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"The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East"(48)

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Chapter 6: Genealogy of Islamic terrorism

6-5(48) Monotheism distinguishing ally and enemy

President George W. Bush, who fell into the Iraq War, labeled Hussein's regime to be part of the axes of evil along with Iran and North Korea. He said that all of the countries in the world had to clarify their own position to belong either on the US side or the terror side and shouted that "Show the Flag!". There was no alternative to allow ambiguity. For President Bush it was a confrontation between justice and injustice. In religious meaning, it was a confrontation between God and the Devil. In such case, needless to say, the United States was justice and an agent of God, and Iraq was injustice and an agent of the Devil. Monotheistic Christianity often uses its own logic to distinguish ally or enemy.

However, monotheistic Islam also had the same logic. For Islamic countries justice was in their side. They justified that they were the agents of Allah (God). They claimed that the United States and other Western Christian countries were injustice, and Western people were the agents of the Devil. The Satanic Verses incident in 1988 was a good example. A British writer Sir Salman Rashdie wrote a novel "The Satanic Verses" which was the lifetime story of Prophet Muhammad. Muslims accused the author that the novel insulted Prophet Muhammad and Islam. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, ordered death sentence for not only the author but also its publisher and foreign translators. Japanese translator who was an associate professor of the Tsukuba University in Japan was killed by unknown somebody.

Such fanatic reactions are peculiar to monotheism. Buddhism and polytheism like Greek myths or Shintoism in Japan teach that justice or injustice and God or the Devil are coexisting in one's own minds. Although there is a struggle between the enemy and the ally, it is not a confrontation of justice and injustice and a fight between the agent of God and the agent of the Devil.

There would be three cases to classify the ally or the enemy in a monotheistic way of thinking which distinguish ally or enemy by means of justice or injustice and God (Allah) or the Devil. One is a confrontation with a different religion (pagan confrontation), the second one is a confrontation with the difference of sects (sectarian confrontation), and the third one is the confrontation with the orthodox

faction and the heretical faction in the same sect (heretical confrontation). Terrorism used to occur in each confrontation.

Looking at these three confrontations in terms of Islam, the pagan confrontation is a confrontation between Islam and Christianity and/or Judaism. The example of pagan confrontations were the wars between Israel and the Arab countries, or terrorist attacks against the United States by Al Qaeda such as September 911 attacks and other terrorist attacks in various places of the world. The Afghan war against the USSR could also be deemed to be a kind of pagan confrontation as monotheism versus atheism. Iran-Iraq War was a typical sectarian confrontation of Shiite vs. Sunni.

The heretical confrontation within the same sects is the confrontation between modern Islamic secularism and Islamic fundamentalism (Sarafism), but this has a little bit complicated problem. Because in this confrontation each side insists that they themselves are orthodox and condemned opponents as heretic or apostates. They assert that they are the followers of the correct teachings of Prophet Muhammad. They never withdrew each other. There is no room for compromise at all.

Heretical confrontation had also occurred in the medieval Christian society. It was a confrontation between Catholic and Protestant. But Christian society overcame the confrontation and coexists with no violation to others nowadays. Why Islam cannot overcome this confrontation?

In case of Islam, fundamentalism means Sarafism calling for returning to the spirit of early era of Prophet Muhammad. Fundamentalists are not trying to fit the doctrine and organization to modern society.

Why such an anachronism is justified? The answer might be found in the fact that the origin of Islam. Islam was born in the 14th century when the world trade system had already been well established. Fundamentalists preach that they can return to those days of seven centuries ago. Christianity also has fundamentalism. The name of fundamentalism itself was originally used in official bulletin of the Evangelical. Christianity started two thousand years ago, and it was the era of agricultural society and serfdom. It is impossible to return to that era and to trace everything in life. It is only possible to return to the spirit of Christ. However, Islamic fundamentalists seriously think about restoring lives of the good old day as much as possible.

As fundamentalists believe that they are absolutely right, they work on realizing their ideals in haste. As a result, they are disliked not only by the enemy but also by the ordinary citizens. They force citizens to obey when they keep the power. Those who do not obey are violently cleared away as heretic or apostate. And fundamentalists recruit radical youth who was sympathized or inspired by their thought bring up him as a terrorist and a suicide bomber. When he performed his job, he was set up as a martyr. The ordinary citizens who are unable to oppose against fundamentalism endure and wait for the storm to pass.

The Iraq War started in a completely different circumstance and ended in different result. Mass destruction weapons that the United States considered as the reason of Iraq War were not found. And the evidence of the relationship between Hussein administration and Al Qaeda was also not found. At the Gulf War in 1991, there was a justification for liberating Kuwait, but this time the United States could not answer what the Iraq War was.

Nevertheless, the US insisted that the tyranny by Saddam Hussein was collapsed by the war and that the democracy was established in Iraq. But after the collapse of the Hussein regime Pandora's box was opened in Iraq. Three years later, Saddam Hussein was executed after a public trial in 2006, but Iraq still continues a political struggle in which Sunni and Shiites turned the tables. The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (or al-Sham) (abbreviated ISIS) took the advantage of. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Husseini al-Quraishi proclaimed himself as Calif of Islamic State (IS) and tyrannized the region.

The United States brought about a big problem in the Middle East, following the British and France during the era of imperialism. Whether this was right or wrong will be judged in the future. Let's remind Christian medieval argument of heresy for Protestant, it took hundreds of years before the problem settled down. It has to take a considerable length of time to judge the correctness of the current event in the Middle East Islamic world.

The confrontation of pagan, sectarian and heresy in the Middle East Islamic world could not become finale in just 100 years after World War II. However, both the United States and the IS who confront each other and dream to realize justice and the kingdom of God or Allah in this world are too hasty to settle.

It may sound very irresponsible, but for the time being there will be no choice but to watch the situation. In ancient poetry saying; The arrogant is not forever. It is just like a spring night's dream.

(To be continued ----)