Rewiring Regional Security in a Fragmented World. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2011. 540 pp. $28.00 (cloth).

Will the Middle East Implode? Mohammed Ayoob. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2014. 120 pp. $45.00 (cloth).

The Middle East has been appealing to the international community since the eruption of the Arab Uprisings, which began in late 2010. The question whether people protests against autocratic rulers would be successful in transforming the countries for democratic and transparent governance and sustainable regional peace was raised just after the Arab Spring. Academia turned toward the Middle East's social, political, and military transformation began to seek the answers to these questions. The two volumes in this essay complement each other by examining the changing dynamics of the security sector in world politics and the Middle Eastern politics, elites, civil–military relations, and regional challenges within the Arab Spring.

Rewiring Regional Security in a Fragmented World, edited by Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, deals with regional security issues from a broad perspective. The book emphasizes the regional effect and differences in international conflict management, and it offers an analytic tool for understanding complex regional challenges and conflicts. It draws attention not only to the official institutional and decision-making process, but also to the role of civil societies, regional cooperation, and conflict resolution capacity. The book brings together more than 20 experts in the field to examine regional disputes, violence, challenges, and conflict resolution attempts.

The book is composed of two main parts and a conclusion. In the first part, the authors explore both global and regional aspects of conflict management. Chapters 1–3 analyze international security issues, arguing that security threats and challenges are more regional rather than global. The authors call attention to changing roles in international security matters and note that taking into consideration traditional security institutions, decision-making processes, and conflict resolution techniques is unsatisfactory. They also argue that regional/subregional institutions, political elites, and civil society have begun to play a more active role in conflict management and civil society in ensuring peace and stability. In doing so, the authors illustrate the United States's objective as "the preservation of global peace and stability" rather than "to dictate peace to the world" (28). The authors exemplify the regional organizations' role in peace operations and in negotiation and mediation. Chapter 4 also highlights cultural outlook and puts forward intersocietal interactions and their effect on national, security, and political culture in regional conflict management.

In part II, the book examines regions dealing with regional security problems, challenges, and threats by analyzing political agendas, security architecture, and capacities of political, economic, and nongovernmental organizations in peacekeeping and conflict resolution. It begins with African security problems and regional solutions, then moves to cover Middle Eastern security, as well as the chronic Arab–Israel conflict. The other chapters of the book examine other regional security challenges and threats, such as: the United States and NATO, European security, Russian and Central Asia, India and South Asia, the Caribbean and America. The regional analysis of these chapters demonstrates the changing dynamics of international environment, in particular, at the end of the Cold War era; converting security threats into more complexes (i.e., extremism, nuclear proliferation, and failing states); and the need for both military and nonmilitary forces to cooperate in order to cope with regional security threats.

Each region/case in this section also reflects the regional differences, strengths and weaknesses, and governance capacities to the security threats as well. They also discuss a new complex security paradigm and geopolitical and cultural effect on conflict resolution.

My arguments focus on the Middle Eastern section (chapters 6–8), which make an important contribution to understanding the Middle East's complex politics as well as being a comprehensive explanation of the Arab Spring. It emphasizes the weakness of subregional organizations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council, Arab Maghreb Union, and Arab Cooperation Council in regional conflict resolution and mediation. The authors note that the nature of state in the region led to instability and insecurity, indicating that "the apparent 'anarchy' that seems to prevail among the region's state and non-state actors, the absence of any meaningful consensus on how to take regional agendas forward, and the presence interstate rivalries that seem to be built on zero-sum competition for the defense of maximalist positions" (185). Politically and militarily, the Middle Eastern states tend to strengthen their national security and defense through cooperating with Western partners, in particular the United States, rather than achieving such through unifying regional security organization or via a common political will.

In terms of the policymaking and decision-making processes, Arab countries suffer from a lack of interoperability and collective security understanding. Furthermore, political competition in the region impairs cooperation, leading to an arms race. The authors argue that oil wealth directs public opinion and media in preventing the onset of opposition. While they stress the weakness of the security sector and of political organizations, they also perceive that resolving the Israel–Arab conflict, stabilizing Iraq, and reaching an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program could make a positive impact on collective policymaking. The authors also point out the need for democratic governance in order to provide political stability and security. These arguments and comments reflect the pre–Arab Spring era. In this context, Mohammed Ayoob's book yields a better understanding and a comparative analysis to examine the effect of the Arab Uprisings, regime changes, and their implications in the post–Arab Spring era.

Will the Middle East Implode? delves into the Arab Spring's effect on politics in the Middle East. Ayoob examines the changing dynamics of Middle Eastern politics, policymaking, interstate relations, and conflicts, in particular, transition process and the success of the revolution in the post–Arab Spring era. Ayoob's book does a good job of integrating Crocker, Hampson, and Aall's edited volume in terms of the effect of Arab Uprisings in the Middle East, as well as in demonstrating the big picture of the Arab Spring rather than simply focusing on public revolts. The book is divided into six chapters. In the first chapter, Ayoob offers a critical analysis of the Arab Spring and expounds that the Arab Spring proved not only the easiness of toppling old regimes but also the difficulty of replacing them with new ones. He deduces that the Libyan case marks the most important failing of regime replacement in the postrevolutionary era. He also points out that the current regime change in Syria, which is toppling Bashar Assad, may lead to a sectarian and ethnic division.

In chapter 2, Ayoob explores Islamist challenges on both state and nonstate levels. He makes clear that it is mandatory to take Islamist movements, ideologies, and relations into account to better understand Middle Eastern political executives. Ayoob highlights the Islamist movements as "Leninist organizations that are products of hybridization between social conservatism and political radicalism, whose primary objectives are political rather than religious or social" (15). Additionally, Ayoob recapitulates *Rewiring Regional Security in a Fragmented World*'s challenges to the Middle Eastern security by adding the role of dominant powers in the region. Chapter 3 deals

with one these challenges: the Palestine–Israel conflict. He argues that the Hamas victory in the 2006 election in Palestine revealed a new instance in terms of policymaking and governmental change. Nevertheless, Fatah's refusal to hand over the government to Hamas, as well as the United States's and Israel's distant attitude, led to a zero-sum game for both sides. In the post–Arab Spring era, regime change in Egypt had a slight effect on the Palestine–Israel conflict. Even under Morsi's rule after Mubarak's regime, Egypt developed relations with Palestine in a limited way due to military and economic dependence on the United States. The Egypt Muslim Brotherhood also played an important role in unifying Hamas and Fatah.

After having analyzed the region's prime problem, in chapter 4 the book presents rivalries at both regional and global levels. Ayoob amplifies each transition case—Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, and so on—and asserts that the regional rivalry is one of the most important factors obstructing transitions, leading to failure in the establishment of government. He especially portrays the external interventions as a security threat to the region rather than a facilitator in the transition to democracy. Chapter 5 discusses Iran's nuclear program. Taking into account that the book was published in 2014, before the nuclear deal, Ayoob points out the need for a strategic partnership to find a peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear program.

In the last chapter, Ayoob questions the Arab Spring's effect on the Middle East. He delineates the limits and policymaking challenges of the Arab Spring, noting that it led to failing democratic governance and rising radical Islamist movements in the post–Arab Spring era, contrary to expectations at the beginning of the revolutions. He also infers the different social, political, and ethnic factors in failing to transition into democracy. Ayoob's vision for the Middle East post–Arab Spring is based on the return of winter. The book explicates the causes of the failure and chaos, highlighting the lack of democratic governance experience, civil society organizations, and regional and global rivalries across the region in terms of economic and strategic importance. While the book was written in late 2013 and published in 2014, it provides valuable empirical findings regarding the Arab Spring's adverse effects.

Taken together, these two volumes make a significant contribution to international security matters by providing in-depth regional analysis of the current crises facing the Middle East. Covering Middle Eastern social, political, and military transformation in the light of the Arab Spring, the books provide a comparative analysis covering eras before and after the Arab Spring. *Rewiring Regional Security in a Fragmented World* is voluminous and covers important regional security issues and challenges; *Will the Middle East Implode?* is well structured, balanced, and easy to read. Both volumes are recommended to scholars, researchers, and students of international relations and area studies.

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