Chapter 1

Political Change in the Middle East: The Advent of the Arab Spring and the Collapse of Long-lasting Authoritarian Regimes

In January 2011, the long-lasting authoritarian regime of President Ben Ali of Tunisia collapsed on account of demonstrations that had begun at the end of 2010. Thereafter, similar demonstrations spread to neighboring countries, and in February, the Mubarak government of Egypt was also overthrown. Thus did the so-called "Arab Spring" arrive. Since then, antigovernment demonstrations have intensified in neighboring countries.

The governments of other Arab countries, having witnessed the collapse of the dictators in Tunisia and Egypt, channeled their energies into containing the demonstrations and holding onto power. The Gaddafi government of Libya took the high-handed line of cracking down on protesters, an approach that triggered international military intervention and ultimately failed to prevent the regime from collapsing in August. Meanwhile, countries such as Bahrain, having enlisted the support of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (commonly referred to as the "Gulf Cooperation Council" [GCC]), were largely successful in quelling demonstrations.

In Syria, the demonstrations have shown no sign of easing despite the fact that many demonstrators have lost their lives in the government crackdown. The al-Assad government has found itself in a bind on account of its suspension from the League of Arab States (the Arab League) and other unfavorable international reactions. In Yemen, President Saleh signed a GCC-brokered agreement in November. However, because of the precarious situation which predated the Arab Spring in that country, there is little chance that the agreement would produce stability.

In the first democratic elections that were held in Tunisia and Egypt after the collapse of their respective dictators, both countries saw a strengthening of Islamist groups, which had previously been illegal. Still, the prospect of democratic institutions taking root in those Arab countries, which had been under authoritarian regimes for so long, remains unclear.

1. Collapse of the Long-lasting Authoritarian Regimes in Tunisia and Egypt

(1) Tunisia: The Flash Point for Political Change

In December 2010, a poor, young roadside fruit seller in Tunisia tried to burn himself to death in protest to police actions taken against him. That incident

served as the trigger for antigovernment demonstrations across the country, primarily among the poor and the young, who are economically discontent. The background to the demonstrations include such developments as people's struggle to survive because of the sharp rise in the international price for foodstuffs, as well as the increasing public discontent concerning the expanding rich-poor gap in the country caused by its rapid economic growth. Tunisian president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, when confronted by that situation, originally moved to contain the demonstrations and take steps to dispel public discontent. He had the young fruit seller who had tried to commit suicide brought to a hospital and undergo intensive medical care, and went himself to the hospital to check up on the young man's health, having his visit televised. He thus tried to orchestrate an image of a merciful president who was the friend of the weak. In addition, on January 13, 2011, he announced that he would not run in the upcoming presidential election scheduled for 2014. While endeavoring to dispel the public discontent by using his declaration not to run as a promise—on the surface—to resign, President Ben Ali also effectively declared his intention to remain in office for the time being by refusing to resign immediately.

That kind of declaration, namely, announcing one's intention not to run in the next election, is a form of political gamesmanship frequently employed by

Figure 1.1. The six Arab countries covered by this chapter

sovereigns of Arab states that have republican systems. The typical method used so far has been this: when discontent toward the government exists, the sovereign declares his intention not to run in the upcoming election, and the resulting release of tension helps calm down popular discontent, while at the same time buying time for the leader until the next election, during which period he plans how to regain ground. Then, having succeeded in coming this far, the government mobilizes "official" demonstrators to call upon the president to retract his intention to leave the scene, at which point the sovereign takes back his declaration not to run, in the form of "responding to the people's voice." In other words, President Ben Ali's January 13, 2011, declaration—announcing his intention not to run—very likely meant that he had no intention to resign whatsoever.

However, on the following day, January 14, 2011, President Ben Ali suddenly fled to Saudi Arabia, and his regime collapsed. At that time, while violent demonstrations were still raging in Tunisia, apparently the situation was not so serious that the president would have to leave the country immediately. For that reason, one cannot deny the possibility that the president was provided wrong information about the scale and seriousness of the demonstrations, and fled the country based on such misinformation. There is also the possibility that the intensifying demonstrations incited internal power struggles within the government, and the president, having lost those struggles, was forced to leave the country. Later, speaking through his attorney, former President Ben Ali said, "I was tricked into leaving the country. The head of presidential security convinced me that it was better to escape from the country temporarily because of a planned attempt on my life. After making sure my family reached Saudi Arabia safely, my plan was to return to Tunisia right away, but the plane we had taken did not obey my order to wait, instead flying back to Tunisia without me, making it unable for me to return." There is a strong possibility that what he said was true. However, the fact that the president had left the country while demonstrations were intensifying was interpreted by the common public as the formula in which it was the demonstrations that had caused the overthrow of the authoritarian regime. After that, the continued outbreak of demonstrations in neighboring Arab countries was a result of the widespread understanding, via satellite television, the Internet, and other means, that "demonstrations can overthrow authoritarian regimes." Traditionally in the Mideast, especially the Arab world—where authoritarian regimes rule with a strong hand backed by powerful military and police—it was

quite risky for the public to engage in antigovernment demonstrations. For that reason, in those cases where the demonstrators' demands were economic in nature, the demonstrators used to belong mainly to the poorer classes, who were unable to even enjoy a minimum standard of living anymore. The traditional logic of demonstrators used to be that while participating in demonstrations meant putting one's life on line, people living in extreme poverty constantly saw their lives at risk anyway, so they would end up at the same point even without taking part in demonstrations; so instead of just sitting around waiting to die, they would aim for an improvement in their living situation even if it meant taking a risk. Such demonstrations by the poor had occurred previously, such as in Egypt in 1977 and Tunisia in 1984. Both demonstrations turned extremely violent, producing many victims, but the regimes succeeded in quelling them by taking such measures as enhancing food subsidies, among others. In other words, antigovernment demonstrations by indigent people in the past had succeeded in getting living conditions improved, but never had brought about the overthrow of a regime. Moreover, even assuming that the goal of improving living conditions could be reached, the normal case had been that a large number of people had become victims in that process owing to government crackdowns. However, the recent Tunisian demonstrations succeeded in overthrowing the regime with relatively fewer victims than used to be the case. For that reason, two lessons learned from that successful experience spread to neighboring countries: (1) participating in demonstrations is not so risky, and (2) it is possible to overthrow regimes through demonstrations. Ever since then, similar demonstrations broke out in succession in many countries in the region.

After Ben Ali's departure from Tunisia on January 14, 2011, Interim President Fouad Mebazaa, Prime Minister Muhammad Ghannouchi, and other remaining officials of the old government initially responded to the demands of the popular demonstration on the surface, calling attention to their own reform stance, but in actuality they attempted to maintain the old regime. For example, on January 17, the establishment of a national unity government was announced with the inclusion of three opposition party leaders and three trade union representatives in the cabinet, but the ruling party of the Ben Ali regime, the RCD (*Rassemblement constitutionnel démocratique*, or the Constitutional Democratic Rally), kept the major posts of prime minister, interior minister, foreign minister, and defense minister, among others. At that time, Prime Minister Muhammad Ghannouchi

and his cohorts swiftly arrested several relatives of the former president, along with the ex-head of presidential security and the former interior minister, among others, with the aim of splitting the people who had supported the former regime into two groups: the clique supporting former President Ben Ali, and everyone else in the other. The aim was to concentrate public criticism on the former group and to insert themselves in the latter group, thereby dodging responsibility and ensuring their own survival. However, that way of doing things failed to gain public support, with demonstrations criticizing the new cabinet springing up nationwide. In response, Prime Minister Ghannouchi and his cohorts resigned from the RCD and attempted to turn the hollowed-out party into a scapegoat. The resignation from the RCD by Interim President Mebazaa and Prime Minister Ghannouchi on January 18 was a reflection of that stance. After that, demonstrations calling for the removal of cabinet members belonging to the RCD continued. The cabinet reshuffling of January 27 saw the ousting of the major cabinet members— such as the interior, foreign and defense ministers—who had originally belonged to the RCD, though they had recently resigned, while Prime Minister Ghannouchi retained his post as he had left the party early on. Still, the public criticism of the prime minister did not dissipate, as he had supported the Ben Ali regime, so he resigned his post on February 27 in the face of continuing protest demonstrations.

The person selected to succeed as prime minister was Beji Caid Essebsi, who had been foreign minister in the 1980s. At the time he took office he was an elderly eighty-four years old. The reason for his selection was the fact that those who had supported the previous regime could not gain the trust of the people owing to their relationship to the Ben Ali regime. At the same time, given that Tunisia has only known two long-lasting authoritarian regimes since independence—the Habib Bourguiba regime (1956-87) and the Ben Ali regime (1987-2011), the need to select somebody with the experience of running government and administrative ability left only one option, namely, choosing someone who had been involved in the Bourguiba regime. Under the new prime minister, Tunisia slowly began to institute reforms. On March 1, 2011, the government legalized the Islamist organization Ennahda as a political party, though it had been suppressed as an illegal organization under the previous regime. On March 7, a new cabinet was inaugurated after the purging of anyone related to the previous regime, with the announcement of the disbanding of the security forces who had participated in the crackdown of the demonstrations

during the final stages of the previous regime. Also, on June 20, the criminal trial of former President Ben Ali began in absentia, and the guilty verdict was delivered the same day; he was convicted of the misappropriation of public funds and other crimes, and was sentenced to thirty-five years' imprisonment and given a hefty fine. The former president has been indicted on many other charges as well, and on July 4, he was given another prison sentence of fifteen and a half years for the illegal possession of drugs and weapons, along with another hefty fine. At any rate, Saudi Arabia refuses to hand over the former president to Tunisia, so there is no prospect at the current time of his actually serving time.

Meanwhile, various new problems have arisen since the collapse of the previous authoritarian regime, such as the worsening security situation in the country resulting from the spate of police officers leaving their positions. In January 2011, then-President Ben Ali had issued a declaration of a state of emergency because of the increasingly violent demonstrations, but it has yet to be lifted, because the demonstrations have not died down since his departure, while at the same time the security situation is worsening. Also, since people now have the freedom to conduct political activities, the economy is stagnating because of repeated strikes of workers calling for better treatment. The tourism industry, one of the nation's important industries, has suffered the drastic decline of foreign tourists. In addition, Tunisian migrant workers in Libya have returned to their home country in huge numbers owing to the worsening situation in that country (to be touched on later), meaning that there have been no signs of any improvements in such economic problems as unemployment. While the people of Tunisia have gained political freedom thanks to the antigovernment demonstrations that were triggered by economic discontent, there is, as of yet, no sign of their realizing their original goal, namely, an improvement in the economic side of life. Tunisia will have to grapple with those issues in the future, particularly on the part of the politicians elected in the constitutional assembly elections held in October 2011 (to be mentioned later).

(2)   Egypt: Collapse of the Regime of the Regional Power

After Tunisian President Ben Ali fled the country on January 14, 2011, the citizens of Arab countries learned that demonstrations could be used to overthrow authoritarian regimes. As a result, similar antigovernment demonstrations occurred in countries throughout the region. In one of those, Egypt, several self-

immolation attempts were made right after the political upheaval in Tunisia, on January 17 and 18, to protest harsh living conditions. The incidents were seen as actions aiming to incite the same kind of antigovernment demonstrations that had happened in Tunisia. That was followed by large-scale antigovernment demonstrations across the country on January 25, starting in the capital of Cairo, with the demonstrators calling upon President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak to leave office. The people taking part in the demonstrations were mainly youth without affiliation to any existing political organizations. However, unlike Tunisia, where most of the demonstrators, at least at the beginning, came from the poorer sections of society, the young people who were the main force behind the Egyptian demonstrations were university graduates unable to find jobs to their liking. They were not part of society's poorer segment despite their economic discontent, as they were using mobile phones and personal computers on a daily basis, and were familiar with social networking services (SNSs), Twitter, and the like. That is attributable to the fact that the hurdle to demonstration participation had been lowered, with people having learned the lesson from Tunisia, namely, that "participating in demonstrations is not a life-risking action." Until then, it was quite risky to take part in antigovernment-type actions in Egypt, even if it was just moderate criticism of the government. An example of that is the "Egyptian movement for change," generally referred to as the Kefaya movement, that emerged in the latter 2000s to protest the long-lasting dictatorship of President Mubarak. The activists in the movement, whose true feeling was "we've had enough of President Mubarak's long-lasting authoritarian regime," would not be permitted to say such a thing, so the name of their movement euphemistically removed the object of the sentence and kept just the phrase "we've had enough," or *Kefaya* in Arabic. Although they only held peaceful gatherings, they ended up meeting the suppression of the authorities.

That repressive kind of environment in Egypt changed dramatically in the wake of the regime change in Tunisia. In the demonstrations on January 25, 2011, President Mubarak was singled out for

criticism, with photographs of the president's face being ripped up and burnt. While the clashes with the security forces produced deaths, injuries and arrests, the bulk of the demonstrators escaped arrest and punishment. Since the political change in Egypt was triggered by the large-scale demonstrations of that day, it is referred to as "the January 25 revolution."

The young people who had led the demonstrations in Egypt planned a new large-scale demonstration on January 28, 2011, a Friday, which is the day of congregational prayer for Muslims. In order to take part in that, the former International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Muhammad ElBaradei, who had previously expressed his desire to run for the Egyptian presidential election, made an emergency return trip to Egypt. In addition, the largest antigovernment group, the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organization, also expressed its support of the demonstration. Amidst the upsurge in anti-Mubarak protest actions, the regime issued a nighttime curfew on the 28th, and also blocked Internet access and mobile phone communications, in an attempt to prevent the demonstrators from contacting one another. Still, the regime was unable to contain the demonstrations. The curfew during the demonstration on the 28th was ignored, with the rampaging demonstrators in Cairo setting fire to the headquarters of the ruling party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), as well as to police stations. President Mubarak, viewing the escalation of the situation with concern, announced an en-masse resignation of the cabinet on the following day, January 29, also appointing General Intelligence Director Omar Suleiman, from the military, to the vice-presidency, a post that had long been vacant. The appointment of the vice president meant that President Mubarak had given up on the hereditary transfer of the position of president. The regime obsessively tried to contain the demonstrations, banning on the next day, January 30, the Egyptian domestic broadcasts of the Arabic satellite news channel Al Jazeera, and revoking the press credentials of its journalists, since Al Jazeera had been actively broadcasting the antigovernment demonstrations. However, the demonstrations showed no signs of abating, with ensuing large-scale demonstrations on February 1, 4, and 11. The president's resignation was announced on the 11th, marking the collapse of the thirty-year reign of the Mubarak regime.

The Mubarak regime had been a powerful system, supported by what was viewed as the strongest military and police in the entire Arab world, but still the Egyptian regime was overthrown in just a few weeks since the large-scale

demonstrations began. Why, then, was the regime overthrown so easily? The first reason that can be cited for that was that the demonstrators had become bullish on account of the successful experience in Tunisia. Before, participation in antigovernment demonstrations meant putting one's life on line, but reports by the media of the low number of deaths among Tunisian demonstrators caused such fears to evaporate. To put it briefly, it was not that the demonstrators in Egypt were no longer afraid of dying, but rather that they were not afraid, as they believed that they would not die. That led to more hard-line demands to the regime, more violent demonstrations, and a greater number of demonstrators.

The second reason why the Mubarak regime was overthrown so easily was that unlike Libya, Egypt had to concern itself about its reputation as a member of the international community, with many foreign television stations having set up bureaus in the capital of Cairo. Since right after the beginning of demonstrations on January 25, 2011, media from around the world made live broadcasts of the demonstrations in Cairo. In Egypt, which had strictly restricted unpermitted demonstrations before, such large-scale antigovernment demonstrations and riots had probably not taken place since 1977, at which time there was no Al Jazeera, and not even a CNN. It was the first time that foreign satellite news channels had made live broadcasts to the world of large-scale demonstrations in Egypt. Because of the live broadcasts, the regime feared the worsening of its image to the outside world, making it difficult for security forces to crack down on the demonstrations. That point is significantly different from places like Libya and Syria, where security forces have resorted to arms against demonstrators, as there is mostly no foreign media presence. Also, the fact that security forces could not employ force in earnest is thought to have given the demonstrators even more courage, giving the demonstrations more momentum.

The third reason that can be cited is military defections. Ever since the Free Officers Movement established the republican system in Egypt in 1952, the four successive presidents of the country have all come from military backgrounds. To date, the country has not seen its presidential post been passed on by heredity, nor has it seen a civilian becoming president who did not have a military background. The method of presidential succession in Egypt typically used to involve the selection by the president of a capable military person to be vice president, who then was promoted to the presidency when the president died. For example, President Mubarak was designated vice president because of his accomplishments

as commander of the Egyptian Air Force during the Fourth Arab-Israeli War (1973), and rose to the presidency after President Sadat was assassinated in 1981. President Mubarak discontinued that customary practice, though, when he tried to designate his civilian second son, Gamal, to be the next president. Behind the scenes, however, the military was opposed to that plan. The post of vice president had long been vacant in the Mubarak regime. The reason for that is thought to be that President Mubarak failed to get the military's consent about his plan for hereditary succession, given that the vice president is the de-facto next president. Meanwhile, in order to make his hereditary succession plan a *fait accompli*, he kept on promoting Gamal within the framework of the NDP, where the military had little influence on personnel decisions. At the beginning of last year's political upheaval, Gamal was the deputy secretary-general of the NDP and head of its Policies Committee. Since the end of January 2011, the military, which had been mobilized to maintain order, adopted a neutral stance toward the demonstrations and rejected involvement in their suppression; one reason for that was the military's discontent about the hereditary succession issue. Also, the fact that General Intelligence Director Suleiman had been nominated as vice president on January 29, after the demonstrations became violent, with the president giving up on the hereditary succession plan, meant that Mubarak had struck a bargain with the military, which had called for the customary practice to be maintained. As of the 29th, President Mubarak had not yet announced his intention not to run in the next presidential election that was scheduled for the fall of 2011, so it is possible that he tried to win over the military and retain his post as president by accepting the military's wishes concerning the successor problem. However, the military had already fastened its gaze on the post-Mubarak era, and never abided by the president's intentions.

After Mubarak resigned on February 11, 2011, the presidential authority was transferred to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, and the interim administration of the country was handled by it, led by Field Marshal and Defence Minister Muhammad Tantawi. The role of the Supreme Council is to amend the national constitution for the period of the interim administration, and then to hold parliamentary elections, formulate a new constitution, hold a presidential election, and thereafter implement the transition to civilian rule. On February 13, the Supreme Council dissolved Parliament and suspended the national constitution. Moreover, it promoted the freedom of speech, political activities, and the

organization of political parties. On February 19, the Wasat Party was recognized as a legal political party, made up of former members of the Muslim Brotherhood. It was the first party to gain recognition after the collapse of the Mubarak regime. After that, various new parties were established, including the recognition on June 6 of the Freedom and Justice Party, founded by the Muslim Brotherhood, which had long been an illegal organization under the previous regimes. Also, on March 19 a referendum was held regarding amendments to the constitution, and it was approved by a majority of the voters, limiting the time a person could be president to two terms, for a total of eight years.

While progress was made in such reforms, various measures were also being carried out to highlight the break with the previous regime. On February 17, 2011, several former government high officials were arrested on the charge of misappropriating public funds, including ex-Interior Minister Habib al-Adly, who was believed to have taken part in the demonstration crackdown. On April 13, the former president's eldest son Alaa and second son Gamal were detained on the suspicion of taking part in the demonstration crackdown as well as misappropriating public funds. In addition, on April 16, an order was issued to disband the old ruling party, the NDP. In May, the former president and his two sons were indicted together, and their trial began in August. The opening session of the trial was televised live on national television.

