

## **The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (34)**

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

### **Chapter 4: War and Peace in The Middle East**

#### **4-6(34) Islamic revolution in Iran**

Until the end of the 1970s Iran was the most stable country in the Middle East. In 1925 Reza Shah, a general of Cossack Brigade, established Pahlavi dynasty by a coup d'etat. He changed the country name from Persia to Iran. During the World War II, he approached the Nazis of Germany. Iran, therefore, was surrendered by the Allied Forces. Reza Shah was forced to abdicate in favor of his son, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi. Then the Communist Party gained power. In 1951 Muhammad Mosaddegh became Prime Minister and nationalized the oil industry.

The United States thought that communism and nationalization of oil industry in Iran were critical for US Middle East policy. The US overthrew the Mosaddegh government by the secret operation of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Muhammad Reza Pahlavi gained full authority again. Since then the honeymoon between the United States and Iran had started. The United States generously gave the state-of-the-art weapons to Iran. In return Iran poured the wealth of oil to the United States. The US entrusted Iran to stabilize the Persian Gulf region and to support indirectly the unstable Israel. Iran was called "the Guardian of Persian Gulf". Muhammad made reign of terror with the cooperation of the CIA of the United States and Mossad of Israeli intelligence agency. The network of the secret police, so-called SAVAK, covered all over the country. Agricultural land reform, privatization of state enterprises and right of women's vote were introduced in order to curry the United States' favor. It was called White Revolution.

Merchants of the bazaar (market) and the Islamic clergy were the victims of the White Revolution. It was worthy to mention that Prophet Muhammad was a merchant as the leader of caravan. Therefore, the relation between merchant and religious people was not bad in Islamic society. And power of merchant could not be underestimated in the Middle East. Merchants and clergies cooperated each other and resisted the Shah regime. Shah was merciless for the resistance movement, and imprisoned them or exiled them abroad. Ayatollah Khomeini, a top religious leader, was expelled abroad. He manipulated the resistance movement in Iran from Paris.

In 1978, a slander article against Ayatollah Khomeini triggered a riot in the sacred City Qom. People protested against the government and demonstrators shouted the establishment of Islamic state. The riot spread throughout Iran like the wildfire. In January 1979, Reza Pahlavi finally retired and exiled abroad. In exchange Ayatollah Khomeini returned home from Paris. In 1979, the Islamic Revolution

achieved at last.



In April of the same year, referendum approved the establishment of Islamic Republic of Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini declared “velayat-e faqih”. Velayat-e faqih meant Guardianship by Islamic jurist. It formed the basic theory of the national sovereignty. Religious state was established in Islamic modern society for the first time. Velayat-e faqih is the ingenious legal theory of the Twelver Shiism. In Iran the majority of Muslims is Twelver Shiism. It preaches as follows; Imam, religious leader, took over the leadership after Muhammad's death. But the Imam of twelfth successor suddenly hid out (Hidden Imam). Thereafter the Islamic religious leader ruled the world on behalf of Imam until he appears as Mahdi. Their theory justifies the control by religious clerics. Iran became a religious state which was very rare in the modern world.

At the same time, a communist regime was born in Afghanistan next to the east of Iran, and the civil war took place. The War in Afghanistan was the war between socialism ideology and the Islam. Though the United States and Arab Islamic countries historically conflicted each other, they fought against the USSR in one mind. The United States believed that liberalism and capitalism was the best ideology in the world and the War in Afghanistan was the final ideological war against USSR. While the Arab-Islamic countries thought that the war was religious one to stop the invasion of atheism.

The Islamic Revolution had changed Iran from the ideology of liberalism and capitalism by Reza Pahlavi to religious beliefs by Ayatollah Khomeini. Both the USSR and the United States were confused by the drastic change of society in Iran. The impact of the United States was much bigger than USSR. The United States has accepted the exile of Reza Pahlavi taking humanitarian manner into consideration. However, US decision ignited the anti-American sentiments of Iranian students. They occupied the US embassy in Tehran. The occupation lasted for a year. As a result, the strong anti-Iran sentiment was born in the United States. There is no indication to end the mutual antipathy until now. It was the beginning of the unfortunate history between Iran and the United States.

(To be continued ----)

By Areha Kazuya  
E-mail: [Arehakazuya1@gmail.com](mailto:Arehakazuya1@gmail.com)

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