

Acknowledgement

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Acknowledgments

The idea of this book was first expressed by Professor Hiroshi Kato, Hitotsubashi University when I met him with Professor Hisao Komatsu of the University of Tokyo in the small office of Islamic Area Studies. His intention to conduct a comparative studies on social protests is revealed in the foreword of this book. It was an exciting and stimulating subject for social scientists as well as historians, and I added that it would be richer in colour if we argue it in the context of nation-building. This is the way our project for “Social Protests and Nation-Building in the Middle East and Central Asia” began.

It developed into three major research activities. First, a study programme for this subject was organised by the Institute of Developing Economies, under the title of “Social Movements and Political Stability in the Middle East and Central Asia” in the year 2001. Those who joined it were Professor Shintaro Yoshimura from Hiroshima University, Professor Yoshiko Kurita from Chiba University, Professor Tomohiko Uyama from Slavic Research Center in Hokkaido University, and Professor Chika Obiya from the Japan Center for Area Studies, National Museum of Ethnology, and adding to the researchers of IDE, Mr. Hiroyuki Aoyama, Ms. Natsuko Oka and me.

Secondly, Professor Kato organised a session in the International Symposium of the Islamic Area Studies (IAS) Project, held at Kazusa Arc on October 5–8, 2001, under the title of “Social Protests and Nation-Building in Muslim Societies.” This IAS project, represented by the project leader Professor Tsugitaka Sato from the University of Tokyo, was an epoch-making and challenging research project which lasted five years from 1997. A large number of the scholars for the Middle East and Central Asia were widely involved and various conferences, seminars, and international symposium were organised each year. The above-mentioned four-day International Symposium in Kazusa, whose general title was “The

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Dynamism of Muslim Societies: toward new horizons in Islamic Area Studies” was a kind of concluding meeting for the IAS Project. In that session, Mr. Aoyama and myself from IDE gave our presentations, as well as Dr. Saodat Olimova from Sharq Center, Tajikistan, and Professor Victor Shnirelman from Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences. Professor Juan Cole from the University of Michigan, Dr. Stephane Dudoignon from CNRS, Paris, and Professor Isam al-Khafaji from University of Amsterdam were also with us in the session.

Thirdly, IDE organised an International Workshop on the subject of “Social Movements and Political Dynamism in the Middle East in the Era of Globalization” at Makuhari, October 9–10, 2001. After the lectures from Professor El-Sayed Yassin, Counselor of al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo and Professor Maher al-Charif from Institut Français d’Études Arabes de Damas in Syria, we continued to discuss issues related to the subjects raised in the former two study projects. Professor Eiji Nagasawa from the University of Tokyo, Hiroshi Matsumoto, Research Fellow of the Japan Institute of International Affairs, Professor Takeji Ino from Wayo Women’s University joined the discussion, as well as Professor al-Khafaji and other staff of IDE.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Sadashi Fukuda, Director-General of Area Studies Department II, IDE, for his unflagging support for our project. Without his assistance and encouragement, I am certain this project will not have been accomplished.

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