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

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Chapter 4: War and Peace in The Middle East

4-5(33) The war in Afghanistan: Bitter enemies in the same boat



After the era of brief peace and prosperity in the first half of the 1970s, the Middle East was suddenly rolled in by gun smoke in the latter half of 1970s. In 1978, the Communist regime was born in Afghanistan where sandwiched between Iran and Pakistan. Afghanistan has long been a crossroad of trade in the 19th century. Russian Empire had traditional policy of southward expansion aimed for the Indian Ocean from Central Asia. Meanwhile East India Company of British Empire which

monopolized trade with Asian countries tried to secure a trade route from Oman to India. Both empires crashed. It was called "Great Game" and Afghanistan became multiple areas of conflict. In the early 1970s when the Afghan monarchy was falling down and the Communist party gripped the power with the support of USSR, USSR got a big opportunity to control the region.

However, Afghanistan, where was controlled by a traditional tribal society and a strong Islamic faith, has gained momentum for anti-government rebels rather than stability. The inferior central government called for reinforcements to the USSR. In spite of the opposition of the international community, USSR began military intervention in 1979. After that, for ten years until the troops of USSR withdrew, civil war in mire had continued in Afghanistan.

It was the "Mujahidin" that battled in the center of the rebels in civil war. Mujahidin means jihad (holy war) warrior of Islam in local language. For Mujahidin of Islam jihad, communism that advocated atheism was the incarnation of evil. Communism was much more difficult to accept than Christianity or Judaism.

Muslims believe that God of Christianity and Yahweh of Judaism are the same existence with Allah of Islam. For the Islam, one of the three major monotheism, Allah is the same as God and Yahweh,

because the supreme existence is the only one Creator. Muslims believe that prophets written in the Old Testament was the first batch of the prophets. Jesus Christ was a prophet of the second from the last prophet. And Muhammad was the last prophet. Although the Christian believes that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Muslims, however, understand that God had no child, so Jesus Christ was one of the prophets. Monotheists do not admit the religion which believes plural supreme, so-called polytheism. Therefore, they consider the polytheism of ancient Greek is a religion of evil. They might also think that Japanese traditional faith that there are eight million deities in natural world is a religion of barbarian. But monotheists can accept polytheists because polytheists themselves believe the supreme existence. They cannot accept atheism of communist society.

For Muslims, atheism is not only unable to understand but also the thought of devil. Mujahidin did fight against the communist government on behalf of Allah. Muslims in the Arab countries sympathized for the Mujahidin. Muslims in the oil-rich Gulf countries worshiped at the mosque for Afghanistan jihad fighters and then put money into the Zakat box when leaving mosque. Zakat means the donation and is a religious duty of Muslims. They were willing to donate. The donated money to back up the Afghan war could not be made public, so the money was laundered through several banks. Later donation for the war in the mosque and its money laundering transformed into a fund route for Islamic extremists. Governments of the Middle Eastern and the Western countries were silent or encouraged at the time, nevertheless they are plagued nowadays.

In the Afghan war the Arab countries supplied soldiers and money. While the United States supplied modern weapons and intelligent information via Pakistan. The information includes the deployment of USSR's missile and army acquired by military satellites. They collaborated each other against the USSR socialist regime. The joint operation between Islam and Christianity, though historically being hostile relations, exactly looked like "Bitter enemies in the same boat".

The principles that both camps aimed to overthrow the USSR was completely different. The Arab camp had intense antipathy to communist atheism. The USSR was the Devil or Satan. Therefore, it was jihad (holy war) to defeat communism ideology. Arabs are implanted ethnicity and Islam religion. Arabs have no room for ideology. In contrast, the purpose of the United States to defeat the USSR was very clear. It was to hold the hegemony of the world order based on battle of ideology: Liberalism against Socialism, Capitalism against Communism. After the muddy Vietnamese War ended in 1975, the United States grabbed the world leadership at the advanced country Summit (G7) in the same year. For the United States, the USSR was the last enemy. The Afghan war was the forefront.

In the Afghan War, a large number of volunteer soldiers participated from Arab countries. Among them the biggest name was Usama bin Ladin of Saudi Arabia. There is no person who doesn't know his name. Let review briefly his career how he became the terrorist.

Bin Ladin was born in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia in 1957. His father was origin of Yemen and in youngster he moved to Jeddah just near Holy City Makkah. He stepped up from peddler on the street, and then got the favor of Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, first king of Saudi Arabia. When Usama bin Ladin was born in 1957, his father was already the owner of the biggest construction conglomerate in the country. He got married with many women and Bin Ladin was his 17th son. At the age of 11 Usama lost his father by airplane crash, and he received a legacy of 300 million dollars. He then entered Islamic Seminary (Madrassa) and devoted himself to extreme Islamic fundamentalism. When he was 22 years old he went to Afghanistan as a volunteer soldier. Many madrassas were built in Afghanistan with financial aid by Saudi Arabia, and Mujahideen (jihad fighters) were brainwashed by the Islamic fundamentalist idea. It was a matter of course that Usama immediately came to the top of foreign volunteer soldiers because he had 300 million dollars.

The USSR were gradually driven into a corner and finally withdrew in 1988. The Arab-Muslim countries won the religious war against atheism and the United States won the ideological war against socialism. The Afghan war brought about the collapse of the USSR. In the United States, religious sociologist Professor Francis Fukuyama wrote "The end of History and the Last Man". The era of America First emerged and the illusion has been created as if an eternal world peace would be realized.

However, Afghan War also had a negative aspect to make many problems hidden in the shadows of history come to the surface. The United States forced Middle East countries to liberalize and democratize politics. It was a pressing of Western ideology. But behind ideology, there were Evangelicalism of Christianity and Neo-Conservatism in ideology.

Meanwhile, in the Islamic countries, the Iranian revolution broke out in 1979. Religious politics by Shiite leader Ayatollah Khomeini generated a conflict with the Sunni Arab countries and resulted in the Iran-Iraq war. Furthermore, secularism and fundamentalism crashed inside the Sunni Arab countries. In addition, terrorism by extremist spread inside of the fundamentalism. Chaotic confusion had appeared.

(To be continued ----)