

Summary

The Middle East is a region which for many decades has remained the focus of attention as it is prone to making 'surprises' and turnarounds which produce a significant impact on the whole world. It is not surprising since the global powers as well as regional players pursue their own geopolitical interests here; besides, significant reserves of energy resources allow influencing the prices while severe manifestations of religious fanaticism provide fertile ground for terrorism. We should also mention unsettled issues of creation of nation states, the diversity of ethnical and religious composition of population in many regions, excessive wealth, huge volumes of arms purchases, etc. which makes one realize the complexity and the danger of the whole situation.

Revolutions that took place here in 2011 initially caused enthusiastic reaction of the West and the most educated members of Islamic society. That is the reason why these revolutionary events have been termed "the Arab Spring". But unfortunately, they failed to solve main problems in the countries; moreover, they triggered a series of coups, civil wars, interventions and ongoing confrontation in the society also bringing waves of terror and repressions. In short, the Arab Spring has turned into the Arab Autumn which is likely to drag on.

In political history revolutions have been observed for many centuries. The history of some regions, for example, the Hellenistic states and Ancient Rome, as well as of many Eastern countries, can be presented in political terms as a struggle between social and political groups for the distribution of resources and power. But only starting from the early modern period the revolutions became one of the major driving forces of historical process. Advanced modernization and profound transformations of society are usually associated with major social and political revolutions that occurred in Britain, France, other countries of Europe, North America and later in other parts of the world.

Starting from the modern era, in most cases revolutions have been underpinned by serious disproportions in the society's development which emerged as a result of rapid modernization. These disproportions became even larger due to a rapid population growth and especially due

to a sharply increasing share of urban population and youth in population structure which increased social tensions.

Our study of a number of developmental models of different countries in different epochs showed that regardless of consumption level and population growth rate the processes of modernization are quite tightly and intrinsically related to the perils of social and political cataclysms which can rather easily transform into revolutions and violent disorders. That is why one should consider the cases of crisis-free development in the course of modernization and escape from the Malthusian trap rather as an exception in comparison with cases of revolutions and political upheavals.

As a result, revolutions frequently occur in economically successful or even very successful societies. However, that very success leads to unrealistic expectations which become the ideological basis for social upheavals. By the 2010s, the situation in such countries as Egypt and Tunisia developed following this very model which is thoroughly described in Chapters 2 and 7 of the present monograph.

With the acceleration of historical process the number of revolutions has increased. The 20th century appears to witness many events of the kind. The revolution is a specific form of changing government or political (social and political) regime. Being quite familiar with the theory of revolutions, Vladimir I. Lenin fairly noted that the basic issue of any revolution is the issue of power. Let us point that any, even the most legitimate change of political regime, no matter under monarchy or democracy, inevitably leads to more or less considerable breakdowns in the functioning of administrative and political mechanism. However, the revolutionary overthrows of political regimes mean a much more dramatic breakdown in functioning of the system, often bringing unpredictable consequences. That is why, in general, revolutions have always been a very disruptive and devastating way of social progress (which often turns into anti-progress).

Moreover, the attitude to revolutions changes depending on the public position of social researchers and general situation within a society. Thus, in the 20th century revolutions were often associated with the threat of establishment of communist regimes that is why most Western political analysts gave them a negative assessment. So the common trend among the Western researches was to define the causes of revolutions and to find the ways to prevent them.

The collapse of socialism finally proved that revolutions are no longer a suitable tool of social progress. However, paradoxically just from that moment the USA and Western countries dramatically changed their attitude toward revolutions, and nowadays (when the danger of establishing communist regimes as a result of revolutions has been eliminated) they are considered as a positive and advantageous phenomenon for the Western countries. As before, the revolutions today are correlated with democracy while the latter is considered by all means a positive form of government. The present monograph, in particular its first and last chapters are devoted to this issue.

The end of the 20th century and the early 21st century became a period of revolutions of a new type with an increasing share of external interference and instigation, as well as a period of a number of 'man-made' and non-spontaneous revolutions aimed at overthrowing undesirable regimes. A series of such revolutions, symbolically named 'color revolutions' occurred in many countries. Thus, at present these are democratic (not communist) states that use revolutions as their primary geopolitical instrument. For this purpose in targeted countries the opposition was intensively trained often by Western instructors. Also, non-profit organizations (NPOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and diplomatic missions were actively employed as coordinating centers and headquarters. Unfortunately, the positive effect of these revolutions was mostly insignificant whereas the negative effect was disastrous. The influence of foreign forces on revolutions in the Middle East is evident (which is proved conclusively in this monograph). But one should realize that the causes of revolutions are not always determined by external influence, they are often a result of internal crisis. In the present monograph we try to deduce the causes and terms of such a crisis with respect to a number of Middle Eastern countries.

