transfer executive powers in domestic and foreign affairs to his brother Crown Prince Faisal amid economic crisis and growing discontent with his mismanagement. Faisal initiated an austerity programme to balance the budget, among others.

1960s

1963, February 3: Kuwait's oldest functioning women association, the Women's Cultural and Social Society, was established to promote Kuwaiti women's rights and political participation.

1963, March 11: Kuwait became the first Arab Gulf country to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union during the Cold War and helped the USSR to expand relations with the GCC countries in the 1980s.

1963, April 17: Following the Tripartite Unity Talks, Egypt, Syria and Iraq agreed to form a federation with Gamal Abdel Nasser as President. It came shortly after coups d'états in Syria and Iraq established Ba'athist governments. But the plan collapsed a few months later after a failed pro-Nasserist coup in Syria.

1964, January 12: The Zanzibar Revolution overthrew the last Sultan, Jamshid bin Abdullah Al-Busaid. Zanzibar became part of Oman's empire in 1698 after the Portuguese defeat in East Africa and it later also briefly served as a seat of the Omani ruler Said bin Sultan in the 1830s before its split from Oman.

1968, January 16: The UK Labour government announced the withdrawal of British forces from the Gulf by the end of 1971, ending British regional dominance and precipitating the emergence of independent Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

1968, February 18: Rulers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, met in Al Sedaira and agreed to form a federation to unite the two emirates and invite other emirates to join, laying the foundations of the United Arab Emirates.

1968, February 27: The Rulers of the Trucial States, Bahrain and Qatar signed an agreement to form a federation of nine Arabian Gulf Emirates in Dubai. However, Bahrain and Qatar would later withdraw from the federation and proclaim independence.

1970s

1970, May 2: The strategically important, US-owned Trans-Arabian Pipeline (Tapline) delivering oil from Eastern Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean was shut down until early 1971 due to a damage in

Daraa that caused a large oil spill and the subsequent refusal of the Syrian government to allow its repair until ARAMCO paid extra transit fees.

1971, March 30: Amid an internal Baath party power struggle, Hardan al-Tikriti, former Vice President and Defence Minister of Iraq, was assassinated in Kuwait on the orders of Saddam Hussein. Al-Tikriti was a key member of the 17 July Revolution (1968), which brought the Baath party to power in Iraq.

1972, January 25: Ruler of Sharjah, Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, one of the UAE's founding fathers, was killed in a failed coup led by his cousin and former deposed ruler, Saqr bin Sultan, who returned from exile in Egypt. Khalid's brother, Sultan bin Muhammad, succeeded him and continues to rule until today.

1972, February 10: Under the leadership of Ruler Saqr bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ras Al Khaimah joined the United Arab Emirates and became the seventh emirate of the federation two months after its establishment.

1972, February 23: Qatar's Prime Minister, Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani, deposed his cousin, Ahmad bin Ali Al Thani, and became Emir of Qatar. Generally considered as the first modern ruler of Qatar, he ruled until 1995, when he was deposed by Hamad bin Khalifa, his son and father of the current Emir.

1973, March 20: Iraq attacked Kuwait's border post at Sanita near Iraq's Umm Al-Qasr port, killing two officers, amid border talks. Iraq laid claim to Kuwaiti islands Bubiyan and Warbah, controlling access to the port, developed with Soviet help. Saddam Hussein flew to Moscow and both sides accepted mediation by PLO's Yasser Arafat.

1974, January 1: Governments of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman agreed to buy the British Overseas Airways Corporation's shares in the Gulf Aviation and founded the Gulf Air, a joint flagship airline. In 2007 Bahrain became the airline's sole owner after the other three governments withdrew.

1974, February 7: Palestinian militants took hostages at the Japanese Embassy in Kuwait City, demanding a safe passage for the "Bukom bombers," four members of the Japanese Red Army and PFLP, from Singapore to Kuwait. Japan dispatched a plane that flew them to Kuwait and then to Aden, Yemen.

1974, March 18: Arab oil producing countries (except Libya) lifted the oil embargo against the United States, which was imposed on Israel's supporters during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and caused a global energy crisis, amid prospects of disengagement talks between Israel and Egypt and Syria.

1975, March 5: Kuwait acquired the remaining 40% of the Kuwait Oil Company from the British Petroleum and the Gulf Oil and took full control of its oil industry. The agreement was signed in December 1975 and was backdated. It expedited the nationalisation process of oil industries in other Arab Gulf countries.

1975, March 25: King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who ruled Saudi Arabia since 1964, was assassinated by Faisal bin Musaid, his nephew and grandson of the last Al Rashid Emir of Hail. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Saud ascended to the throne after his brother's death.

1975, April 12: Delegations from Saudi Arabia and Iraq agreed on border delimitation from Wadi al-Aujah at the tripoint with Kuwait to Jabal Anazah at the tripoint with Jordan, straightening the line. The Neutral Zone was later divided as well. The formal Saudi-Iraqi border treaty was finalised in late 1981.

1975, April 13: The 15-year Lebanese civil war broke out as the fighting between the Maronite Christians and the Palestinian-Muslim forces intensified after an attempted assassination on the Phalangist leader and a deadly retaliatory attack on a bus with Palestinians.

1976, February: The Sultanate of Oman and the Baathist Iraqi Republic established diplomatic relations for the first time after Baghdad ceased supporting the Dhofar insurgency. Oman later proposed a regional security framework that would include the six future GCC states, Iraq and Iran.

1976, May 6: The United Arab Emirates' federal military body, the UAE Armed Forces, was created by the unification of the Abu Dhabi and the Dubai Defence Forces, the Ras Al Khaimah Mobile Force, the Sharjah National Guard and the other emirates' smaller forces.

1979, January 17: The last Shah of the Imperial State of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, fled to the US amid looming revolution. Ruhollah Khomeini landed in Tehran two weeks later and established the region's first Islamic theocracy in modern times.

1979, March 19: The Second Yemenite War between the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), supported by the US, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and the USSR-allied People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), ended with a ceasefire and peace talks in Kuwait brokered by the Arab League.

1979, March 26: Egypt's President, Anwar Sadat, and Israel's Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, signed a formal peace treaty at the White House. Egypt was the first Arab state to recognise Israel, angering the Arab world. Egypt was suspended from the Arab League until 1989 and Sadat was assassinated by Islamists.

1980s

1980, February 13: Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the US Carter Doctrine, Kuwait and other Arab Gulf states, except Oman, supported Iraq's Arab National Charter, calling for non-alignment, peaceful resolution of intra-Arab conflicts, solidarity against foreign aggression and rejecting foreign military presence in the region.

1980, April 7: The US President, Jimmy Carter, severed diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran as Tehran refused to release 52 US citizens held hostage at the US Embassy since November 1979. The two countries have no formal diplomatic relations to this day.

1980, April 28: Iran's Foreign Minister, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, survived an assassination attempt in Kuwait during his first regional tour. Tehran blamed Iraq for the attack. Ghotbzadeh, who was one of the closest aides of Ayatollah Khomeini during the Islamic revolution, was executed in 1982 for allegedly plotting to overthrow Iran's theocratic regime.

1981, February 4: Foreign Ministers of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates convened in Riyadh to draft the founding Charter of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which was then formally adopted by the rulers of the six countries in Abu Dhabi in May.

1982, February 21: Saudi Arabia signed bilateral security pacts with the UAE and Qatar and two days later also with Oman. An Iran-backed coup plot in Bahrain earlier prompted a similar security pact with Manama and the first GCC Foreign Ministers' extraordinary session in Bahrain, which affirmed the principle of collective security.

1984, March 27: During the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqi Air Force escalated the "tanker war" with the first combat use of a French-made Super Étendard fighter jet and an Exocet missile against the Greek commercial tanker Filikon L, carrying crude oil from Kuwait to Italy, assuming it carried Iranian oil.

1988, April 5: Shia militants hijacked the Kuwait Airways Flight 422 en route from Thailand, demanding Kuwait to release the "Kuwait 17" terrorists responsible for the 1983 bombings. Militants held hostages for 15 days, killing two, and forcing landings in Iran, Cyprus and Algeria. Kuwait said it was orchestrated by Hezbollah's Imad Mughniyeh.

1988, April 14: During the Iran–Iraq War, the US frigate USS Samuel B Roberts was damaged by an Iranian mine on its way to escort reflagged Kuwaiti tankers in the Gulf. The US forces retaliated against Iran four days later with the Operation Praying Mantis, the US Navy's largest surface engagement since World War II.

1988, April 26: A bomb exploded at the Saudia airline office in Kuwait, one day after Riyadh broke off diplomatic relations with Tehran over Iranian acts of terrorism and subversion, namely the 1987 riot in Mecca that killed over 400, the attack on Saudi Embassy in Tehran that killed one Saudi diplomat, and attacks on commercial shipping in the Gulf.

1989, February 16: North Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt announced the establishment of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) to foster closer economic cooperation and integration. The new bloc unsettled neighbouring states, particularly in the GCC. However, the ACC did not survive the 1990-91 Gulf War.

1990s

1990, March: Oman and Saudi Arabia resolved a long standing territorial dispute, agreeing on delineation of their nearly 658 km border across Rub al-Khali (Empty Quarter), marking a fresh start in Omani-Saudi relations. They also agreed to share water resources and establish a road connection.

1991, January 15: The UN Security Council deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait passed. The US-led Coalition launched military campaign to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Meanwhile, Iraq also fired missiles at Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and Israel.

1991, February 8: Iraqi forces began systematically igniting Kuwaiti oil wells, reaching 700 by the end of the Gulf War. Two weeks earlier, Iraq dumped around seven million barrels of crude into the Gulf waters, causing the world's largest oil spill.

1991, February 28: One day following Saddam Hussein's order to the Iraqi forces to retreat from Kuwait, the liberation campaign of Kuwait by the US-led international coalition successfully ended Iraq's almost seven-month long occupation and the Gulf War.

1991, March: Following the Gulf War, Foreign Ministers of the six GCC countries, Egypt and Syria, which helped liberate Kuwait from Iraq, met in Damascus to discuss a new security system for the Gulf. They adopted the "Damascus Declaration," envisaging defence cooperation among the parties.

1992, March 1: Iran further fuelled the conflict with the United Arab Emirates over the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, occupied since 1971, by demanding that all visitors must have Iranian visa.

1994, January 20: Qatar Airways began operations under the ownership of the Al-Thani royal family two months after its establishment, becoming the GCC's fifth national flag carrier (after Saudia, Kuwait Airways, the Emirates, Oman Air). 20 years later, it became fully government owned.

1994, April 8: Saudi Arabia's government officially revoked Saudi citizenship of Al-Qaeda's leader, Osama bin Laden. Since his expulsion from Saudi Arabia in 1992, he relocated his base to Sudan and later to Afghanistan.

1996, April 2: Israel's Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, visited Qatar for the first time. Following a meeting with Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Qatar and Israel agreed to exchange trade representations. Qatar was the second GCC country after Oman to publicly host a head of an Israeli government.

1997, February 24: Qatar inaugurated the Qatargas 1 LNG plant, the world's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporting facility. The plant uses natural gas from the North Field. The first LNG exports were bound for Japan and Spain.

1997, April 10: In a first, a German court ruled that Iran's government, including Supreme Leader Khamenei, President Rafsanjani and Minister Fallahian, ordered the killing of four Kurdish dissidents in Berlin in 1992. Germany was Tehran's biggest trading partner and Europe's "critical dialogue" policy with Iran was called into question.

1999, March 6: Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa succeeded his father, Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, as the second Emir of Bahrain since gaining independence from the UK. He assumed the title of King following a 2002 national referendum to turn Bahrain into a constitutional monarchy.

Early 2000s

2001, February 15: In a referendum held on 14 and 15 February, some 98.4% of Bahraini voters approved the National Action Charter, a constitution transforming Bahrain to a Kingdom and Emir Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to a King, establishing an elected parliament and introducing social reforms.

2001, March 12: Iran's President Mohammed Khatami and Russia's Vladimir Putin signed the first cooperation and security agreement between Moscow and Tehran since the 1979 Islamic revolution, aiming to expand ties notably in military technology, arms trade, Iran's nuclear programme and regional affairs.

2001, March 16: The International Court of Justice settled a long-standing territorial dispute between Bahrain and Qatar and delineated their maritime boundary. According to the Court's final ruling, Zubarah and Janan Islands belong to Qatar, while the Hawar Islands and Qit'at Jaradah belong to Bahrain.

2001, April 18: Saudi Arabia's Minister of Interior, Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and his Iranian counterpart, Abdolvahed Mousavi Lari, signed a bilateral agreement on internal security cooperation as ties between Iran and its Arab Gulf neighbours began to improve.

2003, January 2: Rashid bin Ahmad Al-Mualla II, who ruled Umm Al Quwain since 1981, died aged 77. He was succeeded by his son, Saud bin Rashid Al-Mualla, the tenth ruler of Umm Al Quwain who leads the emirate until today.

2003, April 9: Three weeks since the beginning of the US-led invasion of Iraq, the Coalition forces formally began occupying Iraq's capital, Baghdad, deposing Saddam Hussein and ending the Baath Party rule. It led to a protracted armed conflict and regional instability.

2005, January 5: Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, became the Ruler of Dubai, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, following the death of his brother, Maktoum bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who held the positions since 1990.