

The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (30)

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

Chapter 4: War and Peace in The Middle East

4-2(30) Dictatorship shadows citizens' peaceful life

People in Egypt and Israel recovered peaceful life when the Ramadan War was over. The Palestinians who had been expelled from their own land inherited from their ancestor long time ago also shared the same feelings. They escaped to Jordan, and then migrated Persian Gulf countries like Kuwait or Saudi Arabia.

Shatila who was employed by a Japanese company that started oil development in the neutral zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia married to a Palestinian woman of his distant relation. He spent busy but peaceful days. Every weekend he drove a second-hand American car with his wife and visited parents living in Kuwait. The road was unpaved rough one for a while beyond the border. But as soon as entering Burgan oil field, comfortable paved road of double lanes continued straight to the city center of Kuwait. When Shatila arrived his father's home, he did never fail to visit Al-Yassin family of neighbor. Two families caravanned together from Palestinian city Turkam to Jordan and then to Kuwait. The Al-Yassin got one girl named Rania in Kuwait. Shatila loved a cute and clever Rania.

In midtown of Kuwait, there were many prestigious hotels of European and American style. Inside the comfortably air-conditioned shopping center, famous brands from Western world attracted visitors. The war was over and oil boom was in front of them. Kuwaiti people and foreigners enjoyed peace and days of plenty. They hoped that such a life would last forever. The neighboring non-oil-producing countries also benefited from aid by oil-producing countries, or remittance from migrant relatives.

However, dissatisfaction had grown little by little in the heart of people during their peaceful life. It was not due to lack of goods. Low-income citizens were awaked to the economic disparity in their daily life and asked for change. It was dictators who took the opportunity in such atmosphere politically and grabbed the power. The dictator was not a tyrant from the beginning. He firstly appeared as a sophisticated person with nation-wide popularity. This was seen not only in the Middle East but also in many developing countries in Eastern Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. But it was worthy to say that the dictatorship in the Middle East appeared intensively after the Ramadan War, and has kept power for a very long period of 30 to 40 years since then. It was surprising that some of them still keeps power.

Chronologically, the duration of dictatorship in the Middle East was as follows; Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in Libya (1969-2011), President Hafiz and Basher al-Assad in Syria (1971- present), President Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen (1978-2012), President Saddam Hussein in Iraq (1979-2003), President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt (1981-2011), President Ben Ali in Tunisia (1987-2011) and President Omar al-Bashir in Sudan (1989-2019). The shortest one was 24 years tenure of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Ben Ali in Tunisia respectively. Assad family of Hafiz and Basher is still sitting in a dictator's chair for nearly half century.

Dictatorship in the Middle East began in 1970s and 1980s. And many of dictators slipped down from their power in 2011 and 2012. "Arab Spring" which was taken place at the end of 2010 made them step down.

The inaugurations of dictatorship were different from each other depend on the political and social situation of each countries. But it would be meaningful that many dictators had the same experience. Gaddafi of Libya, Hafiz al-Assad of Syria, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Abdullah Saleh of Yemen, Omar al-Bashir of Sudan were all military officers. Experience in the army was the fastest course to become dictator.



In case of Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, he toppled the Kingdom of Libya by the coup d'etat in 1969. He grabbed power and established Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Jamahiriya means direct democracy. He did not allow people to call him as president. People called him the supreme leader and he called himself as "colonel". Gaddafi esteemed Egyptian president Nasser who had a title of colonel during his military career. Gaddafi used carrot and stick distinctively to control tribes in Libya. At the same time, he survived in the turbulent international politics with marvelous tactics. Finally, he was killed in the civil war during "Arab Spring". His dictatorship continued for 42 years and ended in 2011.

(To be continued ----)

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