



# ARAB SPRING AND WAR IN SYRIA

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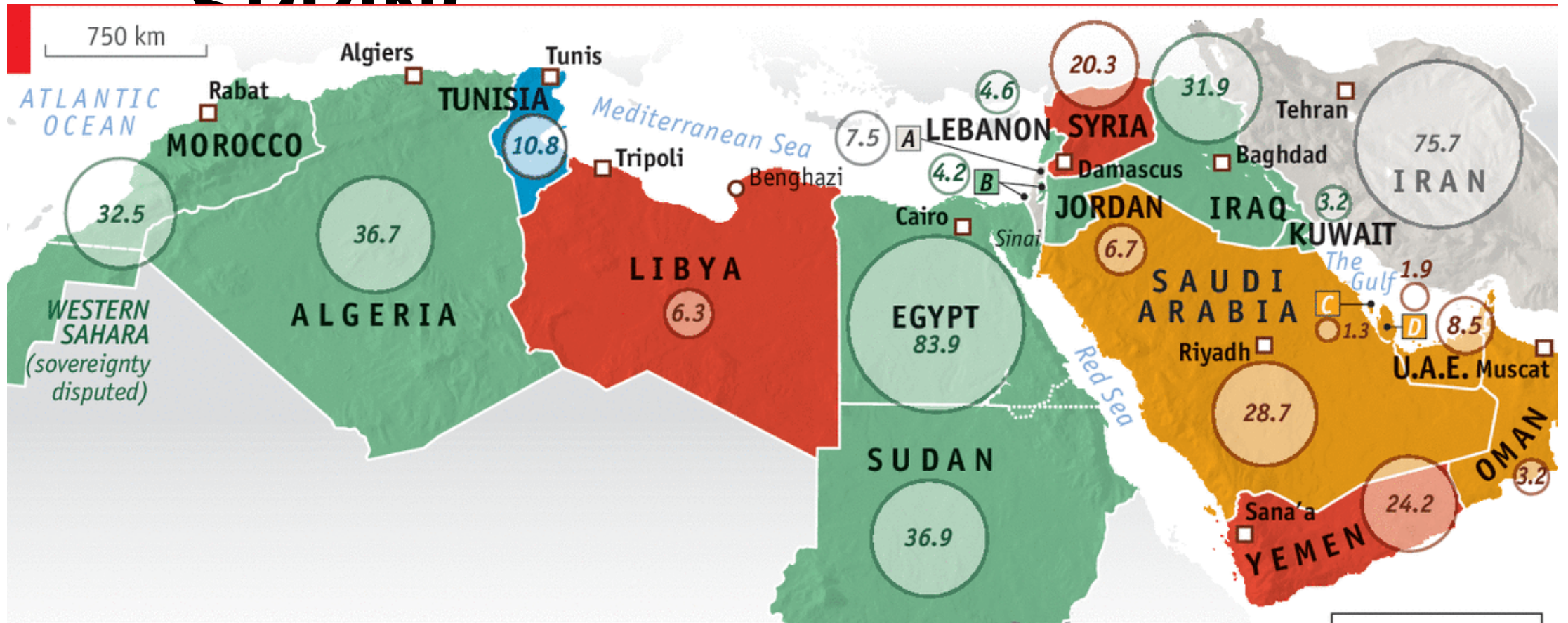
Masaryk University

# 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 Facebook and Twitter.



# SITUATION AFTER ARAB SPRING



**Country status of selected Arab countries (January 2016)**

■ Democracy   
 ■ Autocracy/restricted democracy   
 ■ Full autocracy   
 ■ Failed state/civil war   
 ■ Non Arab

Sources: UN; *The Economist*

○ Population at onset of Arab spring 2011 estimate, m

A: ISRAEL  
 B: PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES  
 C: SAUDI ARABIA  
 D: QATAR

