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The Peace on The Horizon - 75 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (121)

Chapter 5: Two calendars (Gregorian & Hijri)

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The Iranian Revolution took place in January 1979 (Hijri 1399, hereinafter Gregorian calendar will be used for easy understanding). In July 1979, Saddam Hussein assumed the presidency of Iraq. He aimed for the leader of Arab countries taking the place of Egypt. In August 1979, the Great Mosque of Makkah known as al-Masjid al-Haram in Saudi Arabia was occupied by Muslim extremists. The Saud ruling family was heavily shocked. In September 1980 (Hijri 1401, the first year of the 15th century of Hijri) the Iran-Iraq war was broken out. Ayatollah Khomeini, supreme religious leader of Iranian Shia sect, aimed for the religious leader of whole Islam, while Saddam Hussein of Iraq aimed to be a dictator in the Middle East. Religion and ethnicity competed regional leadership each other.

Saddam Hussein of Iraq insisted that Iran-Iraq War was the battle between Shiite and Sunni sects of Islam. Saddam Hussein ill-used the antagonism between two sects. He withdrew the money necessary for the war from rich Gulf oil-producing countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Both Iraq and Gulf monarchies were the same secular states. The Iran-Iraq War, therefore, was not a battle between religious sects but It was the war between secularism and religious faith. Although Iran was inferior to Iraq at the first stage of the war, the young Iranian volunteers marched in the battlefield one after another. Iranian Shiite Muslims believed that the war against Iraq was the fight against the enemies of Islam, so-called "jihad". They were driven by the sense of religious mission and bravely challenged against Arab secular states.

(To be continued ----)

Areha Kazuya

(From an ordinary citizen in the cloud)