At the same time, we have to note that there is no universally acknowledged definition of revolution. This arises from the fact that revolutionary and quasi-revolutionary upheavals occur in countries with different levels of development. While revolutions in such countries as Egypt and Tunisia took place as a result of internal social tensions, in a number of other Arab countries they were caused by internal ethnic and religious contradictions. These contradictions have never disappeared and they gained impetus from a number of factors including social discontent, other countries' example, as well as instigation of protests and

active help from outside. This is the case with Libya, Yemen, and Syria where the external interference together with open or concealed intervention triggered the ethnic and religious conflict. The latter could be constrained only by rather rigid and authoritarian regimes. As soon as such a regime is toppled, the respective country is pushed into chaos. The idea of revolution is very perilous for the countries with weak statehood and low cultural level of many groups of population as it leads to instability. Thus, democratic ideas collide with a need for stability and as a result, the transfer of power in authoritarian regimes becomes their vulnerable point.

One should emphasize that for five years none of the revolutions of the Arab Spring has solved any urgent issue (and probably could hardly do it). It must be acknowledged that everything that was needed for modernization either had been done or could be done within the authoritarian regimes. All this raises a question – to what extent can the democratic governmental principles be considered universal?

Certainly, revolutions can stir societies, mobilize new forces, raise urgent issues, and give considerable political experience. They can lead to positive developments. But one can hardly expect that revolutions can solve the most important problems. Unfortunately, at present the developmental model follows not the desirable scheme from revolution to democracy but the one from revolution either to counter-revolutions (as in Egypt) which seems more preferable, or to new revolutions or just chaos and civil wars of all against all what we observe today in Libya, Yemen, and Syria. Moreover, sometimes they lead to the creation of terrorist groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS).

Among the states involved in the Arab Spring events, Tunisia and Egypt still remain the most economically developed countries. Nevertheless, Tunisia being a more advanced country managed to escape a political breakdown (some fragile but true democracy is still preserved there) but still in economic terms it fell in a worse state than before the Jasmine revolution. And although the moderate Islamists of Al-Nahda party had promised to reproduce the Turkish model in Tunisia, that is to create a successful and rapidly developing country in which religion would play an important role, soon it turned out that they had failed. Besides, Tunisia has been tortured by Islamic terrorism and the peril of establishing a more hardline regime (through imposing martial law) emerged.

Meanwhile, Egypt where the counter-revolution has occurred demonstrates better economic results. So, does this mean that one should return to counter-revolution? Still one should bear in mind that today the Egyptian military forces that have pushed the Muslim Brotherhood underground and established a stricter dictatorship than ever before, are at risk of making the same mistakes that caused the revolution in 2011. In other words, the Arab countries can evolve not along a direct development path but a social and political spiral.

The present monograph consists of Introduction, seven chapters arranged into three parts, Conclusion, and two Appendices. The first appendix presents rather challenging data – a collection of letters demonstrating the evolution of views of the revolutionaries: from euphoria to disappointment. The second appendix provides an objective and straightforward chronology of events and shows the unprecedented scale of revolutionary events and their almost inevitable escalation into more or less prolonged violent intrasocietal conflicts.

The Introduction entitled ‘Revolutions in the 21st Century, Pros and Cons...’ provides a survey of views on revolutions over the period of more than a century, it also analyses the transformations of revolutions proper and of the views on them in the period between the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries.

Part 1 ‘Political Theory and the Middle-Eastern Reality’ consists of two chapters. Chapter 1 ‘The Factors of the Arab Revolutions’ provides social, economic, and demographic analysis of the processes and transformations in the Arab world for the last half a century which can convincingly explain the causes of the Arab revolutions and counter-revolutions. A rapid population growth, the increasing share of youth cohorts (the so called youth bulge), as well as fast transformations in education system, living standards and living habits are combined here with relatively high illiteracy rates, high priority of religious fundamentalists, unemployment, etc. All these fueled the dissatisfaction with the level of justice, system of distribution of benefits, nepotism, corruption, lack of democracy, and with Arab states’ social and political regimes in general, under certain circumstances (including the explosive increase in food prices in 2010–2011) and with active outside interference these have led to revolutionary outbursts.

Chapter 2 ‘Revolution, Counter-revolution and Democracy (the case of Egypt)’ presents a theoretical analysis of the correlation between rev-

olutions and democracy which is significantly based on historical examples and events of the Arab Spring, in particular in Egypt. It shows that revolution does not necessarily lead to democracy and the transition to democracy requires a certain level of development, mentality and readiness of a significant part of population. Otherwise, revolutions can even delay the transition to democracy as we see in the case of many Arab countries.

