

Introduction

In May 2011, in light of the Arab spring and the domestic and international transformations it wrought, the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO) initiated a new research project on peace, stability and domestic political changes in the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia. This book is the first product of the research, which we hope will be useful not only for deepening our understanding of middle-eastern politics and international relations, but also for policy-making among the Japanese government ministries, including the Ministry of Economy and Trade (METI), which oversees JETRO, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As part of the research project, we organized an international symposium on “Political Changes in the Middle East: Civil-Military Relations, Democratization, and International Commitments” in Tokyo on January 31, 2012, in cooperation with the World Bank and Asahi Shinbun. We had Professor Lisa Anderson, a noted specialist of Middle Eastern politics and international relations and President of the American University in Cairo, as keynote speaker, and Professor Ali Ferdowsi, Chair of the Department of History and Political Science of Notre Dame de Namur University as speaker. We also organized a series of seminars at the IDE-JETRO to which experts on Middle Eastern and Central Asian experts were invited. This book includes Prof. Anderson’s keynote speech at the symposium as well as the papers produced for some of the IDE-JETRO seminars, which are focused more narrowly on developments in Iran, Afghanistan, and Gulf countries.

The papers included in this collection address a wide range of issues. The writers we have assembled include political scientists, political economists, and contemporary historians. They examine countries in North Africa, Middle

East, and South Asia. But they share one crucial question in common: how to understand the current political economic questions confronting the Middle East by examining the factors that are pertinent to the long-term stability, peace, and prosperity of the region.

The chapters are organized geographically. Part I adopts a comparative perspective to analyze the political changes now taking place in the Arab World and explore their domestic and international implications. Lisa Anderson highlights some of the crucial differences in recent domestic political developments in the Arab states. Her essay is followed by papers on civil-military relations. Akifumi Ikeda compares the political processes of a number of Middle Eastern countries from the perspective of civil-military relations and assesses its implications for civil society. Basically on the same scope of interest, Prof. Ikeuchi applies this focus of political analysis to six Arab countries most hard-hit and shaken by the wave of protests. In his discussion, the character of civil-military relations is seen to be strongly affecting the way each regime respond to the challenge from the society. The varying degrees to which each country's military has been institutionalized or patrimonially composed were specified as a crucial factor in determining the diverging developments of each country.

The next section looks at the Middle East in terms of its two sub-regions (East and West), with a focus on Iran (Chapters 4 and 5). Here the writers, both specialists on Iran, assess the significance of factors other than the Arab-Islamic culture that has prevailed for centuries in this region. Hitoshi Suzuki discusses recent political developments in Iran in general and stresses the increasing importance of US and Western military presence in the Middle East. He emphasizes the special importance of the eastern region of the Middle East, including several non-Arab countries for Japanese policymaking. Professor Ferdowsi's argument is even more aggressive. Comparing the national experiences of two revolutions, namely the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the Egyptian Revolution in 2011, he concludes that the Iranian case has been the clear

genesis of the following historical events in this whole region.

In Part II of this report, the chapters are organized according to Middle Eastern sub-regions, but here again we try to highlight the prevailing political trends and types of rhetoric which are peculiar to each sub-region and country.

Chapter 6 treats the developments within Salafism, which seemingly reflect the new trend of political Islamism in the post-“Arab Spring” context. Sadashi Fukuda approaches this phenomenon from his original field of study (Saudi Arabia), which is the birthplace of Salafism, and then broadens his narrative to include several Arab countries, especially Egypt where the influence of Muslim Brotherhood is also expanding after the fall of the Mubarak regime. He concludes that generally the Islamic influence is going to be stronger in this region at least in the foreseeable future.

The following chapters look at several Arab countries, starting with Egypt (a historical evaluation of recent events and their economic consequences are detailed in Chapter 7 and 8), followed by the case of Yemen, which can hardly be considered a revolutionary transition (Chapter 9). Next, the focus shifts to Syria, which is now experiencing the most severe form of civil war (Chapter 10).

In Chapter 7, Eiji Nagasawa starts his argument by declaring that the year 2011 was historic for both Japan and the Arab world. After reconsidering the recent “Arab revolutions” in the context of world history, Nagasawa proceeds to put the Egyptian case in place according to its proper historical background. He postulates that there will be huge obstacles ahead for the newly born regimes in Egypt, Tunisia, and other Arab countries. As to Japanese contributions in this region, he affirms that Japan has its own reasons and rationalizations for actively contributing to the development and prosperity in the Middle East.

