

Política Internacional e Geopolítica

a crise do mundo globalizado

**INSTITUTO CULTURAL
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PARTE I – TEMA PRINCIPAL

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (1)

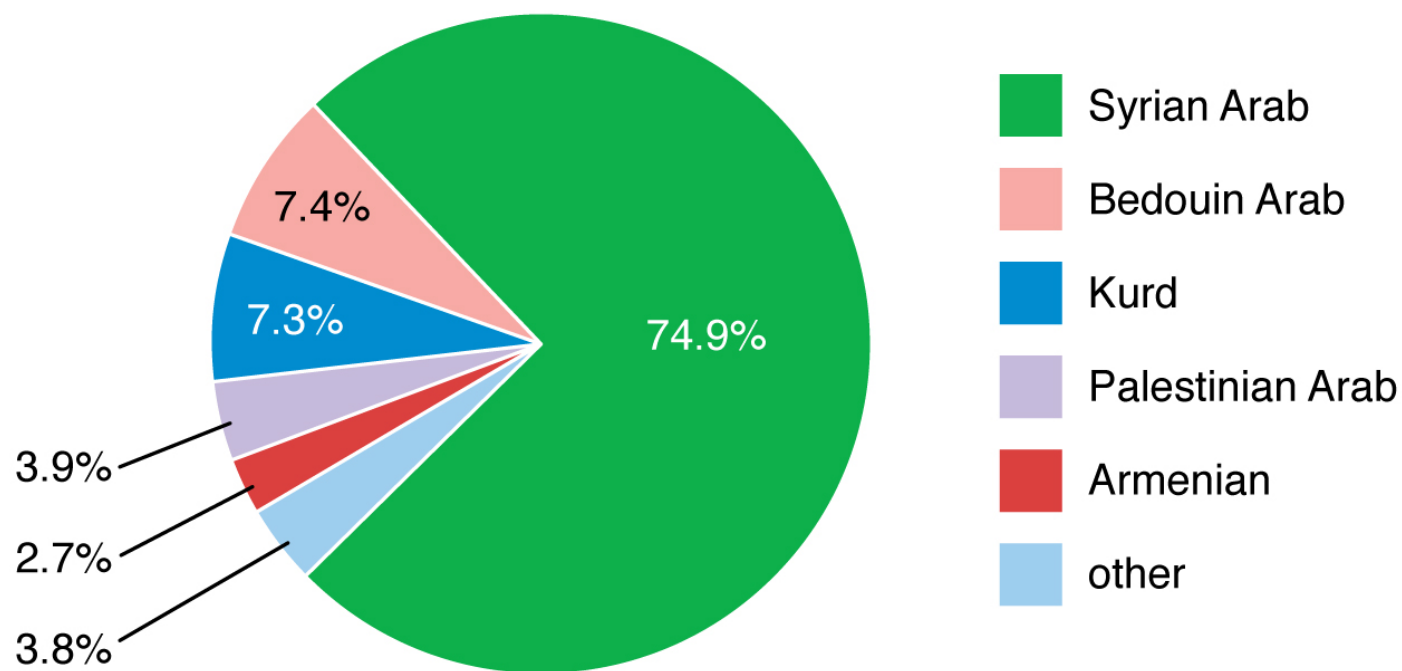
[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]



A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (2)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

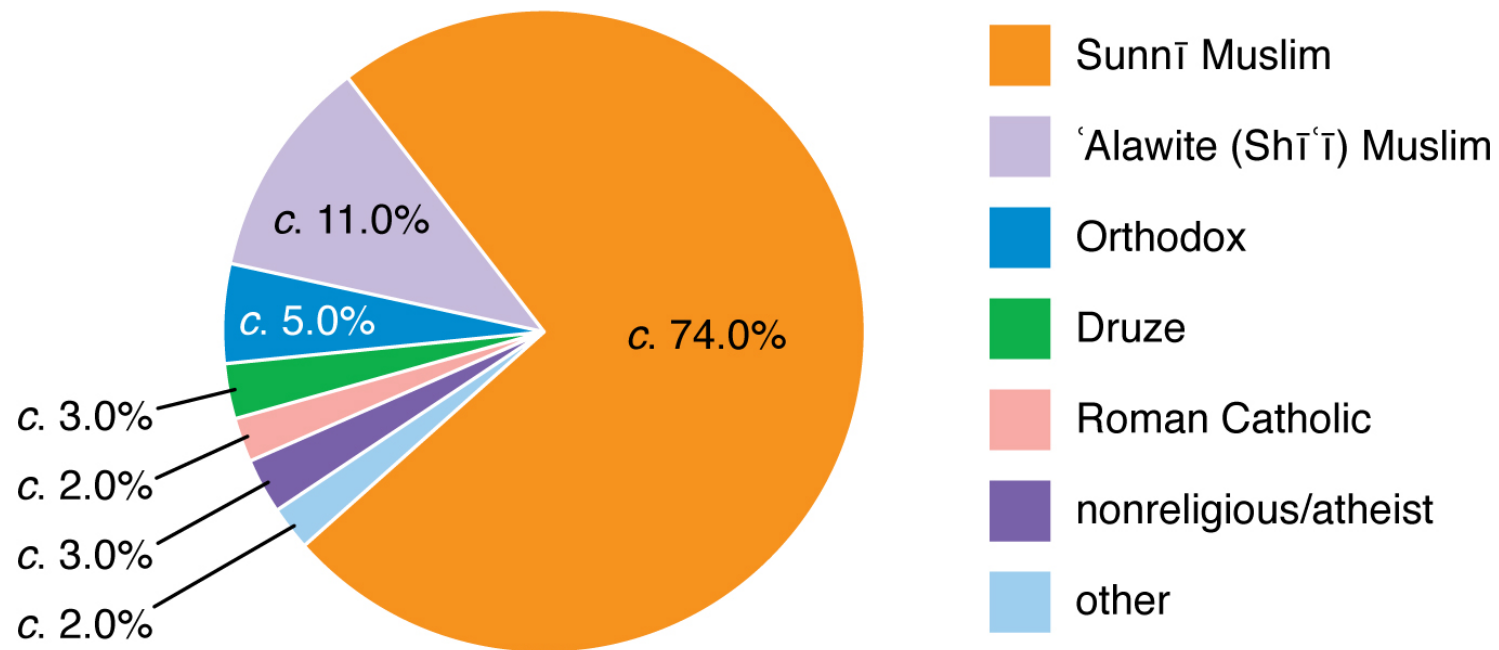
Ethnic composition (2000)



A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (3)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

Religious affiliation (2000)



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A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (4)

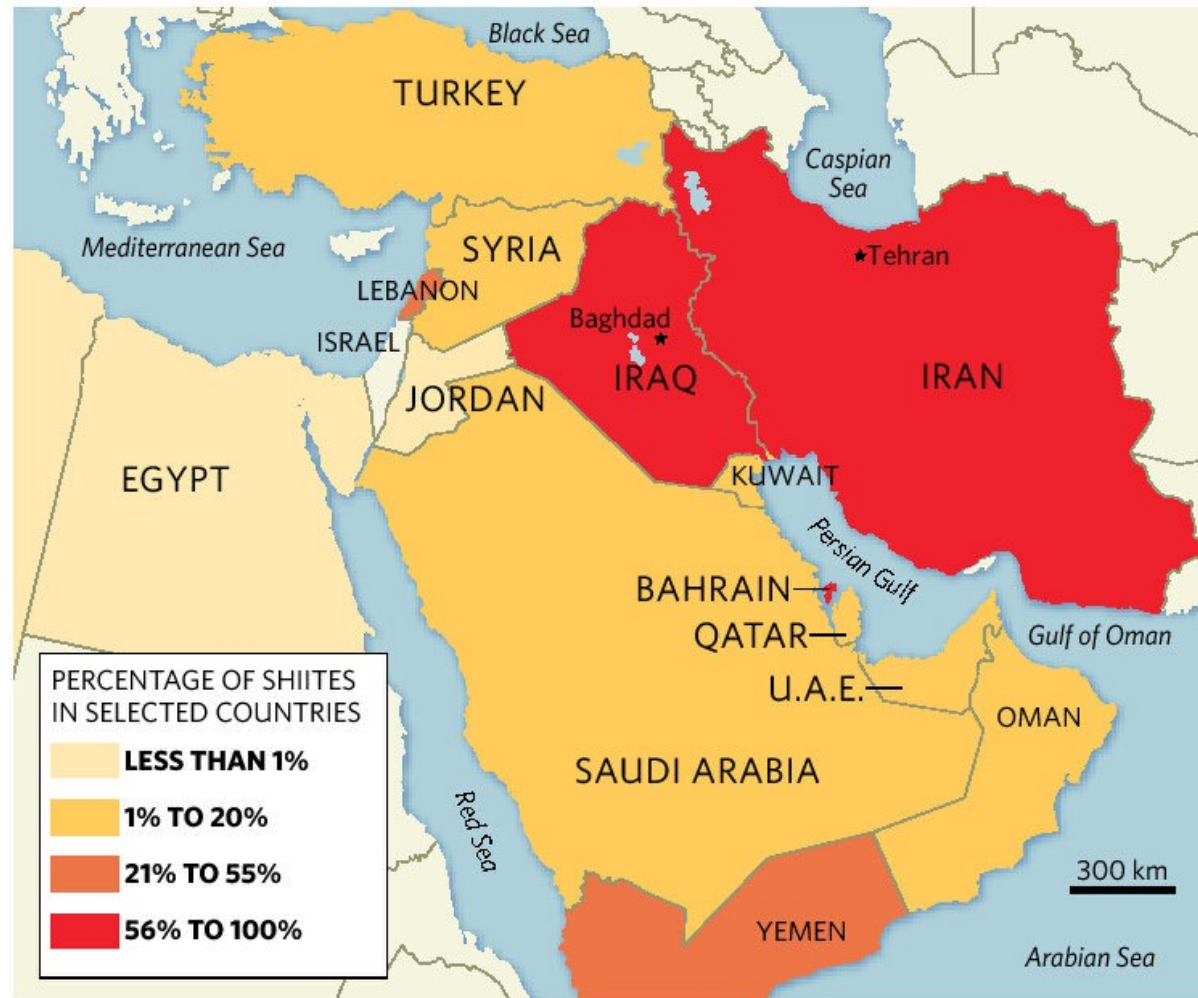
[MAPA: Sunitas e xiitas no Médio Oriente]

Muslims in the Mideast

Less than 15 per cent of the world's Muslims are Shiite, or Shia; most Muslims are Sunni.

	PER CENT OF POPULATION	
	SHIA MUSLIM	SUNNI MUSLIM
Bahrain	70%	30%
Egypt	–	90%
Iran	90%	9%
Iraq	63%	34%
Jordan	2%	92%
Lebanon	36%	22%
Qatar	14%	86%
Saudi Arabia	5%	95%
Syria	13%	74%
Turkey	15%	85%

SOURCE: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life;
CIA World Factbook; Adherents.com



A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (5)

[FONTE: BBC, 26/12/2011]

Arab Spring: 'It was the first time I felt I belonged'

26 December 2011

By Dhruti Shah

BBC News

It has been a year like no other for those living in the countries involved in the [Arab Spring](#).

Sparked by the death of a fruit and vegetable seller in Tunisia, [Mohamed Bouazizi](#), protesters in neighbouring countries including Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen, embraced the idea that they too could make a difference.

As well as the streets, they took to YouTube, Twitter and other social networks, or even contacted the BBC directly, to make sure their voices were heard.

Here is a selection of some of the stories of these ordinary people caught up in these extraordinary events.

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (6)

[FONTE: BBC,26/12/2011]

SYRIA

Yet not all countries have seen their leaders toppled by sheer people power.

The government has continued its brutal crackdown on protesters calling for President Bashar al-Assad to step down.

The UN has said that more than 5,000 people have been killed by security forces since March.

However, the president also has his supporters, who have frequently staged counter-demonstrations.

The majority of those we managed to speak to, or who were able to tweet or comment via Facebook or other social networks, feared for their lives for voicing their opinions.

In August, prolific tweeter [@AlexanderPageSY](#) told us that life in Damascus had changed irrevocably.

In [The Libyan effect: Your stories](#), he said: "It's a war zone out there but, despite all the difficulties, people are risking their lives for a common goal:

freedom."

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (7)

[FONTE: NYT, 27/04/2015]

Islamist Rebels Create Dilemma on Syria Policy

April 27, 2013



An image provided by citizen journalists shows Nusra Front rebels at an air base in Idlib. Edlib News Network Enn, via Associated Press

CAIRO — In Syria's largest city, Aleppo, rebels aligned with Al Qaeda control the power plant, run the bakeries and head a court that applies Islamic law. Elsewhere, they have seized government oil fields, put employees back to work and now profit from the crude they produce.

Across Syria, rebel-held areas are dotted with Islamic courts staffed by lawyers and clerics, and by fighting brigades led by extremists. Even the Supreme Military Council, the umbrella rebel organization whose formation the West had hoped would sideline radical groups, is stocked

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (8)

[FONTE: NYT, 27/04/2015]

with commanders who want to infuse Islamic law into a future Syrian government.

Nowhere in rebel-controlled Syria is there a secular fighting force to speak of.

This is the landscape President Obama confronts as he considers how to respond to growing evidence that Syrian officials [have used chemical weapons](#), crossing a “red line” he had set. More than two years of violence have radicalized the armed opposition fighting the government of President Bashar al-Assad, leaving few groups that both share the political vision of the United States and have the military might to push it forward.

Among the most extreme groups is the notorious Al Nusra Front, the Qaeda-aligned force declared a terrorist organization by the United States, but other groups share aspects of its Islamist ideology in varying degrees.

“Some of the more extremist opposition is very scary from an American perspective, and that presents us with all sorts of problems,” said Ari Ratner, a fellow at the Truman National Security Project and former Middle East adviser in the Obama State Department. “We have no illusions about the prospect of engaging with the Assad regime — it must still go — but we are also very reticent to support the more hard-line rebels.”

Syrian officials recognize that the United States is worried that it has few natural allies in the armed opposition and have tried to exploit that with a public campaign to convince, or frighten, Washington into staying out of the fight. At every turn they promote the notion that the alternative to Mr. Assad is an extremist Islamic state.

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (9)

[FONTE: BBC, 12/03/2015]

SYRIA

1. Uprising turns violent



Pro-democracy protests erupted in March 2011 in the southern city of Deraa after the arrest and torture of some teenagers who painted revolutionary slogans on a school wall. After security forces **opened fire on demonstrators**, killing several, more took to the streets.

The unrest triggered nationwide protests demanding President Assad's resignation. The government's use of force to crush the dissent merely hardened the protesters' resolve. By July 2011, **hundreds of thousands were taking to the streets across the country**.

Opposition supporters eventually began to take up arms, first to defend themselves and later to expel security forces from their local areas.

2. Descent into civil war



Violence escalated and the country descended into civil war as rebel brigades were formed to battle government forces for control of cities, towns and the countryside. Fighting reached the capital Damascus and second city of Aleppo in 2012.

By June 2013, the UN said **90,000 people had been killed in the conflict**. However, by August 2014 that figure had more than **doubled to 191,000** - and continued to climb to 220,000 by March 2015, according to activists and the UN.

The conflict is now more than just a battle between those for or against President Assad. It has acquired sectarian overtones, pitching the country's Sunni majority against the president's Shia **Alawite** sect, and drawn in neighbouring countries and world powers. The rise of the jihadist groups, including Islamic State, has added a further dimension.

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (10)

[FONTE: Alarabiya, 30/09/2015]

Russia unleashes first wave of airstrikes in Syria

A U.S. official said the Russian sorties so far did not appear to be targeting ISIS-held territory

30 September ,2015: 12:00 AM GST

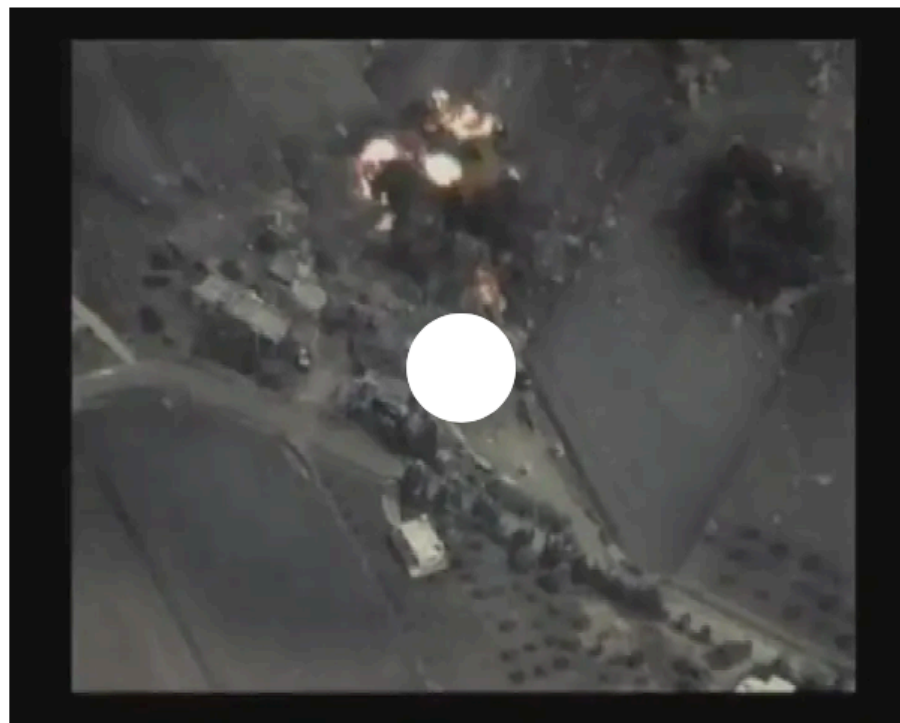
Russian warplanes have conducted their first air strikes in Syria, Russia's defense ministry said adding that the jets targeted Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) militants, according to AFP.

Russian fighter jets carried out 20 flights in Syria, striking "eight Islamic State (ISIS) targets" including a command post held by the militant group, the Russian defense ministry said.

"The targets, notably a command center of the terrorists, were completely destroyed," the ministry said in a statement.

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (11)

[FONTE: Alarabiya, 30/09/2015]



Defense ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov, quoted by Russian news agencies, added: "All the strikes took place following information provided by the Syrian government."

The ministry also published a video of the air strikes which appeared to show three targets being hit. It said "munitions and weapons depots and military equipment" were also destroyed in Wednesday's raids.

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (12)

[FONTE: BBC,21/10/2015]



Syria air strikes: Russian fighter jets bomb targets

Russia began air strikes in north-western Syria against opponents of President Bashar al-Assad in late September.

Moscow says it is targeting Islamic State and other militant groups fighting Mr Assad's government.

Satellite imagery and reports from the ground in Syria show how Moscow has rethought its military investment in Syria.

So what hardware does Russia actually have there?

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (13)

[MAPA: Al-Monitor, 11/03/2021]

Syria 'a living nightmare' after decade of war, UN chief says

On Monday, Syria will mark 10 years since peaceful protests against the government of Bashar al-Assad turned deadly, spawning a war that has killed more than 400,000 people and forced more than 5 million to flee the country.

Roughly 60% of Syrians are at risk of hunger this year, Guterres said, blaming the country's economic collapse on a combination of "conflict, corruption, sanctions and the COVID-19 pandemic."

"It is imperative that we continue to reach all Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance," he said, calling on the UN Security Council to ensure cross-border deliveries continue to reach those who need it.

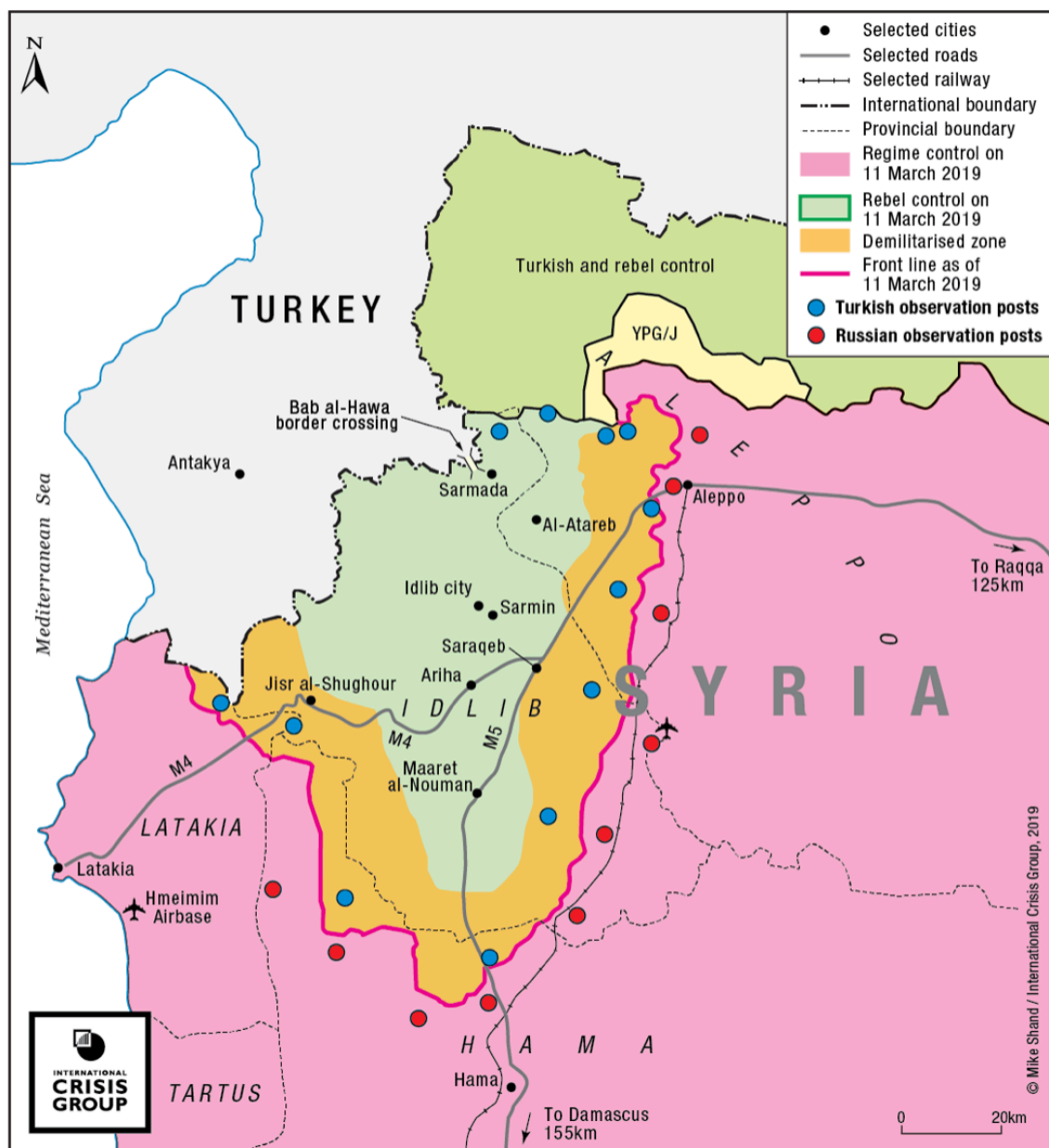
Faced with a veto threat from Russia and China, the 15-member body last year shut one of two remaining access points used to bring aid into the war-torn country. In July, the Security Council will vote on whether to reauthorize the cross-border aid operation.

A fragile cease-fire reached in March 2020 by Russia and Turkey, which back opposing sides of the war, has largely held, pausing the fighting between the rebels and government forces in northwestern Syria. The UN has called for a permanent, nationwide cease-fire.

After a decade of fighting, Assad is now in control of much of the country, with the exception of a pocket in northwestern Syria run by opposition groups and a swath of northeastern Syria managed by US-backed Kurdish forces.

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (14)

[MAPA: Idlib, Síria. FONTE: International Crise Group]



A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (15)

[MAPA: Clingendael / “The geopolitics of Syria’s reconstruction: a case of matryoshka”, 2019]

Table 1: Overview of key interests of selected foreign state actors in the Syrian conflict and their implications for reconstruction efforts in Assad-held areas

State actor	Key current interests in the Syrian conflict	Preference intensity in Syria	Assets deployed in Syria*	Leverage on course of conflict	Likely implications for reconstruction support
US	Eliminating IS	Moderate	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – May support reconstruction framed as ‘stabilisation’ in Kurdish-controlled northeast Syria – Refrains from all other reconstruction
	Weakening Iran	Moderate			
Russia	Reasserting itself as a global power	High	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strives for internationally accepted conflict resolution – Lobbies others to support ‘minimum reconstruction’ of Syrian state – Seeks commercial benefit
	Re-establishing a friendly Syrian state	High			
	Unmooring Turkey from the West	Low			
EU	Bringing a political transition about	Moderate	Nil	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No reconstruction support unless the elusive political transition occurs – Focus by necessity on regional refugee situation – Weakening Iran is not a consideration
Saudi Arabia	Overthrow of Assad as ally of Iran	High	Low	Low	None likely to be forthcoming beyond bare minimum required for normalisation of relations
Iran	Retaining a friendly regime	High	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support for ‘minimum reconstruction’ of Syrian regime – Reconstruction of a quasi-autonomous sphere of influence
	Establishing a parallel sphere of influence	High			
	Connecting its areas of influence in the Middle East	Moderate			
Turkey	Undoing Kurdish autonomy gains	High	Moderate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reconstruction of occupied bits of northern Syria to establish a zone of influence – May seek commercial benefit
Israel	Rollback of Iran-linked military presence	High	Moderate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No direct reconstruction support – May discretely support Russian fundraising efforts as part of its anti-Iran strategy

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (16)

[FONTE: NYT, 23/02/2021]

Having Won Syria's War, al-Assad Is Mired in Economic Woes

After a decade of war, the biggest threat now to President Bashar al-Assad is an economic crisis. But at a recent meeting, he had no concrete solutions to his country's extreme distress.



Buying food in Damascus with a photo of Syria's president in the background. With the rising cost of food, 60 percent of Syrians are at risk of going hungry. Youssef Badawi/EPA, via Shutterstock

BEIRUT, Lebanon — In a private meeting with pro-government journalists, President Bashar al-Assad was asked about [Syria's](#) economic meltdown: the currency collapse that has gutted salaries, the skyrocketing prices for basic goods and the chronic shortages of fuel and bread.

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (17)

[FONTE: Al-Monitor, 12/03/2021]

EU: No Syria reconstruction aid until Assad leaves

Josep Borrell marked the 10th anniversary of Syria's civil war by doubling down on US-led policy to isolate Assad



Mar 12, 2021

The European Union is standing [firm on sanctions](#) against Syria's President Bashar al-Assad and will not support reconstruction for the war-torn country until the dictator in Damascus steps aside.

"There will be no end to sanctions, no normalizations and no support for reconstruction until a political transition is underway," Josep Borrell, the EU's top foreign affairs official, said Tuesday at a European Parliament debate marking the 10th anniversary of Syria's unresolved civil war.

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (18)

[FONTE: Asia and the Pacific Policy Society, 25/02/2021]

China vies for role in reconstructing Syria

The World Bank estimates it could cost at least \$250 billion to rebuild Syria – four times the country's GDP in 2010. China intends to play a major role in the process, and has much to gain by doing so, Isaac Kfir writes.

There is growing evidence that China is furthering its [evolving](#) presence in the Middle East, with the Chinese government signing major economic agreements with Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and others.

The Chinese Communist Party recognises the centrality of the region to its survival, which is why former Chinese President [Jiang Zemin](#) visited the Arab League while in office in 1996, and, in 2004, Beijing sponsored the establishment of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum.

The region provides much of China's energy needs but also it has a vibrant, young population that is looking to buy things, and China's as 'the world's factory' is therefore appreciative of the Arab World's growing purchasing power. In 2018 alone, bilateral trade between China and the Arab World stood at US\$244 billion, a 28 per cent [increase](#) from 2017.

In 2016, President Xi Jinping marked the 60th anniversary of China-Arab diplomatic relations by not only visiting Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt but also by issuing the first [Arab Policy Paper](#), a document aimed at promoting trade between China and the Arab States.

A guerra na Síria, uma década depois (19)

[FONTE: Asia and the Pacific Policy Society, 25/02/2021]

It is worth recalling that along with the BRI funding, at the July 2018 [China-Arab States Forum](#), Beijing promised \$20 billion in infrastructure loans to Syria. Included in this pledge was \$100 million in humanitarian aid to Syria and Yemen.

Several months later, when the Syrian government held the 60th Damascus International Fair, over 200 Chinese companies [attended](#) the event. The implicit promise that came with the Chinese companies was that they would build cars, mobile hospitals, and more in reconstructing Syria.

Syria is important to Beijing for several reasons. First, China wants a diverse range of options when it comes to its relationships. Be it energy, economics, or security, China recognises that having few options can make it vulnerable, which is why it likes to spread risk and have multiple potential partners it can use to meet various needs.

The clearest example of this is in the BRI, which has three principal trade routes linking China with Europe and Africa. The first is a northern land trade route that goes through central Asia and Russia to Europe, the next is a central route which relies primarily on western Asia to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, and the third is a southern, mainly maritime route, running from China to the Indian Ocean. This structure gives China a wide range of options when it comes to its trade and security.



PARTE II – NOTAS BREVES

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (1) [FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]



O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (2)

[FOTO: discurso de Collin Powell nas Nações Unidas, 5/02/2003]



O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (3) [FONTE: History, 5/02/2003]

Secretary of State Colin Powell speaks at UN, justifies US invasion of Iraq

U.S. Secretary of State [Colin Powell](#) gives a speech to the [United Nations](#) that is both highly consequential and full of fabrications on February 5, 2003. Using talking points that many within his own government had told him were either misleading or outright lies, Powell outlined the United States' case that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, making the argument for the [invasion](#) that would happen the following month. Powell has called it a "blot" on his record.

President [George W. Bush](#)'s administration contained several prominent officials, such as Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who had advocated for the First Gulf War and were known proponents of a second invasion of Iraq. Soon after a group of mostly-Saudi terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on [September 11, 2001](#), a movement began within the Bush administration to remove Iraq's leader, the dictator [Saddam Hussein](#), from power, on the grounds that he was connected to the attacks. Powell was not among this clique—according to him, he warned Bush in August of 2002 that removing Hussein might be easy but turning Iraq into a stable, friendly democracy would not be. At Bush's urging, Powell took his case to the United Nations, leading to the decision to send inspectors into the country to search for "weapons of mass destruction." The inspectors found no proof of such weapons, but Congress nonetheless authorized Bush to use military force against Iraq in October of 2002. According to Powell, Bush had already decided to do so before sending Powell to the UN.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (4) [FONTE: BBC, 5/07/2016]

20 March 2003



The invasion - Operation Iraqi Freedom - begins with a "shock and awe" campaign of aerial bombardment intended as a show of force. Bombs are dropped on a farming community outside Baghdad where intelligence incorrectly suggested Saddam Hussein might be hiding.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (5) [FONTE: BBC, 5/07/2016]

9 April 2003



The government of Saddam Hussein loses control over Iraq's capital Baghdad, with the advance of US forces into the centre of the city.

Baghdad falls to US forces

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (6) [FONTE: BBC, 5/07/2016]

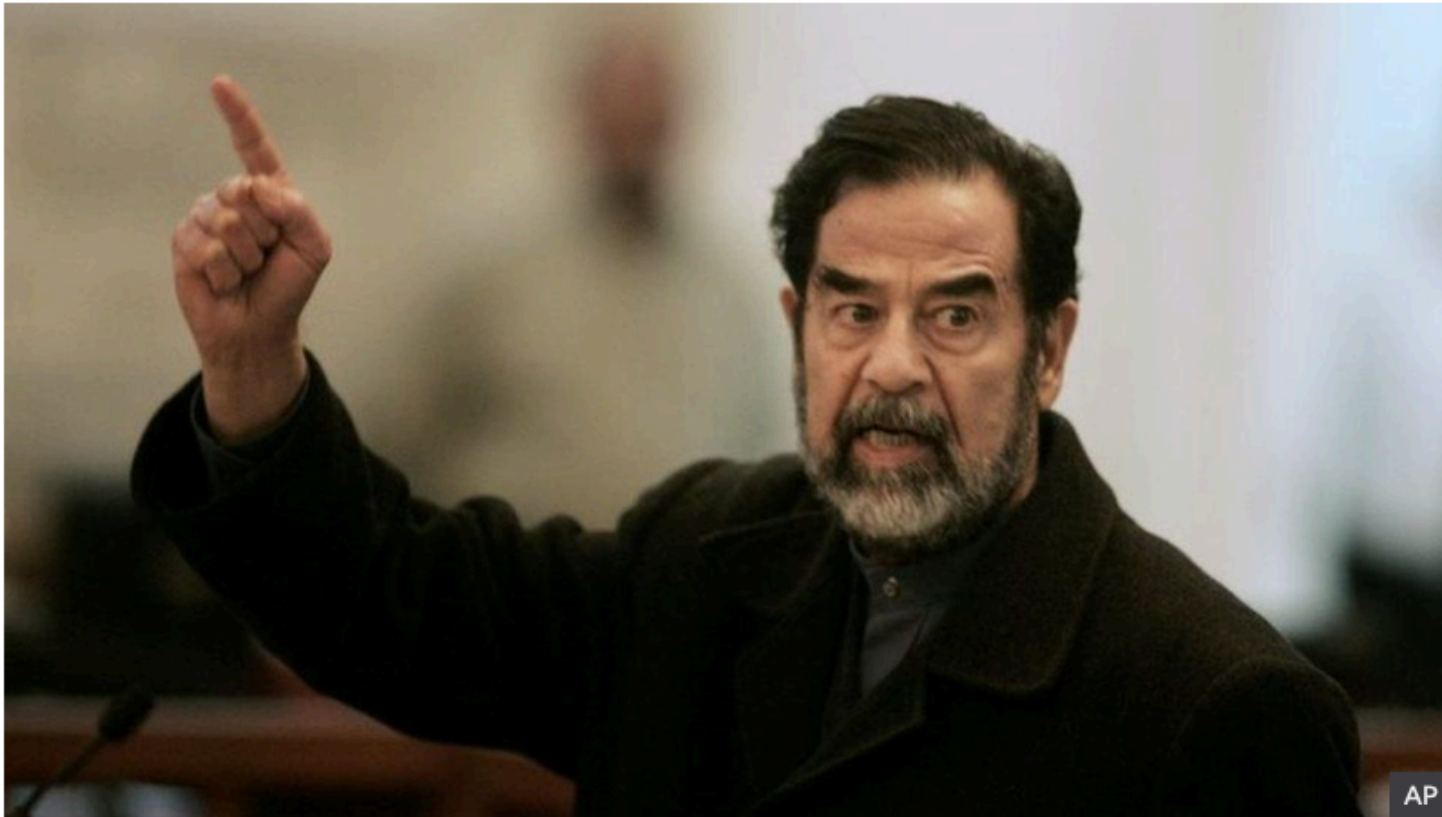
1 May 2003



President Bush appears on an aircraft carrier off the coast of California to declare victory.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (7) [FONTE: BBC, 5/07/2016]

30 December 2006



Saddam Hussein is hanged, after being found guilty of the killings of 148 Shias from the town of Dujail in the 1980s.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (8) [FONTE: DW, 2/10/2018]

Iraqi parliament elects Kurdish moderate Barham Salih as new president

The Iraqi parliament has elected veteran Kurdish politician Barham Salih as president. The vote threw a spotlight on the deep divisions within the Kurdish camp.



Iraq's parliament on Tuesday elected a new president despite a bitter dispute between the two main Kurdish parties, who for the first time put forward competing candidates.

In Iraq, a Kurd holds the presidency — which is a largely ceremonial role — while the prime minister post is reserved for a Shiite and the speaker of parliament a Sunni.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (9) [FONTE: BBC, 7/05/2020]

New Iraq prime minister after five months of deadlock

7 May 2020



AFP

Mustafa al-Kadhimi is a 53-year-old former head of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service

Iraq's parliament has approved a new government, ending months of deadlock as the country battles an economic crisis and the coronavirus pandemic.

Former intelligence chief Mustafa al-Kadhimi, the third man to be nominated to replace Adel Abdul Mahdi since November, was sworn in as prime minister after Wednesday night's vote.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (10) [FONTE: BBC, 7/05/2020]

Who is Mustafa al-Kadhimi?

The 53-year-old Shia Muslim is seen as a political independent and a pragmatist.

He is a former journalist who wrote against former President Saddam Hussein from exile in Iran and the UK before the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.



Reuters

Anti-government protesters rejected Mr Kadhimi's nomination

He served as head of Iraqi National Intelligence Service (Inis) from 2016 until last month, when he was tasked with forming a government. The two previous candidates, Mohammed Allawi and Adnan al-Zurfi, withdrew after failing to win enough support in parliament.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (11) [FONTE:

Chatham House, 27/02/2020]



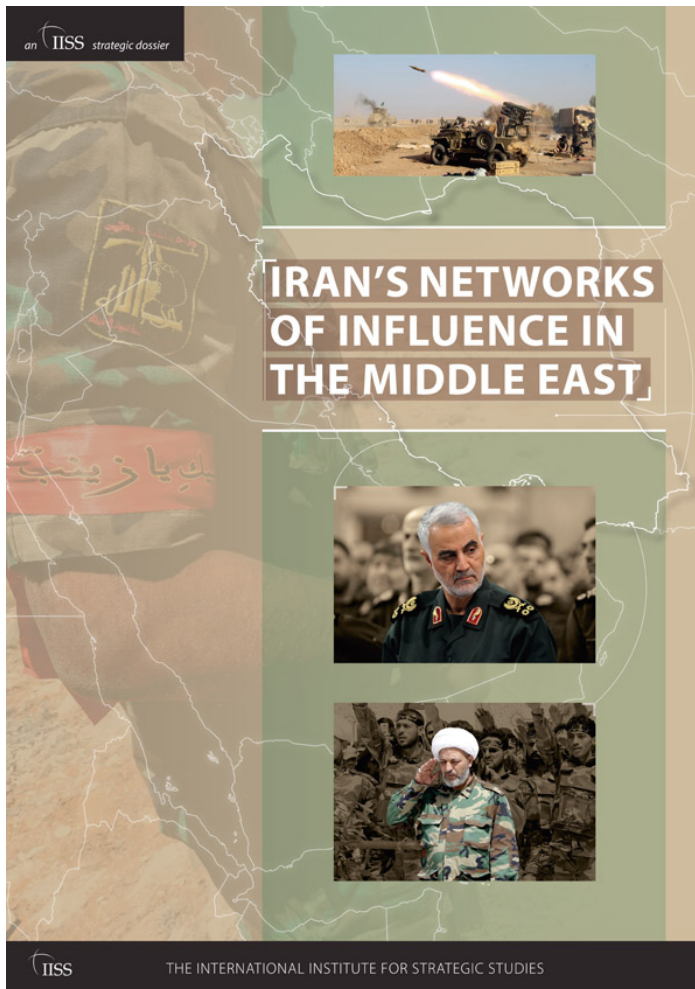
Summary

- The implementation of federalism in Iraq is a divisive political issue that has coloured relations between the central government and both the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Iraq's individual provinces. The form and substance of power-sharing arrangements, and the extent to which sovereign authority should be devolved, have been in constant dispute since the establishment of the post-2003 state.
- Efforts to implement decentralization measures mandated in the 2005 constitution have been stymied by ambiguities in the document, the need for enabling legislation, and the reluctance of successive federal governments to dilute their power at the expense of the Kurdistan region and the provinces. Attempts to reach a formal agreement on power-sharing between the federal government and the KRG have been further undermined by Erbil's insistence on a maximalist interpretation of the constitution, which Baghdad regards as an existential threat to its authority and to the territorial integrity of the Iraqi state.
- Kurdish resolve to preserve the exceptionalism that the KRG has carved out since 2003 is matched on the federal government side by a determination not to surrender the sovereign authority that it presently enjoys, and – by extension – not to implement the constitution as it is written in any part of Iraq. As the balance of power has shifted over time in favour of the federal government, it has become less willing to compromise or to permit decentralization to the Iraqi provinces under its control. This ensuing impasse has undermined governance nationally, and it has imposed punitive financial and administrative costs at all levels of government.
- The key to a long-term resolution of the federalism question lies in finding a compromise formula that would satisfy the minimum requirements of both the federal government and the KRG, and open the door to decentralization in the rest of Iraq.
- One option is Kurdish independence, but this faces domestic and regional obstacles, including the KRG's fiscal fragility.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (12) [FONTE: IISS

November 2019]

Iran's Networks of Influence – Chapter Four: Iraq



- ♦ Iran's paramount goals are to shape Iraq's domestic trajectory and security policy, and to deter or counter any hostile action by the United States
- ♦ Since 2003, Iran has empowered several militia groups that are now crucial players in the state-endorsed Popular Mobilisation Units (PMU), providing Iran with unique depth and leverage within Iraqi society and institutions
- ♦ Iran's partners in Iraq are in competition with each other and vie for institutional power as well as resources, requiring the Quds Force to manage these rivalries and exposing Iran to political and popular criticism

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (13) [FONTE:

Reuters 2/12/2020]

Iran expands shrines and influence in Iraq

Iran is pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into developing Shi'ite shrines in Iraq. In doing so it is binding its neighbour closer.



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (above) set up a body called the Holy Shrines Reconstruction Headquarters to spearhead shrine development. Official Khamenei Website/Handout via REUTERS

The development of Shi'ite shrines is being spearheaded by Iran's Holy Shrines Reconstruction Headquarters, a body set up by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and run by the Revolutionary Guards' appointees. In March, Washington sanctioned the Headquarters and Kawthar, its Iraq-based engineering wing. Pelarak was among officials targeted. The Americans alleged the Headquarters and Kawthar were involved in "lethal aid" to proxy militias in Iraq and Syria, intelligence activities and money laundering. A Treasury spokesperson told Reuters that Iran sought to expand its influence and exploit Iraqi financial and business sectors.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (14) [FONTE: Reuters 2/12/2020]

"Iran has long penetrated the Iraqi deep state. Iranians use their soft power and religious ties, which can be more important than political ties."

The U.S. Treasury's sanctions in March said Kawthar "served as a base for Iranian intelligence activities in Iraq, including the shipment of weapons and ammunition to Iranian-backed terrorist militia groups." An Iraqi customs official told Reuters Iran did not need Kawthar, an organisation focused on trade and soft power, to transfer weapons. "There are other ways of doing that – their proxy militias control the borders from the Kurdish north to the south of Iraq," he said.

Kawthar carries out shrine development on behalf of the Holy Shrines Reconstruction Headquarters using a number of specialised Iranian companies. Kawthar is owned by Pelarak and at least two other Guards-linked officials, including a Quds Force commander based in the southern Iraqi holy city of Najaf, according to the U.S. Treasury.

Iraqi traders and officials described how during Iran's economic downturn Kawthar has become more important because of its grip on development of religious sites.

"Iran had its eye on shrines since the fall of the (Iraqi) regime in 2003," said Dhiaa al-Asadi, a former lawmaker close to Najaf-born Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (15) [FONTE: FT,

9/09/2020]

China's Middle East strategy comes at a cost to the US

Beijing gains in oil and influence as successive presidents in Washington withdraw



Critics of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq have always believed the real motivation was taking control of the world's second-largest proven oil reserves.

Even the architects of Operation Iraqi Freedom were convinced Iraqi oil revenues would quickly [fund reconstruction](#) of a US client state that would help redraw the contours of the Middle East in America's favour. But if oil and influence were the prizes, then it seems China, not America, has ultimately won the Iraq war and its aftermath — without ever firing a shot.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (16) [FONTE: FT, 9/09/2020]

Until recently, Beijing had followed a hands-off policy in the Middle East of being a friend to everyone but allies with none. The success of this has been on display as it negotiates a \$400bn investment and [security pact with Iran](#) while assisting Iran's enemy Saudi Arabia with its nuclear programme. And it fully supports the Palestinian cause while [charming Israel](#) into sharing state of the art technology and leasing key strategic ports to Chinese state enterprises.

But perhaps the most powerful sign of China's rising influence in the region is the fact that almost every Muslim-majority country has supported the incarceration of as many as 2m Muslims in re-education camps in western China. In [public statements and joint letters](#) to the UN, countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, Iraq and the UAE have all praised the camps and suppression of Islam in the region of Xinjiang as necessary "counterterror and deradicalisation" efforts that have brought "happiness, fulfilment and security".

In the US, two successive presidents have been elected on promises to extricate the country from Middle Eastern entanglements. In the wake of the shale oil revolution, with America now virtually self-sufficient in energy, the rationale for pouring more blood and treasure into the sand looks thin.

Washington's resistance to playing regional policeman while other countries, particularly China, reap all the benefits has been evident for a while. It was Barack Obama's administration that first proposed the "[pivot to Asia](#)" to refocus American diplomatic and military might on the Asia-Pacific and counter China's rise as a regional hegemon. President Donald Trump has accelerated that strategy.

O Iraque, dezoito anos após a invasão dos EUA e derrube de Saddam Hussein (17) [CARTOON:

Tulsa World / Plante, 1/06/2020]



Sugestões de leitura

