

# CURRENT ISSUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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# FINAL EXAM

- Final Exam: January 14, January 28, February 11 (12 CET)
- 6 open questions sent by e-mail (cover lectures and readings from the whole semester)
- Time: 1 hour
- Submission: Information System of Masaryk University
- Total: 60 points

# GRADES

A	92 - 100
B	84 - 91
C	76 - 83
D	68 - 75
E	60 - 67
F	less than 60 points

# AMBIGUOUS (AND STILL OPEN) CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARAB SPRING

- A stable but often very brutal autocracy sinks into chaos (Syria, Yemen, Libya) or the resurgence of autocracy (Egypt).
- In the ongoing chaos, radicals of all kinds are strengthening - from secularists (clan warlords in Syria or Kurdish militias) to religious extremists (ISIS, An-Nusra).
- Weakening US power, slightly strengthening influence of Russia (Syria), China, regional power





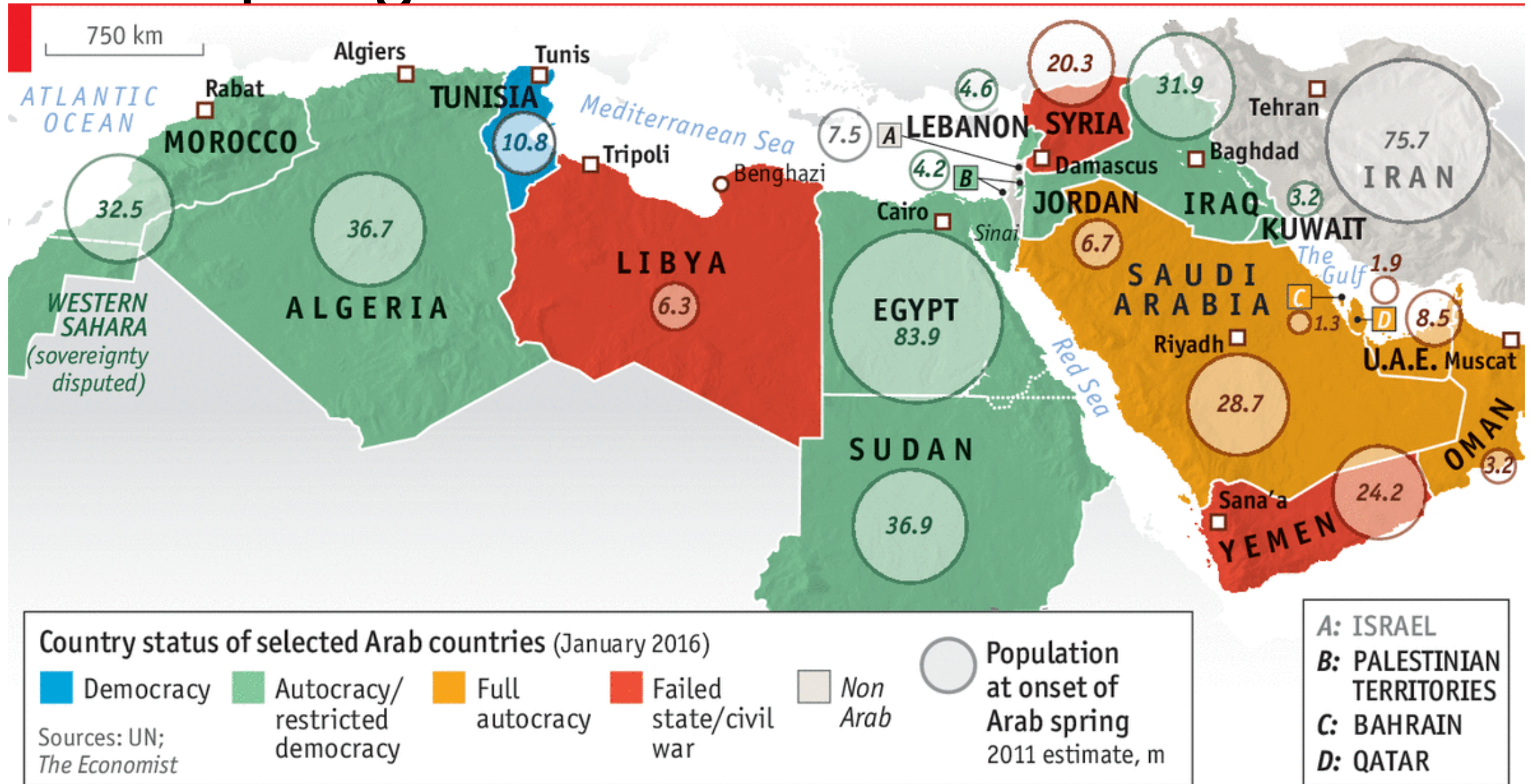
# AMBIGUOUS (AND STILL OPEN) CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARAB SPRING

- Intra-Islamic religious disputes are politicized and sharpened (Saudis and their allies versus Iran and its allies), the Israeli-Arab conflict (but not the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) is de-escalating.
- Giant refugee waves, humanitarian disasters, devastation or stagnation of economies, rising inequality and poverty.



