

# POST-COLD WAR CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST



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# 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: non 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 OF THE WAR

- 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.



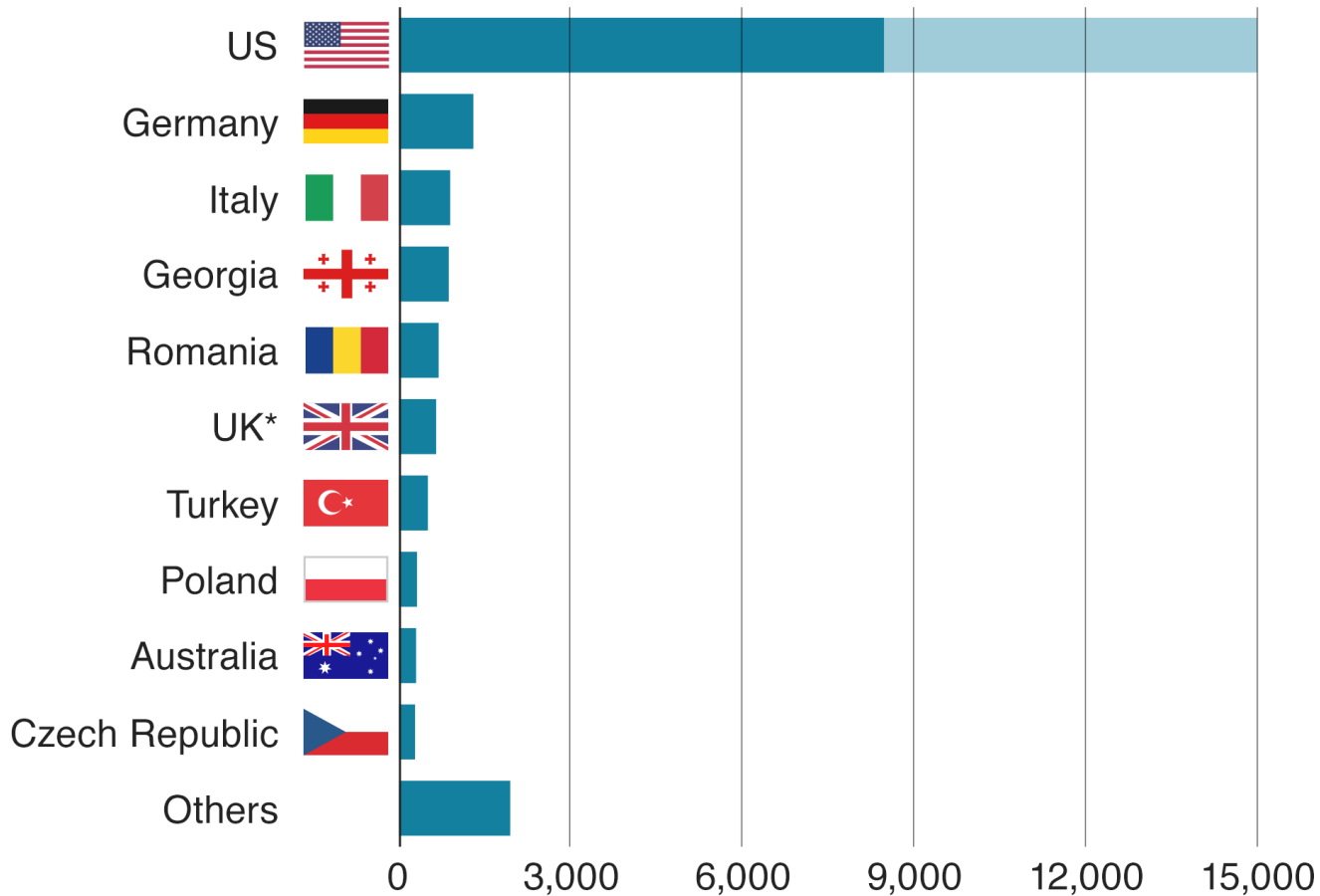
Osama bin Laden

# WAR IN AFGHANISTAN 2001- TODAY

- Death of Osama ben Laden May 2, 2011 – suspicious circumstances.
- Central government (the president Ashraf Ghani) does not have the full control over the territory.
- Warlords, Taliban, other radical groups.
- 2020: peace talks between Taliban and the central government in Kabul.

# The US contributes the most troops to Afghanistan

- Nato Resolute Support Mission troops
- US Operation Freedom Sentinel troops



\*UK troop numbers to rise to over 1,000 by early 2019

Source: Resolute figures from Nato (Nov 2018),  
Sentinel figures from US Department of Defense (March 2018)

# AL-QAEDA ATTACKS IN EUROPE

- 2004: Madrid train bombings (190 people killed).
- 2005: London bombings (52 people killed).
- 2015: attack on Charlie Hebdo in Paris.



# 2nd GULF WAR (WAR IN IRAQ)

- 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.



# WAR IN IRAQ

- May 2003 – most of the territory occupied by the allied countries – *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.
- December 2003: Saddam Hussein captured and put to the court.
- The conflict transformed in guerilla war and civil war → the security



Saddam Hussein in court



# IRAQI NATIONAL UPRISING

- Iraqi national uprising – officially ceased in December 15, 2011 but since that the fightings 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

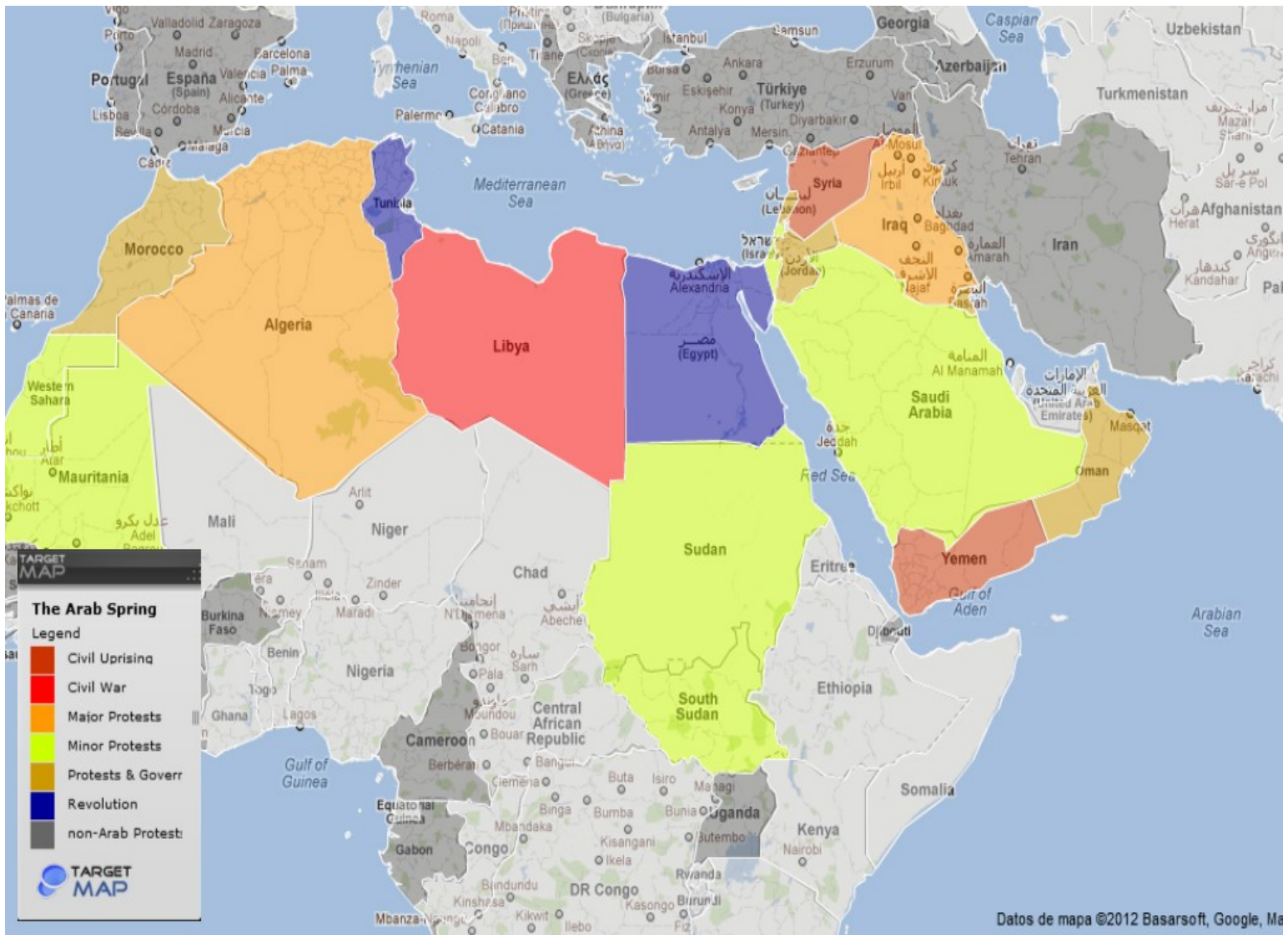


Abu Musab al-Zarqawi

# ARAB SPRING

- December 2010: Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in Tunisia → protest against president Bin Ali's government → spread to almost all other Arab countries (a significant surprise for the whole world).
- Various reasons for the protests: economic troubles, difficult social situation, corruption, limited human and political right.
- Role of the new media and social networks such as





**Legend**

- Civil Uprising
- Civil War
- Major Protests
- Minor Protests
- Protests & Govern
- Revolution
- non-Arab Protest

TARGET MAP

# PRESIDENTIAL MONARCHY IN SYRIA

- The president is almighty, supported by the army.
- Personal cult – “people, unity, revolution“.
- March 1963: military coup lead by Ba'ath Party (The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party)  
→ 1970 Hafez Assad became the president of Syria.
- Three pillars of power:  
