



europa
social fund in the
czech republic



EUROPEAN UNION



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
YOUTH AND SPORTS



OP Education
for Competitiveness



UNIVERSITY
OF DEFENCE

INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

Course: SELECTED CHAPTERS OF CZECH AND WORLD HISTORY

T9 Regional Conflicts 1945 to 1989

Author: Aleš Binar, Ph.D.

Contents

Characteristics of Period	3
Decolonization.....	3
First Stage of Decolonization 1941 to 1950	4
Second Stage of Decolonization 1950 to 1970.....	5
Final Stage of Decolonization 1970 to 1990.....	5
Post-Colonial World.....	6
Arab-Israeli Conflict	7
Palestinian War 1948 and 1949	8
Suez Crisis 1956	8
Six Days War 1967	9
Yom Kippur War 1973	10
Civil War in Lebanon.....	10
Falkland's War 1982	11
Islamic Revolution in Iran 1979	11
Iran-Iraq War 1980 to 1989.....	12
Summary	14
Recommended Sources.....	15

REGIONAL CONFLICTS 1945 TO 1989

After the end of Second World War number of new states in Asia and Africa were established. Decolonization began in fact in interwar period, but after 1945 the process were accelerated. For example fourteen sovereign states were founded only in 1960.

This meant that significance of relations between European countries decreased, particularly in respect to Cold War that in fact petrified (or sometimes made impossible) these relations. Civil wars, Arab-Israeli conflicts, or fundamental Islam became new phenomena.

Characteristics of Period

Because process of decolonization took place at the same time as Cold War did there were number of attempts of superpowers to make use of existence of newly founded states for their own purposes. On the other hand these new states tried to make profit of fact the Cold War. United States and Soviet Union both support their economic growth, building of infrastructure, helped with formation of their armed forces etc.

The newly founded states were unstable and that is why soon became epicentres of conflicts. With respect to Cold War these conflicts or wars were in **ambivalence position**:

- Conflicts that **were escalated** due to Cold War, especially Korean War, and partly Vietnam War;
- conflicts that **were moderated** due to Cold War and were regionalized, especially Arab-Israeli Conflict;
- and finally conflicts **without important relation** to Cold War, among them Indo-Pakistani and Falkland Islands War.

The change in waging the war signalized the fact that in all of these conflicts **civilian victims outnumbered military** (ethnic, ideological clashes).

Decolonization

After Second World War process of emancipation of colonies began. Precondition of decolonization was **Atlantic Charter**, document of members of allied countries (see T6. Second World War), in which the right of each nation to have its own government was declared.

After 1945 there were **six major colonial powers**:

- **United Kingdom** was the largest colonial empire that had its colonies in Southern and Eastern Africa and some countries in Guinea Bay, than in Palestine, India, Malaysia etc., and controlled number of island in Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean.
- **France** was second largest colonial empire with dependencies in Northern and Western Africa, in Madagascar, in Indochina and island all over the world, especially in Atlantic and Pacific.
- **Netherland** disposed the territory of Indonesia and of islands in the Caribbean Sea.
- **United States** controlled the Philippines and some Pacific islands.
- **Portugal** had majority of its dependencies in Africa, i.e. Angola, Mozambique, and African islands in Atlantic, and harbours in Atlantic and Pacific Ocean, among other Timer in Indonesia and Macao in China.
- **Belgium** disposed of territory in Middle Africa, i.e. of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi.

Except these colonies there were so called **mandatory areas**, former German, Italian, and Japan territories that were according to decision of League of Nation and later on of United Nations entrust to major powers to be administrated. But in fact in number of cases their situation was same as by colonies.

The process of decolonization lasted nearly 50 years from 1940s to 1980s and comprised of three stages (see chapters below).

First Stage of Decolonization 1941 to 1950

First stage of decolonization lasted from 1941 to 1950 and took place in Asian countries:

- 1) Countries of **Southern** and **Southeast** Asia:
 - Impact of Second World War was in fact that colonies were either on the side of anti-Japan coalition, for which they were promised independence, or were occupied by Japan, and their colonial administration was removed.
 - It lasted from 1945 to 1950 and independence gained **Vietnam, the Philippines, India and Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia.**
- 2) Countries of **Middle East**:

- Impact of Second World War was in fact that France was occupied by Germany, and Germans supported of national emancipations of Arabs.
- In 1941 to 1948 the independence gained **Syria, Lebanon, Jordan,** and **Israel**.

Second Stage of Decolonization 1950 to 1970

Second stage of decolonization lasted from 1950 to 1970 and took place predominantly in Africa:

- 1) In **Africa**.
 - Till 1960 process of emancipation was slow and complicated, independence gained **Libya, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia,** and **Ghana**.
 - The year 1960 became “**Year of Africa**” due to fact that independence reached majority of African countries; those countries were **Chad, Benin, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Madagascar, Mali, Mauretania, Niger, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Somalia,** and **Central African Republic**.
 - Decolonization then continued to the end of 1960s, but pace of process gradually slowed down; the new sovereign states were **Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe,** and **Botswana**.
- 2) In **small countries** all over world.
 - Except of Africa small dependencies, especially islands, harbours, or small countries, got sovereignty; among those countries there were **Cyprus, Singapore, Malta** etc.; but also **Malaysia**, middle-class Asian state.

Final Stage of Decolonization 1970 to 1990

After the end of 1960s colonial possession shrined only to overseas dependencies and colony of two countries, of Portugal and of South African Republic, both states with non-democratic regimes.

- In **Portugal** authoritative regime existed that suppressed emancipation movement, despite the fact that Angola and Mozambique civil resistance switched from revolt and manifestation into civil war. After overthrown the

regime independence got **Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe.**

- In **South African Republic** existed regime of so called Apartheid. The only colony of South African Republic was **Namibia** that was after fall of Apartheid pronounced as independent state.

When Namibia gained independence the process of decolonization became fulfilled and ended up. The only one state that was founded on the ground of former colony status was Palau in Pacific in 1994 (former U.S. mandatory territory).

Post-Colonial World

- New forms of relations between power and colonies
 - **United Kingdom:** est. **Commonwealth of Nations**, in fact in 1931 by Westminster Status, English monarch head of commonwealth; majority of colonies joined, exc. Ireland, South African Republic, and Pakistan
 - **France:** on basis 1958 **Communauté Française**, graduation of independence on France, but from 1960 gradual disintegration
 - **Spain and Portugal:** 1954 Latin Union
- Effort to gain full independence on colonial powers
 - **Pan-Africanism:** movement to unify all African countries, 1963 est. Organization of African Unity
 - **New International Economic Order:** opposed to the Bretton Woods system but not effective; for example developing countries must control the activities of multinational corporations, they are free to set up associations of primary commodities producers etc.
- New countries instable (tribal, economical etc. Issues), for example:
- **Civil war in Nigeria**
 - On 30 May 1967 southeastern provinces of Nigeria as self-proclaimed independent state **Biafra Republic**
 - British colonial policy divided Nigeria into three region: North, West and East, that exacerbated differences among ethnic groups
 - July 1967 Nigerian Federal troops advanced into Biafra
 - Nigerian federal forces launched their final offensive against the Biafrans started on December 1969

- After three years of fights on 12 January 1970 capitulation of Biafra forces
- **Civil war in Angola**
 - Soon after gaining independence on 11 November 1975 fight between **Marxists** and **Nationalists**; Cuba support Marxists movement
 - In the 1980s fighting spread outward from southeastern Angola; Cuba increased its troop force in Angola
 - Cuban intervention ended in 1990

Arab-Israeli Conflict

Arab-Israeli Conflict represents new phenomena that fully appeared after the end of Second World War. It is also one of the **key clashes** of period of Cold War, because **both blocs were interfered into conflict**. After beginning of the conflict important switch happened in relations to superpowers. While in 1948 one of the most important allies of Israel State was Soviet Union, Soviet dictator, Joseph Stalin, changed his view and start to support Arab states. The new and important supporter of Israel then up to present day became United States.

Four wars between Israel and Arabs states took place in 1948 to 1973; First Arab-Israeli War, or **Palestinian War** took place in 1948 and 1949, Second Arab-Israeli War or **Suez War** in 1956, third war of 1967 is called as **Six Days War**, and the last, fourth, war of 1973 then **Yom Kippur War**.

Arab-Israeli conflict originated as **ethnic or national conflict** between Jews and Palestinians and Arabs, respectively, but in its course **gradually switched into religious conflict** between Judaism and Islam.

The roots of conflict were set at the end of 19th century when **Zionism** movement spread among Jewish population (see T3. The Rise of National States). The main request of Zionism was creation of independent national state of Jews. This state should be located in Palestinian territory, once Biblical Promised Land.

But the Palestine was inhabited by Palestinians, members of one of the Arabs nations. The immigration of Jews to Palestine was connected with clashes with indigenous population.

Palestinian War 1948 and 1949

According to promises of British government the **independent Jewish state** with President David Ben Gurion was declared on 14 May 1948. Its act induced disagreement among Arab population. The coalition of Arabs states, i.e. of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, was created. United Nations negotiated armistice in June 1948, but after assassination of United Nations commissioner Bernadotte by Zionist radicals Israel breached the terms of armistice and attacked its opponents.

After August 1948 Israeli troops defeated armies of Arab states and occupied part their territory. From January 1949 to June 1949 Arabs states one by one signed a peace treaty with Israel.

The result of the First Arab-Israeli War was that Israel was not only **able to defend itself, but to occupy part of Palestine territory**. The Palestinian state that was declared at the same time as Israel was occupied by Israel and more than **one million refugee left Palestine**. The status of refugees and the fact that war did not settled the motive of mutual Arab-Israeli tension was precondition for continuation of the conflict.

Suez Crisis 1956

New epicentre of tension appeared to be in Egypt. In 1952 Egyptian officers conducted coup d'état. General **Gamal Abdel Nasser** became president (1952 to 1970) and tried to legitimize its power by improving Egyptian economy and infrastructure. One of his most ambitious projects was building of **Aswan Dam** and water power plant.

At that same time President Nasser orientated Egypt on Soviet Union. That meant weakening of influence of traditional powers in Middle East, of France and United Kingdom.

But Egypt did not dispose money to finish this project and Gamal Nasser decided to nationalize **Suez Canal Company**. This was huge company in Egyptian territory that operated the shipping through Suez Canal.

Share-holders of Suez Canal Company were citizens of France and United Kingdom. That is why both countries interfere on behalf of their inhabitants into conflict.

British and French Prime Ministers Anthony Eden and Guy Mollet met together with representative of Israel in **Sevres** on 23 October 1956. And they decided for military solution.

According to Sevres Agreement Israel attacked Egypt and occupied Sinai Peninsula on 29 October 1956. The Second Arab-Israeli War or Sinai War began.

But United Kingdom and France, all according agreement, appealed Israel and Egypt to stop the fights and to withdraw their armed forces from Sinai. As it was supposed, Egypt refused. This was casus belli for United Kingdom and France. Both countries attacked Egyptian territory and occupied Port Said. The aim of Western assault was not only to restore control of Suez Canal, but also to remove President Nasser from power.

But Western powers followed another goal. After the Second World War influence of France and United Kingdom in Arab world decayed; they lost Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Levant countries, and Iraq. Representatives hoped to restore their pre-war influence.

Despite military success of Western powers and Israel war ended as political fiasco. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev threatened United Kingdom and France and U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower refused to help its allies. United Nations appealed both sides to stop the fights. That is why Suez War ended on 6 November 1956. Year later Israeli forces left Sinai Peninsula.

