The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (32)

(Japanese Version)
(Arabic Version)

Chapter 4: War and Peace in The Middle East

4-4(32) "Dar Al Islam (House of peace)" and "Dar Al Harb (House of war)"

Muslim names their world as "House of Peace (dar al-Islam)" and the rest of the world as "House of War (dar al-Harb)". Islam means to believe Allah and Prophet Muhammad and to send the life according to the doctrine of the Holy Quran. For Muslim, Islamic world is a very peaceful one. And non-Islamic world is the one of war.

It is not only Islam but also any other religions that faithful believers would be guaranteed the peaceful utopia. Christianity has the word "millennium kingdom of bliss". For the people who is neither Muslim nor Christian might not qualified to comment these words. But it seems that the meaning of "dar al-Islam" and "millennium kingdom of bliss" is very similar each other. Other monotheism and polytheism seem to have the similar doctrine too. It would be somewhat different from Buddhism in which enlightenment has the highest value.

At the beginning of Islamic era, it was the mission to deploy the doctrine of Islam to al-Jahiliya (the world of darkness). Then the Islamic Empire was built up. In the Middle Ages, Ottoman Empire overwhelmed Christianity at the fight with the Crusades over the holy Jerusalem. The Empire achieved its prosperity. It was the time when the world continued to be a "House of Peace (dar al-Islam)". Although the modern Western people insisted that the Ottoman Empire was the world of tyranny and exploitation, it was a peaceful place for the majority people living in the Empire.

It was the imperialism of Western powers that invaded and destroyed House of Peace. The politicians, the uniforms and capitalists of Western countries expanded the "House of War (dar al-Harb)" one after another in the Islamic world. Muslim believed that there was one house neither "House of Peace" nor "House of War" between the boundary of two Houses. They named it "House of Peace Treaty (dar al-Sulf)".

After the Ramadan War in 1973, Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty. Since then Arab-Israeli inter-state war has not took place for nearly half a century. It can be said that the "House of Peace (dar al-Islam)" appeared exactly. Speaking of the Middle East war, it usually meant the Arab-Israeli war. It was the ethnic war between Arabs and Jews, and at the same time it was a religious war between Islam

and Judaism. It was a mere bilateral confrontation scheme that was clearly defined ally or enemy.

Other countries could simply be categorized whether ally or enemy. If one country supported Israel, Arabs regarded that country as enemy. Enemy's ally was enemy. If one country opposed against Israel, Arabs regarded that country as ally. Enemy's enemy was ally. Ramadan War in 1973 showed the clear evidence. Arab oil-producing countries (OAPEC) launched their own oil strategy. The country that supports the Arab regarded as ally and they continued the supply of oil to that country. But Israeli supporter like United Stated and Netherland were classified as an enemy of Arabs. OAPEC discontinued the supply of oil to the US and Nertherland. Japan which was a close ally of US was regarded as enemy of Arab. Enemy's ally was enemy. Japan dispatched Vice Prime Minister Miki to the Middle East in haste expressing that Japan was a friendly country of Arab. Japan could escape from oil embargo by OAPEC.

The conflicts in the Middle East after the Ramadan War were not just a simple confrontation. The Iran-Iraq war from 1980 to 1988 was the integrated conflicts with ethnic problem between Persians and Arabs and Islamic problem between Shiites and Sunnis. The Arab countries unanimously supported Saddam Hussein of Iraq ruled by Arab Sunnis. But in southern Iraq there were many Shiites who showed religious royalty rather than ethnicity or nationality. They were afraid of the dictatorship of Sunni central government. They had sympathy on Shiites' Iran.

Saudi Arabia is a Sunni monarchy country. Iran is a Persian, Shiites and Republic country. Iran is an enemy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Iraq is an Arab Sunni country. Therefore, Iraq was an ally of Saudi Arabia though Iraq was republic state. Saudi Arabia had a contradictory problem. There were many Shiites both in Kingdom's Eastern province and in southern region of Iraq. Saddam Hussein was a security risk for Saudi Arabia because he once insisted to overthrow the Saudi monarchy. But Saudi Arabia had no choice to support Iraq in Iran-Iraq War.

Ethnicity, religion and political ideology were interconnected with each other. It became vague that who was enemy or who was ally. Enemy 's enemy might be an ally or another enemy. Enemy's ally might an enemy or another ally. Situation had changed from time to time. The intricate political situation was difficult to judge either enemy or ally.

But the Middle East in the late 1970s before Iran-Iraq War was a relatively calm era. Nobody might object to call 1970s a peaceful era. The wealth of oil in the Gulf oil-producing countries was one reason to insure the peace. Non-oil producing countries in Middle East shared the slice of oil wealth, too. The birth of authoritarian states in Syria, Iraq, Libya and several other countries was another reason. All of them were dictatorship states. To be honest, temporary peace in Middle East after the Ramadan War was brought by oil money and dictators.

(To be continued ----)

By Areha Kazuya

E-mail: Arehakazuya1@gmail.com

Home Page: OCIN INITIATIVE
(Table of contents)