

Islam pillars and concepts. The role of political Islam

By Dr. Karin Kneissl

Maps are drawn from Le Monde
diplomatique, ÖMZ and own maps

Neusiedl April 16th, 2015

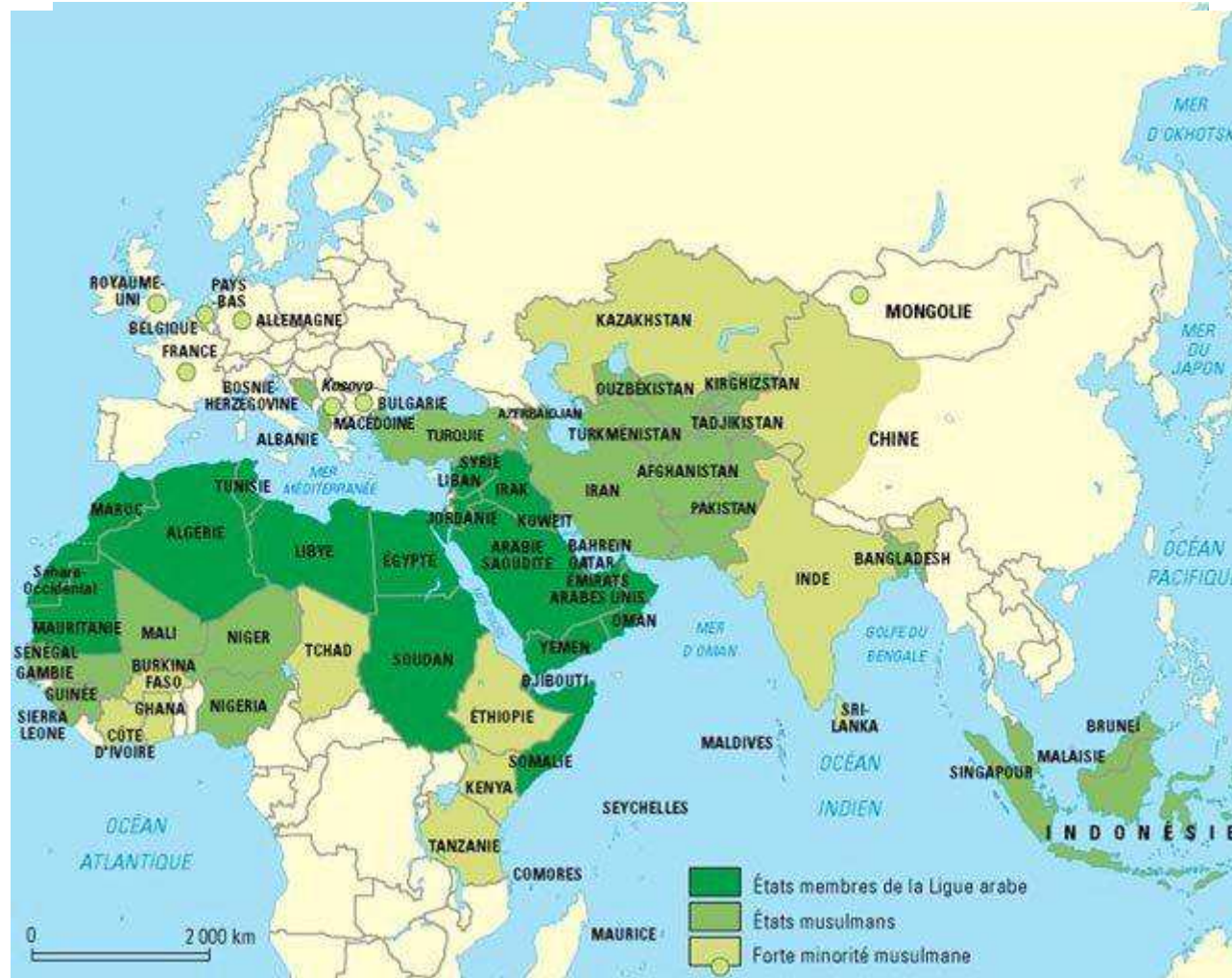
From the mare nostrum to confrontation

Civilizations of the Mediterranean and the Occident

- Notions of Middle and Near East
- Trade, religions, agriculture
- Rise of conflicts – monotheism
- Interventions
- Mutual fear
- What remains of the common heritage?



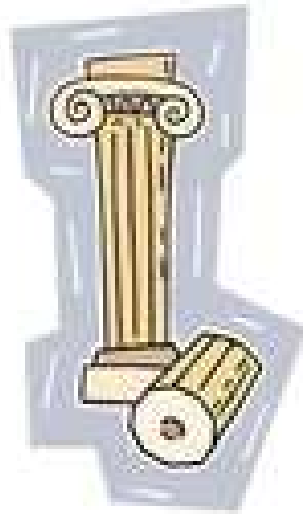
The Islamic World



The geography of chaos in the „Greater Middle East“

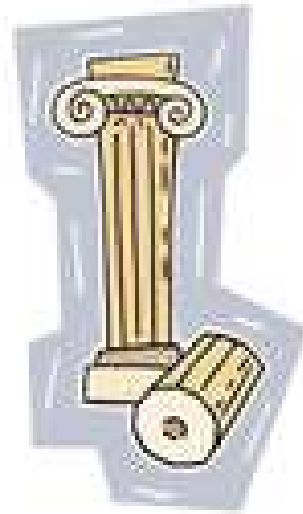


Five pillars of Islams



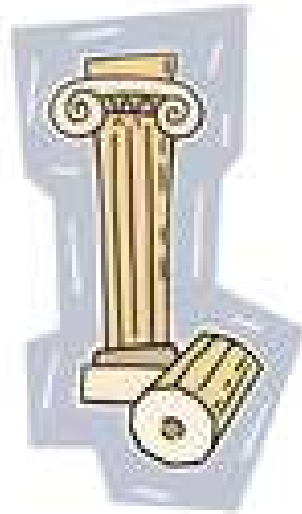
1st Pillar

Declaration of
.....
"There is no god
except,
Muhammad is the
messenger of



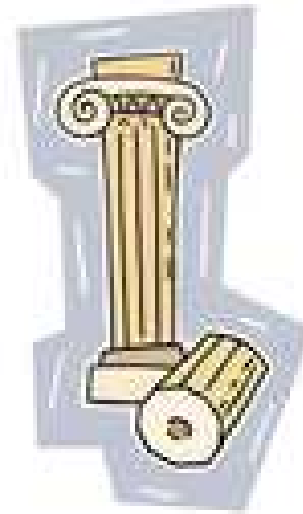
2nd Pillar

Praying
times each day,
facing
Before praying
people must
..... Their



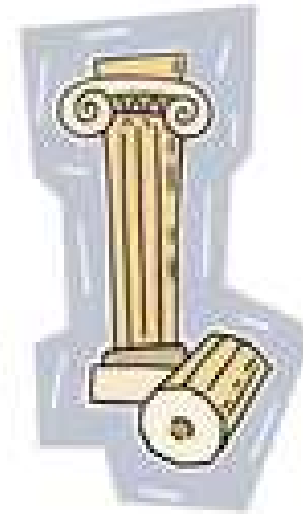
3rd Pillar

Giving
(about 2.5% of
their savings) to
.....
perhaps for the
poor.



4th Pillar

Muslims must not
..... food or
..... during
the month of
Ramadan during
..... hours.



5th Pillar

Muslims must
make this
pilgrimage to
..... at least
..... in their
lifetime, if they can

Sulta and khalifa

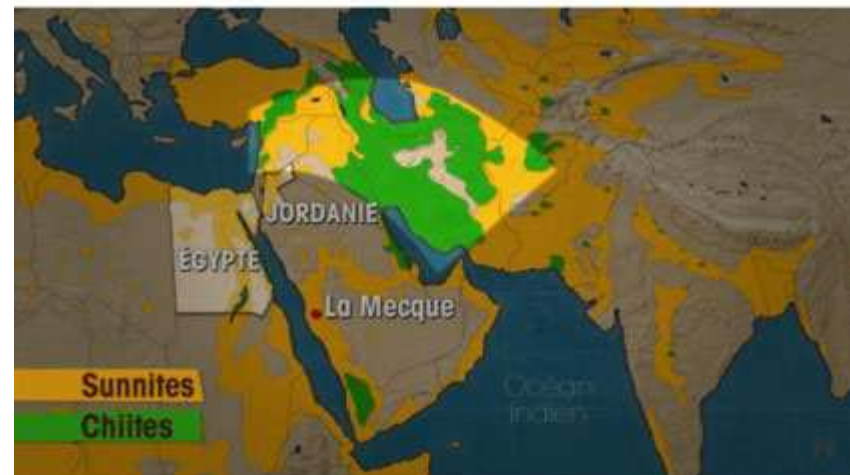
- Spiritual and political power
- Rise of religion in tandem with territorial conquests
- Separation of powers?
- Personal union – Times of Prophet, Ottoman Empire
- Arabic - and critical interpretation

From a succession dispute within the family of Prophet Mohammed to a global conflict



Schism in Islam

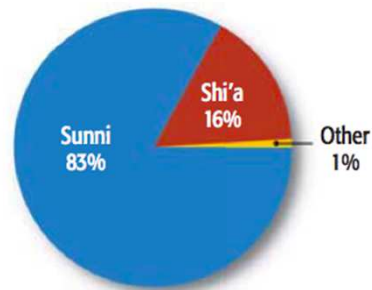
- Succession strife 632
- Death of Prophet Mohammed
- Shia Ali versus followers of Abu Bakr
- Ali, Hussein, Fatima
- Legitimacy, martyrdom
- More than a theological dispute



Shia vs Sunna

Basic Differences Between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims	
Sunni	Shi'a
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Believe that the first four caliphs were "rightly guided"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Believe that Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, should have succeeded Muhammad
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Believe that Muslim rulers should follow the Sunna, or Muhammad's example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Believe that all Muslim rulers should be descended from Muhammad; do not recognize the authority of the Sunna
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Claim that the Shi'a have distorted the meaning of various passages in the Qur'an	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Claim that the Sunni have distorted the meaning of various passages in the Qur'an

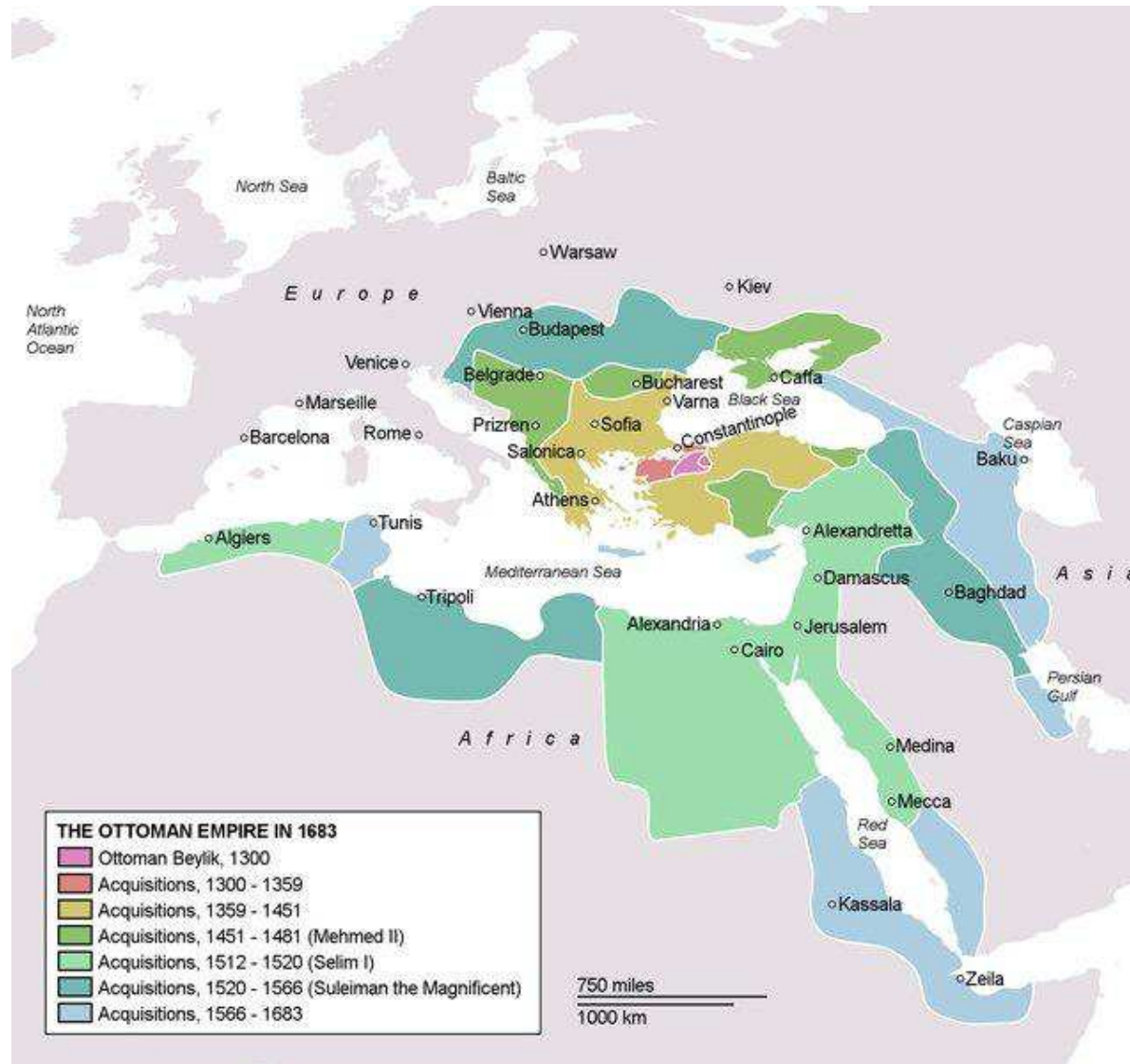
Percentage Today of Sunni and Shi'a Muslims Worldwide



