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The civil war in Syria was a military struggle between the government and several anti-government entities which demanded the resignation of President Baser al-Assad. Iran and Russia supported the Assad government to strengthen their influence in the region. Iran supported Assad because the clan of al-Assad was from Alawite sect which was one of Shiite faction. Russia supported Assad due to military purpose. Russia held a navy base in Syria which faces to Mediterranean Sea. The sea lane from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus Strait had a significant strategic meaning for Russia compared with that of the Atlantic Sea through Baltic Sea where was frozen in winter. On the other hand, Western countries including the United States supported anti-government entities to overthrow the autocratic Assad regime. Saudi Arabia and Turkey of Sunni faction unanimously support anti-government entities. Their purpose was to keep countermeasures against the Shiite faction of Assad and Iran.

However, anti-government entities in Syria were not solid. They were like “bitter enemies in the same boat”, or crowd without order. Leadership had changed from time to time. The main wing was the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) consisting of Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) and several Arab anti-government forces including Al-Nusra Front. Islamic State (IS, ISIL, ISIS or Daesh) was the independent power different from neither government nor anti-government entities.

(To be continued ----)

Areha Kazuya

(From an ordinary citizen in the cloud)