

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

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

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 for the first time in the Czech democratization movement during the Cold War. It was called "Prague Spring". The word implied the positive and open-minded meaning. It became a symbol of the resistance movement against USSR communism. All of Western Europe media was fascinated itself the sound of the word. The Prague Spring was crashed by the USSR in 1968. But in 1989 the Velvet Revolution took place in Czechoslovakia. 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.

Through the experience of 'Prague Spring', West European people believed that Arab Spring would be able to achieve the victory overwhelmingly. However, it was true that Arab Spring brought even more chaos and stagnation in each country than before. History shows that the extremism seeks further reform while the conservatism aims to restore the order of good old days. They resume to fight each other and the society had been disturbed one after another. It took more than 30 years after Prague Spring that Czech accomplished the democratization. Therefore, it might be too early to judge historical overcome of the Arab Spring. After 30 years from now Arab countries might possibly turn into Western style democracy. It will be exactly "Inshallah (if God wills)."

However, it would be valuable to judge the contemporary meaning of Arab Spring. As mentioned before, there are three identities in the Arab World. They are ethnicity, religion and ideology.

In Egypt, protest on the street was organized by students. They demonstrated in Tahrir (Revolution) Square in Cairo in January 2011. It was exactly same timing with the "Jasmine Revolution" in Tunisia. Following on the agitation 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 national flag and chanted the slogan; "Kefaya (We are bored)!" They asked for resignation of President Mubarak. Police officers on site showed sympathy to the demonstrators. Officers themselves were also "Kefaya" for the President.

President Mubarak gave up to persuade public opinion, and resigned in February 2011. Then he was arrested on charges of corruption and held in prison. The demonstration still continued for a while and the government became malfunction. Citizens hoped to return to a normal and quiet life. The security force ordered the dismissal of demonstrators. Students were in the euphoria for a while that they made Mubarak to resign from the President. But it was unfortunate that they had no concrete vision or firm policies as to what should be done next. They quarreled each other and insisted own opinion.

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.

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 actual 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 power of SNS. Even though they could mobilize large-scale demonstration, they could not make the people to act together. They could not compete against the well-organized Muslim Brotherhood, which took the initiative of the movement. 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 President Morsi who had been elected just a year ago. Abdel Fatah el-Sisi, the military commander, grabbed the power by coup detat 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 fate 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. International community stamped on Yemen as failed state same as Libya.

Syria would be the best example of Arab Spring ended in a failed state. Syria was split into many political pieces, i.e. Assad government, Islamic State (IS), Sunni anti-government forces, etc. 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 destroyed through international cooperation. Assad regime with Russian support regained the power while the West and the Arab Sunni countries took a time. The democratic forces in Syria, which was expected as a flagship 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. But it causes misunderstanding. Western people use Spring and democracy in the same political meaning. They insist that democracy is absolutely the right ideology in modern society. Why they force on their own dogma 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 ----)

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Home Page: [OCIN INITIATIVE](#)

[\(Table of contents\)](#)