Obama at war

* When ambassador Ford came to Syria to support protesters, the protesters threw flowers and olive branches at his car
* Weeks later Assad attacked
* Everyone believed Assad would have to the protestors based on the other countries in Arab springs, but he didn't
* The shia Iran and hesbola were on Assad's side
* Biden proposed airstrikes on Assad's forces in 2012 to create safe havens for rebels.
  + “If we'd attacked earlier we wouldn't have destabilized the middle east like it is”
  + It would have violated international law to undermine a sovereign nation
* ISIS was first heard of in 2011 and were being funded by Sunnis in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait. The US felt compelled to aid the outmatched, disorganized moderate rebels
  + The CIA armed them secretly from Jordan to prevent legal issues
* Delimma - intervention worked in the Balkans but not iraq
* If you arm the rebels and they lose, those arms go to the enemy. This can suck you in
* In late 2012, Obama declined to send weapons
* Iran and Russia had been aiding the regime and in 2013 Assad used chemical weapons to demoralize the rebels
  + Obama said this crossed the line and announced he would start arming the rebels, but they didn't arm them enough to make a difference. Then Assad kills 1400 people with a single chem attack.
  + White House begins to plan airstrikes and gets everything in place. But no one supported him so Obama delayed. He “tried” to get congressional support so that he'd look better
  + Kerry says that they wouldn't strike if Assad turned over the chemical weapons
* ISIS then convinced many locals that they'd been betrayed by the US and that they should support ISIS in taking down Assad, including many moderate rebels. When they invaded iraq they had the support of the people. The US was blindsided but took little action
* When the execution of American James Foley was released, Obama formed a coalition and took action. He launched airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, with Kurds fighting on the ground
* Because ISIS is so integrated, a ground force is required, so Obama has began training rebels
  + This was the 2012 plan, but wasn't being executed until 2015
* Many rebels have given up and quit, and some converted to ISIS
* Assad is still using chemical weapons

On our watch

* Time and time again, the US and UN has shied away from taking action against genocide
* 1994 - ignoring warnings, UN fails to stop Rwanda genocide
  + Clinton didn't want casualties on a humanitarian mission that is not in the US interest
* Sudan was the largest country in Africa up until it's split
* UN first learned of the genocide in 2003. The Islamic government was targeting Christians in the south, where Christian rebels were trying to secede
  + By 2003 the bush administration had the rebels and government talking peace
* In 2003 Sudan started extracting oil and China wanted it. Sudan is their primary source of oil
* Darfur rebels formed to claim some of the wealth
* Government armed a militia of bandits, janjeet and sent them to fight the rebels. they attacked civilians of darfur to pillage for sustainment and to terrorize
* Originally Sudanese government tried to downplay it
* 2004 - the UN begins discussing darfur, but the differing political interests hinder action
  + Sudan ignored all 2004 resolutions and didn't get punished
* In 2005 african union soldiers entered darfur, but the un would not support them
* In 2005, the UN decided that they would be allowed to violate sovereignty when genocide is involved
* 2006 - 8 resolutions passed, one stated that AU would receive support
  + China agreed not to veto if it required Sudan's permission
  + Sudan declined
* 40:05