Chapter 8, written by Ichiki Tsuchiya, assesses the general trend in the Egyptian national economy after the January 25 revolution. Relying on recent economic indicators compiled by the World Bank, the Central Bank of Egypt, and the Financial Ministry, he argues that, generally speaking, the economic performance of Egypt in this political period is worsening compared to the

previous time, and it is hard to find any positive signs for recovery in the short term.

Mr. Hiroshi Sato's Chapter 9 deals with the case of Yemen in detail, emphasizing that it typifies an entirely different political process compared with the Tunisian, Egyptian, and even Libyan cases. Like several other Arab countries, in which the "Arab Spring" resulted in the toppling of old regimes, in Yemen, revolution spelled the end of the long dictatorship of President Saleh. However, in Yemen's case, the transfer of power proved to be a completely peaceful process; for Sato, the most important factor for this ideal transfer was the non-intervention policy of Western countries.

In Chapter 10 Dr. Housam Darwisheh examines the case of Syria, the most violent and the most tragic case of the "Arab Spring." At the first stage, most analysts predicted that the Assad regime would soon collapse, but the reality was that the regime survived more than a year and a half, and the future of the country remains unclear. Darwisheh examines closely the coercive and resilient character of the Assad regime and offers an historical explanation from the viewpoints of civil-military relations and the country's political economy. He explains how the existing power structure, which made the Syrian regime resilient and able to sustain its cohesion so far, simultaneously constrains its scope for reform and its ability to formulate political arrangements that can urgently respond to domestic challenges without waging a war against its opponents and society. The conflict, he argues, is not only about toppling a regime but also about uprooting the current system which is based on keeping Syrians hostage to communal divisions and regional power plays.

The next two chapters (Chapters 11 and 12) turn our attention to the Arabian Peninsula, but offer very different arguments and areas of focus. In a word, this sub-region of the Arabian Peninsula is a "hot spot" for grasping and understanding the changing political processes of the Middle East as an integral region.

Chapter 11 discusses Saudi Arabian diplomacy in the wake of the Syrian

humanitarian crisis. Although the international situation and the main actors have changed as the crisis unfolded, and the diplomatic efforts by Saudi Arabia have not offered a solution to the Syrian crisis, Dr. Satoru Nakamura's detailed analysis is still valuable for considering the recent shift in Saudi diplomatic policy in favor of a more active position. In his concluding discussion of Japanese foreign policy in the Middle East, Nakamura declares that Japan should focus its policy efforts on promoting preventive diplomacy in the long term.

Chapter 12 considers the general trends in the activities of Japanese companies operating in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) during the period of the "Arab Spring," drawing comparisons with those of the South Korean companies there. Jun Saito focuses on the aggressive expansion of economic activities by Korean companies in the Gulf. After observing statistical data on this crucial period, he concludes that Japan also has some room to contribute to the economic development of this promising country in the Gulf region.

Chapter 13 is rather unique in this report, since it focuses mainly on Afghanistan and Pakistan, but readers will find this kind of discussion indispensable for gaining insights into the immediate future of the Middle East as a global region. One of the most important points made by Manabu Shimizu's is that "to build a bridge between the reality in Afghanistan and a 'New Silk Road' strategy is a new task before the international community." This applies not only to Afghanistan, but also to the entire Middle East as a newly reemerging regional system.

In the end, if we would summarize implications of each of the chapters in this report, we could point out several trends as following: (1) In this crucial point of time in the contemporary political transition in the Middle East, the civil-military relations is, and will continue to be, one of our main focus of analyses in the foreseeable future. (2) The appearance of several Islamist movements will also be our main issue of interest, although it does not necessarily mean that the general political trend in this region is explained only by anti-Western or anti-democratic sentiments. (3) As to the Japanese diplomatic

policymaking on the Middle East which is inevitably related with our energy policy, basic importance of the eastern part of the region, sometimes well beyond the generally recognized regional border, will not change in the near future. (4) Seeing the rapid process of re-integration of the countries and sub-regions is now on the process, Japan should take much more effort in its interest to contribute effectively for the making of sustainable peacekeeping system of the whole region.

In the end if we add our own take on the following chapters, the importance of the diversity and unity that are both appearing as political reality in the Middle Eastern region cannot be stressed too much. Our main interest in this region then will be concentrated on the underlying key factor for the enduring coordination of regional socio-economic interdependency and cooperation, which will make the peaceful co-existence of different political apparatus accomplished without any serious confrontation.

Editor