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" The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East"(15)

By Areha Kazuya

E-mail: areha_kazuya@jcom.home.ne.jp

Chapter 2 Global wave – The demise of the colonial era and the regional power

2-1(15) Contrasting French and British colonial rule

According to the Sykes-Picot Agreement at the World War I (see prologue 5), France has got the area from southern Turkey, the whole of Syria, northern Iraq to Lebanon. And Britain got southern Iraq, Jordan, North of Arabian Peninsula and Kuwait. Both countries reigned as colonial powers in their respective regions.

However, the momentum of independence increased in various places after the World War II. The political system that France and the UK recognized after independence were largely different. During the World War II, France was occupied by Germany. There was no room for France to think about Middle East. By sewing the gap, Lebanon and Syria declared independence as republic states in 1941. France had not afford to interfere the independence. On the other hand, the UK has made Jordan and Iraq independent as kingdoms of the House of Hashim, which was descendants of the prophet Muhammad. The UK kept the promise according to the Hussein McMahon Correspondence (see Prologue 4).



It is an interesting fact that France acknowledged Lebanon and Syria as republic states, and the UK acknowledged Jordan and Iraq as kingdoms. One reason was due to the political system of both countries. Both countries are parliamentary democracies, but the UK is the constitutional monarchy as shown in its official state name "United Kingdom". Therefore UK people had no objection to making Jordan and Iraq as kingdoms.



In France, on the contrary, in 1789 the Bourbon dynasty was overthrown and French people established the republic state waving the three-color flag, so-called Tricolor. France had a long history as republic nation. Three colors are symbolizing the freedom, equality and philanthropy respectively. It was the reason why they

allowed Syria and Lebanon as republic states. However, France did not want to lose substantial control for two countries. Therefore, in Syria, France put Alawi factions of Shiite minority tribes in power. It is a conventional means of the colonial control to leave the power for minorities as virtual rulers under colonial rule. France manipulated the minority who needed external assistance behind the scenes and created advantageous power structure by repressing or breaking the majority.

France had double face to advocate freedom, equality, and philanthropy in the front, and to manipulate the colony at will in the back. This was a contradiction of French diplomacy. The Soviet Union has struck the contradiction. As the only one socialistic country the Soviet Union deployed class struggle in the Middle East after the World War II. Socialist movement spread accompanying the movement of Arab nationalism. The Syrian republic had pierced recklessly against French intention. In response to such a situation France was obstructed by its own ideology and could not take strong action. Historically speaking, France opts to escape when everything was in confusion. In the end France asked the United States to take care of the waste. It is totally the same story as Viet Nam war being defeated by Viet Cong (Communist Party of Vietnam). France left Vietnam, and the United States fitted into the mud. It is a fact of history that France could not count on the war. In the Middle East, France has not been able to become a leading role in solving problems even the old days even now.

On the other hand, the UK procured old wisdom through the long colonial rule of the British Empire. The UK put two sons of Hussain of a descendant of prophet Muhammad who were descended from Makkah by the Saud in the king of Jordan and Iraq respectively. In the Western Europe where democracy has become widespread, the monarchy looks like old-fashioned anachronism. But in the Middle East it was still a world where tribes could make their breadth, and Islamic religion was rooted in life. Western European republican or parliamentary democracy was premature in the Middle East. The UK looked at the reality of the Middle East in cool-headedness.

During the World War I, UK military officer Thomas Edward Lawrence, famous for "Lawrence of Arabia", helped Abdullah Hussein, the second son of the Sheriff of Makkah and later the king of Jordan. T.E. Lawrence was an advisor of Abdullah, but as a matter of fact he was merely one of a secret agent of British government. In 1921, Abdullah became the ruler of the Emirates of Transjordan, and in 1946 the country became independent as Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. His son, Crown Prince Hussein was sent to UK to study at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Sandhurst is renowned training school for young princes of royal family in the Middle East studying how to be a good emperor. UK has conciliated Hashemite into the UK's ally.

The Hashemite was the ruler who has sent in Jordan by UK. But for ordinary Arabs it was enough that the ruler was the descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. They thought UK had given them a precious gift. An Arabic merchant in the capital city of Amman passionately welcomed the ruler. His son, Khatib who was born in 1939 when the World War II began, was still seven years old at that time and did not know the meaning of the independence of Jordan. But he clearly could remember that his father

enthusiastically welcoming the new ruler.

(To be continued ----)