

Middle East: Order in Chaos

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Five years since the upheaval in the Middle East, extreme unrest, great division, and major reorganization constitute the typical characteristic of the Middle East, distinctively exhibited by the domestic turmoil in the transformed Arab countries and the imbalanced frame of the Middle East. In 2015, the situation in the Middle East still presents this feature that is the turmoil and chaos as the norm, only more intense than before. However, among the chaos, signs of governance also appear in the Middle East in 2015. The sign of Iranian nuclear agreement is undoubtedly the biggest spotlight of the changing situation in the Middle East, for it not only removes the largest regional security threat of war, creates a Iranian nuclear pattern for the political settlement of the Middle Eastern hot issues, but also helps Iran integrate into the international community and balanced Middle East regional structure.

In 2015, among the chaos in the Middle East region, order and organization find its way in terms of the transition of Arab countries regional heated issues, the regional structure and other aspects in the Middle East. Currently, the transformed Arab countries have into two types: the ones move toward stability (such as Tunisia, Egypt) and the ones toward volatility (such as Yemen, Libya), showing the coexistence of stability and chaos. Extreme terrorist forces such as “the Islamic State” (IS) continued to wreak havoc together with refugee problem rumbling on. These problems have severely impacted on global security and global governance, but they also directly promote the international cooperation about anti-terrorism and refugee governance. Although the tensions of the old and the new heated issues continue in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine and Israel, the Syria and Yemen issues now are possible to return to the political track. The geopolitical game and sectarian conflicts among the big countries in the Middle East continued to deepen, which exert a profound impact on the issues of Syria, Iraq, Yemen and the fight against IS, while more rational regional powers’ diplomacy and more balanced game between great powers create opportunities for solving Middle East issues. .Presently, even though the trend from chaos to peace and order has not appeared yet in the Middle East, but the governance and organization among the chaos let the whole world see the hope to change the situation in the Middle East.

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Iranian Nuclear Negotiation Reached Agreement after 12 Years

In July 14, 2015, the Iranian Nuclear Negotiation which have lasted for 12 years, finally come to an agreement after several rounds of intermittent talks full of ups and down. Iran signed a comprehensive agreement on the Iranian nuclear program with six world powers. The core of the agreement is that Iran agreed to slash its nuclear research and development capabilities under the supervision of the international community (the number of centrifuges of Iran will be cut by two thirds, reduced from about 1.9 million units to 6104 units; Iran's heavy water plant at Arak will be redesigned and rebuilt to ensure they are used for peaceful purposes; and so on), in exchange for the lift on the comprehensive sanctions of the United Nations, the United States and the European Union against Iran.

The fundamental driving force behind the Iranian nuclear agreement is based on the foundation that Iran and the United States own mutual demands. In the background of strategic contraction of the United States from the Middle East, the United States has used all the means of except for the use of force. The negotiation became the means that the United States cannot circumvent and also a diplomatic legacy that Obama government strives to build. As for Iran, getting rid of international sanctions economic and recovering disastrous economy have been the relentless pursuit of the moderate conservative Rouhani since he took office in 2013. Thus, the adjustments of cognition and policy between US and Iraq directly contributed to rounds of the Iranian nuclear negotiations, until the Iranian nuclear full agreement is reached.

Iran and all the parts of the international society are the winners of the Iranian nuclear agreement, while obviously Iran is the biggest winner. Iran has guarded its national dignity, retained its right to the safe use of nuclear power, and had reached a comprehensive lifting of sanctions, at the same time, it is a great opportunity to help Iran out of isolation, integrate into the international community, and achieve the strategic objectives of becoming regional powers. United States also benefits from the agreement. The sign of Iranian nuclear agreement decreases the difficulty of the U.S strategic contraction from the Middle East. Iran's moderate participation in regional affairs also contributes to shape the U.S-led regional balance. Besides, the comprehensive settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue, the breaking-ice of US-Iran relations, and the maintaining of Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, will become an important part of Obama's foreign diplomatic heritage. Russia, Europe, China have not only played a special role in settling the Iranian nuclear issue, they can also share benefits of the Iranian market after the lifting of sanctions on the economy. For the international community, particularly the Middle

East, the Iranian nuclear agreement is an example of a political settlement of international hotspot issues, and creates a conducive environment to maintain international and regional security. The EU has put forward a political method of Iran's nuclear mode to solve Syrian problem, which is the best description of exemplary value of the Iranian nuclear agreement.