In that manner, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces promoted both reforms and punishment, reflecting the hard-nosed survival strategy of the military. In January 2011, when antigovernment demonstrations were taking place, the security forces, centered on the police, were mobilized to deal with the demonstrations from the very beginning, while the military was mobilized after the situation became more serious. Moreover, the military refused to suppress the demonstrations. The military thus succeeded in reinforcing its image of being "friends with the people," unlike the police. A state of emergency first went into effect in Egypt in 1981, and had remained in force ever since, and the arbitrary arrests and detentions by the police have made the public deeply hateful toward them; that, too, worked to the advantage of the military. Also, after the collapse of the Mubarak regime in February, the indictment of Gamal—whose existence had for a while been an annoyance to the military in the sense that he was a civilian president candidate—allowed the military to get rid of a potential rival while winning the trust of the public. While the military was also one of the main forces

supporting the previous regime, only a very few powerful figures with a military background were among the former high government officials who were arrested and indicted, except for former President Mubarak.

Also, the military skillfully took advantage of one of the special characteristics of the latest political changes, namely, the overthrow of regimes by unorganized public demonstrations. Traditionally, the method of overthrowing regimes in the Arab world had generally been a coup d'état or something similar carried out by organized political groups. That stems from the fact that most Arab countries did not hold democratic elections, making it impossible to change regimes through elections; in order to change regimes, then, there had been no option but to overthrow regimes by force. Moreover, in the conventional method of overthrowing regimes, the political group(s) that succeed in overthrowing a regime normally become the leaders of the new regime. For example, in Egypt in 1952, the Free Officers Movement that toppled the monarchy became the leaders of the new regime. On the other hand, when a regime is overthrown by unorganized public demonstrations, as happened this time, these demonstrators do not have the ability to hold the reins of government right away, meaning that someone has to become the new leader; the Egyptian military skillfully edged its way into that position. As a result, among the main powers supporting the previous regime—the old ruling party, the police, and the military—the old ruling party was disbanded, the police have weakened bearing the brunt of public criticism, leaving only the military to have successfully survived as the power behind the new government, for the time being. In addition, having blocked the creation of a civilian president (Gamal), the possibility even remains that the unwritten rule can be preserved, namely, the system of selecting presidents with a military background.

Meanwhile, as in Tunisia, Egypt also faced the problem of worsening public order after the collapse of the previous regime. Before that, the police could make arbitrary arrests based on the state of emergency, which made the public afraid of them, but it also served as a kind of restraint against crime. However, the collapse of the previous regime virtually suspended its implementation, making it impossible to carry out arbitrary arrests, thus causing that restraining effect to disappear. Also, as many prison staff members had abandoned their workplaces in the chaotic period during the final days of the previous regime, many prisoners escaped from jail. Moreover, with the collapse of the previous regime, the truancy rate rose among police officers, weakening their ability to

maintain public order. As a result of all those factors, the climate of public safety became worse than during the period of the previous regime. Furthermore, under conditions where the concepts of freedom and democracy were not rooted, the broad range of freedom—including the freedom to conduct political activities—that was handed to the public upon the sudden collapse of the authoritarian regime caused many incidents that can be described as people's confusing or misunderstanding freedom and lawlessness. Typical of those was the frequent occurrence of attacks by majority Muslims on minority Christians. While there had previously been antagonism between certain Muslims and Christians, the police under the previous regime had largely prevented such attacks before they occurred. They were caused by the combined factors of people acquiring unfamiliar freedoms and the police weakening.

Also, while the people involved in the antigovernment demonstrations had demanded both the overthrow of the Mubarak regime and economic improvements for the public, including employment and wage increases, there is yet no prospect for the latter to be realized. In the short term, Egypt's economy is worsening, and the public may well become poorer than before. Although tourism is Egypt's biggest industry, the political upheaval and worsening of public order have not subsided, with the number of foreign tourists still stuck at extremely low levels. As far as other industries are concerned, moreover, the economy has been stagnant owing to a series of strikes by workers calling for wage increases, now that people have become able to freely gather and demonstrate since the collapse of the previous regime. In order for the economy to be improved, it is first necessary for the country to get out of the chaotic situation resulting from the collapse of the previous regime.

Despite such troubles, the fact that demonstrations were able to overthrow, in a short period, the authoritarian regime of such a regional power as Egypt, boasting the largest population in the Arab world and hosting the headquarters of the Arab League has given renewed confidence to the common people of other Arab countries who are not content with their dictators. That resulted in intensified demonstrations in the Arab world since February 2011.

2. The Spread of Antigovernment Demonstrations to Neighboring Countries, and the Intensifying Collisions with Regimes

(1) Libya: Civil War and the Collapse of the Gaddafi regime

In Libya, which lies between Tunisia and Egypt, the first antigovernment demonstrations erupted on February 15, 2011. That means that the start of demonstrations in that country came after the authoritarian regimes in its two neighboring countries had already been overthrown. The site of the first demonstration was in Benghazi, the largest city of the eastern part of the country, and not the capital of Tripoli, which is in the west. That resulted from the antipathy between the eastern and western halves of the country. During the monarchy period that preceded the establishment of Muammar Gaddafi's regime, Tripoli and Benghazi were made joint capitals of Libya so as to alleviate the regional antipathy, but Gaddafi made Tripoli the lone capital, giving it preference in terms of development and the like, which created discontent among Benghazi citizens that festered for a long time.

From the beginning, the demonstrations in Libya were accompanied by violent clashes with security forces. In addition to the police and military, the Gaddafi regime also enlisted mercenary soldiers drawn primarily from people from other African countries to crush the demonstrations. To fight against that, these antigovernment demonstrators armed themselves. On the top of that, uniformed defectors from the Libyan military joined them with their weapons. As a result, the political change in Libya gradually shifted away from the equation seen in Egypt—namely, unarmed demonstrators clashing with governmental security forces suppressing them—toward a full-blown civil war, with both the antigovernment and government sides armed and fighting each other.

Within a few days since the beginning of demonstrations on February 15, 2011, Benghazi and several other cities fell under the control of the antigovernment forces. On February 20, the demonstrations also spread to the capital of Tripoli, torching the General People's Congress (the country's parliament), and attacking the offices of the national television channel. The following day, Libyan Air Force aircraft indiscriminately bombed antigovernment citizens in cities around the country, including Tripoli, with many people being killed and injured. On February 22, Gaddafi made a high-handed speech on national television, ordering

a "house-to-house search to purge [people on the antigovernment side]," making clear his position that he would exterminate his opponents with force.

In most of the Arab countries where the recent antigovernment demonstrations occurred, the governments—at least on the surface—made a certain effort to listen to the demonstrators' demands and yield to them to some extent. In that sense, the stance taken by the Gaddafi regime can be said to be unusual, in that it rejected any compromise. However, it was once considered natural for Arab countries' regimes to crush antigovernment insurrections ruthlessly with force. For instance, right after the Gulf War of 1991, the Saddam Hussein regime ruthlessly suppressed an insurrection of Shiites in the south of Iraq, slaughtering many people. Also, in 1982, when the Muslim Brotherhood of Syria rose up against the Hafiz al-Assad regime in the city of Hama, the Syrian military besieged the city and sealed it off, and subsequently wiped it out with artillery bombardment and air strikes, with more than 20,000 people alleged to have been killed. In response to such antigovernment activities and insurgencies, the use of military force has been the traditional method of Arab countries' regimes. In Tunisia and Egypt both regimes adopted relatively moderate ways to cope with antigovernment demonstrators in 2011, but these ways of coping were unusual in Arab countries. Although Col. Gaddafi was known for his eccentric words and actions, his policy of suppressing antigovernment uprisings with force was the orthodox method of Arab countries.

Because the authoritarian regimes had already been overthrown in its two neighbors, when the antigovernment insurrections intensified and expanded geographically, there was a spate of defections from the Gaddafi regime. On February 21, 2011, the pilots of two Libyan air force jets refused the order they had received to bomb Benghazi, the home base of the antigovernment forces, and defected to Malta. Also, some military officers made a declaration calling upon soldiers to defect from the Gaddafi regime and join the antigovernment forces. In addition, on the same day, several powerful tribes announced their defection, along with several Libyan ambassadors, including those to the United States and the Arab League. Also on the same day, Minister of Justice Mustafa Abdul Jalil, later to become chairman of the National Transitional Council, handed in his resignation and joined the antigovernment forces.

In that manner, while many defected from the Gaddafi regime from early on, contrary to their hopes, the regime proved to be tenacious. With superior military

power to that of the antigovernment forces, the regime switched to a full-fledged counterattack in early March 2011. On March 10, the government won back the central Libyan city of Ras Lanuf, the center of an oil-producing area, forcing the antigovernment forces to pull back toward the eastern city of Benghazi. Also, the regime took back the eastern city of Brega on the 13th, causing the antigovernment forces to retreat even further. In mid-March the antigovernment forces suffered defeat upon defeat, including the encirclement of the city of Ajdabiya by government forces on March 15, and the bombing of Benghazi, their home base, on the 17th. At that time they found themselves in a critical situation where they might be crushed by the government.

Given that crisis, the antigovernment leaders endeavored to break through the situation by vigorously carrying out diplomatic activities to win the support of the international community. On March 5, 2011, they set up the National Transitional Council (NTC) in Benghazi with Mustafa Abdul Jalil as chairman, positioning itself clearly as the legitimate new regime to take over from the Gaddafi regime. While unorganized demonstrators had overthrown the authoritarian regimes of Tunisia and Egypt, in Libya the antigovernment people first organized themselves, then that newly established antigovernment organization overthrew the regime. In that respect, the political change in Libya is closer to the traditional model of regime change in the Arab world. Another factor working advantageously for the

Figure 1.2. Libya, a country torn by civil war
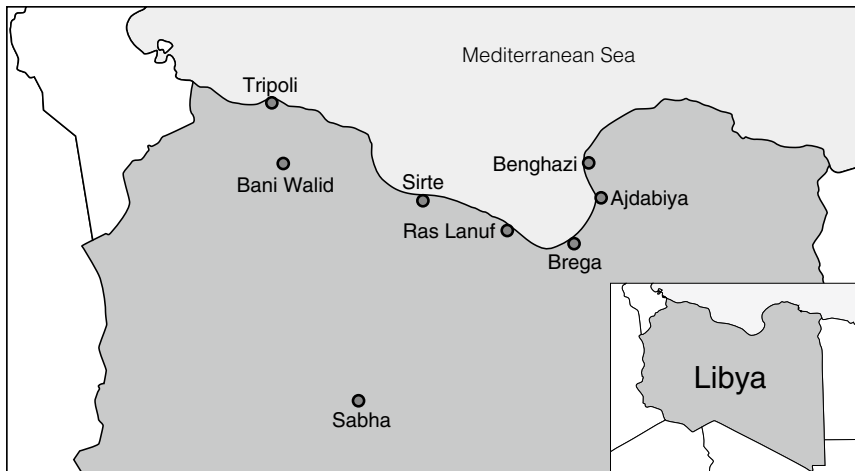
antigovernment forces in winning support from the international community was the suspension of Libya's membership in the Arab League on February 22, in advance of the establishment of the NTC, on account of its crackdown of the demonstrations. The Arab League exceptionally swiftly suspended Libya's membership despite other member countries also having cracked down on antigovernment demonstrations and producing many victims, partly because the bizarre behavior of Gaddafi, including his past support of terrorism, alienated himself in the League.

Five days after the establishment of the NTC, on March 10, 2011, France recognized it as the legitimate government of Libya, cutting off diplomatic relations with the Gaddafi regime. As the first country to recognize the NTC, France thereafter went on to provide effective assistance, including military assistance. In addition, the United Kingdom, which was similarly to become a significant supporter of the NTC, had already dispatched a small diplomatic team to its headquarters in Benghazi by March 5, when the NTC was established. Following that, on March 12, the Arab League adopted a resolution calling upon the United Nations Security Council to establish no-fly zones in Libyan airspace, as a way to support the NTC. In response to that request, the Security Council passed Resolution No. 1973 on March 17 establishing no-fly zones in Libyan airspace and condoning the use of military force, based on Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. China, Russia, and Germany abstained, while Lebanon, a member of the Arab League, cast a vote in favor of it. In that way, with Arab countries also calling for intervention, a multinational force led by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France initiated air raids on Libya on March 19. Arab countries such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) also participated in the multinational force, which avoided the picture of "the West vs. the Arabs." While the original command of the force was with the US military, it was transferred on March 31 to NATO, which led the mission from then on.

Thanks to the bombing, the NTC found a way out of its military crisis. On April 19 and 20, 2011, the three countries of Britain, France, and Italy announced that they would send a group of military advisers to the NTC; starting in June, France began providing it with antitank missiles and other weapons. Thus the NTC gained back the ground it had lost militarily. Diplomatically, as well, the number of countries recognizing the NTC grew steadily, including Qatar on March 28 and Italy on April 4. The meeting of the Libya Contact Group on July 15—with the

participation of Western countries, Japan, Arab countries, and others—issued a chairman's declaration recognizing the NTC as the legitimate ruling body of Libya. This meeting virtually made the NTC a full member of international society. At the end of July, the United Kingdom announced that it would expel all the staff of the Libyan embassy in London representing the Gaddafi regime. The NTC thus gained a firm footing in international society before it had done so domestically. Even in Libya, though, things started moving in favor of the NTC in its conflict with the Gaddafi regime, gradually expanding its area of control. On August 23, it took control of most of the capital of Tripoli, effectively bringing to an end the forty-two-year reign of the Gaddafi regime since 1969. Thus in the wake of regime changes in Tunisia and Egypt, the authoritarian regime in Libya collapsed as well.

Still, while the outcome of the conflict had largely been decided after the fall of Tripoli, the previous regime forces continued fighting in Bani Walid, Sabha, and Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte, among other places. Also, Gaddafi and his second son Saif al-Islam, who had been regarded as his successor, broadcast voice messages through Syrian television after the fall of Tripoli, pledging to continue their resistance. In the end, the NTC took control of Sabha on September 21, 2011, and Bani Walid on October 17, and finally Sirte on October 20, bringing the combat with the previous regime forces mostly to a conclusion. On October 23, the NTC declared the long-awaited liberation of the entire country. As for Gaddafi, he was captured and killed when Sirte fell.

Meanwhile, now that their common enemy Gaddafi had disappeared from the scene, internal division started to emerge within the NTC. First, the regional discord between Tripoli in the west and Benghazi in the east have not been resolved. Second, the NTC is composed of those who had been suppressed by the Gaddafi regime and recent defectors from it, such as the chairman of the NTC, Abdul Jalil, who had been a cabinet member. It makes unclear whether the two groups could work together smoothly into the future. Abdel Fattah Younes, who had once been

interior minister in the Gaddafi government, and later defected from it and became military commander of the NTC, was assassinated at the end of July before the fall of Tripoli. It is said that antipathy toward the defectors' group caused his assassination. Also, there is the possibility of a clash between secularists and Islamists concerning the form of the new regime. Because the Gaddafi regime had suppressed Islamists, most of the recent defectors, who had been members of the establishment in the former regime, are secularists. However, the NTC includes Islamist members such as Abdel Hakim Belhaj, who played a big part in the August 2011 assault on Tripoli. He had experienced combat against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan during the 1980s, and returned to Libya in the 1990s as leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). He spent the 2000s as a prisoner under the Gaddafi regime, and was released in 2010. Third, the troops under the NTC are not under a single unified command and control, and weapons had spread through the country during this civil war. So, if the TNC fails to found new unified Libyan military forces, these troops may split into many armed groups under control of their own warlords. These troops are in reality similar to militia organizations, and their relationship is mutually competitive. Because of that, after the declaration of the countrywide liberation in Libya in October, many clashes erupted between these troops and many were killed or injured.

Besides the kinds of problems resulting from internal divisions, there were also issues about the future of Libya. For example, the NTC had expressed its intent to hold democratic elections in 2012 or later. Unlike neighboring Tunisia and Egypt, however, Libya had never experienced elections before, even just perfunctory ones. Hence, it is unclear whether the TNC could hold elections smoothly or not.

On November 22, 2011, the NTC launched an interim government headed by the new prime minister, Abdurrahim al-Keib. Despite the many problems facing Libya in the future, as mentioned previously, the country does have a smaller population than Tunisia and Egypt, and also has a wealth of petroleum resources. It means that if Libya should overcome such problems as intensifying internal divisions and stabilize its domestic situation, it has the brightest economic prospects of all the countries whose authoritarian regimes were overthrown recently. Also, while the civil war in Libya caused far more victims than the political change in Tunisia and Egypt, the fact that the NTC overcame a military crisis and succeeded in overthrowing an authoritarian regime has encouraged the continuation of the trend of political change in the rest of the Arab world.

(2)　Bahrain: Thwarted Antigovernment Demonstrations

Bahrain, an island country off the Arabian Peninsula, saw its large-scale demonstrations begin around mid-February 2011, in the wake of the political changes in Tunisia and Egypt. The demonstrations were characterized by the fact that they were based on religious (sectarian) tensions and their demands were relatively moderate, without making radical demands for the overthrow of the current political system.

In Bahrain, there is a political and economic disparity between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, with the Sunni monarchy wielding the real power, while the Shiites, who form a majority of citizens of the country, are virtually shut out of political power, and are discriminated against in public-sector employment, military recruitment, and other areas. Their discontent toward that situation provided the motive force behind the demonstrations in Bahrain, thus demonstrators consisted almost entirely of Shiites. Meanwhile, in contrast to Egypt and elsewhere—where the demonstrations from the very beginning made the radical demand for the resignation of the head of state—the main demands of Bahrain's demonstrations were basically reforms within the framework of the current regime, such as strengthening the legislative power of the parliament and institutionalization of a parliamentary cabinet system in parallel with reduction of the authority of the king. They did not call for either the overthrow of the monarchy or the resignation of the king as head of state. The reason for their moderate demands is that Bahrain had seen relatively more progress in democratization than the other monarchies on the Arabian Peninsula, and political activities of opposition parties and some dissident groups had been permitted to a certain degree in that country. To name a few, in 2002, a constitution was promulgated along with a transition to a constitutional monarchy. And in the October 2010 lower house election of the parliament, the Shiite opposition party, the National Islamic Society (Al Wefaq) won eighteen seats of the forty seats, becoming the largest party.

On February 15, 2011, the predominantly Shiite demonstrators occupied the Pearl Square in the center of the capital Manama, continuing a sit-in there. In response, on the night of February 16, the security forces forcibly removed the demonstrators from the square, causing deaths and injuries. In late February, the eighteen members of parliament from Al Wefaq submitted their letters of resignation in protest to the crackdown.

After that, the regime tried to quell the demonstrations by employing the "carrot-

and-stick policy" of conciliation and coercion. On February 19, 2011, the military evacuated themselves from the Pearl Square after the crown prince issued an order to do so, and the demonstrators once again occupied it. On February 21, the king ordered a halt of the trials of Shiite political detainees as well as their release. Because of that act of clemency, Hassan Mushaima, the leader of the Haq Movement for Liberty and Democracy, an unrecognized opposition party, returned to Bahrain on February 26 from London, where he had been in effective exile. On the same day, the cabinet was reshuffled, with the number of Shiite ministers increased to four out of the total of twenty-three cabinet ministers, while those from the royal family decreased to eight. In addition, the housing minister in the new cabinet announced a general 25 percent reduction in government housing loans.

Despite such policies of conciliation, the demonstrations in Bahrain did not die down. Large-scale demonstrations were held both on February 22 and March 4, 2011, while on March 11, demonstrators marched toward the king's palace in Manama and clashed with security forces.

Under those circumstances, Bahrain asked for support from members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), including Saudi Arabia. On March 14, 2011, Saudi-led GCC joint military forces, namely the Peninsula Shield Force, entered Bahrain. The reason why the Saudi Arabia supported Bahrain so swiftly and dispatched its military there was their strong sense of caution that the Shiite demonstrations in Bahrain would spread to Saudi Arabia, too. In contrast to Bahrain, where the Sunni minority controls the Shiite majority, Saudi Arabia's population has the reverse makeup, with the Sunni majority controlling the Shiite minority. Nonetheless, the rich petroleum-producing areas of the eastern Saudi Arabia have a high proportion of Shiites, and they are discontent owing to the virtual monopoly that the Sunnis, including the royal family, have on that oil. For that reason, while Shiites in Saudi Arabia sometimes have demonstrated and rioted against the Sunni-led regime, these protests are often spurred by the similar actions of the Shiites in neighboring countries. For example, when the Shiite Islamic Revolution took place in Iran in 1979, the Shiites in eastern Saudi Arabia were incited to riot.

Having received GCC's military support, the king of Bahrain declared a state of emergency on March 15, 2011, and the security forces forcibly removed the demonstrators from the square again. On the next day, March 16, a twenty-four-hour curfew was issued for the center of the capital, and gatherings and

demonstrations across the country were banned. Then on the 17th, Hassan Mushaima and five other dissident activists were arrested, and on the 18th, the authorities destroyed the Pearl Square, the base of the demonstrations. That series of strong-arm measures smashed the demonstrations almost completely.

The military and security forces in Bahrain include many foreign Sunni Muslims. The regime used its own security forces, which rely heavily on foreigners, as well as foreign military and security forces from Saudi-led GCC countries, to crush demonstrations of the Bahraini public. That was made possible because the international community, mainly the United States and others, gave tacit approval to Bahrain to crush the demonstrations by force.

One of the reasons for the United States' attitude was the potential influence that the demonstrations in Bahrain might have on the region's general situation. Lying opposite to Bahrain on the other side of the Persian Gulf is the great Shiite nation of Iran, with its Shiite Islamist ideology. The Shiite demonstrators in Bahrain were calling for the abolition of sectarian discrimination, and were not aiming for the establishment of an Islamic state such as Iran. However, with the US Navy's Fifth Fleet based in Bahrain, the United States adopted an icy stance toward the demonstrations, given the possibility that Iran could expand its influence to that country if a Shiite-led government was set up there as a result of the demonstrations, which would have a negative effect on the continued existence of the Fifth Fleet's headquarters in Bahrain and might upset the stability of Saudi Arabia, a Sunni oil producer with Shiites living in its oil-field regions. The attitude of the United States toward Bahrain contrasts sharply with its favorable stance toward, for example, the antigovernment demonstrations in Syria, which has a makeup similar to Bahrain's, with a minority religious group politically controlling the majority religious group. Meanwhile, it may also be said that Bahrain excessively played up the threat from Iran in order to gain the approval of the international community for cracking down on the demonstrations, such as getting the GCC countries to condemn Iranian intervention into Bahrain at an emergency GCC foreign ministers' meeting held on April 3, 2011. Still, despite the exaggerated nature of the Iranian threat, it is not totally without basis in fact. If the Shiites in Bahrain succeed in improving their position as the result of the demonstrations, there is a strong possibility that the Shiites in neighboring Saudi Arabia would step up their political activities. In that case Iran would step up its involvement in those countries.

After the suppression of the Bahrain demonstrations in March, many demonstrators were arrested. They were put on trial, and on April 28, 2011, four were sentenced to die and three others were given life sentences. The verdicts for other demonstrators since then have also been harsh. Also, many people were fired from their jobs for taking part in the demonstrations. While taking such actions to neutralize the antigovernment demonstrations, the regime has orchestrated—on the surface—national reconciliation, having held a National Dialogue in July with the participation of some Shiites.

Bahrain is practically the only country in the Arab countries hit by the recent antigovernment demonstrations that has succeeded in containing them. The key to its regime's success was the fact that its suppression by foreign troops and foreign-born security forces was tolerated internationally, and that no intervention took place as in Libya. On the other hand, given that Bahrain is just a small country with around 500,000 citizens, the thwarting of the demonstrations there failed to swing the tide against the antigovernment demonstrations already occurring in other countries. Still, it is important that the suppression of the demonstrations in Bahrain did end up restraining the upswell of antigovernment demonstrations in Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries.

(3) Syria: Unrest in a Land with a De Facto Hereditary System of Presidential Succession

The large-scale antigovernment demonstrations in Syria lagged behind those of other Arab countries, having not begun until mid-March 2011. Unlike those in the other countries, the demonstrations in Syria flared up in relatively smaller regional cities, rather than in big cities such as the capital of Damascus and the second-largest city of Aleppo. That derives from the fact that in Syria, where the police and public-security organizations had maintained strict control, it was easier to carry out demonstrations in regional cities because of the relatively lax government control. The al-Assad regime of Syria is virtually a one-party authoritarian regime, with the ruling Arab Socialist Baath Party (the Baath Party) advocating Arab nationalism and socialism. In terms of religion, however, the ruling classes belong to the Alawi sect of Islam. In Syria the previous president Hafiz al-Assad and his son, Bashar al-Assad, the current president have held power for more than forty years over two generations. Since the Assad family belongs to the Alawi sect, the top posts of their government, including the major positions in the military, are

occupied by Alawis, who make up just around 10 percent of the country's population, controlling the Sunni majority. For that reason, the Sunnis, to whom the cold shoulder has been given, have constituted the primary bulk of the current antigovernment demonstrations. As symbolized by the previous president's crackdown on the Hama insurrection by the Muslim Brotherhood in 1982, the traditional dissident organizations in Syria were violently suppressed, with most of the remaining members living in exile abroad. This means that the main actors in the recent antigovernment demonstration in Syria are believed to be people not belonging to any of those organizations.

A demonstration against the Syrian regime broke out in the southern city of Deraa on March 18, 2011, later expanding across the country to Damascus, as well as to the northern city of Hama and elsewhere. The regime mobilized the security forces and military to crush the demonstrations, while at the same time aiming to ease public discontent by outwardly adopting a reform stance to some degree. On March 24, the government announced various reform plans, such as the release of arrested demonstrators and a hike in public servants' salaries. That reform stance was reflected by the general resignation on March 29 of the cabinet led by Prime Minister Muhammad al-Otari, and the launch of a new cabinet on April 14 headed by Adel Safar as prime minister. In addition, on April 21, decrees were announced repealing the emergency law, abolishing the Supreme State Security Court, and allowing peaceful demonstrations with certain conditions attached. The emergency law, which had stayed on the books for almost half a century ever since 1963, gave a huge amount of authority to security forces, and its repeal was one of the demands of the demonstrators.

However, such conciliatory measures failed to calm down the demonstrations, and on the following day, Friday, April 22, 2011, antigovernment demonstrations again broke out nationwide taking advantage of the Islamic day of congregational prayer, with more than 100 people killed in clashes with the security forces. The flash point of the demonstrations was the city of Deraa, where two locally elected members of the national parliament resigned on April 22 in protest to the government crackdown on the demonstrations. In that city on April 27, many members resigned from the ruling Baath Party. That meant that there were people defecting from the regime even from inside the traditional ruling class. Meanwhile, the Syrian regime moved to crush the demonstrations with full force, having sent in military tank units to Deraa starting on April 25, killing many demonstrators.

Since then, the regime has maintained its policy of basically cracking down on the demonstrations with force, while retaining a certain stance of compromise and reform. Those reforms include a decree on May 31, 2011, pardoning political prisoners, including members of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as permission granted to a meeting of dissidents in Damascus on June 27. On July 10, a public dialogue was begun under the direction of the government, with several dissidents participating, and on August 4, a political-party law allowing opposition parties was enacted. However, while this new law allows the establishment of opposition parties on the surface, it still prohibits any religious and provincial parties. Moreover, there was doubt about the law's viability, given that, for example, the leading position of the Baath Party in the Syrian state and society was kept as is, as stipulated by Article 8 in the country's constitution. As seen by such actions, the regime had no intention of fundamentally reforming its current system. Moreover, given that the demonstrators rejected incremental reforms and instead demanded the overthrow of the regime, the government has nothing to win if it gave into those demands, for if it did so, the al-Assad family and the Alawi ruling class would lose their position in society, and the president and other high government officials could be expected to be indicted, as seen in the cases of Tunisia and Egypt. That has left the government no option but to crack down on the demonstrations.

On June 6, 2011, Syrian national television reported that "security forces in the northwest city of Jisr al-Shughour were attacked by armed groups, with 120 members killed." After that incident, the Syria military took revenge by besieging Jisr al-Shughour, forcing many residents to flee into neighboring Turkey; as of June 17, the number of such refugees into Turkey reached some 10,000. The reliability of the reports of the incident in Jisr al-Shughour is unclear, but the term "armed groups" may refer to security force members who had refused to crack down on demonstrations and defected, meaning that it was possibly a clash between fellow security force members. While the exact numbers are unclear, several members of the military and security forces have defected from the regime to support demonstrators from an early stage since the demonstrations broke out in March, owing to their dissatisfaction with the crackdown on the demonstrations. Some of the defectors from the military declared their defections through video messages on the Web, denouncing the military for attacking its own citizens, and calling upon other members of the military to defect as well. At the end of July, a

colonel in the Syrian army defected along with several hundred of his subordinates, declaring the formation of the Free Syrian Army. There is the possibility that those defectors will play a big role in the country's future.

As many casualties have resulted from the clashes between the Syrian military and security forces, on the one hand, and the demonstrators, on the other, since March 2011, the demonstrators have gradually become more violent, using more weapons, which has increasingly turned the conflict between the two sides into what seems to be a civil war. That tendency can also be understood from the shift in the demonstrators' chants away from "we want to overthrow the president's regime" to "we want to execute the president." At the time of this writing, the military and security forces in Syria maintain overwhelming superiority over the antigovernment demonstrators in terms of equipment, sophistication, and sheer numbers, but given that the majority of them are Sunnis, just as the demonstrators, one cannot deny the possibility that such superiority would collapse if the number of defectors increases in a backlash to Alawi rule.

Much remains unclear about the actions of the dissidents in Syria on account of the tight lid kept on information there. It seems that so-called local coordination committees have been supporting the demonstrations across the country, but it is uncertain whether they are acting separately or if they maintain a nationwide network. Meanwhile, although Syrian dissidents who live overseas have been actively holding meetings and taking other actions, it is unclear how closely they are able to be involved in the domestic demonstrations in Syria. However, it is practically certain that there is some contact between the dissidents living outside the country and those on the inside, given that most of those meetings have been held in adjacent Turkey, with which overland communication is possible with Syria. On June 1, 2011, a meeting was held in the Turkish city of Antalya between various Syrian dissident groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood. Following that, simultaneous meetings were planned for July 16, with domestic dissident groups to meet in Damascus and overseas dissident groups to meet in Istanbul, Turkey. However, the site in Damascus was attacked the day before the meeting was to be held, so only the Istanbul meeting went through in actuality, but some of the dissidents in Damascus did participate in the Istanbul meeting via a teleconferencing system. The meeting saw a divergence of opinions between those condoning dialogue with the Syrian government and those who flatly rejected it.

After that, on August 23, 2011, Syrian dissident groups in the Turkish capital of Ankara formed the Syrian National Council, setting forth the common goal of overthrowing the regime, coordinating their domestic and foreign efforts, and transcending ideological and sectarian differences. The council enjoys the participation of both dissidents living abroad and those still in Syria. At a meeting of the council held in Istanbul on September 16, it proclaimed the goal of overthrowing the Syrian regime in half a year. At that point there were 140 members in the council, including Islamists such as members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Of the members, 60 percent are said to be living inside Syria and 40 percent living elsewhere. For safety reasons, the names of most of the members inside Syria have not been revealed. With several more dissidents joining the council at the beginning of October, the council is gradually advancing toward becoming a unified entity comprising all the dissident groups. The council has not been recognized by most of the international community as a state because it does not control any specific territory in Syria, and because there are still nebulous points about its true nature. Still, on October 10, the Libyan National Transitional Council recognized the Syrian National Council as the sole legitimate government of Syria. Nonetheless, the council does not encompass all the dissidents in Syria, with several other dissident organizations existing outside of it.

Meanwhile, the international community has issued declarations condemning Syria for its crackdown on the demonstrations and the many casualties resulting, with some countries imposing economic sanctions against it. In early May 2011, the European Union (EU) imposed various sanctions, including a ban on weapons exports, a freeze on the assets of high government officials in Syria, and a travel ban against those officials. On August 3, the UN Security Council adopted a presidential statement condemning the demonstration crackdown. Inside the Arab world, the GCC and the Arab League made statements condemning Syria in early August, and the three countries of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain recalled their ambassadors from the country. Also, on August 18, the United States called upon President al-Assad to step down, and Britain, Germany, and France issued a joint declaration making the same demand. In addition, on November 12, the Arab League passed a resolution suspending the membership of Syria. Even so, the League has maintained contacts with Syria since then, sending a monitoring mission there on December 27.

On the other hand, the international community has not taken any military

action against Syria, as it did against Libya. The reasons for that include that country's tight relationship with Russia—it is been so ever since the Soviet era— and the strong possibility that Russia and China would cast vetoes against any anti-Syrian resolution proposed in the UN Security Council, making it unlikely that the Council will ever adopt them. Also, the international community is concerned that the potential collapse of the Syrian regime would create further instability in the Middle East. The last point is particularly important. Syria is a supporter of Hamas, the group that effectively controls the Gaza Strip of the Palestinian Territories, as well as of Hezbollah, the Shiite organization in Lebanon. Also, Syria is a friend of Iran, and both countries have non-Sunni regimes. If the Syrian regime were to collapse, the balance of power between all those forces would be upset, creating fluidity in the Middle East—a situation that would be desirable neither for Syria nor for its diplomatic opponents. That is one reason why the international community has hesitated to intervene in Syria. As for the position of Iran regarding Syria, Iran supports the Syrian regime and it has criticized the antigovernment demonstrations in Syria as examples of foreign intervention. Meanwhile, on the surface Iran has welcomed the antigovernment demonstrations in other Arab countries and the overthrow of the regimes there, likening them to its own Islamic revolution achieved in 1979. Through its logic of likening the demonstrations and regime changes in Arab countries to its Islamic revolution, the current regime in Iran—having achieved its own revolution—has tried to position itself as the forerunner of the demonstrators in Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere, so as to deflect criticism from antigovernment groups at home.

Considering the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, one can conclude that the increasing violence and protracted demonstrations in Syria makes it unlikely that the al-Assad regime can crush them and restore stability to the country. On the other hand, given that the president is not likely to resign on his own accord, the dissidents need to defeat the Syrian military and security forces by force in order to topple the regime. For that purpose, it is absolutely necessary for quite a few people to defect from military and security forces, but the number of defectors is still quite low. Those factors have led to the current loop of demonstrations followed by crackdowns, followed by more demonstrations and crackdowns. Meanwhile, although the Syrian dissidents originally professed the desire to overthrow the al-Assad regime by themselves, without requesting any military aid from the international community, they have since changed their position to one

of effectively asking the international community for such help, given the protracted clash with the regime and the increasing casualties. They have asked the Security Council, for example, to set up a safe zone within Syria.

If the al-Assad regime should ever collapse in the future, it is virtually certain that the Alawis would lose their position as Syria's ruling class and that the country would be controlled by Sunnis. The current regime is pro-Iran, a position that derives from the fact that Syria's ruling Baath Party historically used to be in an adversarial relationship with the Baath Party of Iraq, moving it closer to Iran, Iraq's neighbor, and also because it shares with Iran the characteristic of having a non-Sunni regime. For that reason, if a Sunni-led regime were to be created in Syria without any connection to the Baath Party, it is entirely possible that Syria would change its pro-Iran stance to an anti-Iran one, along with its relationship with the United States—that is, changing for the better. On the other hand, Syria's relationship with Israel is not expected to change for the time being, even under a new regime, unless the territorial problem of the Golan Heights is resolved.

(4) Yemen: Increasing Disarray in the Domestic Situation

Yemen, which lies in the southwest part of the Arabian Peninsula, is one of the poorest Arab countries, with scarce natural resources compared with the other countries on the peninsula. After the collapse of the authoritarian regime of Tunisia, antigovernment demonstrations also began in Yemen in mid-January 2011. Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh has been head of state since 1978 (including his time serving as president of the Yemen Arab Republic, also known as North Yemen, before the northern and southern halves of the country were unified in 1990).

The difference between the demonstrations in Yemen and those that broke out recently in other Arab countries is that elsewhere, there were powerful authoritarian regimes predating the demonstrations that had a firm grip on their entire respective national territories, and that had suppressed most dissident activities, whereas the long-lasting dictatorship in Yemen was weak in terms of governance, which let groups in regions outside the control of the central government go about their activities in a partially free manner. For instance, since 2004, the Shiite Zaydi insurgent group known as the Houthi group has been conducting an armed struggle in the northern border region of the country adjoining Saudi Arabia. As the Yemeni regime was unable to stop those activities, its neighbor, Saudi Arabia,

intervened militarily to deal a blow to that Yemeni insurgent group in 2009. Also, a regional branch of the Sunni al-Qaeda known as "al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" (AQAP) is said to have been set up in Yemen in 2009, with some of its members having shifted their base of operations from Saudi Arabia to Yemen. That is also proof that the regime has a weaker governance than the Saudis.

When North Yemen (Sanaa) and South Yemen (Aden) came together to form one country in 1990, the south was unhappy that the north had taken the lead in the reunification, leading to the outbreak of a civil war in 1994, which was concluded after a brief period. Afterwards, there has been a lingering feeling of discontent in the south over the leadership of the north in the regime, and that has served as one factor in its inability to govern the entire country. Also, the tribes of Yemen are extremely powerful, and the government's power within each tribe's sphere of influence is strictly limited. Each tribe maintains its own militia, and even some members of the government's military and security forces are thought to be more loyal to their tribes than to the country. In addition, since 2006, many Islamists have crossed the Red Sea from Somalia to enter Yemen. Those factors have combined to weaken the regime's ability to govern the country. Before antigovernment demonstrations broke out, Yemen had reached the point where some said it was one step short of being a failed state.

In that way, Yemen is characterized by a diverse range of political forces, including its tribes, and their interrelationship is not only extremely complicated but also obscure and nebulous. For that reason, the makeup of the country's political strife after the demonstrations began is not simply a two-sided matter of "the regime versus the demonstrators." Also, on account of the Yemeni custom of each tribe arming itself, the antigovernment demonstrators also bear arms to a certain degree. That means that when military and security forces attack the demonstrators in Yemen, the demonstrators are not the only side suffering deaths.

The main participants in Yemen's demonstrations have been young students and others not belonging to any existing political organizations. Incidentally, there are six existing opposition parties with seats in parliament, including the Islah party, the Yemeni Socialist Party, and four others, which have formed an alliance known as the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP). However, while the demonstrators and JMP share the common goal of overthrowing the regime, the fact that they have different motives means that they do not constitute a united front.

Since the breakout of demonstrations, the Yemeni regime has responded by

compromising superficially while at the same time rejecting demands for it to step down, as did the other Arab countries' regimes this time. For instance, on February 2, 2011, President Saleh announced that he would not run in the next presidential elections slated for 2013, and denied that he would pass the post of presidency hereditarily to his son. In addition, he also decide to give cash payments to poor households and exempted students from paying tuition to public universities. However, President Saleh had in the past declared his intention not to run again then retracted that decision later, so his declaration this time was not viewed as his true intention, but just as a way for him to stall for time for the moment.

However, as the demonstrations continued and intensified, and the regime crackdowns produced casualties among demonstrators, the country's two major tribal confederations, the Hashid tribal coalition and the Bakil tribal coalition, announced on February 26 that they would stop supporting the government. As President Saleh comes from the Hashid tribal coalition, it was a blow to his regime for the tribal coalition to which he belongs to defect to the other side. On February 28, the president proposed the formation of a national unity government, and on March 10 he proposed revising the constitution to expand the power of parliament. However, both proposals were rejected by the opposition party coalition and the demonstrators, as they effectively signified the continuation of the president's term in office. In the end, the president declared a state of emergency on March 18, moving to suppress the demonstrations. In the capital of Sanaa, more than fifty demonstrators were said to have been killed on March 18 alone. Similar demonstrations flared up in the south, and seventeen people were killed in the city of Taiz on April 4 after being shot at by security forces.

Given the upheavals in the Yemeni situation, the GCC moved to mediate. On April 10, 2011, the GCC made a proposal to both the Yemeni regime and the opposition parties so as to end the crisis. The basic pillars of the GCC-brokered agreement include the following: (1) the president will resign within thirty days of both sides having formally agreed to the GCC proposal, (2) the authority of the president will be transferred to Vice President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, (3) a national unity government will be set up, with a presidential election to be held within sixty days from the time the president resigns, and (4) the president and his relatives will be granted immunity from indictment. The existing opposition parties acceded to the proposal, but the demonstrators were opposed to it. Meanwhile, President Saleh, who had a strong determination to hold onto the

presidency at all costs, kept on playing the political game of announcing his intention to agree to the proposal and then retracting his statement at the last moment. The secretary general of the GCC visited Yemen to mediate in negotiations, but the regime engineered several incidents obstructing his efforts, including having armed groups besiege the UAE Embassy in Sanaa on May 22, where the secretary general was staying. In the end, the GCC-brokered agreement went nowhere. Meanwhile, the recurrent violation of promises that the president had made amplified the discontent of the antigovernment forces, and tribes that had switched to the opposition clashed with security forces in Sanaa on May 23, producing many casualties.

Meanwhile, during the same period, it was reported that armed Islamist insurgents, said to be linked to AQAP, had made headway in the south, particularly in the province of Abyan. On March 27, armed insurgents with alleged ties to AQAP raided and looted a weapons factory in the town of Jaar in Abyan province. Later, on May 29, armed insurgents with alleged ties to AQAP were reported to have taken control of Zinjibar, the provincial capital of Abyan. However, there are doubts as to the veracity of such information as foreign media have not been able to gather enough data on the ground in Yemen. Regarding for Islamist insurgents' rising in Abyan, the antigovernment side claimed that the regime had tacitly assented to the rise of the insurgents, so as to shape international opinion through the following logic: "If the Saleh regime weakens, Yemen will become more unstable, and al-Qaeda will gain power. For that reason, the regime is necessary for the purpose of squashing terrorism."

Later, on June 3, President Saleh was seriously injured in an explosion at the presidential palace in the capital of Sanaa during ongoing clashes with antigovernment demonstrators, and he was flown to neighboring Saudi Arabia to undergo medical care. Seven people died in the explosion, and several high-ranking officials including the prime minister were injured, and were also taken to Saudi Arabia along with the president. Still, the Saleh regime avoided collapse because Vice President Hadi stepped in for the president, and the president's oldest son, Ahmed Saleh, commander of the Republican Guards Forces, remained in the country. Meanwhile, as Saudi Arabia is one of the main countries in the GCC and as the GCC-brokered agreement called for President Saleh's resignation, people increasingly began to speculate after the president's departure that maybe "Saudi Arabia demanded that President Saleh make a firm promise to resign in

return for letting him into their country for medical care, and the president agreed to that." However, President Saleh left the hospital on August 6, and on August 16, Yemeni national television broadcast his speech while he was still in Saudi Arabia announcing his desire to go back to Yemen as soon as possible. On September 23, then, he returned home after three months away.

After that, the clashes between the regime and antigovernment sides have continued, with more than forty people dying in Sanaa on September 24. On November 23, however, President Saleh—who had repeatedly declared his intention to resign then later retracted his intention—finally signed a revised GCC-brokered agreement, passing on presidential powers to Vice President Hadi. Also, a national unity government was launched on December 10 with equal numbers of ruling party and opposition parties members in the cabinet. A presidential election is in the works for February 2012.

However, many of the antigovernment forces, except for the existing opposition parties, are opposed to the section of the GCC-brokered agreement that gives immunity to President Saleh and others. For that reason, even after the president's signing of the agreement on November 23, the situation remains unchanged in which the forces supporting the president and the opposition have continued their clashes nationwide. The president still retains his influence over the military's elite troops, meaning that he is not politically neutralized. That is why one cannot assert at the moment of this writing that Yemen's long-lasting authoritarian regime has been overthrown, following the toppling of the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan regimes. Nonetheless, no matter what happens, there is little possibility that Yemen will soon enjoy the creation of a stable regime, given that the Saleh regime was known to be weak even before the recent political upheavals began.

3. Prospects for the Future of Reforms

(1) The Political Process in Post-Mubarak Egypt and Its Future Prospects

Egypt, the Mideast's regional power, can be cited as an example of the political process in the region since the collapse of the authoritarian regimes. After Mubarak's resignation, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of Egypt has been responsible for the interim administration there, with plans to hold an election for the People's Assembly, establish a new constitution, and hold a

presidential election under the new constitution, after which transition to civilian rule will be carried out.

Although secularist youths were the main force behind the demonstrations causing the Mubarak regime to be overthrown, thereafter, once freedom of political activities was established, the activities of the Islamists, including the Muslim Brotherhood, picked up pace. Since there had never been democratic elections or fair opinion polls in Egypt before, there was conflicting speculation on which group would gain the majority in parliamentary elections. Traditionally, it had been believed that the Islamists would win a democratic election were one to be held. However, the fact that it was mass secularist youths who were the backbone of the antigovernment demonstrations showed that many secularists did in fact exist in Egypt. For that reason, some people speculated that those secularists would become a major force in the parliament if they succeeded in organizing themselves in an appropriate manner before the election.

However, in the People's Assembly (i.e., the lower house of parliament) election that was held from November 28, 2011, to January 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood's the Freedom and Justice Party ended up gaining the most seats as a single party, with the Islamic al-Nour Party coming in second, with the two party's combined seat totals constituting a majority in the lower house. Meanwhile, the secularist youths lost miserably in the election, having failed in their attempts to create a unified organization, instead splitting into many little ones. Before the election, the Muslim Brotherhood announced that it would limit the number of its candidates to a very slim majority of the lower house as a sign of paying heed to people's fears about its gaining too much strength. That was not a demonstration of the group's modesty, however, but rather can be described as a tactic to prevent the dispersal of votes too widely so that they could instead gain a steady number of seats. The Muslim Brotherhood fully utilized the advantages of its ability to mobilize people and its vote-gathering power in the election.

As regards the presidential election that is supposed to be held by June 2012, several people have announced their candidacies from an early stage, including two with high international name recognition: Amr Moussa, who had served as foreign minister under Mubarak and was also former secretary-general of the Arab League, and Muhammad ElBaradei, the former secretary-general of the IAEA. Moussa has a wealth of experience domestically, and was one of the most popular politicians in the former regime, making him a strong candidate for president. In

contrast, ElBaradei has a weak base of domestic support owing to his many years of living abroad. Having decided that things were not going in his favor, ElBaradei announced his decision in January 2012 not to run for president. Given that the authority of the president in Egypt is stronger than that of the parliament, and because the past four presidents have all come from the military, the upcoming presidential election and the transition to civilian rule from the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces must be considered as occurring in conjunction.

Ever since 1952, the Egyptian military has had a big stake in the country's economy. Through its subsidiaries, the military is believed to be involved in a broad range of economic activities nationwide, including the automobile and hotel industries, to the extent that it has been described as the "largest industrial conglomerate" in Egypt. However, those economic interests lie outside of the national budget, and the breakdown of the military section of the national budget is not disclosed publicly, lacking in transparency. The Egyptian military thus does not wish to let go of the stake that it has built up under the presidents with a military background. Meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood has expressed its intention not to run its own candidate in the upcoming presidential election, one reason, it is thought, being its desire to avoid being at loggerheads with the military. The Brotherhood was made illegal in 1954 on account of an unsuccessful assassination attempt on President Nasser, who was effectively the head of the military as well, with many of the group's members forced to spend a long time behind bars. Because of that background, it has handled its relationship with the military with kid gloves. On the other hand, everyone who has expressed the intention to run for president so far is a civilian. In that case, one question left up in the air is whether the military—which has promised a transition to civilian rule after the presidential election—will actually tolerate the creation of the country's first civilian president and let him or her actually hold the reins of power. One possible initiative that would allow the military to solve that difficult question is the scenario of having a leading military person run in the presidential election. For instance, in September 2011, the front page of a leading governmental newspaper just happened to print a photograph showing Field Marshal Muhammad Tantawi, who chairs the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, walking around central Cairo in civilian clothing and being greeted by citizens. That brought about speculation that it was part of an image-boosting strategy aiming to make the field marshal president.

However, because of a delay in the originally scheduled date for the election—considered a prerequisite to the transition to civilian rule—the young people who were at the center of the antigovernment demonstrations have become more critical of the military as time has passed. During the period of political uprising in January and February 2011, they had welcomed the military as a "friend of the people," but they no longer hold such views today. In November, a large-scale demonstration was held protesting the attempt by the military to give itself a privileged position in the new constitution, forcing the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to promise to move the presidential election forward. In December, there was a clash between protesters and the military in Cairo despite being in the midst of an election campaign, producing many casualties. Because of such developments, many people have yelled out criticisms of Field Marshal Tantawi during demonstrations, making the situation increasingly severe for the military.

On the other hand, an increasing number of people now criticize the youths who want to continue demonstrating, as they view with dismay the chaos and worsening of public order in Egypt since the collapse of the Mubarak dictatorship. Namely, those who suffer from anarchy now wish for the revival of strong regime. It is a typical sequence of events that Arab politics have seen traditionally. Under current circumstances, it would not be so easy for someone from the military to win the presidency, but if such person were to have a good chance of winning, it would be because of a campaign pledge to restore order and stability to the country, thus attracting support from people who are sick of the country's prolonged chaos. It may be a positive sign for the Egyptian military that fewer people are thought to have taken part in the demonstrations of November 2011 and later, protesting against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, than those who had taken part in the earlier demonstrations against the Mubarak regime in January and February of 2011. Meanwhile, the military has repeatedly announced that it would not put up its own candidate for president. However, the only options that the military could tolerate, in actuality, are either (1) a civilian president who would approve the continuation of the military's special interests, or (2) a president with a military background, as with past presidents. And even if a civilian president were to emerge, special consideration would have to be given to the military to ensure a smooth transition to civilian rule.

As far as domestic affairs are concerned, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has been unable to restore stability to Egyptian society, but on the

diplomatic front, it has laid down a different policy line from that of the previous regime. Immediately after the resignation of President Mubarak in February 2011, the Supreme Council permitted two warships belonging to the Iranian military to pass through the Suez Canal. Iran and Egypt have long since broken off diplomatic relations with each other, but such efforts to improve the relationship may sow the seeds for possible future negotiations to reinstate diplomatic ties. Also, in May 2011, the Supreme Council opened up the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip of the Palestinian Territories, freeing up the Palestinians living there, who had been experiencing a blockade situation. The opening of the border with the Gaza Strip may facilitate the flow of arms to the Islamist organization Hamas, which has effectively ruled the territory since 2007. Also, the restoration of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Iran would weaken the isolation of Iran. As both Hamas and Iran are hostile to Israel, such acts by the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces have provoked Israel. The sentiment of the Egyptian public is strongly anti-Israel, so it is possible that the Council may take similar action in the future to curry favor with the public. Also, if the transition to civilian rule takes place as scheduled in 2012, there is a strong possibility that the new civilian regime might try to gain public support by adopting similar provocative diplomatic policies toward Israel. Nevertheless, the Egyptian military, having experienced four Mideast wars in the past, is fully aware of the strength of the Israeli military. Also, the major weaponry of the Egyptian military at present has been provided by the United States, predicated on the existence of the Egypt-Israel Treaty of Peace. For that reason, the option of fighting with Israel is not available to the Egyptian military, and the peace treaty between the two countries is expected to be maintained in the future.

(2)   Can the Middle East Be Democratized?

In the Arab countries where authoritarian regimes recently collapsed—Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere—democratic elections are starting to be held, without restrictions as to who can run, and without the falsification of ballots. The first such regime to collapse, Tunisia, held its first-ever democratic constitutional assembly election (parliamentary election) on October 23, 2011. The election results showed the moderate Islamist party, the Ennahda Movement, getting the highest number of votes for a single party, with 89 of the 217 seats, and the secularist Congress for the Republic coming in second at 29 seats. Despite the

fact that the antigovernment demonstrations in both Tunisia and Egypt were primarily led by secularists, it is noteworthy that the Islamist groups made the most gains in the elections that were held thereafter. As stated before, the elections in Egypt that followed those in Tunisia also saw the Islamists gaining strength, hinting at the possibility that the phenomenon is not limited to just those two countries, but will also happen in the other Arab countries where authoritarian regimes collapsed. Since no party was able to win an outright majority in the Tunisian elections, Ennahda formed a coalition with the Congress for the Republic and the fourth-place Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties, launching a new interim government headed by Ennahda senior member Hamadi Jebali as prime minister. The political process in Tunisia has for the most part moved forward smoothly.

However, it is still unclear whether democracy will take root in those countries. A long period of education is believed necessary for democracy to take root, but the countries in question lack sufficient personnel who could provide such an education. Also, Arab countries, including the three where authoritarian regimes collapsed, are characterized by a powerful nepotism—the favoring of relatives or people from one's hometown—which is thought to be a factor inhibiting democracy from taking root there.

Moreover, it is not clear whether the problems of worsening public order, etc., that newly emerged after the collapse of the dictatorships can be resolved. So far, there has not yet been a single Arab state in the Mideast that has succeeded in democratization while stabilizing public order at the same time. The only states in the Mideast with a stable democratic foundation are the non-Arab states of Turkey and Israel. One can cite such Arab countries and regions as Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories as having held democratic elections to a certain degree, but all of them face internal public order issues. The three countries that did succeed in overthrowing their authoritarian regimes—Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya—all face worsening public order situations. One can really say that democratization has succeeded in those countries only after they have established governments based on democratic elections, as well as succeeding in restoring public order, and finally maintaining their rule of society through democratic government. To put it conversely, there are also concerns that a revival of the following negative cycle may occur: democratic governments failing to restore public order, with new replacement authoritarian regimes coming in to restore order through heavy-handed rule, sacrificing democracy in the process.

(3) The Implications for East Asia

How has the political upheaval in the Mideast countries, as described above, affected the countries of East Asia? Both China and North Korea fear the import of the practice of antigovernment demonstrations. China has placed restrictions on Internet search words and done other things to restrict the flow of information about political change in the Mideast. On February 19, 2011, China's General Secretary Hu Jintao ordered a stricter clampdown on the Internet. Ever since that month, China has seen people inspired by the political upheaval in the Mideast using the Internet and other means to call for demonstrations across the country, but the authorities were virtually able to contain all of them having implemented a state of high alert. China is effectively a one-party dictatorship, and the government-led economic policies have brought about a high rate of economic growth, while also causing growing economic disparities in the public. As it shares those points in common with such countries as Tunisia and Egypt, it is understandable why the Chinese government felt a sense of crisis. On the other hand, countries such as Tunisia and Egypt have a very high ratio of young people in their total population makeup, and the unemployment problem of those youths served as one factor in the intensification of the demonstrations, whereas China has a much lower ratio of youth in its total population in comparison to those Arab countries, on account of its one-child policy. That is one reason why the demonstrations in China failed to catch on.

The countries whose authoritarian regimes were overthrown, as well as those in which demonstrations are still continuing though the regimes have not yet been overthrown, can be categorized as follows, among others: (1) countries that had enjoyed a long period of economic growth (Egypt and Tunisia), (2) a country that loosened restrictions on publishing, etc., after the hereditary succession of the president (Syria), and (3) a country that eliminated its development of weapons of mass destruction and shifted its course from isolation to cooperation with the international community (Libya). The fact that the regimes of such countries were overthrown may have sent North Korea the following message: the realization of high economic growth, the relaxation of restrictions, and coordination with the international community do not necessarily contribute to the continued existence of a country's regime. North Korea thus may have taken the recent political upheaval in the Mideast as confirmation of the legitimacy of its conventional policies. In particular, the case of Libya—where dissidents endorsed and

supported by the international community overthrew the regime despite its having renounced the development of weapons of mass destruction—may have provided North Korea with the lesson that giving up nuclear weapons is no guarantee of a regime's preservation. Indeed, one reason why the countries of the West so swiftly embarked on military intervention is believed to be that Libya had already renounced the development of weapons of mass destruction, meaning that there was no possibility that it could retaliate using such weapons. South Korea is concerned that such a lesson may have postponed the solution of the problem of North Korea's nuclear problem. The death of Col. Gaddafi in October 2011 led the South Korean Minister of Unification Yu Woo-ik to stress, "Gaddafi's wretched death did not come about because he renounced nuclear weapons," and continued by saying, "We must convince North Korea that renouncing nuclear weapons is in its interest." In North Korea no demonstrations inspired by the latest Mideast upheavals seem to have taken place, given that foreign news is almost never reported domestically in that country. In that sense, the restrictions on information in that country can be said to have contributed to its regime's preservation.

The Death of Usama Bin Laden and the Future of al-Qaeda

On May 1, 2011, al-Qaeda supreme leader Usama Bin Laden was killed by US Navy SEALS at his hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The United States thus succeeded in toppling him some ten years since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The killing of Bin Laden was a significant achievement in the US-led global campaign against terrorism. However, there is little likelihood that his killing will lead directly to the weakening of al-Qaeda. Although Bin Laden was the founder of al-Qaeda, he was forced to go into hiding ever since the Taliban government of Afghanistan was overthrown after 9/11, and his only definite role within al-Qaeda since then was as a "mouthpiece," making video messages on the Web and elsewhere. In other words, there is little possibility that he was directly involved in the majority of terrorist incidents carried out by al-Qaeda in various places after 9/11.

Meanwhile, one cannot underestimate the importance of being a mouthpiece. After the collapse of the Taliban government in 2001, the ability of Bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders to plan and carry out terrorist attacks by themselves was severely limited. However, by continuing to make Web messages, Bin Laden and al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, succeeding in gaining

sympathizers, who then recruited fellow supporters in the areas in which they lived, setting up regional branches of al-Qaeda. Since 2004, then, several regional branches of al-Qaeda were set up around the Mideast (in Iraq and elsewhere). Al-Qaeda thus became a network-type of organization with the leadership believed to be hiding out in Afghanistan and Pakistan, with regional branches in other places. The relationship between the leadership and the regional branches is that of the proponents and sympathizers of a radical Islamist ideology, and not one of those giving and following orders. In most cases the regional branches carry out terrorist attacks without any direct guidance from the leadership. The organizational changes are one of the reasons why the death of Bin Laden has not seriously weakened the ability of the organization to carry out terrorist attacks. Although Bin Laden cannot issue any new messages, there is a huge inventory of his previous messages that can still be reused; at any rate, many of his messages were a repetition of similar contents, letting them be easily recycled for propaganda purposes after being edited. Also, al-Qaeda's new supreme leader, al-Zawahiri, is alive and well, and has issued messages after the death of Bin Laden. For that reason, it is possible that Bin Laden's death will not lead to a weakening of the leadership's propaganda ability. Meanwhile, the United States has recognized the importance of reducing al-Qaeda's propaganda ability. Proof of that is the killing at the end of September 2011 of Anwar al-Awlaki, a senior member of the AQAP, who, as an American citizen, played a big role in gaining sympathizers in English-speaking countries owing to his fluent English.

On the other hand, 2011 may mark a negative turning point in the fortunes of al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda has maintained its strength partially because some people support its radical Islamist ideology of founding Islamic states through the overthrow of existing regimes by force. In a dictatorship, force was not an unrealistic means by which to overthrow the regime. However, the recent political changes in Tunisia and elsewhere have proven that regimes can be overthrown without the use of force. Democratic elections have started to be held in the countries whose dictatorships collapsed. That new situation has upset the validity and relevancy of the armed-struggle policy line advocated by Islamist radicals, and that may erode support for al-Qaeda in the future, possibly leading to the weakening of the organization.