It is not surprising that Part 2 is called 'The Paradoxes of the Arab Spring' as each of its three chapters demonstrates how the euphoria of revolution and its initial slogans gave way to deep splits in Arab society, drop in living standards, transformation of peaceful protests into protracted conflicts, civil wars and military interventions.

Chapter 3 titled 'The Syrian Dead-End' shows the evolution of the Syrian conflict which became the center of global geopolitical tensions involving many countries including Iran, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the USA, European countries, Russia, etc. As a result, the Islamic State stepped forward, which is one of the most unpleasant 'surprises' of the Middle East; this itself presents numerous challenges of many kinds. Chapter 5, which we briefly summarize below, is also devoted to the Islamic State.

Chapter 4 'Nasty Arab Autumn: Yemen in 2014–2015' is devoted to another dead-lock of the Arab Spring – Yemen. Having not yet recovered from a long civil war, Yemen lagged behind its neighbors. The attempts to establish democracy via revolutions revived old conflicts and triggered new ones. As a result, by present Yemen has been split and gripped with a new civil war, which has been sharply exacerbated by the Gulf States' intervention. All this supports the idea that the attempts to instantly impose democracy on the unformed states, especially on the ones that lack ethnic and confessional unity (*e.g.*, Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, etc.) lead to destabilization of the situation, increasing number of conflicts, and humanitarian crises. Besides, this results in the dissolution of the previously stable states which contributes to a rapid spread of the Islamic and terrorist ideology.

The title of Chapter 5 is 'Islamic State – an Undesirable Child of the Arab Spring'. In our analysis of the events we actively employ Berdyaev's law which states that 'all revolutions end with reactions' and the events in the Middle East sustain it rather well. However, expanding this law one can say that any interference also ends with reactions. That is

the reason why one can state that ISIS is the response to the Western (and, especially, American) interference.

Finally, Part 3 of the monograph ('The Middle East and Instability in the World System') is devoted to the influence of the world-system factor on the changes in the Arab states and shows that turbulent events of the last five years in the Greater Middle East are one of the indicators that the whole World System has come on the run and this is the process that we define as the 'World System reconfiguration'. This section of the monograph analyzes the tight connections between the events in the Middle East and global changes.

Chapter 6 'The Revolutionary Wave of 2013–2014 in the Middle East and in the World: a Quantitative Analysis' defines some peculiarities of the protests and revolutions in the Middle East comparing them with similar events in other regions of the World System. In particular, this chapter analyzes two types of revolutionary destabilization movements, namely, the 'peripheral advance' and the 'central collapse'. Thus, it becomes clear that notwithstanding all the peculiarities, the revolutions and counter-revolutions in the Middle East have much in common with similar events in other regions.

Chapter 7 'Upheavals in the Middle East and Reconfiguration of the World System' deals with the characteristics of powerful social movements of the end of 2010 and 2011 and their consequences in 2012–2015 in the Arab World from the point of view of the theories of revolution and modernization. The events of the Arab Spring and subsequent events are analyzed in two dimensions: first, with respect to internal and global causes (in particular, global crisis and agflation), and second, in terms of their influence on the future scenarios of the World-System development. The authors explain the amazing synchronization of social upheavals in a dozen of Arab countries. This chapter also studies similar in terms of synchronization revolutionary events in history which always brought considerable changes of the World-System. Thus, it eventually becomes evident that the turbulent events in the Arab countries are also a precursor of the forthcoming structural transformations of the world and its reconfiguration.

In the Conclusion entitled 'Surprises and Contradictions of the Middle East' we briefly analyze different important events which were beyond the focus of the main part of the monograph such as the role of Iran and Turkey, negotiations on Iran's nuclear program, etc. Still the

Conclusion is mostly devoted to the analysis of general changes in the Middle East (in particular, the declining role of Israel), transformation of the U.S. policy in the region and the consequences of extremely contradictory and egoistic American policy. We make a conclusion that current situation objectively forces actors to take responsibility for the results of their foreign policy and geopolitical actions while the Western countries still act as though they live not in the 21st but in the 19th century. However, in the epoch of globalization the response to such actions will be quite rapid and can be unexpected as we see by the example of the EU's migrant and refugee crisis.

On the whole, the diversified theoretical study of the phenomenon of revolution performed in the present monograph provides an in-depth analysis of the events of the last five years in the Middle East, summarizes the results of the previous development of the region, reveals the reasons of revolutionary failure; it brings the readers to the conclusion that the turbulence in the Middle East marks the beginning of a new process involving the whole world; we called this process the reconfiguration of the World System. The book contains plenty of challenging facts, generalizations, and viewpoints. Thus, it will be useful and interesting not only for experts but also for those who are interested in the problems of the Middle East.

The subject of the Arab revolutions by all means requires considerable attention and further study. But we hope that the present monograph will also contribute to the understanding of this phenomenon.