

Home Page: [OCIN INITIATIVE](#)

([Japanese Version](#))

([Arabic Version](#))

([Table of contents](#))

"The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East"(51)

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Chapter 6: Genealogy of Islamic terrorism

6-8(51) Short spring banquet

"Arab Spring" was named by Western countries, in particular by its media or intellectuals. It was defined as resistance and democratization movement by citizens against the tyranny of dictators in the Middle East and North African countries. The word "spring" in the political scene was used in the Czech democratization movement under the Cold War for the first time, so-called "Prague Spring". The word implied the positive and open-minded meaning. It became a symbol of the resistance movement against USSR communism. Western Europe media became narcissistic to the word itself. In 1968 the Prague Spring was ground down by the intervention of USSR. But in 1989 the Velvet Revolution took place in Czechoslovakia and Unification of East and West Germany followed in the next year. Western countries were convinced that democracy was absolutely correct ideology and that Prague Spring was its forerunner.

'Prague Spring' made the West European people to believe that Arab Spring would also succeed undoubtedly. However, it could not be denied that Arab Spring brought even more bad chaos and stagnation to each country than before. Human history shows that the radical seeks further reform and the conservatism aims the resurrection of a good old days. They used to fight each other and the society had been disturbed immediately after major reforms. Taking into consideration that it took more than 20 years for the Czech democratization movement to be fulfilled, it might be too early to judge historical meaning of the Arab Spring. After 20 years from now Arab countries might possibly turn into Western style democracy. But it will be exactly "Inshallah (if God wills)."

However, it would not be meaningless at this moment to evaluate both countries which were influenced by Arab Spring and which were not. Three identities of Arab World; "Blood (ethnicity)", "Heart (religious faith)" and "Brain (ideology)" would clarify the character of each Arab countries.

In Egypt, the demonstration mainly being composed of students took place in Tahrir (Revolution) Square in Cairo in January 2011. It was exactly same timing with the "Jasmine Revolution" in Tunisia. Following on the voices of young students who called to participate to demonstration by SNS, the demonstration had expanded its scale and filled the Tahrir Square. They shouted waving their flags and chanted the slogan; "Kefaya (We are bored)!" They asked for resignation of President Mubarak. Security forces, the followers of President Mubarak, did not overwhelm demonstrators. Police officers on site showed a friendly attitude to the demonstrators at first. To tell the truth, officers themselves were also "Kefaya" for the President.

Mubarak, who gave up to persuade public opinion, resigned from the president in February 2011. Then he was arrested on charges of unlawful money making and held in prison. The demonstration continued for a while and the government became malfunction. Citizens hoped to return to a normal and quiet life. The security force ordered to dismiss the demonstration. Students were in the euphoria at that moment with the result of achieving the retreat of Mubarak. But it was unfortunate that they had no clear vision or opinions as to what should be done next or they had insisted different opinion each other.

It was the Muslim Brotherhood that gained the power. They squeezed into the gap between citizens and students. The Muslim Brotherhood had already deeply rooted in the life of citizen as a mutual aid organization of Muslims. In response to the general election, they formed a political party, namely "Freedom and Justice Party". On the other hand, students and intellectuals aimed to establish liberal political party.

But the prominent intellectuals of the liberal movement had exiled to Western Europe during the Mubarak regime. They were accustomed to the free and safe life there. They were argumentative intellectuals without action and could not understand the pain of the citizens stayed in Egypt. They could not organize the unified political party and could not coordinate with the ordinary citizen who suffered from tyranny. Students who had too much confidence of the SNS power. Even though they could mobilize large-scale demonstration, they could not make the people to join. They had to stand by the well-organized Muslim Brotherhood which took the leadership. Students lamented that the revolution was hijacked by Muslim Brotherhood. It was true that young people spread the news of suicide tragedy of a Tunisian youth by SNS and led the movement of "Arab Spring". However, democratic ideology was still not rooted in Islamic society like in Europe or the United States. Middle East Arab world is still the society that is dominated by blood of ethnicity and religious faith of Islam.

Freedom and Justice Party of the Muslim Brotherhood gained overwhelming victory in the first fair election in Egyptian history. The reign of President Mohamed Morsi, however, had lasted only one year and so. Morsi with little political experience repeatedly fainted from the economic policy management. In addition, the peoples' heart was completely left from the Muslim



Brotherhood due to its nepotism for their members. Young people again demonstrated on the street. Egyptian society became turbulent. People dragged down their President who had elected just a year ago. Abdel Fatah el-Sisi, the military commander, grabbed the power by coup d'état and dismissed Morsi. The military government has come back again. Egypt returned to the military regime with strong power. Arab Spring in Egypt ended in two years. People welcomed Sisi enthusiastically and the international community including the Western democratic countries welcomed the political and economic stability of Egypt which was the leader of Arab world.

The destiny of "Arab Spring" in other Middle Eastern countries was much shorter than Egypt. Many of them fell into chaos and disorder. After the fall of Gaddafi in Libya, a large number of weapons flowed into the black market and resulted in a civil war between tribes. Same as in Yemen. President Saleh was exiled abroad. Saudi Arabia, as a mediator, helped to establish a new interim government. But as Yemen is the tribal society, Houthi factions gained momentum and former President Saleh joined to Houthi insurgency and occupied the capital Sana'a. The Hadi interim government escaped to Aden and managed to maintain a power with the support by Saudi-led coalition's airstrike. From the criteria of peace of the international community, Yemen is stigmatized as failed state same as Libya.

Syria would be the best example of Arab Spring ended in a failed state. In Syria political powers including Assad administration, Islamic State (IS), Sunni anti-government forces, etc. were split into many factions. At the same time there was also a fight between the international powers which was involved in the fight in search for hegemony. Islamic State was almost destroyed through international cooperation, but while the West and the Arab Sunni countries took a time, the Assad regime with Russian support regained the power. The democratic forces in Syria, which was expected as a flagman of the Arab Spring, revealed inability and was completely diminished.

What was the "Arab Spring"? There is endless debate until now. The word "Spring" sounds sweet. The word causes misunderstanding. Western people use "Spring" and democracy almost in the same political meaning. They insist that democracy is absolutely the right ideology in modern society. If so, why they force on their own theory denying the different culture? They are not generous for others.

Anyhow, it can be said that "Arab Spring" was a short spring banquet in 2011.

(To be continued ----)