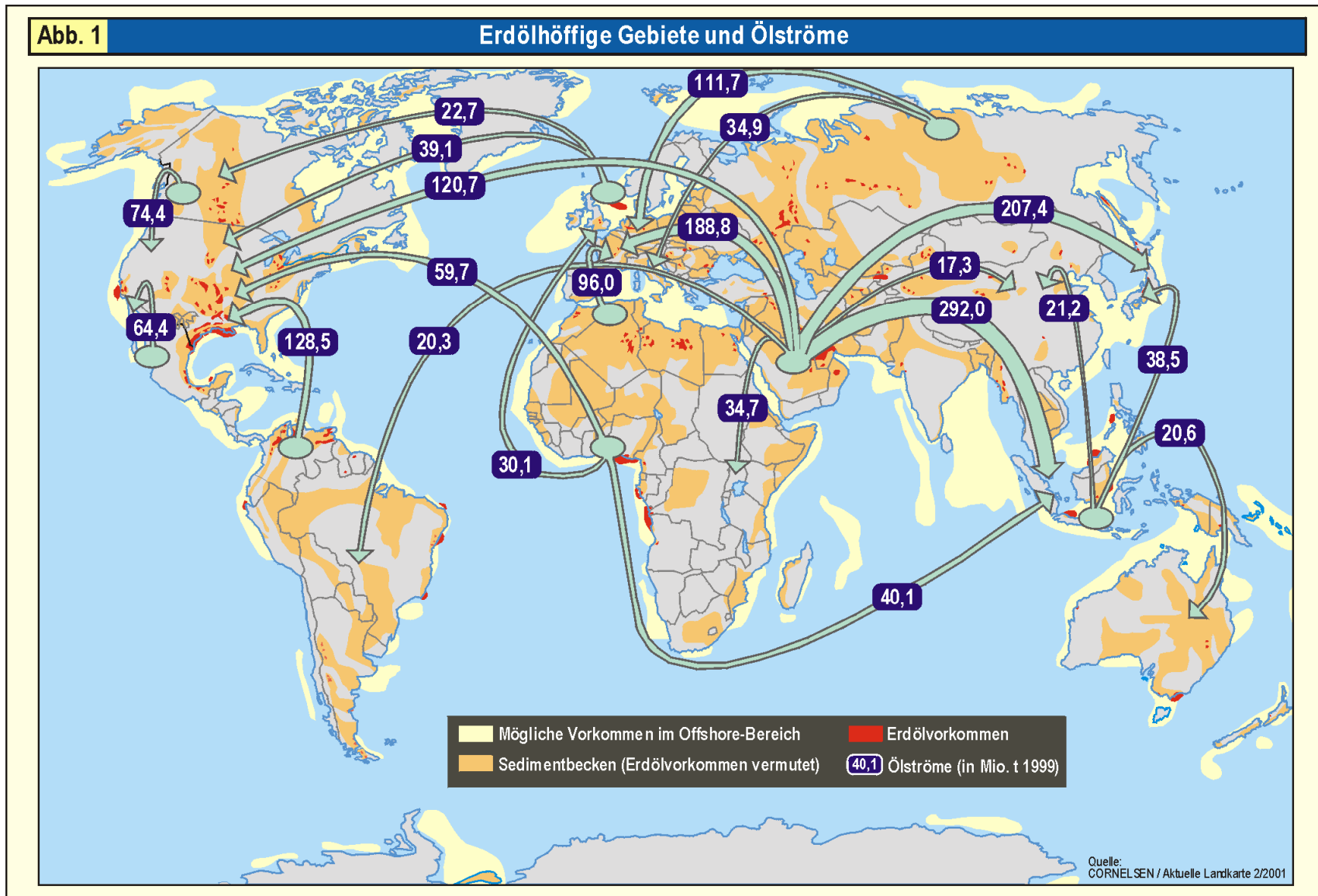
Shia and Sunna



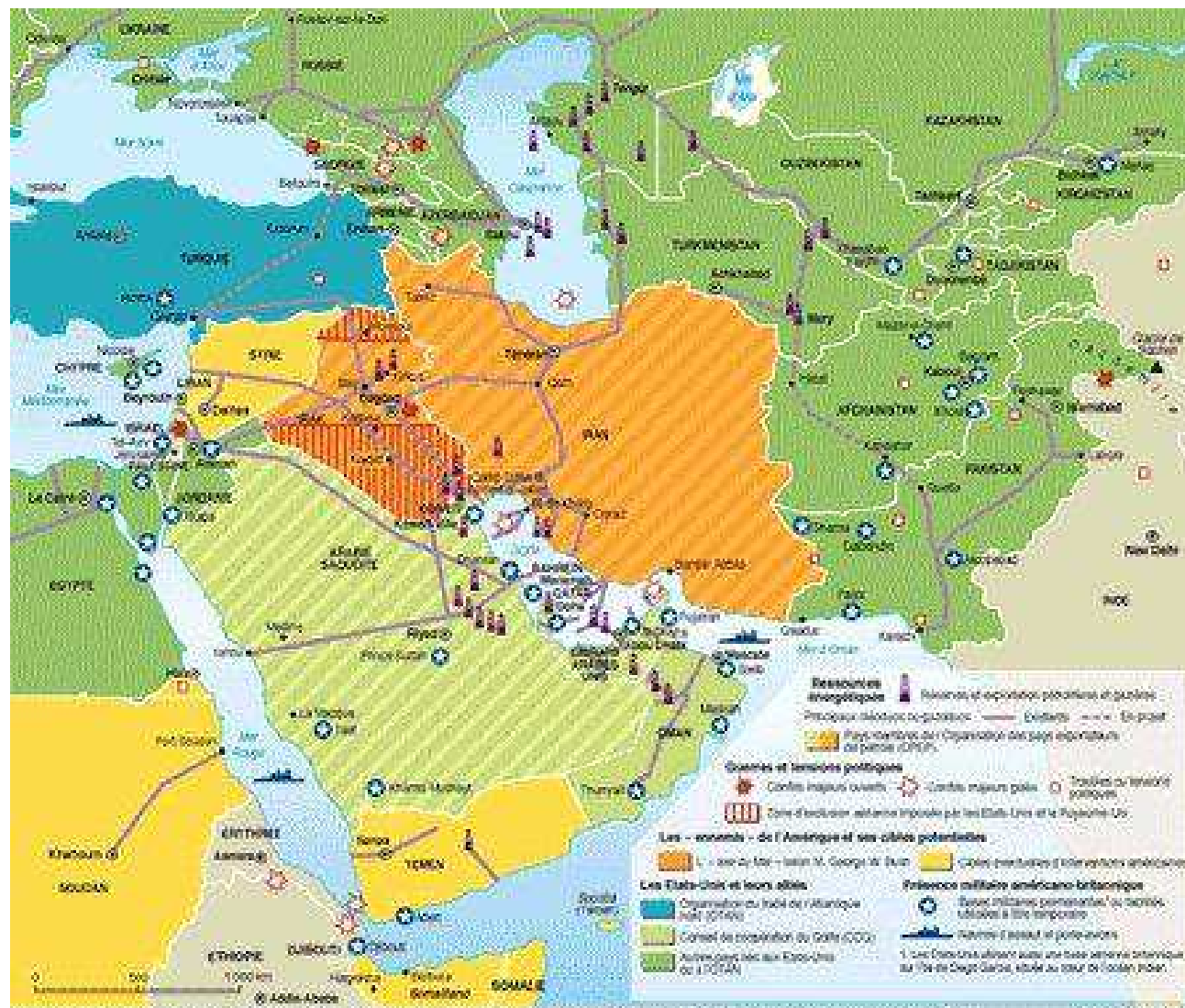
Ottoman Empire in 1683



Energy interdependence



Physical access to energy and military bases



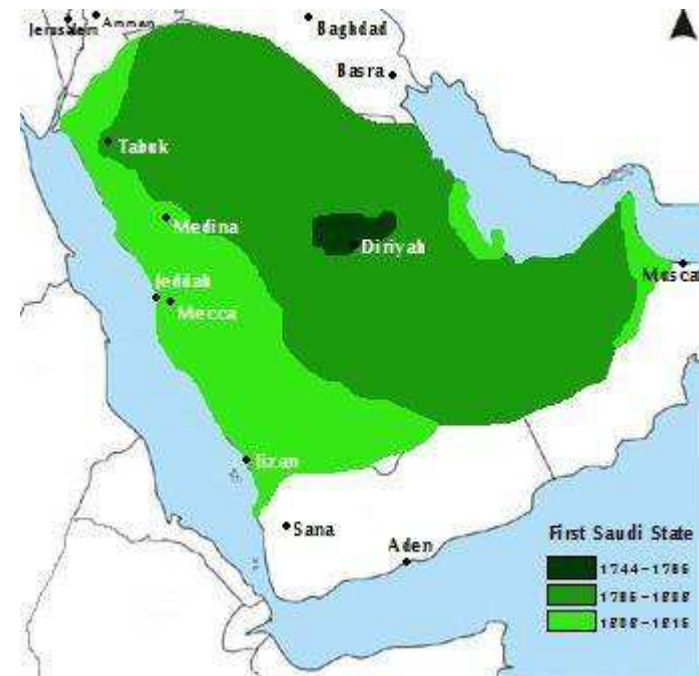
Saudi Arabia versus Iran?

- Sunni or Shiite: Claiming leadership in the „umma“
- Not just a theological issue, Re-emergence of a „fitna“ in the Islamic world?
- Pragmatic or ideological approach? Improved relations
- Traditional Rivals inside OPEC
- Dealt differently with the IOCs (Seven Sisters)