# 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

# 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.



# 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, Turkey and others.





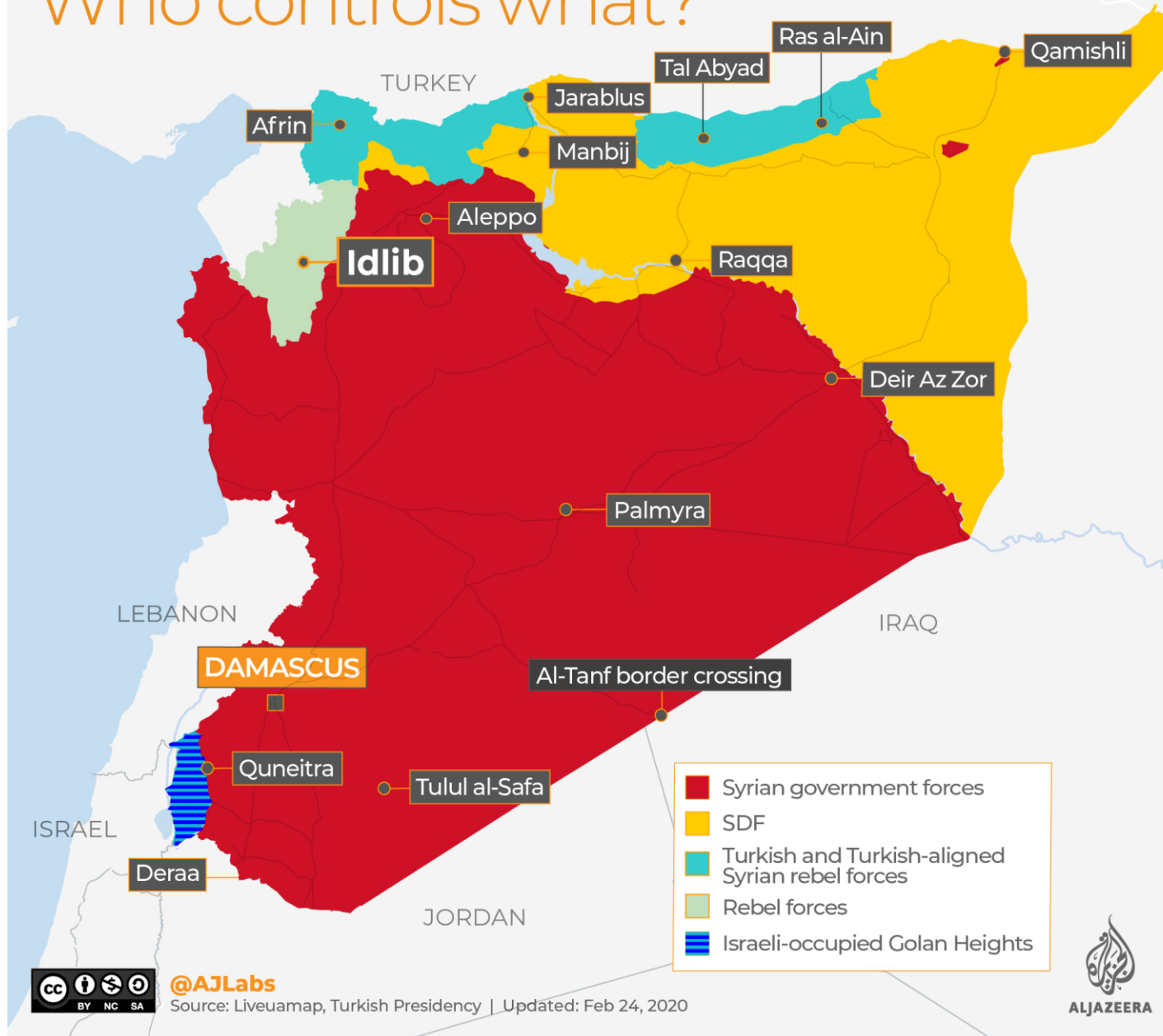
# WAR IN SYRIA

- **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).
  - Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia.



# SYRIA

## Who controls what?



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION