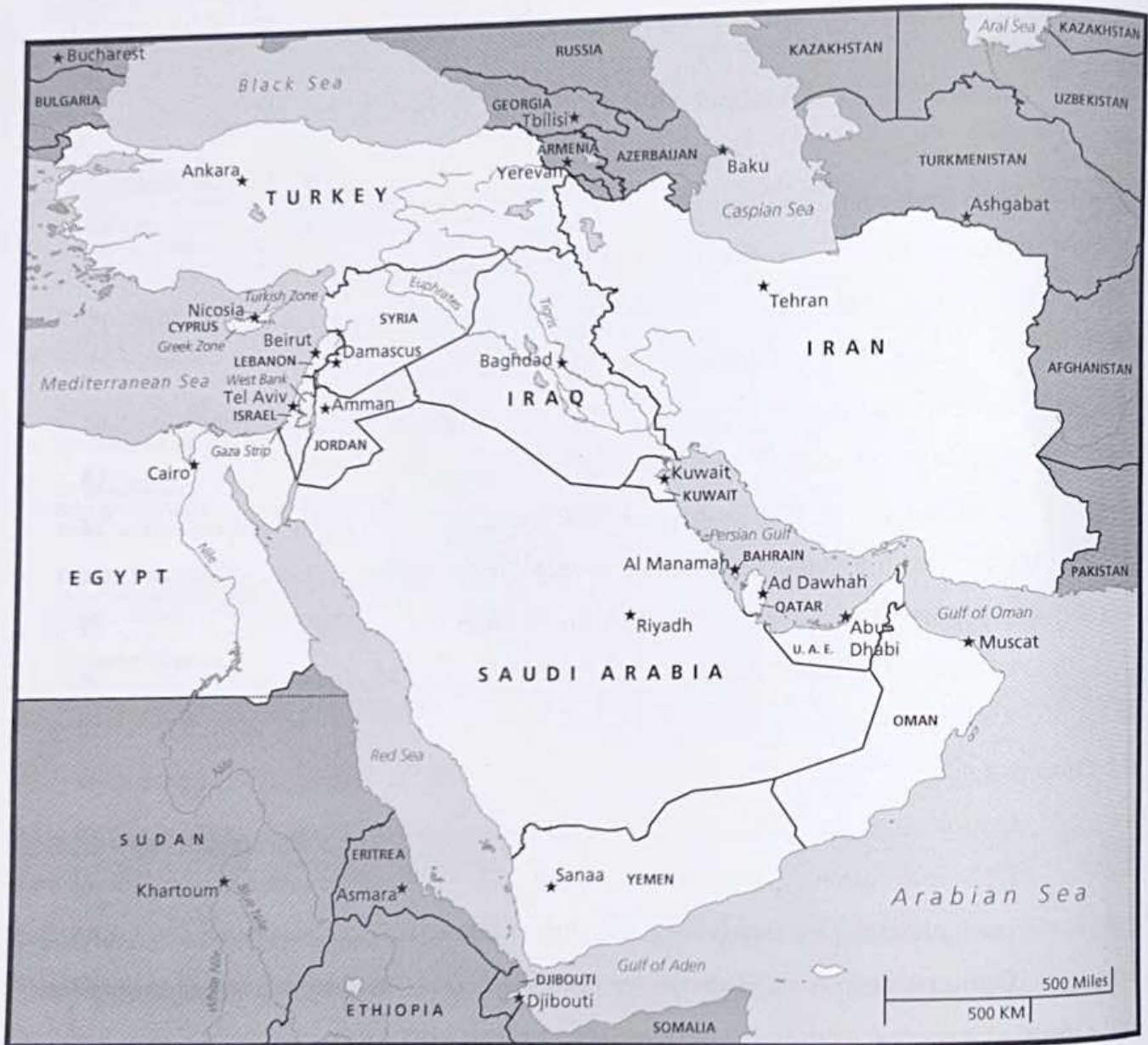


The Middle East



The term "Middle East" was invented by British government officials to describe a region to their east between Britain and lands in the "Far East," for example India and China. Today, the term "Middle East" can be used to describe a region spanning countries as far apart as Morocco in North Africa to Pakistan in South Asia. For this reading, the term "Middle East" refers to the countries highlighted in the map, stretching from Egypt in the west to Iran in the east. The term "Arab world" refers to the countries in which Arabic is widely spoken. This includes countries in North and East Africa and extends to the Persian Gulf. It does not include Iran, where Persian is the official language.