- Iranian/Persian state for 2500 years; SA created in 1932



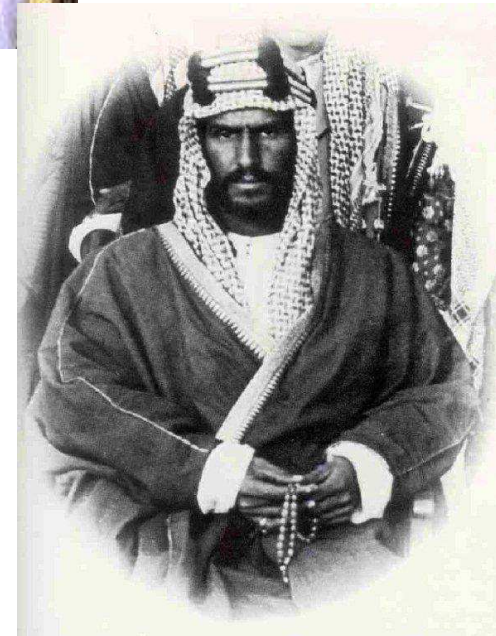
The House Saud

- Alliance betw. Tribe of Saud and Wahabite ulama in late 18th century
- Mutual dependence
- State established on basis of jihad
- What to do with the religious zealots (Ihwan)? dominant political force
- ca. 20 000 members
- Basic Law 1993; a real theocracy
- No political parties, no interest groups
- Terrible HR situation
- Municipal elections in 2005 (a breakthrough for democracy??)



