

POST-COLD WAR CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST



Mgr. Eva Taterová, M.A., Ph.D.

Politics and Society in the Middle East

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ

- 1958 military coup led by Abd al-Karim Qasim → end of the monarchy → Iraq republic – dominance of Baath Party.
- Since 1960s Saddam Hussein was a leader of Baath Party, since 1978 president of Iraq → authoritarian regime.
- Various conflicting lines in the society:
 - Kurds – 25 % of population living especially in northern Iraq → Kurdish nationalism.
 - Sunni vs. Shia Muslims – Shia Muslims are the majority but under Saddam's regime subordination to Sunni Muslims.
 - State sovereignty of Kuwait was not



Saddam Hussein

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ

- Personal cult of Saddam Hussein (new Saladin of the Middle East).
- Nationalization of Iraq oil industry in 1970s → various social programs, modernization of the country → Saddam's regime quite popular among the ordinary people (except of the Kurds).
- Iran-Iraq war 1980-1988: none of the state was able to achieve unambiguous victory – significant damages for economies, societies, environment of both countries.
- The war became the excuse for the repression of the Kurds – 1987: chemical attacks on towns and villages in Kirkuk region (Al-Anfal operation – sometimes titled as Kurdish genocide).

GULF WAR 1990-1991

- Iraq was searching for new sources of income as economy of the country was heavily damaged by the war with Iran.
- Long-term disapproval of Kuwait's state sovereignty (historical reasons, oil resources, fresh clean water).
- Underestimation of the international consequences of the war by Saddam Hussein (conversation with US ambassador April Glaspie).
- September 2, 1990 – start of the annexation of Kuwait, the country got occupied with one day (emir Jaber left to exile) → UN Resolution no. 660 – demand of immediate withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait → UN Resolution no. 678 – the mandate to use military means if Iraq does not withdraw from Kuwait.

ANTI-IRAQ INTERNATIONAL COALITION

- International coalition led by USA (George H. Bush).
- January 17, 1991: Operation Desert Storm → Iraq defeated within couple of weeks.
- Outcomes:
 - Renewed territorial integrity and sovereignty of Kuwait.
 - Despite of military defeat, Saddam Hussein remained in the position of Iraq president – the coalition did not support the Kurdish uprising.
 - Economic sanctions on Iraq for whole 1990s (program Oil for Food).
 - Confirmation of superpower status of USA.

GLOBAL JIHADISM

- Terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. in September 11, 2001 → huge shock for the western world – growth of global jihadism (al-Qaeda as well as the other organizations).
- So called war against terrorism (al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, ISIS) – *Bush doctrine*



RONALD REAGAN MEETS WITH THE TALIBAN



“THESE GENTLEMEN ARE THE MORAL
EQUIVALENTS OF AMERICA’S FOUNDING
FATHERS.” – RONALD REAGAN, 1985

WAR IN AFGHANISTAN 2001- TODAY

- Started October 7, 2001 in response to terrorist attacks from September 11 (Operation Enduring Freedom).
- USA, GB vs. Taliban (nowadays the Operation Enduring Freedom is managed by NATO) → obvious military superiority of US army – Kabul got under US control in November 2001 → guerilla war.
- Death of Osama ben Laden May 2, 2011 – suspicious circumstances.
- Central government (president Ashraf Ghani) does not have the full control over the territory.
- Warlords, Taliban, other radical groups.



Osama bin Laden

2nd GULF WAR

- March 20, 2003: alliance of western states led by USA attacked on Iraq (not a full support of international community, no official UN mandate).
- The declared reasons:
 - Iraq possessed the weapons of massive destruction;
 - Support of al-Qaeda,
 - Protection of human rights in Iraq.
- May 2003 – most of the territory occupied by the allied countries.
- December 2003: Saddam Hussein captured and put to the court.

2nd GULF WAR

- The conflict transformed in guerilla war → the security problems till today.
- Iraqi national uprising – officially ceased in December 15, 2011 but since that the fights have been occurring constantly.
- Temporary Iraqi government → election → permanent government made in 2006 – not able to control the whole territory of the country (president Barham Salih).
- Different groups of the rebels:
 - Supporters of Saddam Hussein.
 - Al-Qaeda in Iraq: Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

GROWTH OF ISLAMIC STATE (ISIS)

- Close connection to wars in Iraq and war in Syria – al-Qaeda was a great inspiration for Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS.
- Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has been a leader of ISIS since 2010 (in 2014 he claimed himself to be caliph)
- Increase of activities since the withdrawal of US army from Iraq in 2011, and the war in Syria.
- The main rival of ISIS has been especially the Kurdish forces (peshmerga).
- Significant emphasis on propaganda and media campaign.
- Terrorist attacks outside of the Middle East (Paris in November 2015, Istanbul in



TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OF ISIS



ThirdPosition @Third_Position - Jun 16

#ISIS Roadmap: The goal of a unified #Islamic #Caliphate. pic.twitter.com/21rEJM6xpV

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION