

## The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (50)

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

### Chapter 6: Genealogy of Islamic terrorism

#### 6-7(50) Arab spring has come

Even after the collapse of Hussein regime in Iraq in 2003, many of the Arab countries remained as authoritarian states or hereditary monarchic states of dictatorship. Western style democratic states were only Algeria in North Africa and Lebanon in the Middle East. Iraq which was beaten up by the United States was struggling for democratization. Gaddafi of Libya, Assad of Syria, Saleh of Yemen, Mubarak of Egypt and Ben Ali of Tunisia had maintained the dictatorship for nearly 30 years each.

Dictatorship is not always a bad ruling system. Dictator has a good skill to grab the hearts of the people. In many cases dictator often appeared as a hero when the country became unstable and the people were stranded in social and economic turmoil. They knew that he was a dictator, but they had been bored with turmoil. They expected that dictator might bring stability to society. Dictator could reconstruct the order of society by an authoritarian method. He caught the heart of citizens firmly with populism. People enthusiastically support him. They ask him to stay as a leader as long as possible.

It is a matter of course that dictator manipulates public opinion with cunning manner. Even if the constitution prohibits the multiple selection of president, it might be revised unanimously. He becomes the lifetime president. The state will be at the discretion of the dictator. His power becomes quite strong. The regime looks like to continue forever. Then the dictator will transfer his power to his descendant. In Syria, president post was taken over from Hafiz Assad to his son, Bashar Assad, in 2000. Gaddafi of Libya and Mubarak of Egypt were the same whereas resulting in failure.

But absolute power corrupts absolutely. During the long dictatorship, political and social organization erodes gradually. The economy falls into trap of stagflation. Daily life of ordinary people seems not to have been influenced at first sight because the prices of bread, gasoline, water and electricity are maintained in low under the claptrap policy. But the jobless is wandering on the street and ordinary citizens suffer from opaque syndrome which cannot forecast the future.

Such a desperate feeling of the common people ignited tragedy in Tunisia in December 2010. Police officers arrested a young jobless man who had been selling vegetables on the street without license by the authority. At that time, the unemployment rate in Tunisia reached in 14%. But unemployment rate of the young generation was terribly as high as 25 to 30%. A young man who was deprived of his bread burned himself to death at the square in front of the city hall protesting against the authority. The burning suicide itself is not so rare in the Islamic world. The incident was reported by local newspaper in the trivial article.



However, as one passer-by recorded the incident on the video by chance and posted it to YouTube. The fact expanded at one push. SNS used to spread endlessly once posted on the Internet. The young people who saw the whole story of the tragedy on the Internet immediately launched protests and called for a demonstration. The demonstration quickly spread from the capital Tunis to all over the country. The demonstrators asked President Ben Ali to resign after 23 years reign. Most of the young participants didn't know the other president since they were born. They cried "We are bored with long dictatorship!" i.e. Kefaya! in Arabic. President Ben Ali could not suppress anti-government demonstration. He finally exiled to Saudi Arabia after a month.

The political change in Tunisia was named the Jasmine Revolution after the national flower of the country. The fire of the revolution quickly spread not only in the northern African countries such as Egypt, Libya, Sudan but also to Syria and Jordan in Levant and Bahrain and Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula. In Cairo, the capital of Egypt, a large number of demonstrators gathered in Maidan(square) at Tahrir (Tahrir means revolution in Arabic) in response to Twitter's call. They collided with army force. There were many casualties. Mubarak's speech, which tried to quell the protestors, rather added fuel to the fire. Eventually President Mubarak resigned in February 2011.

The Western media named a series of revolution as "Arab Spring". The Arab Spring inspires anti-government activists in the Middle Eastern countries who were oppressed by tyranny of the dictatorship regime. In Yemen president Saleh was faced to intense antigovernment demonstrations. His tribal groups and allies in the family betrayed him and he finally gave up dictatorship. A woman activist, Tawakkol Karman, who was a leader of the antigovernment demonstration won the Nobel Peace Prize of that year.

(To be continued ----)

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