Political System challenged

- Absolute monarchy, no separation of powers; Doubtful HR record
- Longterm appointments The current head of the Al Saud and ruler of Saudi Arabia is King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, 83
- More progressive than the people?
- Active foreign policy
- Courageous judicial reforms
- announced 2006 the creation of a committee of princes to vote on the viability of kings and the candidature of nominated crown princes - in effect, clarifying and further defining the Al Saud's line of succession process.
- How to finance the welfare system?
- How to handle the crisis? The terrorist threat from within



Oil and Alliances

- Oil drilling 1937 /Philby – Ibn Saud advisor
- Churchill and Roosevelt courting Ibn Saud
- 1947: alliance with the US
- A theocratic ally in cold war (vs. Arab nationalists)
- Since 1974 major global payer and player
- Afghanistan, Pakistan, Balkans – export of Wahabite Sunni Islam



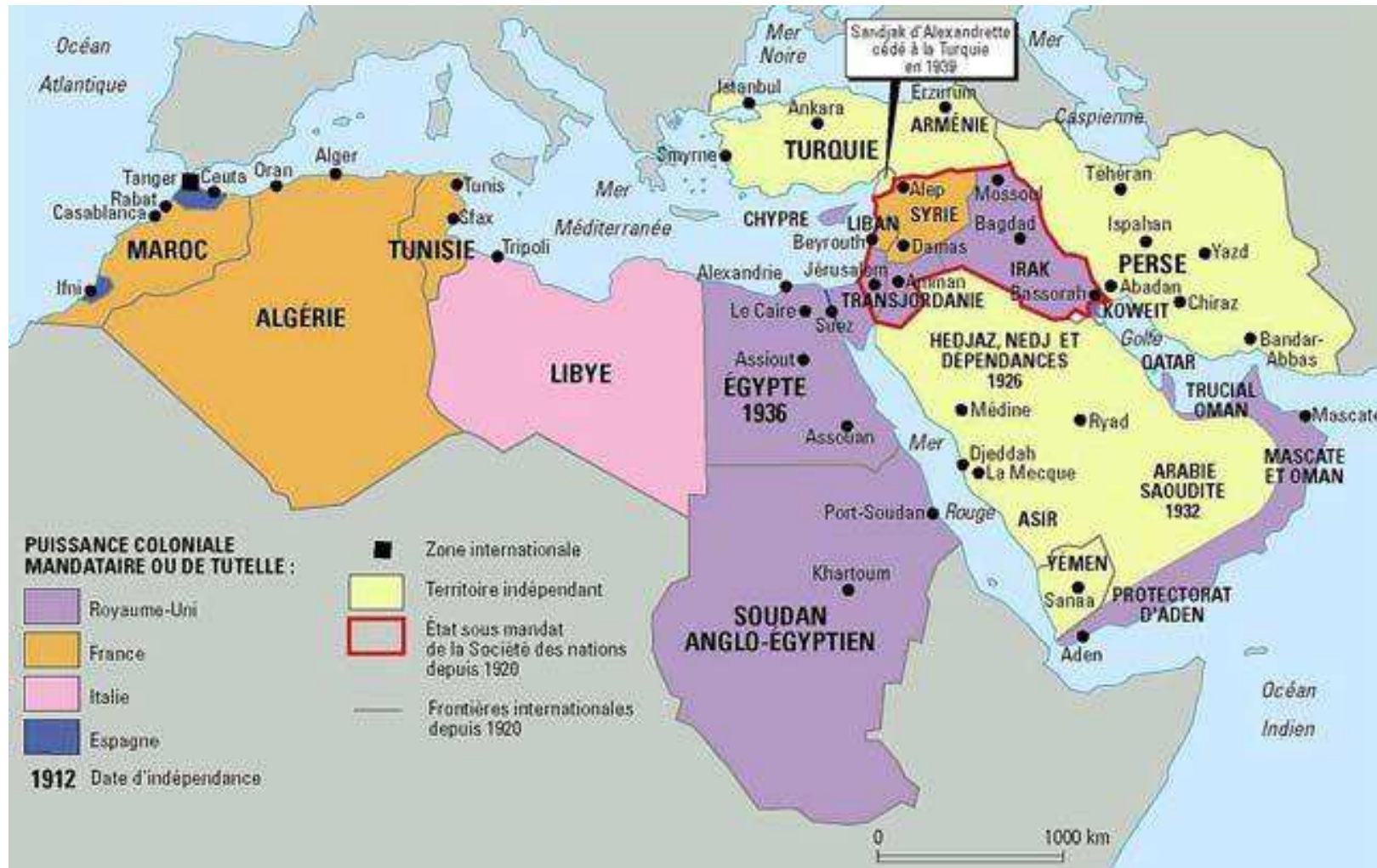
World War I – dismembering the Ottoman Empire

- Paris, London, Berlin
- Diverging roles in the Orient
- Railway concessions
- Rising interventions
- Supporting nationalist movements
- Promises
- European spheres of interest

