

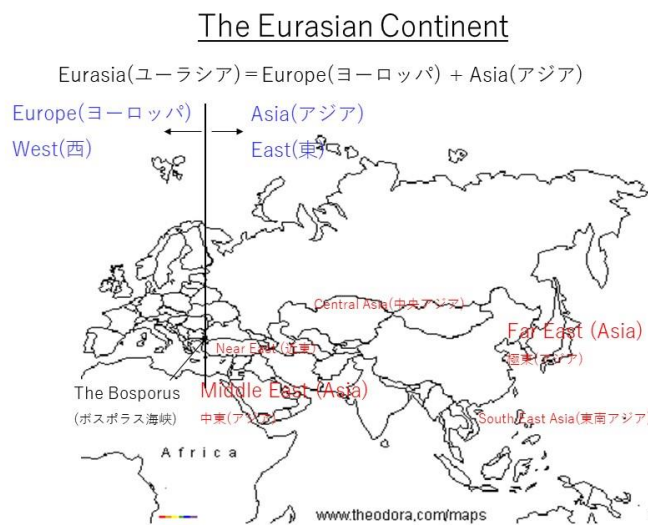
The Peace on the Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (2)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

Prologue

2. Middle East connecting Europe and Asia



Eurasia is the largest continent on the globe. As its English name indicates Eurasia is a word synthesizing Europe and Asia. Where is the border between Europe and Asia? In common sense the border between them is the Bosphorus Strait in Turkey. The west side of the Bosphorus is Istanbul, and Uskudar on the other side of the strait is the entrance to Asia. The Bosphorus Bridge, now called July 15 Martyrs' Bridge is exactly a bridge connecting Europe

and Asia. And the area of Anatolia Plateau from Uskudar to Turkey's capital Ankara is called "Asia Minor".

Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom used the name of Asia in the Age of Discovery in the 15th century. These European countries competed each other to monopolize the trade. They battled not only in India but also in Indonesia and various location. They strengthened the colonial rule each other. The geographical concept of Asia was established during this period. It was a one-sided decision by the Europeans.

Asians, however, did not share the one Asia. None of Japanese thinks Arabs as the same Asians. On the contrary people in the Middle East seem Japanese as the same Asians. The Middle Eastern people consider the Far East as the same Asia due to the imprinting by Europeans. The grouping of the countries for various sports competitions shows the evidence. Asian League of the World Cup Football covers the countries from the Far East to the Middle East countries. In other words, the definition of Asia means the areas except Europe in Eurasian Continent.

Asia occupies a large part of the Eurasian Continent. The Eurasian continents extends from the east longitude 10 degrees, where the Portugal is, and 180 degrees of the Bering Strait. Istanbul, the east

end of Europe, is located at 30 degrees east longitude. This means that five-sixth of the Eurasian continent is Asia and Europe occupies only one sixth.

Asia is so wide that Europeans could not bundle Asia as one region, They, therefore, divided Asia into several regions. It was a very simple and unilateral division from the viewpoint of their geographical perspective. They named each region as the Near East, Middle East, South Asia, South East Asia and Far East. Far East means the end of the east. It is a very rude naming for the people living in that region. (Suppose that If the history was reversed, Britain, France might have been called "Far West" at the end of the west!)

Anyway, when crossing the Bosphorus Strait, you are now in "Near East". It covers the Anatolian peninsula. And the eastern Levant (nowadays Syria and Lebanon), Israel, Iraq and Iran consist "Middle East". In modern history, however, "Near East" and "Middle East" are united and called "Middle East". India and Pakistan are called South Asia.

Europeans desired to trade with South Asia, South East Asia and Far East countries without brokerage by Ottoman Empire. But the onshore route had to pass through the soil of Ottoman Empire. Free trade was hindered in those days. During the 15th century to the 17th century, the biggest reason why European countries embarked on the ocean was to get peppers and tea at coastal countries of Indian Ocean or to obtain gold, silver and China pottery from Japan (Zipang). Europeans found the offshore route instead of onshore route through the Cape Hope at the southern tip of African Continent by sailing ship. Age of Discovery has begun.

European countries advanced from South Asia to Far East Asia along the coast of the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. It was an invasion from one port to another. The Age of Discoveries was an age of trading. At that time European countries themselves did not have own bartering goods to export to India, Southeast Asia and Java. Europeans purchased local products at one port and resell them at another port resulting big margin. Sometimes they looted the precious products from the local and brought them back to home. Many merchants got huge wealth. Western people have achieved industrial revolution with accumulated wealth and made weapons in the 19th century. Colonization of Asia by arms has started.

Ottoman Empire gradually eroded through Western colonial invasion. France opened the Suez Canal in 1869. The UK became a substantial ruler of the Suez Canal afterwards. The new route, from the Mediterranean to the Suez Canal and then through the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, has been secured. The reign of Asia by Western powers has been established. Ottoman Empire was defeated in the First World War. The Asian region from the Middle East to Southeast Asia was dominated by Western colonialists of the UK, France and the Netherlands. They monopolized the wealth of Asia.

(To be continued ----)

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Home Page: [OCIN INITIATIVE](#)

([Table of contents](#))