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The Peace on The Horizon - 75 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (75)

Chapter 3 The grace of Allah – Oil boom (12)

075 Saudi Arabia appeared on stage (4/4)



Saudi Arabia adopted another strategy in addition to negotiations with Seven Sisters. Almost all of the oil fields in Saudi Arabia had been already assigned to Seven Sisters. However, one undeveloped field remained. It was in the Neutral Zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. In Kuwait, Burgan oil field was already in production. In Saudi Arabia, Ghawar, the largest onshore field, and Safaniya, the largest offshore field were also in production. The Neutral Zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had big potential of finding oil. Saudi government tried to assign the concession of undeveloped fields to foreign oil company other than Seven Sisters. The candidate was the private company of oil consuming countries which needed large amount of oil.

It was Japan that came forward the development of the offshore field in the Neutral Zone. Japanese entrepreneur Taro Yamashita acquired the concession in 1958. Arabian Oil Company was established in Japan with the assistance of two prominent businessmen Taizo Ishizaka and Ataru Kobayashi. Exploration base camp was opened in Khafji on the Persian Gulf coast. Oil discovered after two years.

For oil operation, a large number of local staff were required. The company widely recruited Arabs. Amin Shatila was one of the newly recruited staff by the company. He was the eldest son of the Palestinian family migrated from Jordan to Kuwait. In 1950s many Palestinians who lost their homeland migrated to oil-booming Gulf countries such as Kuwait, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Palestinians were very much confident that education was the only one inheritance for their children. They were enthusiastic about education. Amin Shatila was graduated from college in Kuwait. Amin joined Arabian Oil Company

in 1961. He moved to Khafji alone leaving his family in Kuwait.

(To be continued ----)

Areha Kazuya

(From an ordinary citizen in the cloud)