Opportunity among crisis in the volatile region

The biggest crisis in the Middle East in 2015 is undoubtedly complicated regional problem of the raging terrorism, religious extremism, the reconstruction of political landscape, the serious refugee problems deteriorated by the extension of the IS, Syrian Civil War, the unrest in Iraq. Subsequently, there is a complex geopolitical game arising from countries inside and outside the jurisdiction of the state. meanwhile, the fact that the deepening of the regional crisis continues to threaten the interests of all parties leads the United States, Russia, Europe and the regional countries actively or passively adjust relevant policies, and thus make it possible for relevant regional issues to see the light of amelioration.

As for the combat against IS terrorism, the US-led international coalition against IS terrorism is not so effective. IS continues to take over more and more countries in Syria and Iraq. After capturing Ramadi in Iraq and Palmyra city in Syria successively in the first half year, IS continues to tear the existing political map of the eastern Mediterranean region through territorial encroachment in Syria and Iraq. In addition, what is more challenging is the wild spread of their ideology and capacity of recruiting in the Islamic world (West Asia, North Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia) and in the Western countries, which has become a serious challenge confronting global governance. With the persisting expansion of the IS and other extremist forces, the Syrian civil war which now stuck in the long-term stalemate also indicates a unfavorable situation for the Bashar regime. The Iraqi regime was once in precarious trouble too. The religious and ethnic conflicts among the Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, are also exacerbating divisions in Iraq.

The refugee problem, caused by three major reasons: the IS expansion, problem in Syria and unrest in Iraq makes it the biggest refugee crisis since World War II. The problem of homeless refugee has become the special tie that connects Europe, North Africa and West Asia, leaving the promoters of "Arab Spring" Europe to suffer greatly and eat its own bitter fruit. The successive spreading of extremist ideologies and organizations in the European hinterland, and vicious terrorist attacks such as the "Charlie Hebdo" have caused deep anxiety in Europe. On the Middle East countries, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other countries who have involved

themselves in Syrian problem, have their own concerns. The multiple large-scale terrorist attacks in 2015 planed by IS, and domestic political crisis in the two countries (the power struggle after replacement of the Saudi royal family, the hajj stampede, the Turkish electoral crisis and the Kurdish issue), created great security and political risks to these two countries.

However as the Middle East crisis continues to hit the bottom, the world's big powers and regional powers are forced to adjust policies, thus the situation in the Middle East begins to show some positive signs worthy of recognition since the second half of 2015.

Firstly, the United States has slowed the pace of contraction from the Middle East, and puts the reshaping of the balance of the Middle East as the important strategic objective, which at some extent facilitates the rebuilding the Middle East order. The US has increased the force against IS in Iraq, slowed down the military withdrawal from Afghanistan, absorbed Iran to participate in Syria talks in Vienna, loosed stance on the issue of the fate of the Syrian regime of Bashar, restrained in the high-profile fight against IS of Russia. These are all the embodiment of US policy adjustment.

Secondly, Russia's increasing strategic investment in the Middle East is conducive to a balanced regional frame. The aim of Russia's air raid in Syria against IS forces, is to promote negotiations, which has been partially fulfilled. Since October 2015, all forces have rushed to Moscow for the consultations on the issue of the Middle East. The opening of the third meeting of Syria in Vienna and the participation of Iran for the first time, as well as the loosening of stand of the West and Saudi Arabia, Turkey on the Syrian regime of Bashar, are all closely related to Russia's strategic adjustment in the Middle East.

Besides, under the multiple pressures of the refugee problem and anti-terrorism, the European policy toward the Middle East has become more pragmatic and rational. Besides increasing forces against domestic extremism, European powers and the European Union increase have also increased efforts to combat IS. On the issue of refugee, Europe strengthens their internal cooperation as well as their cooperation with Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries.

Finally, some regional countries like Saudi Arabia and Turkey which have actively intervened in the "Arab Spring", especially Syria issues, are now stuck in a quandary. Under internal and external challenges, they are forced to adjust their policies towards IS and Syria.

However, it must be noted that the above positive factors are still far

from suppressing and resolving the Middle East crisis. The reshaping the Middle East frame and order still has a long way to go.

Order and Chaos Coexist in Countries in Transition

“Order” in transition countries is exhibited by the fact that Tunisia and Egypt have found their way to relevant stability though in different ways, and have finished the political transition and reconstruction of the country initially.

Since the end of 2014, Tunisia has completed the presidential election and the reorganization of the government cabinet through democratic procedures. It is also the only existing fruit of the "Arab Spring". In the political transition process of Tunisia, the national dialogues dominated by the National Federation of Trade Union have played an important role in the political reconciliation of the parties, which enabled them to win the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize. The greatest enlightenment of Tunisia's political transition lies in the dialogues, reconciliation and the spirit of compromise among different political forces, religious and secular forces. The Revival Movement Party accepted its failure and gave up its right peacefully, and the Islamic forces peacefully and lawfully integrated itself into the process of political development. These are all lessons for the Arab countries in transition. Egypt also completed its political transition initially in 2015, but through a very different way. The political transition in Egypt is accomplished by the deposition of the unfavorable Morsi ruling, the strong suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood through military forces, and the presidential and parliamentary elections. This is also seen as the process of rebuilding the authority by Western public opinion. More than a year since Sisi came into power, Egypt has gained a lot from its adjustment in the economic, security and diplomatic fields. Of course, Tunisia and Egypt still face challenge in economic, social and security areas, and their prospects are still not so optimistic.

The "chaos" in transition countries is also shown by the continued instability and anarchy in Yemen and Libya. The failed transition of Yemen became an important incentive for military intervention from Saudi Arabia, while Libya is sinking into a long-term secular and religious armed separatism.

In 2015, Yemen's political transition came into a serious crisis due to internal conflicts and interventions from Saudi Arabia and other countries. Since Saleh handed over power peacefully in 2011 and Hadi was elected president in 2012, the core task of political transformation in Yemen is to finish its political transition by the New Constitution completed by the 2013 National Dialogue meeting initiated in 2013. However, the economy and the security situation continue to deteriorate. Conflicts between the

central and the regional area, among different religious groups, among different tribes, the confluence of the remaining armed forces of Saleh and Shiite Jose, and the rampant activities of terrorist forces like Al-Qaeda, all make it impossible for national dialogue meeting to take place in Yemen. In early 2015, the northern armed forces of Jose attacked and occupied the presidential palace and other cities with the excuse of being discontent by the new draft of constitution. Finally, President Hadi Saudi exiled, and Saudi Arabia joint with other Arabian countries launched air strikes to Jose at the end of March. Yemen crisis continues to develop..

The root behind the ongoing turmoil in Libya is the military irresponsible intervention from Western countries, which offers space for the conflicts between the religion and the secular, tribal conflicts, the outbreak of regional conflicts, and the rampancy of extremist force. Particularly, the "General National Congress" from secular forces and the "National Assembly" dominated by religious and militia forces set up a government seperately, resulting in countries separated by two governments. Although the two sides have negotiated for several times, until now there is still no hope of reconciliation. The biggest lesson from the crises of Yemen and Libya is that the political transition dominated by external interventions will fail with a lot of problem.

To sum up, we can learn three important lessons from the order in the chaos in the Middle East: firstly, the only way to stability and order for the countries in transition is to choose their own developing road. External Forced way like military intervention, exporting democracy, revolution of color are helpless for them to create development and stability in the Middle East. Secondly, the Middle East countries should deal with well internal relations of reform, development, and stability, and the international community should work together to support the development, especially economic reconstruction of countries in transition and war-torn countries. They are the most important prerequisites for the Middle East to achieve stability and prosperity. Lastly, dialogues, consultation and cooperation is the inevitable choice to solve the hot issues in the Middle East, which is also the foundation for a comprehensive solution of the Iranian nuclear issue, as well as the working direction of Syria, and other regional hot issues. All these show the China's diplomatic concept.

Translator/ Liu Wencui