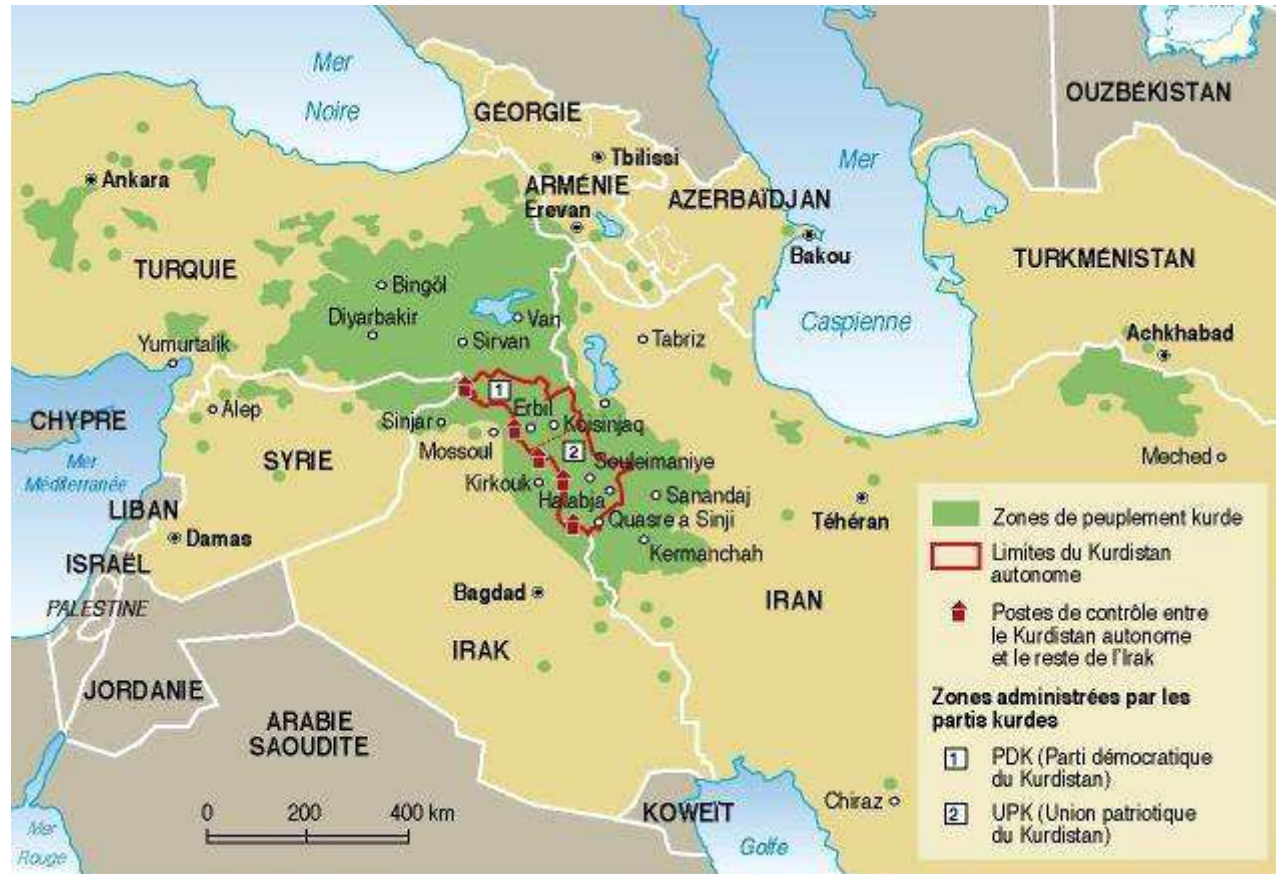
Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916



The region in 1939



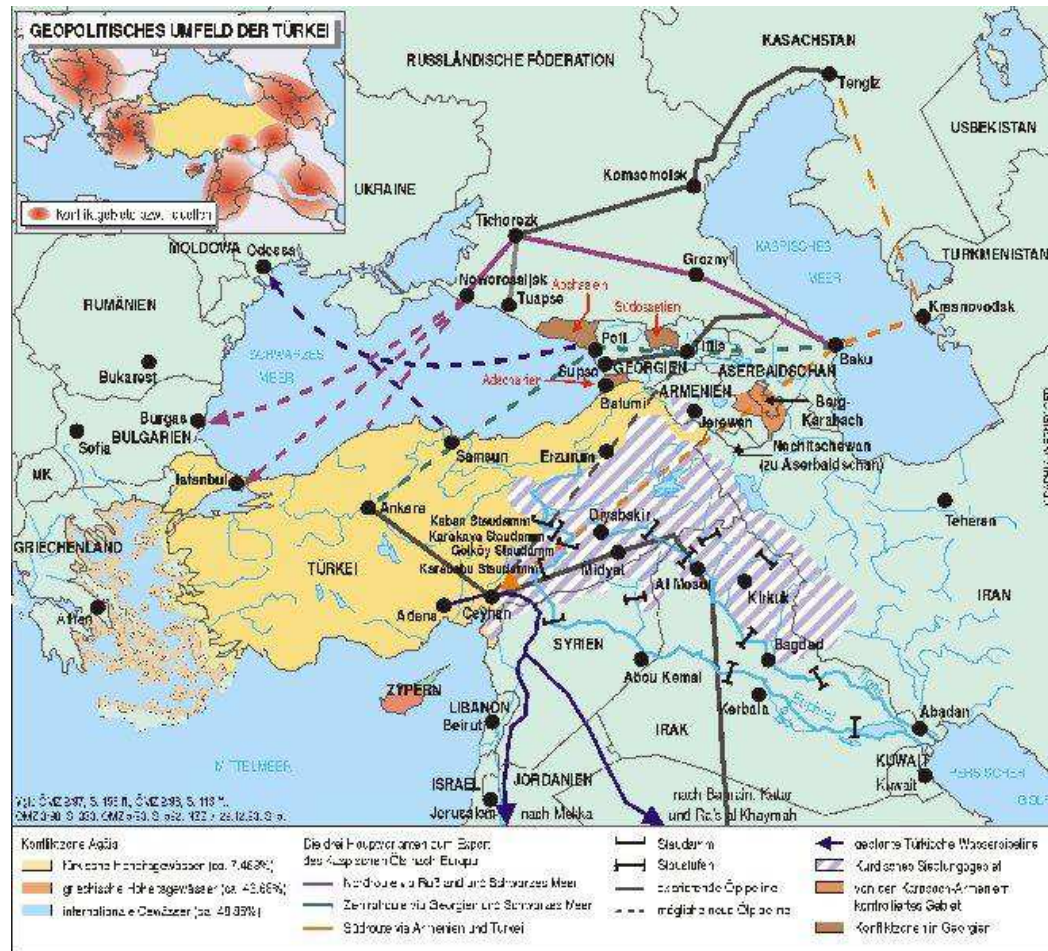
The Kurdish Question



Source : Institut kurde de Paris ; Mehrad R. Izady, Université de Columbia, New York.

