

# DID 9/11 ATTACKS CHANGE THE WORLD?

Pr. Sebastian Santander  
Center for International Relations Studies  
Political Science Department  
Liège University



- What happened on 9/11?
- What have been the effects of 9/11?



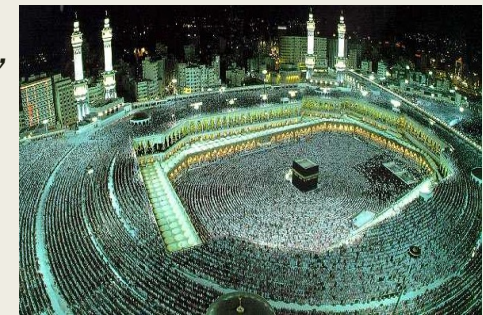
# What were the motives behind the terrorist attacks?



- *“America was targeted for attack because we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world”*



- Complex political situation in the Middle East: Palestine issue
  - *→ for terrorists → Palestine = oppressed → occupied by Israel with the support of the US*
- Saudi Arabia:
  - *→ 2 holy sites of Islam → Mecca & Medina: US presence = “unclean”*
- Sanctions against Iraq



# What are the symbols targeted by the terrorist attacks?

## ■ Sites targeted by Al-Qaeda:

– *Twin Towers*



= *globalization/US power & prosperity*

– *Pentagon*



= *US military power*

– *Capitol*



= *US democracy*

} not chosen by chance

# What have been the effects of these events on the global order?



## ■ Two major factors generated significant international impacts:

– *Terrorist attacks*

– *The chain reaction*

*contributed to change the world in ≠ ways*

# US affected in two ways

- US foreign policy & global power:
  - Declared a “global war on terror” → two wars:
    - Afghanistan/Taliban regime
    - Iraq/Saddam Hussein regime
  - Impact on US power and image:
    - Unable to defeat the Taliban & to stabilize Iraq
    - US army found responsible for abuses & war crimes
- US domestic politics: American democracy
  - Anti-terrorist laws → presumption of innocence
  - Too much power given to the US intelligence services:
    - millions of people will be spied on



# World surveillance increased

- Border surveillance → fences and walls



- Policies against illegal immigration → criminalization



- Decisions to restrict asylum



- Reinforce control at airports



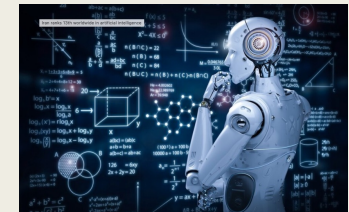
- Biometric passports



# Post-9/11 context reshaped national intelligence services

## ■ Tools & methods for surveillance:

- *Drones*
- *Collecting large quantities of data on internet*
- *Using artificial intelligence to filter information*



## ■ Stronger collaboration → several intelligence services (US, Canada, Australia, Europe...):

- *A global intelligence community is rising*
- *In the name of counter-terrorism → exchanging a lot of information*
- *World facing → large-scale surveillance to the spend of individual freedoms*



# What about the eradication of global terrorism?

- Preventing anything like 9/11 from occurring again
- Proliferation of Islamist terrorist groups:

- *Al-Qaïda, Boko Haram, Al-Shabbab, Islamic State...*

- Military intervention in Iraq → Islamic State → responsible for:

- *low-scale terrorist attacks → Indonesia, Tunisia, UK, France, Brussels, Mozambique ...*

- Vicious circle:

- *military interventions → multiplication of terrorist groups → terrorist attacks → more securities measures → less individual liberties*



# Global institutional framework

- World peace & diplomacy
- Guarantees respect for International law
- Regulates the resort for force



- Unilateral decision
- War in Iraq = illegal
- Huge impact on the UN



- Major powers ignore IL → Russia
  - *Annexation of Crimea*
  - *Intervention in Eastern Ukraine*



# Acceleration of global power shift

- Iran: one of the most powerful country in the Middle East

- *Iraq, Syria, Yemen & Lebanon*



- Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan = major strategic distraction for the US

- *Russia, China ... → + assertive & reinforced their position in the world*



- *Geopolitical balance is moving against the US*



# Populist movements

- 9/11 → fuelled intolerant political narratives:
  - *anti Muslim sentiments*
  - *narrative linking immigration & terrorism*
- Right-wing populist movements or governments

