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"The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East"(31)

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Chapter 4: War and Peace in The Middle East

4-3(31) Dictator created by populism

What is almost common to the dictators of the Middle East was that they were origins of poor. They have achieved excellent results at military academies and climbed up the ladder to officers. In Arab countries of those days, only wealthy people were able to go to college. The poor young guys who had a strong desire to learn aimed for a military academy. Excellent young guys gathered at the military academy. They learned up-to-date technology and know-how at the academy, and the outstanding students were dispatched for studying in USSR. Needless to say, socialistic ideology influenced and inspired the young officers from Arab countries. Arab nationalism was integrated with socialism. Arab officers became opponents against Western capitalism and imperialism.

At the same time, however, Arab officers studying in USSR felt somewhat strange about the socialistic ideology. When they got a sense of mind in childhood, they had already been caught up in the identity of Islam. So they were not entirely captured by a socialistic ideology. They could not accept the atheism of the communist society psychologically. Young Arab officers had rational way of thinking but at the same time they were religious Muslims. They gradually grew apart from the socialism and atheism.

In the midst of the cold war between the East and West, the leaders of the Middle East were forced to decide whether to belong the Western ally or the Eastern ally. Unlike the 1950s when non-alliance movement by Zhou Enlai of China, Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Josip Broz Tito of Czechoslovakia had been prevailing, there was no position of neutrality not belonging to either side. Before World War II Arab countries had been ruled by Western imperialism. After the war, they were fascinated by the socialism of USSR which was linked with the nationalism.

For Arabs who were deeply captive in Islam, atheistic communism was entirely opposite philosophy. For them it was easier to understand Christianity of Western countries because both Islam and Christianity were monotheism. They saw the situation of Muslim minorities in Central Asia being

suppressed by the central government of Moscow. Middle Eastern dictators gradually inclined to Western countries despite the difference of ethnicity.

However, dictators were unwilling to give political freedom to the people unlike to Western countries. While many of the Middle East countries holds the Republic in the name of their country, dictators made the people and the international community blindfold. Harsh dictatorial authoritarian state has been established. It was symbolized in the country name of Libya. Muammar Gaddafi named his country as "Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (direct democracy)". The country's name was too much decorative; "Great". "Socialist", "People's", "Arab (ethnicity)" and "Jamahiriya (direct democracy)". Needless to say, Libya in Gaddafi's era was an absolutely dictatorial authoritarian state far different from its name. Compare with others, North Korea is quite the same case. North Korea's official country name is "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" (in short DPRK). The dictators love to decorate everything.

Actually it was not necessarily true that all of ordinary citizens were looking at such dictators critically. On the contrary, it was not unusual for them to applaud their dictators. The Arab people were daunted by corrupt monarchies and bored by the warfare taken place one after another even after the World War II. They expected re-construction work by young officers who tried to overthrow an old system (Ancien Regime). Association of Free Officers were organized not only in Egypt but also in Syria and Libya.

Capable young guys who were unable to receive higher education because of the poverty acquired the latest knowledge and skills in military organizations. They also got the capacity of leadership to attract colleagues. Dictators used to pay great attention to gain popularity of the masses. Of course the dictator was not always a dictator from the beginning. When he rose to the top, he agitated the people and grabbed the power before the people knew what the real situation was.

The dictator absolutely would not give up the power once he got it. The person of his inner circle might support him and take the lion's share behind the dictator. They could take such privilege only during dictator's tenure. It was why they hoped their boss to be a boss forever. They themselves, however, were not so courageous to become dictators itself. They were acquainted with the fact that the status of dictators was fragile. In any case they would hope the boss to keep his position as long as possible.

Every country has a democratic constitution and clearly stipulate the tenure of president and ban on life-time re-election. However, dictator and his inner circle deliberately raise the popularity and change the constitution conveniently. Thus a dictator becomes the lifetime ruler. The dictator has transformed into a monster that could no longer be controlled before the people acknowledged.

Even though the dictator got a lifetime tenure, human life was limited. The dictator who conscious of his old age would think about the successor. But he could not trust anyone at that time. He would be

afraid that he might be assassinated by his inner circle. He might suspect even his brothers and purge them one after another. Only his son was the last candidate as successor. Every dictator spent his life differently each other, but they surprisingly similar to end their days.

Anyhow, while the dictator reigned, the society was peaceful somehow and the people was satisfied moderately. In any era, dictator was a monster created by populism.

(To be continued ----)