Abdel Fattah el-Sisi

# Situation after the Arab Spring



# THE ARAB SPRING LED TO THE STRENGTHENING OF THREE ALLIANCES:

## 1. "Saudi" - inaccurately "Sunni" bloc

- maintaining the conservative regimes of the Middle East (mainly Saudis, UAE + Bahrain, Egypt) + Israel

## 2. "Iranian" - inaccurately "Shiite" bloc

- Iran, Syria, Lebanese Hezbollah, largely the government in Iraq

## 3. Qatar and Turkey

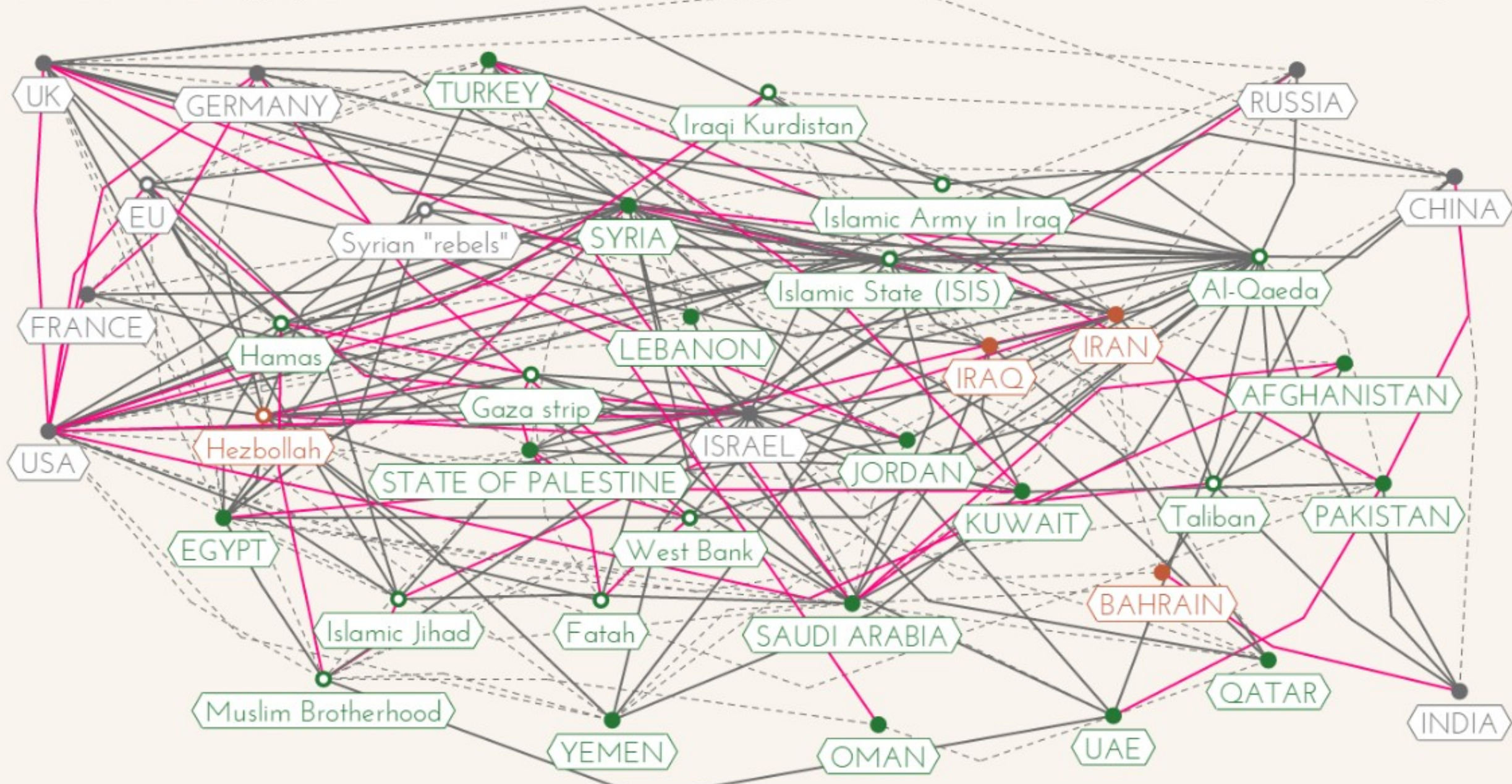
Proxy Wars - Iraq, Syria, Yemen, etc.



# The Middle East

Key players & notable relationships

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# Who supports whom

■ Saudi side ■ Iran side ■ Split\* ■ Non-aligned



\***Syria:** Govt pro-Iran, opposition pro-Saudi. **Lebanon:** Hezbollah pro-Iran, main Sunni bloc pro-Saudi. **Yemen:** Govt-in-exile pro-Saudi, Houthi rebels pro-Iran

# POSITION OF ISRAEL

- Normalization of the diplomatic relations with selected Muslim countries in 2020:
  - United Arab Emirates.
  - Bahrain.
  - Sudan.
  - Morroco.



Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, US President Donald Trump, and UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan

# 2019 AND TURKEY AS A NEW KEY PLAYER

- Member of NATO (2nd strongest army).
- Fighting Kurds (YPG / PKK).
- It benefits from the problems of Syria.
- An important role in the context of the migration crisis.
- Increasing domestic and foreign influence of President Erdogan.
- Business partner of the United States.



Recep Tayyip Erdoğan



# CURRENT POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Change in US foreign policy - gradual abandonment of the Middle East.
- High unemployment in post-war states (Iraq, Syria).
- High debt and corruption.
- Political and religious instability.
- Missing and insufficient infrastructure.
- Consequences of covid-19 pandemic for the region.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION