

Abstract

Abstract: 2020 is the tenth year of the upheaval in the Middle East. After a serious governance crisis, fierce competition and even confrontation among major powers, the Middle East is still lingering in the “long wave” of upheaval, and moving towards a more risky and turbulent “uncertainty” era. On the one hand, avoiding chaos, wishing for stability, solving livelihood problems, and exploring independent development paths have become the core issues facing Middle Eastern countries; on the other hand, slow development pace, sharpened social problems, frequent public protests, and prominent governance problems have been terrible. In particular, the COVID – 19 has aggravated economic and social development difficulties of the Middle East countries, and delayed the pace of getting out of the predicament. At the same time, hot – spot issues frequently occur, the Gulf situation is heating up, the Eastern Mediterranean disputes are tightening, and the intervention of the United States and other extraterritorial powers, which have further increased the intensity of the geopolitical competition and accelerated the pace of order transformation and reconstruction in the Middle East. Therefore, the new Middle East mainly characterized by geopolitical competition is being shaped.

As it is about to usher in the third decade of the 21st century, where is the Middle East heading for? How do Middle Eastern countries get out of the vortex of drastic change? These are still urgent problems to be solved. In the long term, the Middle East countries should explore their independent development paths, improve their governance capabilities, accelerate the adjustment of their economic structure, seize the new opportunities of the new technological revolution and jointly build the “Belt and Road” to promote regional stability, cooperation and development.

Keywords: Long Wave of Upheaval; Governance Crisis; Geopolitical Competition

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I Main Report

Y. 1 A Decade of Upheaval in the Middle East:

Reflections and Prospects

Wang Lincong / 001

Abstract: Since the upheaval in the Middle East (2010 – 2020), serious governance crises, development predicaments, security dilemmas, as well as major power competitions, and geopolitical conflicts have been witnessed in the Middle East. The upheaval has not only changed the overall situation of the Middle East, but also profoundly affected its historical process. It has been a major turning point in the changes of the Middle East, and the region has entered an era of “uncertainty” that is more risky and turbulent than ever. On the one hand, avoiding chaos, wishing for stability, solving livelihood problems, and exploring independent development paths have become the core issues facing Middle Eastern countries; on the other hand, slow development pace, sharpened social problems, frequent public protests, and prominent governance problems have been terrible. In particular, the COVID – 19 has aggravated economic and social development difficulties of the Middle East countries, and delayed the pace of getting out of the predicament. At present, the vast majority of countries in the Middle East are still in the “progress” of upheavals, wandering in the “long wave” of upheavals in the Middle East. The Middle East, which has just entered the third decade of the 21st century, faces eight major risks: regional conflict risk, political security risk, foreign intervention risk, terrorism risk, ethnic conflict risk, nuclear non-proliferation risk, water dispute risk, and energy (and its

transporting routes) security risks. At the same time, the situation in the Middle East presents six major trends: long-term regional transformation and turbulence, frequent intervention by major powers, sharpened geopolitical competition, normalization of popular protest movements, accelerated division of regional countries, and accelerated economic reform, etc.. On the whole, complex crises in the Middle East are on the rise, transformation of the regional countries is difficult, and uncertainties of regional order are increasing. The future development trend of the Middle East is full of greater uncertainties. In the long term, the Middle East countries should explore their independent development paths, improve their governance capabilities, seize the new opportunities of the new technological revolution and jointly build the “Belt and Road” to promote regional stability, cooperation and development, which should be the realistic choice of the Middle East countries, and the hope of development in the Middle East.

Keywords: Long Wave of Upheaval; Dual Turbulence; Geopolitical Competition; Governance Crisis; Development Predicament

II Sub-Reports

Y.2 The Political Situation of the Middle East in 2019 and Its Trend

Wang Lincong, Zhu Quangang / 034

Abstract: Since the Arab upheaval, the Middle East countries have undergone profound political transformations and changes. In general, the current political situation in the Middle East is still in this round of changes, which has affected reconfiguration of political power in many countries. Since 2019, the political development of the Middle East countries has shown the following major characteristics. In some countries, the electoral process has been carried out in an orderly manner, political changes have undergone steadily, and the political development situation was good. In the war-torn countries, they are deeply



affected by external intervention, the parties of the conflict are fighting sharply, and the political reconciliation process is advancing slowly. The Gulf monarchies remain basically stable, but potential crises in these countries have accelerated. After the outbreak of the COVID -19 pandemic in 2020 in the Middle East, the political development in the Middle East may show the following trends: weak states will face a new round of popular protests after the epidemic, strong government models will continue to prevail, political pressure in the Gulf countries will increase, and the peace process in the war-torn countries is still difficult to achieve.

Keywords: Political Turmoil; Political Stability; Strong Government Model

Y. 3 The Economic Situations and Prospect of Middle East in 2019

Jiang Yingmei / 051

Abstract: Due to sluggish recovery of the world economy, the long-term downturn of the international oil price, the aggravation of geopolitical and social tensions, and the lack of fair competition in the market environment, Middle East economy continued to decline in 2019, with an economic growth rate of 0.3%. In 2020, because of the global pandemic of COVID -19, the global economy falls into recession, and Middle East is no exception. In addition to causing a serious health crisis, the epidemic caused major economic turmoil through simultaneous supply and demand shocks-oil and commodity prices plummeted, domestic and foreign demand fell, consumer confidence fell, the financial environment tightened, production and global supply chain disruption-with a serious impact in the Middle East. Middle East economy is expected to contract by 3.3% in 2020. With the end of the global epidemic in the second half of 2020 and the role of economic stimulus policies, Middle East economy will rebound 4.2% in 2021. However, the global economic recovery still faces great uncertainty.

Keywords: Middle East Economy; World Economy; COVID -19; Oil International Price

Y. 4 A New Wave of Protests in the Middle East and Its Impact

Li Zixin / 078

Abstract: In 2019, protests and demonstrations broke out in many countries in West Asia and North Africa to express dissatisfaction with the economic downturn, high unemployment rate, people's poor livelihood and political corruption. Demonstrations in many countries led to the resignation of leaders and government reorganization, but related measures did not effectively alleviate public dissatisfaction. Protests still occur in many countries and continue to this day. This wave of protests and demonstrations is the first time of pan-regional social unrest reappearing in West Asia and North Africa after the "Arab Spring" in 2011, and exacerbated political fragmentation in the Middle East. Thus, some experts named it "the Second Arab Spring." However, the political demands of this wave of protests are slightly different from the "Arab Spring" ten years ago. The intervention of foreign countries has obvious characteristics to serve the needs of the US-Iran game. Especially, the spillover effect of this round of demonstrations has been significantly reduced. The social turmoil in the relevant countries has impacted the balance of power among the regional countries, but it has not changed the overall geopolitical pattern in the Middle East. On the contrary, it has accelerated the pace of existing geopolitical changes. The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and plunging energy prices in 2020 have made the Middle East countries face a more severe governance crisis. This wave of protests has not been completely over, and its impact may continue.

Keywords: Middle East; Protest Wave; Geopolitics; Political Reform; Failure of State Governance

Y. 5 The Security Situation and Prospects of Middle East

Tang Zhichao / 093

Abstract: The security situation in the Middle East remained grim and fragile



in 2019, with regional conflicts on the rise. Three regional wars in Syria, Libya and Yemen are deadlocked. Terrorism has been severely weakened, but there is still the possibility of resurgence. The conflict between the United States and Iran continued to escalate and raised regional tensions. The security situation in the gulf is grave and the safety of navigation at sea is facing challenges. The conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean is heating up, and the game among regional countries is becoming increasingly heated. A new wave of protests broke out and triggered regime changes in some countries. Geopolitical competition among major powers in and outside the region is fierce, and changes in the regional pattern are accelerating, threatening the strategic stability of the Middle East. It is expected that in 2020, the Middle East security situation will remain unstable, and the possibility of a “black swan event” cannot be ruled out.

Keywords: Middle East Security; Turbulence; Geopolitical Competition

III National Reports

Y. 6 Tunisia: Political compromise promoting political development

Wang Feng / 107

Abstract: The Upheaval of Middle East began from Tunisia ten years ago. Following the fall of Ben Ali in January 2011, Tunisia has stepped into the political transition. Its political transition has undergone three phases, during which Tunisia adopted the constitution of 2014 and avoided some possible national conflict or civil war. The reasons why Tunisia has made such great achievements which may lie in series of domestic and external factors. Anyhow, al-Nahda has played significant role in the smooth transition of power in Tunisia. It has made great compromises on the principles of the 2014 constitution and therefore reached the consensus with other major secular parties. With this political consensus, Tunisia has been able to build a secular, inclusive and democratic political system. Al-Nahda has also ensured its legal status as an important political party in Tunisia by further self-reform and succeeded in participating in the democratic

process. However, Tunisia still faces economic, security and political challenges in the future. If these problems were not properly resolved, they might undermine the political and social stability of Tunisia.