family, Ba'ath Party, army.





# POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN SYRIA

- 1990s significant changes in international relations (failure of USSR → loss of the significant ally).
- Deep social changes: social mobilization – more than 50% urbanization rate, growing literacy, 28% people had university or high school education.
- Gradual change of the regime – more freedom to travel, to make business, more autonomy, release of some political prisoners.
- June 2000: death of Hafez Assad → Bashar Assad.

# BASHAR ASSAD AND HIS WIFE





# WAR IN SYRIA

- March 2011 demonstrations against Bashar Assad's regime.
- Bashar Assad decide to suppress the uprisings with the help of the army → the conflict escalated in regular civil war.
- Massive damages: more than 470,000 death, more 3 millions of refugees – huge violation of the human rights (torture, political prisoners, weapons of massive destruction).
- Syria has become the battlefield of the great powers such as Iran. Saudi Arabia. Russia.

# WAR IN SYRIA

- **Assad's supporters:**
  - Syrian government forces.
  - Hizballah.
  - Russia, Iraq, Iran.
- **Opposition:**
  - National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces
  - Islamic state.
  - An-Nusra Front (close connections to al-Kaida).



# SYRIA

## Who controls what?



@AJLabs

Source: Liveuamap, Turkish Presidency | Updated: Feb 24, 2020



# 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 a caliph.
- Increase of activities since the withdrawal of US army



# GROWTH OF ISLAMIC STATE (ISIS)

- 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 January 2016, Brussels in March 2016, Berlin in December 2016, Manchester in May 2017, Vienna in November 2020).





# TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OF ISIS



ThirdPosition @Third\_Position - Jun 16

#ISIS Roadmap: The goal of a unified #Islamic #Caliphate. [pic.twitter.com/21rEJM6xpV](https://pic.twitter.com/21rEJM6xpV)



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**