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"The Impossible Peace - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East"(18)

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

2-4(18) The Arab world that repeats division and dissolution

After World War II, many nations achieved the independence in various regions in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, where free from European imperialism. The reasons of independence were different each other depend on ethnicity, religion, history and so on. But the biggest factor of independence would be ethnicity.

Pan - Arabism raised by the Baath Party in Syria was a movement aimed at solidarity of Arab peoples. Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt was a man who was chasing it desperately. Nasser lost to Israel in the First Arab Israeli War in 1948, Egypt established the prestige in the Arab region as the flagship of non-allied countries when the 1st Asian African Conference (called as Bandung Conference) was held in 1955. In Suez War (Second Middle East War) in 1956, Nasser won in the political meaning as the world recognized the nationalization of Suez Canal, but he lost in military meaning due to the Israeli occupation of the Sinai Peninsula. The result was neither victory nor defeat.

Through these experiences, Nasser became confident that the realization of the overall alliance by the Arab peoples could be the only way to defeat imminent enemy Israel, and to let the world recognize the power of the Arab. It was quite sure that Nasser thought the heyday of Arab and Islam began in the era of Caliphate by Prophet Muhammad in Makkah in the 7th century, and then the Umayya dynasty with Damascus as the capital and the Abbasid dynasty with Baghdad as the capital. In the era of Umayya dynasty they conquered the Iberian Peninsula of the Western Europe. In the Abbasid era their territory was extended to the east of India. At that time Arab Islamic world was more superior to European Christian world not only in academic field but also in culture. Such accomplishment was attributable to bond of Arabic blood and Islamic belief.

It can be said that Nasser aimed for an alliance of Arab peoples to regain the glory of this old days. In history, it was common that the fresh rulers used to whisper to the people the banner of conquest: We are the same ethnic group!. There was one example in prewar Japan vocalizing the concept of "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere by Asian Peoples". Nasser stirred Arab ethnic consciousness or Islamic belief in the speech more and more, the citizen was drunk with his word.



Nasser offered Syria a coalition state plan. There was no objection to Syria dominated by the Baath party with Arab nationalism. In February 1958, the two countries established the United Arab Republic. Needless to say, new state implied the strategic idea of hitting Israel from both sides. Arab Federation between Kingdoms of Jordan and Iraq was also launched in May of the same year just three months later as if not to miss this movement. Both countries were brothers sharing blood and religious faith together, whose descendants were the Hassim family linked to the Prophet Muhammad. This

It was different from the United Arab Republic by Egypt and Syria, which aimed for political integration. Federation aimed a loose bond. In the case of Arab Federation by Iraq and Jordan they tried to defend the monarchy system with a threat to the emergence of United Arab Republic.

But neither the United Arab Republic nor the Arab Federation lasted long. A military coup occurred in Iraq just two months after the formation of the Arab Federation, and all of the Iraqi royal family was killed. The Arab Federation collapsed so quickly. In case of the United Arab Republic, the militia of Syria army repulsed against Nasser's attempt to forcefully integrated them. The coup occurred by the Syrian army officers in September 1961. After all the coalition with Egypt and Syria was resolved.

The Baath Parties in Syria and Iraq rapidly approached each other. In 1963 the Iraq-Syrian Unity was almost formed. The Mediterranean East Coast region including the two countries was called Levant district and was regarded as one area from the time of Ottoman Empire. But during the World War I, Syria and Iraq were divided by France and the UK according to the Sykes-Picot Agreement. It was natural that the friendship between the two countries deepened by the Baath Party which held Pan Arabism doctrine. The alias of the Islamic State which has been raging in this region is ISIL; Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. This implies that Islamic State regards Syria and northern Iraq as integral one territory.

(To be continued ----)