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The Turkish radius

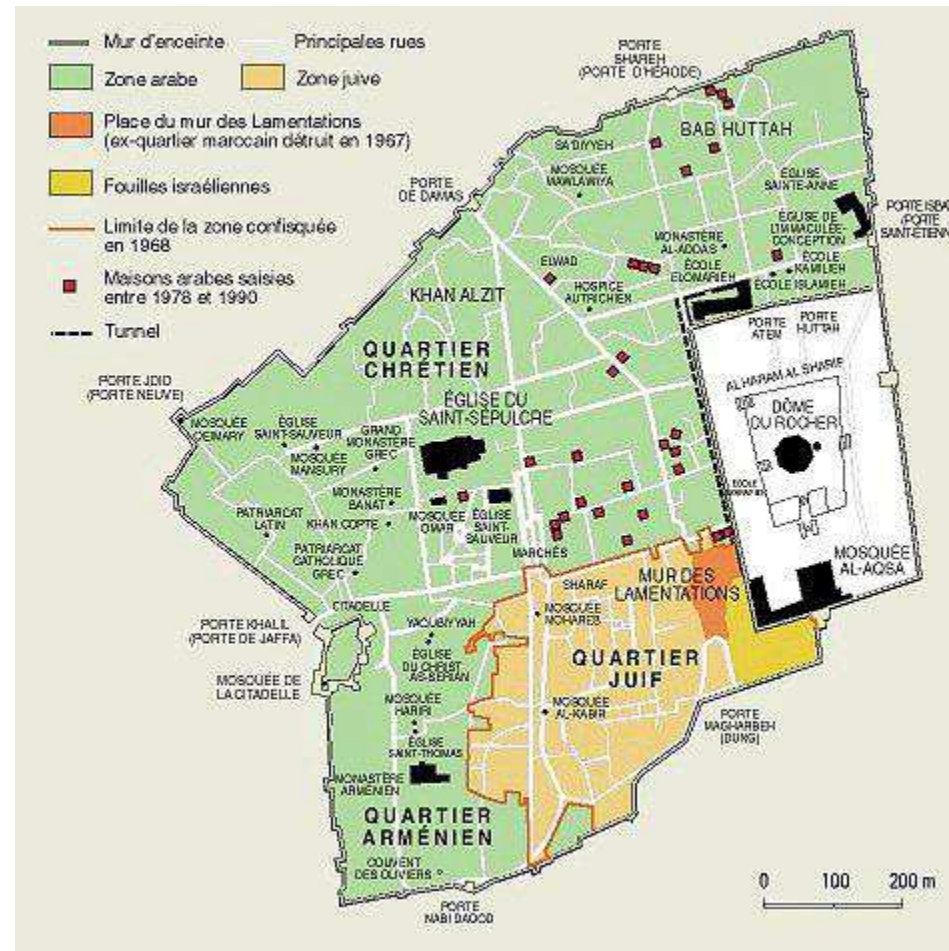


Israel and her neighbours

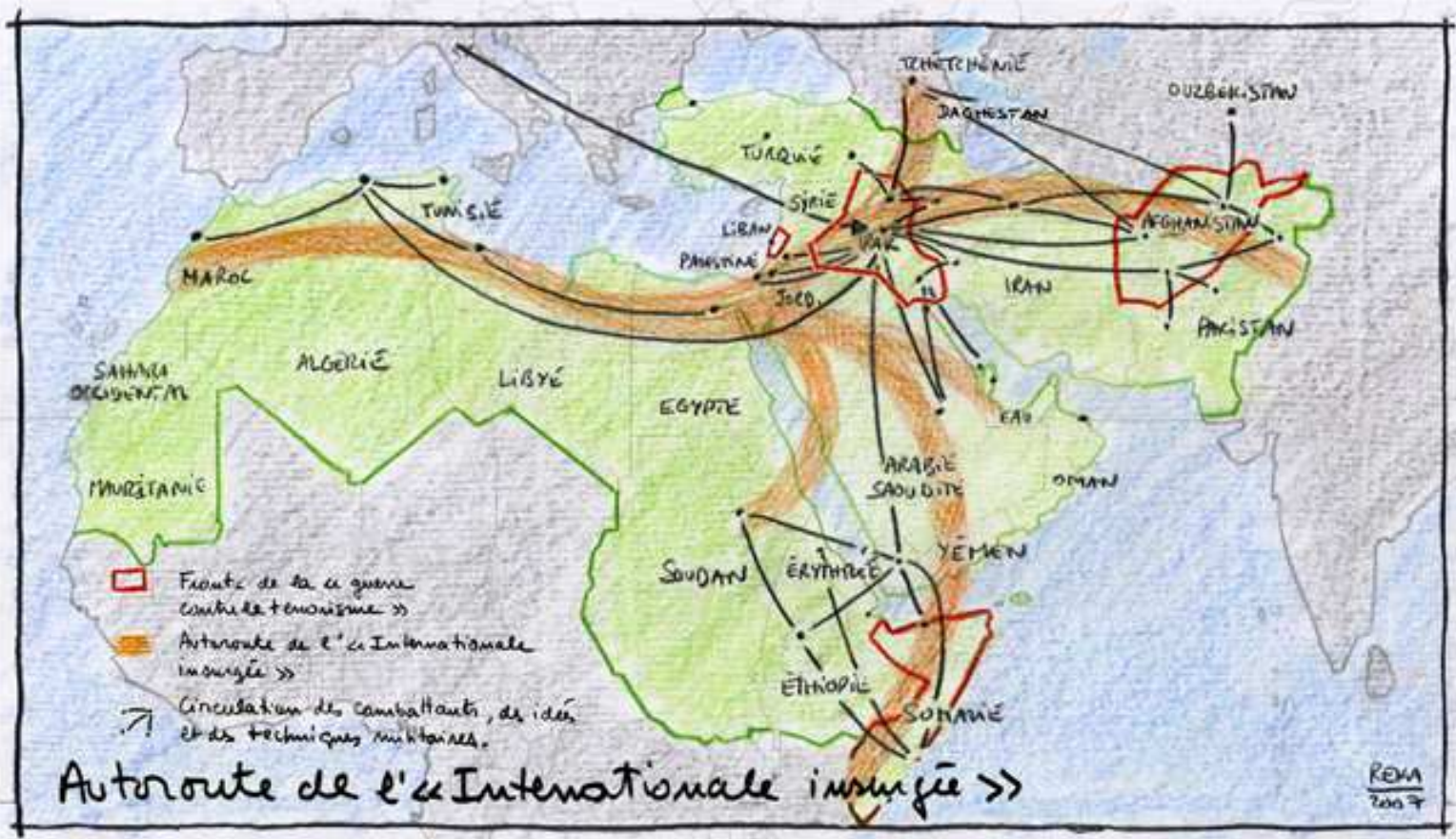
- 1947 UN GA res.
- The many wars post-48
- Jewish state and demography
- The Palestinian question
- A dilemma beyond security



Jerusalem: three times holy?



Le monde diplomatique: „The high-way of international rebellion“ Philippe Rekacewicz



While ideologies are always constructs, civilisations are very real. The come-back of religion

- Long before Huntington addressed the role of civilisation in international politics
- Raymond Aron formulated the same question in his main work „Peace and War – a theory of international relations“ written in the midst of Cold War.
- Aron discusses the heterogeneity of civilisations
- Pointing out that long-term consequences were more serious than military confrontation between the blocs
- Aron wrote on tribalism and nationalistic fragmentaion at a time when this was still overlaid by the global division along ideological lines. See also Malraux

Muslim Brotherhood, Salafists and the army

- The many currents within political Islam
- No separation of politics and religion
- „Islam is the solution“
- Which space for pragmatic solutions?
- Elections: Islamists together apx 70%, fragmented secular camp
- Army – ceding power?
- Clashes continue. Youth: deprived of the revolution

The Ihwan al Muslimin

- 1928 Hassan al Banna,
- Reactivate Muslimhood in order to confront British colonialism
- Marginalized by Nasser
- 1981 prohibited
- 2011 rise
- 2013 fall once again
- Terrorist organization



12.2. 2011 Tahrir Square: We are free now – we can marry!
Socio-economic problems to get married, to obtain status
The many angry young men...and the revolution jumping
across the Mediterranean



Mideastposts.com

A party mobilized in the underground

- „Islam is the solution“
- From independent candidates to a bloc
- Charity network
- Failures
- persecuted



Syria between Lebanization and Iraqization?



- Continuous bloodshed
- Alawites – genuine Muslims? Shia-Sunni split
- According to Supreme Shia Council of Lebanon: yes
- Who runs the country? The Baath party, the Assad family, the army?
- Will army implode, country collapse?
- Consequences for Israel etc

Sunni Monarchies uniting an anti-revolutionary bloc?

- Gulf Cooperation Council
- Crashing down revolt in Bahrain
- Calming revolutions by handing out presents
- Impact of Yemen
- Might we see a larger conflict in the Gulf?



Identity and the right to decide

- The desire for religious neutrality on the part of the state is often expressed in countries such as Lebanon, BiH, Ireland and increasingly in Iraq, Turkey, India etc
- Lebanon eg has inherited the confessionalism of the Ottoman Empire
- Ethnicity based on confession constituted the administrative foundation of the millet system. All facets of human existence governed by religion.

The Middle/Near East affects Europe – „infidels and believers“



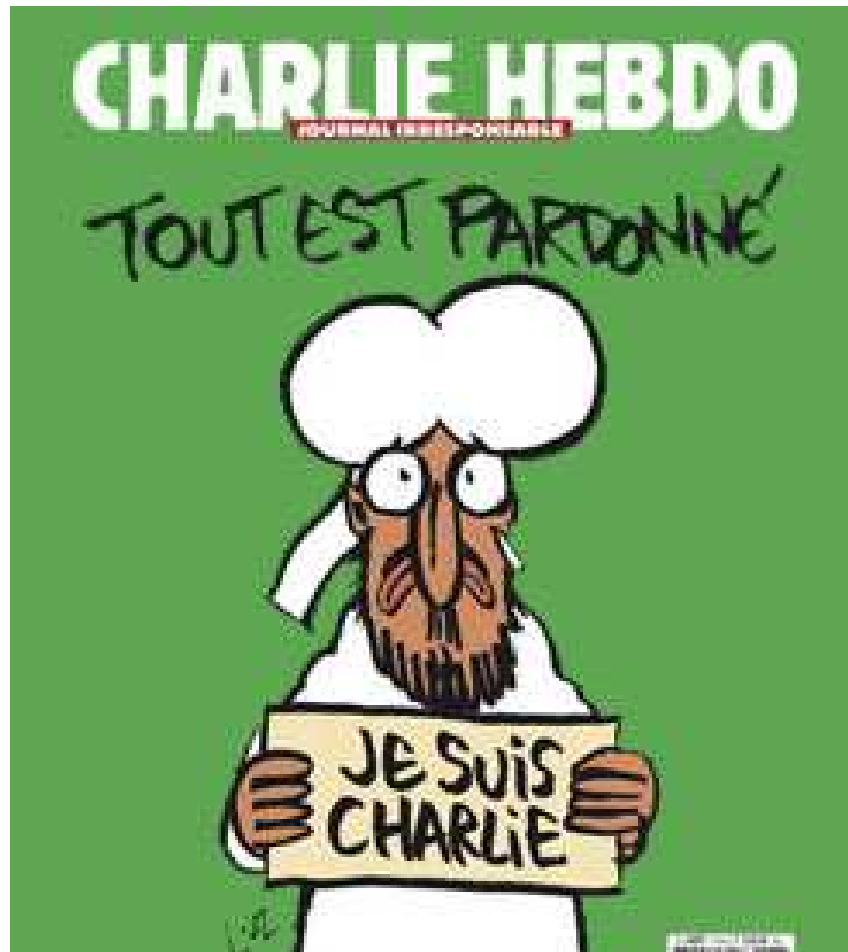
The cartoon strife of 2006 was never over

- Tip of an iceberg
- Broken relations between Muslims world and the west
- 1991, 2001, 2003, 2011
- Underestimated issues
- Paris 2015



Jylland Posten.30.9.05

Freedom of expression vs. Religion



What to do?

- No more Western interventions into the Middle East
- Return to realpolitik
- Pragmatic approach towards existing states
- Clear stance towards Turkey, Gulf states etc
- Decrease financial dependence
- Separate politics from religion

Thank you very much for your
attention! Looking forward to
our debate.

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