Keywords: The Upheaval of Middle East, Tunisia, Political Transition, al-Nahda

Y. 7 Egypt: Twists and Turns of Transformation and Development

Wang Qiong / 126

Abstract: After the January 25th Revolution, Egypt has embarked on a tortuous road of political and economic reform. Morsi challenges military power, successfully being elected President of Egypt, But Morsi was weak in economic governance, facing politically difficulties both at home and abroad, Eventually Egypt trigger the second revolution. After Sisi took power, through strong suppression of social unrest, vigorously promote economic reform, he restored Egypt's economic and social stability, but failed to change Egypt's dependence on rent economy, weak manufacturing industry, and the structural problem of the high debt problem. At present, there are still a series of social problems in Egypt, such as high unemployment rate of young people and livelihood difficulties. And the political stability of Egypt is facing a series of uncertainties in post-epidemic era.

Keywords: Egypt; Middle East Upheaval; Political Development; Economic Situation

Y. 8 Libya: Struggling in the Quagmire of War

Wang Jinyan / 145

Abstract: In 2011, the Libyan civil war broke out and the regime change was realized under the military intervention of many western countries. The past



decade has witnessed Libya suffering from political division and incompetent regime, economic regression and mass destitution, security deterioration and intensified terrorism. It was not only because of long-standing abuses rooted from the decades under the ruling of Libya's old regime, but also closely related to benefit-oriented intervention from external powers. Since the COVID-19 outbreak had rapidly spread in many parts of the world, the number of confirmed cases in Libya has also kept rising this year. From the domestic perspective of Libya, its medical equipment and capacity are not even enough to cope with the epidemic while the two sides of the civil conflict have not yet agreed on ceasefire. From the external perspective, however, the major players of intervention have temporarily decreased their participation in the Libyan civil war due to their own serious domestic epidemic. The experience of the years of chaos in Libya has shown that the final settlement of the Libyan issue needed the reconciliation of parties engaged in the conflict, as well as unselfish help from external powers and international organizations, both of which are indispensable. Whereas, according to the current situation where neither of the conditions was satisfied, the outlook of the mass chaos in Libya still remained uncertain.

Keywords: Libya, Post-war Chaos, External Intervention

Y.9 Syria: Persisting chaos and war caused by radical change

Liu Dong / 162

Abstract: Before the Syria crisis, the government of Syria has promoted economic and political reform actively. Although the reform improved the relations between Syria and Western Countries, it neither improved the livelihood of ordinary Syrian people, nor reduced the poverty rate. Furthermore, the reform also reduced the cohesion of the ruling group and weakened the grass-roots contacts of the ruling group. And the negative impact of the reform foreshadowed the full outbreak of the crisis. Since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis, global and regional powers have intervened strongly and gradually become the main force that influence the

development of the crisis and the Syrian crisis has also evolved from a mass protest movement into a full-blown civil war. It was not until September 2015, with the support of Russian armed forces, that the Syrian government began to launch a strategic counter-offensive, and the domestic situation in Syria began to develop towards stability. However, the ongoing Syrian crisis has seriously intensified sectarian and ethnic tensions in Syria, dealt a devastating blow to the development of the Syrian national economy, and promoted the deepening adjustment of relations between Middle East countries and the policies of major powers in the Middle East. Although the Syrian government has regained most of its territory by the end of March 2020, the protracted war in Idlib also indicates that the situation in Syria is reaching a stalemate. At present, Russia, Turkey, the United States and other international and regional powers have become the leading forces influencing the development of the situation in Syria. Only with the consensus achieved by the above mentioned parties, can Syria reach internal peace, start political reconstruction, and fundamentally solve the Syrian refugee issue that has attracted much attention.

Keywords: Syria Crisis; Civil War; Causes; Evolution

Y. 10 Yemen: Trapping in the vortex of war *Zhu Quangang / 184*

Abstract: In the late period of former President Saleh 's rule of Yemen, Yemen was deeply plunged into multiple governance crisis, which including political governance crisis, economic governance crisis and social governance crisis. As the Arab Spring spread to Yemen, Saleh eventually stepped down, and Yemen entered a period of transformation. Yemen 's transformation process did not properly restrict the power of Saleh, nor did it ensure the interest of marginal groups such as the Houthi movement and the Southern movement. Eventually, Houthi used force to seize state power, and Yemen 's transformation process failed completely. With the intervention of the international coalition forces led by Saudi Arabia, Yemen fell into a bloody war. The Yemen war exhibited three characteristics: dynamic, internal-external linkage, and highly destructive. The



resolution of the Yemeni problem requires restoring the peace order firstly, and then resolving the governance problem, which seems not easy.