Suez Crisis or Sinai War ended by defeat of Western powers and proved that both blocs, i.e. Soviet and Western, are not necessarily united. But war **did not change a thing in Arab-Israeli conflict**.

Six Days War 1967

Arab-Israeli relations were tensed since the end of war in 1956. Gamal Nasser, Egyptian president, attempted to solve this issue once for all and called upon to destroy Israeli state. Meantime Egyptian forces closed Strait of Tiran in 1967.

Israeli identified both deed as threat to existence of Jewish state and commenced **pre-emptive attack to Egyptian positions** on 5 June 1967.

At the same time Israeli was attacked by Jordan and Syria, but Israeli forces were able to reflected attack and occupied **Western Coast of Jordan** and **Golan Heights**.

Short, six day lasting war ended by **military catastrophe of Arab states**.

But after six days the peace was not restored and conflict continued in following years as **War of Attrition** (1967 to 1970). The fights were ended up after death of Nasser.

Yom Kippur War 1973

After Nasser's death new Egyptian president became **Anwar Sadat**. He commenced renewal of conflict.

Egyptian army attacked Israeli positions in Sinai Peninsula and Syrian forces invaded to Golan Heights on 6 October 1973.

The same as in 1967 Israel was able to reflect attack and switched to counter-offensive.

In assistance of U.S. president Jimi Carter peace talks in **Camp David** were commenced that ended by closing Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in 1979 (Israel returns Sinai); peace treaty with Jordan was closed in 1993. But normalization of relation with Syria was complicated by issue of Golan Heights.

Civil War in Lebanon

The Lebanon, country northern of Israel, was stat of three main religious, **Sunni**, **Shia**, and **Christians**. But in Lebanon lived also number of **Palestinian** refugees.

- Since beginning of 1970s clashed between Palestinians and Christians took place.
 - In April 1975 clash between Christian Falange and Palestinians, Lebanon Muslims on side of Palestinians.
 - October 1976: the **Battle of Aishiya** (Maronite village), combined force of Palestine Liberalization Organization and Communist attacked, the Maronite population fled; Syria accepted the proposal of the Arab League – this gave Syria a mandate to keep 40 thousand troops in Lebanon.
 - After 1976 on side of Palestinians was also Syria. The result of Syrian interference led to fact that Lebanon was divided into Christian and Muslim part
 - In 1982 Israeli intervention against Muslims and new period of tension began.
 - In 1983 Israeli forces withdrew and country was occupied by Syria.

- Conflict ended by acceptance of **Charter of National Reconciliation** in October 1989, but religious tension remains up present days.

Falkland's War 1982

Since 1833 the **Falkand Islands** (Spanish Islas Malvinas), archipelago in Southern Atlantic Eastern of shores of Argentina, were occupied by United Kingdom. But Argentina did not recognize this situation that led in some crisis in British-Argentinian relations when negotiations about status of Falkand Islands did not come out with any result. In 1965 Junta of General Leopoldo Galtieri took over the power in Argentina and once again posed the claims for the islands.

United Kingdom did not allowed the loss of the Falklands Islands and Argentinian forces of 600 soldiers **disembarked in beaches of islands** on 2 April 1982 and next day Southern Georgia Island and South Sandwich Islands. Due to geographical distance United Kingdom could not take immediate action. On the other hand Argentinian Junta expected that British reconciles with the loss of small and distant territory. But contrary was true.

But government of **Margaret Thatcher** decided to take islands back and in the beginning of April 1982 operational formation (**Operation Corporate**) under Admiral John Fieldhouse dispatched the England for Falkand Islands. The military formation consists of nearly 100 ships and 3rd and 5th brigade of Commandos.

Meantime British ships and submarines controlled the seas around Falkland Islands that were in distance of 200 miles from the shores declared to be so called Forbidden Zone. That is why Argentinian naval forces had to withdraw into harbours.

The 3rd brigade of General Julian Thompson disembarked in San Carlos bay on 21 May 1982. The fights over control of Falkan Islands lasted until the Argentinian crew on islands capitulated on 13 June 1982.

During the war United Kingdom lost 250 men, while Argentinians lost ca. 650 men. The Falkand Islands War was **British victory**, but did not settle the Falkand Issue. Despite the fact that British-Argentinian relations were proclaimed to be normal in 1990, Argentina sill makes claims to Falkland Islands.

Islamic Revolution in Iran 1979

During the post war year of 1941 to 1979 **Muhammad Reza Pahlavi** as shah was head of Iran. During his long reign he implement liberal reforms, for example he gave

equal rights to women, and started modernization and secularization of country according to the Western countries (occidentalization).

During 1970s the resistance of fundamental Islam against shah's reform gradually grow.

At the end of 1970s economic situation deteriorated. In autumn 1977 student demonstrations spread over Iranian universities and cities. Students demanded resignation of shah and return of **ayatollah Khomeini**. In 1978 the revolts spread all over country and in January 1979 shah abdicated, left for exile and Iran became republic.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was religious leader who was for his ideas forced to leave Iran and lived in Paris. After his arrival the influence of so called **Revolutionary Guards**, of militant units of fundamental movements, rapidly grew.

In November 1979 important incident took place. Because United States were blamed for support of former Shah and of attempts to restore his power, group of Iranian students occupied American embassy in Teheran on 4 November 1979, when get 66 hostages. The students requested to hand over shah and commitments of United States not to interfere into Iranian matter. Hostages were released in January 1981, but the result of incident was deterioration of American-Iranian relations.

During 1980 Islamists get into dispute with new government. In June 1981 president Bani Sadr was overthrown and new president became **ayatollah Ali Khamenei**, Khomeini's follower, and Iran became **theocracy**.

Since establishing of theocracy Iran began to support the **terrorist organizations** of Shia Islam, especially Lebanon movement **Hezbollah**. But on the other hand formation of Shia theocracy led to deterioration of relations with neighbouring states in which Sunna Islam prevailed, and also with Western countries, especially with United States.

Iran-Iraq War 1980 to 1989

After Islamic revolution win in Iran, diplomatic relations between Iran and Iraq became tenser. There were several reasons why the war between those two countries broke out:

- Iran-Iraq War was **prestigious conflict**, because personal attitudes of two leaders, of Saddam Hussein and ayatollah Khomeini.

- The war was also **ideological clash**. While in Iraq there was national socialist and secular regime, in Iran there was installed theocracy.
- But war was waged because of **territorial dispute** in which Iraq claimed Southern part of Iran.

Iraqi headquarters awaited rapid victory in the war and commenced attack into Iranian position on 23 September 1980. But after rapid invasion their advancement stopped in May 1981 and later on the Iranians were able to switch into counter-offensive in September 1981. Iran then commenced number of offensives and penetrated in Iraq, but failed in attempt to defeat Iraqi forces. After 1984 the conflict stuck into **war of attrition**.

In 1986 new series of Iranian offensives were commenced, but did not gain any real success.

After two years, in 1988, United Nations mediated peace talks and finally the war was closed in August 1990.

The war brought nothing only **economic damage and number of deaths** and did not solve tensions in Iran-Iraq relations.

Summary

In 1945 to 1989 the world order was affected by Cold War, i.e. by existence of two antagonist blocs. But despite this fact new sources of diplomatic tensions and new epicentres of conflicts appeared. Number of them remains in existence up present days.

Due to process of decolonization new type of states became reality. It was “emergence” of so called the **Third World** that comprised underprivileged countries of Asia and Africa. Development in these countries was predisposed to be unstable. Ethnic and fundamental conflicts were very often. But until 1989 the **divergence in their development** became important and led to fact that there was not any common interest of countries of Third World. That is why the intensity of conflicts was higher than in other part of world.

Recommended Sources

HOBBSBAWM, Eric: *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century*. London: Abacus 2011.

GILBERT, Martin: *From the Ends of the Earth: The Jews in the 20th Century*. London: Cassell, 2001.