



Politics and Change in the Middle East: Sources of Conflict and Accommodation (8th Edition)

By Roy R. Andersen, Robert F. Seibert, Jon G. Wagner

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This text takes thematic and multidisciplinary approaches that integrates regional experiences into a whole. Major themes include political development, economic development, international relations, Islam - mainstream and jihadist, colonialism and post-colonialism; and recent political changes, with particular emphasis on the U.S. intervention in Iraq and the rising interest in democracy regionally.

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Editorial Review

Review

“This exceptional text, which is popular amongst instructors and students alike, contains reliable and well-presented information about the Middle East. Its excellent framework will help undergraduates better understand contemporary developments in the region by examining its history and culture, as well as the impact of Islam, colonialism, and globalization.”—*Anca Turcu, University of Central Florida*

From the Publisher

This introductory survey of the Middle East first explains, in depth, the special role of Islam and presents an historical overview of the region, and then treats modern issues on a thematic basis (not country-by-country).

From the Inside Flap

Preface

This book has grown out of the authors' conviction that a proper understanding of present events in the Middle East requires knowledge of the cultural, social, and economic, as well as political, background of these events. It is, more specifically, an outgrowth of the authors' attempts to develop an undergraduate course sequence aimed at such understanding. We found that despite the abundance of excellent scholarship on the Middle East, there was a paucity of works that brought together the diverse disciplinary perspectives in a way suitable to our pedagogic aims. It is our belief that this book, with its combination of historical and contemporary materials and its integrated perspective, provides something of value that is not elsewhere available to the undergraduate student or educator.

Many profound changes have occurred since the original publication of this book. As we published our first edition in 1982, the first signs were evident of the inevitable decline of the bipolar international system, a system in which the overarching conflict between the United States and the U.S.S.R. gave substance and meaning to a wide range of international interactions. Now, the U.S.S.R. no longer exists, replaced by a loose confederation of states, autonomous areas, and dependencies that is only a shadow of the old order; and that now must compete for power and influence with its former allies in the Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Kazakhstan, as well as its old enemies in the West. It has been necessary to incorporate these new realities into our analysis of governments and politics in the Middle East. But the long-term consequences of these changes are not yet clear; they are in fact, in the process of evolution. The new Russia is not the powerhouse that the old U.S.S.R. was reputed to be; but Russia still sees a role for itself in the Middle East; and regaining an element of its dominance in the areas of Central Asia is an emergent theme in its domestic politics—yet another example of the "domesticization of international politics and the internationalization of the domestic."

Changes in the Middle East itself have also been drastic. OPEC, for instance, was in its robust maturity as we began our initial work, a dominant player in the international energy system, capable of ostensible control of both supply and price of petroleum; and indeed it can be demonstrated that as Middle Eastern leaders "played the petroleum card" they were able to extract concessions from East and West. But by 2000, OPEC was not nearly the dominant influence it had been, despite a 1999 rally of prices engineered by OPEC. Its influence was diluted by a combination of new non-OPEC sources of petroleum, new technology squeezing new life and profits out of older fields, and modest conservation measures. The oil-rich monarchies of the Middle East are still rich, it is true; but they now live in an age of tough economic constraints in which

important choices must be made, economically and politically. The cushion on which they have relied for two decades has dramatically thinned.

If ever there was an issue or conflict considered architectonic in the Middle East, it was surely the Arab-Israeli conflict. Many regional issues and prospects were held hostage to this seemingly intractable problem. Parties directly involved in the conflict—Israel and the PLO—seemed inexorably headed in opposite directions. Even moderate Israelis seriously considered the merits of "transfer," a euphemism for the coercive expulsion of all Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank; and many Palestinians committed themselves to violent confrontation with Israel, joining and working within a range of parties and groups dedicated to the destruction of Israel. Even the heavy-handed intervention of the United States failed to break the emotional and political deadlock between Israeli and Palestinian.

In the spring of 1993, Norway and independent international non-governmental organizations succeeded where the combined influence of the "great powers" of the world had failed in establishing a framework for negotiating a lasting peace. The signing of the Accords negotiated at Oslo registered not just the willingness of two former adversaries to seek some future negotiated solution to their self-destructive conflict, but also the relative decline of the superpowers and of their ability to dictate international outcomes. The peace process stalled from 1996 to 1999. Then a new administration in Israel signaled that it was ready to resume the process, this time including Syria on a separate track. That said, the series of negotiations only began a process—a process that was characterized by ambiguity, trial and error, and missed or extended deadlines. Put another way, the emerging Palestinian state is an act in progress, not something cut and dried.

Other system-level changes should be acknowledged as well. The proliferation of satellite channels, the emergence of new personal communication systems, and the geometric expansion of the Internet and access to it have begun to deliver on the promise of a truly global system of communication. These changes may have direct political consequences. The small but serious expatriate challenge to the Saudi royal family, for example, distributes its messages on the Internet, located in a home page originating in London. It is significant that among the countries most interested in controlling the information on the Net or access to it are China, the United States, and Germany, three of the most powerful countries in the world.

Sadly, our work has been also bracketed in time by the assassination of two key Middle Eastern leaders, Anwar Sadat in Egypt in 1979, and Yitzhak Rabin in Israel in 1995. Each leader was assassinated by extremist members of his own polity; and each had personally transcended the history of his previous career in order to explore the possibilities of peace. They both succumbed to the violence engendered by a rising tide of religiously motivated political extremism, a tide evident not just in the Middle East but truly global in scale. Non-Middle Eastern referents could include the Oklahoma City bombing in the United States, the release of poison gas in the subways of Japan, the reemergent political violence in England and Ireland—but the list could go on and on.

The good news is that the religious communities involved in systematic political violence appear to be relatively small and not representative of their religious roots. There are growing movements of moderation and tolerance in the mainstream communities of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam that now strive to offset the influence of their extremist coreligionists. It is instructive that in the aftermath of both Sadat's and Rabin's assassinations, the immediate effect was to reinforce the resolve of their successors to continue the search for peace. We have continued to incorporate discussions of religion and politics in this new edition.

The events described above have necessitated substantial revisions in the text. In some cases the changes amounted to a straightforward updating. In others, revisions were made so as to give a more thorough background to emerging issues. In particular, more explicit reference to the globalization process and what it seems to imply for the study of the behavior of individuals and nations, and, indeed, the very notion of area

studies is sprinkled through the last half of the text. The country profiles have been dropped, on the presumption that most students have access to the Internet. Most significantly, the book continues to be predicated on the value of using a multidisciplinary approach within a conflict and accommodation format.

We have directed our writing to an undergraduate audience not specifically acquainted with the Middle East. In addition, we have made every effort to avoid disciplinary jargon, arcane theoretical concepts, or other devices that would necessitate a sophisticated background in any of the social sciences. This is not to say that we do not introduce any special concepts or terms; but we do so only as necessary, and we do it as painlessly as possible.

One of the characteristic problems in writing about another culture involves the use of language. The words used by Arabs, Turks, or Persians to describe institutions and concepts fundamental to their civilization usually have no direct equivalent in English. One is faced with the dilemma of whether to translate them (which necessarily introduces our own cultural bias) or to use "native" terms (which places on the reader the burden of learning a new vocabulary). Compounding this problem is the more technical matter of how to transliterate Arabic or other languages into the medium of the English alphabet. Our solution has been one of compromise; we have used foreign words when there is no English equivalent or when the nearest English equivalent would be awkward or misleading. Despite our efforts to minimize the use of foreign words, the text has unavoidably made use of a number of them—especially Arabic terms. All these are explained in the text, and whenever possible the explanation accompanies the first appearance of a term, which is indicated by the use of italics. As an extra aid to the student, we have also included important terms in a glossary. The terms explained in the glossary are in boldface type the first time they appear in the text. As for the spelling of Arabic and other foreign words, we have omitted the diacritical marks that scholars use to render their transliterations technically correct. We do so on the assumption that the limited number of terms we use can, for the reader's purposes, be determined without these marks. Nearly all Arabic terms appear in several different English forms in the literature; we have tried to hold to those forms that reflect the most frequent current usage among informed scholars who write for a general audience. In personal names especially, we have often departed from the technically correct forms and employed instead the forms used in English for news reportage and popular historical writing.

One further matter that deserves mention here is the definition of the Middle East itself. The term Middle East raises some problems, for it originates in recent Western military usage and utilizes present national boundaries that cut across historically significant cultural and geographical divisions. Furthermore, the reference to the region as part of the "East" reveals a European bias; from the larger perspective of the whole civilized area stretching from Western Europe to East Asia, the socalled Middle East is located somewhat toward the West and has close cultural ties with the Mediterranean region as a whole. Despite these problems, we shall follow the (more or less) established convention and define the Middle East as the region bounded on the northwest by Turkey, on the southwest by Egypt, on the southeast by the Arabian peninsula, and on the northeast by Iran. At the same time, it must be remembered that this division is somewhat arbitrary, and that bordering regions like Afghanistan, the Sudan, and North Africa have much in common with their "Middle Eastern" neighbors. For this reason, we shall include them in our discussions whenever appropriate.

The authorship of this book is genuinely a joint affair; there is no "senior" author. The order of our names on the title page was randomly chosen. One of the authors is an economist with a long-standing interest in economic development; one is a political scientist specializing in political development in the Third World; and the third is a cultural anthropologist specializing in religion and culture change. Each chapter was largely the work of a single author, but each reflects a dialogue that began long before the book was conceived and that has continued throughout its preparation and revision.

We cannot hope to name all the people and institutions that have made important contributions to this writing. We wish to thank Knox College for its material and moral support, and particularly for maintaining an atmosphere that nourishes interdisciplinary collaboration and teaching. We are indebted to the United States Office of Education, which made it possible for us to observe at first hand the phenomena of social and political change in two Muslim countries, Egypt and Malaysia, during 1976 and 1977. We also thank Dr. John Duke Anthony, founder, director, and driving force of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations, under whose sponsorship we have collectively traveled to Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the U.A.E., and Israel and the Palestinian territories it occupies. There are scores of individuals in each of these countries who gave generously of their precious time and considerable talents in order that we could better appreciate some nuances of highly complex situations. We also owe thanks to Professor John Woods and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago. As always, the staff at Prentice Hall have been supportive and professional. We would like to thank the following reviewers for their helpful suggestions: Hanna Y. Freij, University of Utah; James B. Mayfield, University of Utah; Husain Mustafa, Virginia Commonwealth University; and Wayne G. Reilly, Hollins University. Finally, we thank our students at Knox, whose energy, enthusiasm, and interest in the Middle East give us continued motivation for this work.

Above all, we take this opportunity to express our appreciation to our wives and children for suffering bravely through what is, as every author knows, the seemingly endless task of transforming a set of ideas into a finished book.

Roy R. Andersen
Robert F. Seibert
Jon G. Wagner

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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