Keywords: Yemen; Governance; War; Peace Process

Y. 11 Gulf countries: reform and transformation facing new challenges

Yu Guoqing, Chen Yao / 200

Abstract: Broken out at the end of 2010, the so-called “Arab Spring” uprisings had tremendously transformed the Middle East. Though affected by the regional turmoil, Gulf Arab monarchies survived in the Arab Spring without experiencing regime change. In the post-Arab Spring Era, Gulf Arab states had made some achievements in their economic, political and social reforms but meeting with more and more obstacles and even being stalled. Intra-GCC rifts were growing and the 2017 Qatar diplomatic crisis severely hindered the Gulf integration. The security situation in the Gulf was deteriorated by Gulf States’ interventions in regional conflicts, its heightened tensions with Iran, and the increasing competition between the U. S. and Russia in the Middle East. In the recent time, Gulf monarchies are supposed to ride out the new trends of protests and political turmoil in the region. However, they are facing more and more challenges from low oil-price, painful reforms, worsening regional security situation and non-traditional security threats. In a decade after the Arab Spring, Gulf Arab states’ internal and external situations are not optimistic.

Keywords: Middle East Upheaval; Gulf Arab States; GCC

Y. 12 Turkey: Comprehensive transformation of politics and diplomacy

Wei Min / 223

Abstract: The upheaval in the Middle East has brought unprecedented

opportunities and challenges to Turkey. In the past ten years, under the leadership of the Justice Development Party, Turkey has achieved a political system change from parliamentary system to presidential system at the political level. It has resisted the huge impact of the attempted coup and the Lira crisis in economic sector, and successfully achieved the transformation of foreign policy, from traditional Kemalism diplomatic thought to the “new strategic depthism”. Facing the situation in the Middle East, where the conflict is constantly, Turkey has fully utilized its geopolitical advantages and political wisdom, using a combination of diplomatic means and military strikes, and indirectly achieved the national strategic intent, that is to establish a safe zone in northern Syria and the remove the influences of Kurdish forces.

Keywords: Middle East Upheaval; Turkey; Foreign Policy; Political System Reform

IV Hot Issues

Y. 13 New Changes and Prospects of Israeli-Palestinian Issue

Wang Jian, Su Wenjun / 236

Abstract: In the past year, two events have had a significant impact on the Israel-Palestinian issue. One is that US President Trump officially announced the “Deal of the Century”. The other is the establishment of the Israeli coalition government. The “Deal of the Century” overturned international consensus on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian issue and gave Israel the green light to unilaterally annex parts of the West Bank. The establishment of the Israeli coalition government has further strengthened the dominant position of right-wing political forces in Israeli politics, and Israel will adopt a tougher policy on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The Palestinian Authority hopes to counter Israel’s unilateral annexation by announcing that the PA was ‘absolved’ of all agreements and understandings with Israel and the US, including security-related agreements. There is a danger of tension and instability between Israel and the Palestine, and hopes for peace are fading.

Keywords: Deal of the Century; Peace to Prosperity; Israel Election; Two-State Solution; Israel-Palestinian Issue



Y. 14 New Changes in the Iranian Issues and their Implications

Lu Jin / 255

Abstract: Since May 2019, the United States has imposed “extreme pressure” on Iran in terms of strengthening sanctions, military threats, and diplomatic isolation. Iran was forced to adjust its policies from “strategic restraint” to “extreme resistance.” The United States and Iran are fighting openly in the Persian Gulf and Iraq, pursuing a policy of marginal war, and it shows the characteristics of the warming of regional agent war. Since the first anniversary of the US withdrawal from the JCPOA, Iran gradually suspended its obligations to implement the Iranian nuclear agreement in five stages. Affected by the combined effects of US sanctions, Covid-19 and the collapse of international oil prices, the Iranian economy and government financial situation continued to deteriorate. In the future, it is likely to escalate the situation to get rid of the predicament of being surrounded by the US. To win re-election as president, Trump will increase pressure on Iran. The international community’s struggle over the Iranian nuclear issue and the JCPOA will also become more intense. Therefore, the Iran issue in 2020 is the most likely risk factor for the escalation of regional tensions. Changes in US-Iranian relations, the Iranian nuclear issue and the Iranian economy deserve attention.

Keywords: Extreme Pressure; Strategic Restraint; Extreme Resistance; The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

Y. 15 Turkey’s Regional Policy and its Implications *Zhang Bo / 275*

Abstract: This paper took Turkey’s policy towards Syria, Israel and Libya in recent years as an example to discuss Turkey’s regional policy and its implications. In October 2019, Turkey launched the “Peace Spring” military operation against Syrian Kurdish forces in order to establish a safe zone in northern Syria. The operation was opposed by many sides. From December 2019 to March

2020, there were direct conflicts between Turkish and Syrian forces, with both sides suffering heavy casualties and losses. The conflicts reflected the limits of Turkey's military and economic power. Turkey's actions were also constrained by big powers such as the United States and Russia. In November 2019, Turkey signed a memorandum of understanding with the Libyan Government of National Unity on military cooperation and the demarcation of the Mediterranean border. In January 2020, Turkey sent troops to Libya. Fighting on two fronts in Syria and Libya and competing for resources in the eastern Mediterranean have brought too many enemies for Turkey. Turkey criticized the United States and Israel for a series of policies that hurt Palestinian rights.

Keywords: Turkey; Syria; Resources in the East Mediterranean Sea

Y. 16 The Eastern Mediterranean Issue Heating up
and Its Implications

Tang Zhichao, Gu Nanxuan / 289

Abstract: Since the new century, with the development of exploration technology, a large amount of natural gas has been found in the Levant basin of the eastern Mediterranean. The great discovery of natural gas is helpful for regional countries, but brought the fierce geopolitical game and conflict around natural gas resources. This dual process has accelerated further in recent years. In general, the eastern Mediterranean game mainly focuses on the ownership of natural gas resources and the construction of natural gas transport pipeline. However, in recent years, the nature of geopolitical conflicts has increased significantly, which is closely related to the Cyprus issue, the Palestinian-Israeli issue, the game between regional powers and other old and new regional hotspots as well as the adjustment of regional pattern. From the perspective of its implications, the discovery of oil and gas in the eastern Mediterranean not only changed the distribution pattern of oil and gas in the Middle East and promoted the revision of Europe's energy import map, but also had an important impact on the resolution of regional traditional conflicts and hotspot issues, regional security, and the pattern of the Middle



East. The rise of the eastern Mediterranean game reflects the declining trend of the United States and Europe in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, and the strategic development trend of regional countries' increasing influence in regional affairs.

Keywords: Eastern Mediterranean; Oil and Gas Development; Geopolitics; Big Game

V Market Trend

Y. 17 The Development of Middle East Foreign Trade and Sino-Middle East Trade

Xu Qiang / 306

Abstract: In 2017 and 2018 the exportation growths of Middle East (ME) were faster than that of the whole world trade, but the export and import scales of ME were still less than the historical highest yearly value. The growth rates of various country's foreign trade varied markedly. The shares of China in most ME countries exportation and importation have been increased continuously. The Industry-Share-of-Exportation analyses illustrate that the industry-diversification process of the mineral-rich countries won effectiveness to some extent, although most of these countries' mechanic and electronic products' exportation growth is rather unstable and discontinuous. The mutual trade between China and ME countries shows varying Permeating Degree among countries. Chinese government and enterprises should propel Africa-Sino trades by assisting the Industry-Diversification processes of all ME countries, industrialization, the major actions should include: deepening the economic connections between China and all ME countries; participating the construction of all ME economic and trade parks; participating the Africa infrastructure building.

Keywords: Trade Development; Industry-Diversification; Sino-ME Trade

Y. 18 Foreign Direct Investment of West Asian Countries

Zhou Mi / 337

Abstract: The inflows of investment of the countries in West Asia kept increasing in 2018. The oil-exporting countries had an obviously weaker performance in attracting investments, while manufacturing and service industries had become new hotspots for the FDI. The foreign investors considerate more on the factors of industrial structure, human resources and investment environment, etc. The Chinese companies had also invested more in 2018. They took actively part in the infrastructure in the West Asian countries and had more capacity cooperation based on the industrial parks. For better promote the cooperation between Chinese companies and the West Asian countries, it should be done by both sides to improve the investment environment, figure out solutions for key investment challenges, enhance the cooperation on the research and development, encourage financial innovations and help reduce investment risks by more collectively actions.

Keywords: Foreign Direct Investment; West Asian Countries; China Enterprises

VI Documentation

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