

The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (42)

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

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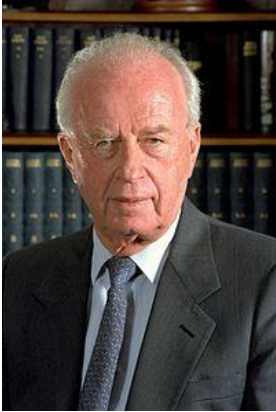
Chapter 5: Two calendars (Gregorian & Hijri)

5-6(42) Israeli prime ministers received Nobel Peace Prize twice

There are several international prizes awarded to those who contributed to world peace, such as the United Nations Peace Medal and the Ramon Magsaysay Award of Philippine. But it is sure that the Nobel Peace Prize is the best one in view of the high degree of recognition or its long history. In November 1901, the first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded by Henri Dunant of Switzerland who founded the Red Cross, and since then the prize has continued nearly 120 years till Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali was awarded in 2019.

Israeli Prime Ministers had won twice in this honorable Nobel Peace Prize. Menachem Begin was the first winner in 1978. He was jointly awarded with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt. After the Ramadan War in 1973, two politicians concluded the bilateral peace treaty although facing the opposition of all Arab countries. The second Israeli winners were Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres in 1994. At that time Rabin was Prime Minister and Peres was Foreign Minister who later became Prime Minister. Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), co-won the prize with them. After the Gulf War, the momentum of peace dialogue between Israel and Palestine had been realized. By the mediation of Norway, so-called "Oslo Accords" was concluded between them. It was the historical event that Israel and PLO acknowledged each other. That was the reason why they received the Nobel Peace Prize.

In the history of the Nobel Peace Prize, half of the winners were individuals and the remaining were organizations or entities. Most of individuals were civilians like peace activists or philosophers. There were very few politicians who received Nobel Peace Prize. Furthermore, they were not the president or prime minister. Even if he or she was the top of the state, most of them were already retired from active service at the time of winning prize like ex-Prime Minister Eisaku Sato of Japan who was awarded the prize in 1974. Taking the number of winners into consideration by country, Presidents of the United States were awarded multiple times. They were Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, Woodrow Wilson in 1919, Jimmy Carter in 2002 and Barack Obama in 2009. This was the exceptional case in the history of Nobel prize.



It was, therefore, surprising that Israeli prime ministers won the Nobel Peace Prize twice. And it was more surprising that one of winners of two peace prizes were assassinated later. President Sadat of Egypt who was co-awarded with Begin in 1978 was assassinated three years later. And Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, winner of 1994, was also assassinated in 1995. Sadat was sniped as the current president by his own soldiers, and Rabin, as the current premier was shot by young opponents who was against the peace treaty.

Alfred Nobel, the founder of the Nobel laureate, told that the peace prize would be given to;

"The said interest shall be divided into five equal parts, which shall be apportioned as follows: /- - -/ one part to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." (Excerpt from the will of Alfred Nobel)

In hopes of reconciliation and peace between Sweden and Norway, Peace Prize is awarded in Norway. As a result, the Nobel Prize in five categories of physics, chemistry, physiology / medicine, literature and economics is awarded in Stockholm, Sweden, whereas only the Peace Prize is awarded in Oslo, Norway.

What was the meaning of the Nobel Peace Prize given to the Middle East peace talks? The reason of awards were the peace building efforts in the Middle East. There was no doubt that three Israeli politicians made a great contribution to the peace with Palestine in spite of the strong domestic opposition. Nobody would object against the decision of the Nobel selection committee that Israeli politicians were deserved to the Peace Prize.

But the peace negotiation in the Middle East after the World War II should not be limited to the peace talk between Israel and Palestine. In the Western countries the political matters about the Middle East were too much concentrated on the peace talk between Israel and Palestine. Politicians in Western countries gave ex post facto consent that Israel won the war four times. They neglected the fact that the construction of the Jewish home land in Palestine and independence of Israel resulted the conflict in the Middle East. Western Europe might conceal the Middle East peace process with the Nobel Peace Prize. Norway's mediation brought Nobel Peace Prize to three politicians in 1994. Norway looked like to praise herself.

The inter-states war between Israel and Arab countries was over after the Nobel Peace Prizes in 1978 and 1994. But it could be hardly to say that the peace had come in the Middle East. The political situation in the Middle East has been deteriorating furthermore since the assassination of

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995. The eternal peace in the Middle East is still on the horizon.

(To be continued ----)

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