

## BOOK REVIEW

***Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrialisation to the Globalisation of Democracy.* Francis Fukuyama. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014. Pp. 658.**

Democracy promotes globalisation and human societies have much transformed since Greek philosophers floated ideas of political order. Since then, political thinking has had a perpetual influence over societies. This process has kept evolving as thought is not static, but like a living organism. Ever since the time of classical Greek political thinkers, Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato, political scientists have been debating on the nature of political philosophy and order. Plato's *The Republic* was the major breakthrough in this regard that has provided the formulation of political deliberation and order. In modern times, democracy evolved as a political concept in Europe with a heated debate that first emerged in Britain and France against oligarchy and monarchy and the existing absolute order was replaced by public participation and representation. Then it influenced the rest of Europe and their colonies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The world has changed much after World War II, but the debate has continued to refine the world order.

With a Japanese-American background, Francis Fukuyama is an influential writer. *The End of History and the Last Man* gained unprecedented currency. In his latest mater-piece, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrialisation to the Globalisation of Democracy*, he picks up the debate from the industrial revolution (1830 AD) to the Arab Spring (2010), and analyses the past 180 years of democracy, and its interaction with many diverse forces. Many societies and states have changed, but many remain reluctant and unchanged.

Fukuyama's work is, in fact, captures intellectual debate among contemporary thinkers. He follows the traditions of Samuel P. Huntington, his American mentor, and draws similar, but not necessarily identical, conclusions. Synthesis of diverse thought is Fukuyama's forte.

Finding similarities and contrasts between the contemporary Middle East and nineteenth-century Europe, Fukuyama discovers religion and nationalism as alternative routes to political mobilisation in the Middle East (pp. 426-51). It is a revealing insight. He finds, for instance, that Libya crumbled because it was over-institutionalised (p. 4). His later remarks about Libya are influenced by dominant American narrative. On the 2008 financial crisis, he highlights that US government's failure to rescue large corporations led to their meltdown (p. 4). The Arab Spring, he contends, was primarily driven by the middle class (p. 6), and makes little reference to external factors.

Fukuyama knows Pakistan since his RAND studies on Afghan War, undertaken in the early 1980s. He is highly critical of Pakistan. To him, Pakistan is a state that resists universal democratic principles to become a modern state. While talking about the strong Asian states, Fukuyama says that Pakistan "continues to be dominated by entrenched quasi-feudal landed elite that has no intention of giving up its privileges" (p. 339). He refers to the efforts made to stabilise Pakistan through military and economic aid (p. 298). Fukuyama believes that "of today's Muslim countries, only Pakistan has a social structure of large landowners dominating masses of peasants, as most European countries did in the early nineteenth century" (p. 340). Pakistan's social and political order is changing, but with a slow speed. If democracy continues in future, much of Pakistan would be changed. The country has been put on the road to economic prosperity with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor underway, economic nation-building and good governance.

Citing Confucius, Fukuyama argues that trust is needed to construct a balance between the bureaucratic autonomy and accountability (pp. 506-23) in a modern political order. On China, he points out that the country is working on "new social landscape created by economic growth"(p.6). He concludes that "China poses the most serious challenge to the idea that liberal democracy constitutes a universal evolutionary model" (p. 544). He raises a number of questions about the Chinese political system and reforms and its growing economy without answering them (pp. 544-5) and predicts that the real challenge would come when Chinese economy will slow down (p. 545).

He says that the massive corruption is a challenge to Ukraine and other newly emerged European democracies. Evaluating Indian democracy, Fukuyama says that the country faces a gap in its performance (p. 547). Compared to China, the country has been completely hamstrung in its ability to provide modern infrastructure or services like clean water, electricity, or basic education to its population (p. 547). He deplores that Indian democracy “does not look very appealing on closer inspection” (p. 457).

Fukuyama says the US is a “Vetocracy,” and a “State of Courts,” where all decisions need public approval (pp. 455-505). However, the country faces a long-term fiscal challenge, which was dramatically demonstrated by shutting down the entire government in 2013. Fukuyama assesses that “American government is hardly a source of inspiration around the world at the moment” (pp. 447-8).

The writer argues that violence rejects and hurts democracy (p. 537-40). He concludes that people are struggling hard from Sao Paulo to Karachi to Los Angeles to London to gain high-quality equal human dignity, and the evolution of political development continues.

The volume is loaded with resources and contains an impressive bibliography. The language is simple yet stimulating and unfolds startling contrasts of political concepts and orders. The book is a valuable addition to the contemporary literature on political science.

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