

The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East(21)

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

Chapter 2 Global wave – The end of colonial era and the emerging two super powers

2-7(21) Six Day War and the death of Nasser

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) which was established in 1964 started campaign to recapture their homeland from Israel. Its headquarter was placed in Amman, Jordan.

There were many political movements in the Middle East at that time. The United Arab Republic by Egypt and Syria was established in 1958, but their unity had broken in 1961. Two monarchies in Iraq and Jordan were agreed to form the Arab Federation in 1958, but the Iraq Revolution took place in the same year. There was a civil war in Yemen in 1962. Dictatorial leaders in Egypt, Syria and Iraq agitated their citizens saying "Drive Israel into the Mediterranean Sea!". They made the political propaganda to conceal their own misconduct or to justify their dictatorship. In any era and region, dictators used hate speech to turn away the eyes of the public.

Meanwhile, Israel also made a fierce campaign against the crisis of nation. Prime Minister Levi Eshkol reinstated retired officer Moshe Dayan with eye-patch as the defense minister. Dayan's strategy was that the best way to win the war was the first strike. He collected information about the neighboring Arab countries without prejudice. Mossad, the world top level intelligence worked for him. He proved the timing of the sneak attack.

The sneak attack of Israel began on June 5, 1967 at 8 AM. Their target was neighboring three countries: Egypt, Jordan and Syria. First, Israeli air force attacked the Egyptian Air Force Base on the Sinai Peninsula. Israel made it impossible to use the runway and destroyed all of the Egyptian jet fighters made in USSR. The Egyptian pilots in bed could not fight back at all. The Israeli army crossed the Sinai Peninsula at a burst, and reached to the Suez Canal.

After the battle of the Sinai Peninsula, Israel army turned to the west and occupied the Jordanian territory of the Jordan River so called West Bank. Furthermore, Israel invaded into the Golan Heights of Syria. Israel got a victory overwhelmingly. The Arab coalition including Egypt was defeated devastatingly. The war ended in only 6 days. The war, therefore, was named as "Six Day War". In this war Israel got the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Israel widened its territory in double. The Sinai Peninsula was returned to Egypt in 1973. The Gaza Strip, West Bank of Jordan River and the Golan Heights, however, have been occupying by Israel until now.



The Suez Canal has been closed for a while and influenced widely on the international economy. Tragedy fell on the Palestinians who lived in the West Bank. Many of them became refugees and flew into Jordan. The number of refugees reached one million.

President Nasser thought that he had to take responsibility for the defeat. He announced his resignation at night on June 9, 1967. But Egyptian citizens thought that there was only Nasser that could save Egypt. Just after the announcement of resignation, citizens in Cairo launched a march on the street and asked for Nasser to change his mind. A huge wave of march appeared in the dark street under the blackout. Only three and a half hours later, Nasser made a statement to leave his decision of resignation to the National Assembly. Early on the 10th June, the National Assembly urged Nasser to stay as head of state. Nasser

decided to continue his presidency.

In August, the Arab countries held an Arab summit meeting in Khartoum in Sudan and adopted a hardline policy against Israel. It was called "Three No's". They were; "NO acceptance of Jewish nation", "NO negotiation with Israel", and "NO peace agreement between Arab and Israel". In fact, both Egypt and Jordan wanted to regain their territory from Israel through peaceful negotiation with intermediation by US. But their hope was swept away by the loud voice of the many Arab leaders.

Nasser had kept the presidency for nearly three years afterwards. He had to understand that he himself was almost lame duck. In August 1970, he achieved the ceasefire with Israel. Next month he suddenly died of a heart attack at the age of 52.

(To be continued ----)

By Areha Kazuya

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

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