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The Iranian Green Movement Is a Protest Against Government Corruption 24

Austin Bay
Although economic issues and government repression are also involved, the Iranian protests began because of government corruption; namely, election fraud during the June 12, 2009, presidential election. Iran’s leaders now face what could be a sustained struggle with a new generation of Iranians who were not part of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The Iranian Green Movement Is Revolutionary 28

Mahmood Delkhasteh, interviewed by Behdad Bordbar
Iranian protesters have demanded freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights; however, Iran’s constitution gives an unelected supreme leader absolute power over all aspects of society and government—a system that cannot implement the protesters’ demands. The green movement is thus revolutionary because it can only achieve its goals by removing the current regime and changing Iran’s system of government.

The Iranian Green Movement Is Not Revolutionary 34

Arshin Adib-Moghaddam
The protests in Iran are not a revolt against Iran’s Islamic Republic system of government but rather just a renegotiation of power in a postrevolutionary nation. The Islamic Revolution of 1979 achieved independence and created an Islamic Republic, and now the green movement demands a third goal—freedom from government oppression.
The Iranian Green Movement
Is a Civil Rights Movement

Hooman Majd

Iran’s green movement is not a revolution that seeks a complete overthrow of Iran’s political system. Rather, it is a civil rights movement that began as a campaign for reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi, then turned into a protest of election results, and finally became a movement to restore the civil liberties promised by the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Some protesters want to overthrow the Islamic regime, but they are a small minority.

The Iranian Green Movement
Is a Twitter Revolution

Jared Keller

Social-networking media such as Twitter and Facebook failed as a tool for organizing the green movement protests and did not prevent the Iranian regime from repressing demonstrations; however, such media allowed the green movement’s struggles to be broadcast worldwide, helping to document the crisis and attract international attention and discussion.

Chapter 2: Has Iran’s Green Movement Been Destroyed?

Chapter Preface

Yes: Iran’s Green Movement Has Been Destroyed

The Iranian Green Movement Has Been Stifled Temporarily

Hossein Aryan

The green movement has been weakened and unrest smothered by the deployment of four layers of government security, but none of the movement’s issues have been resolved. The Iranian government thus will not be able to destroy the discontent among the Iranian people, although the current regime is unlikely to be toppled anytime soon.

The Idea of an Iranian Revolution Was Always Unrealistic

Fareed Zakaria
Many commentators criticize US President Barack Obama's response to Iran's green movement and argue that a more forceful US response could have helped the revolution succeed; however, the movement never really had a chance at overthrowing the Iranian regime because the regime still has significant support in rural areas of the country and among more religious Iranians.

No: Iran's Green Movement Has Not Been Destroyed

Iran's Green Movement Is Not Dead

Michael Singh

Many reports said that Iran's green movement was dead after its leaders canceled demonstrations in June 2010, but Iran's history suggests otherwise. Three other political movements motivated by similar social factors managed to change Iran in the past, and they each took some time to build before succeeding.

The Iranian Green Movement Is Alive

James Miller

A number of mainstream journalists have concluded that the green movement has disappeared, but they fail to understand what is really happening. The protests have already helped American foreign policy to evolve and caused the Iranian regime to weaken. As time passes and problems continue to be unresolved, revolution may still succeed in Iran.

Iranian Green Movement Supporters Will Not Quit

Omid Memarian and Roja Heydarpour

The Iranian authorities thought they had silenced the green movement by brutal police assaults on protesters, by blocking websites, by placing leaders under house arrest, and by an intense campaign of intimidation that included the execution of many movement supporters. Despite these government tactics, however, green movement protesters turned out on February 14, 2011, in the largest numbers since December 2009.
Chapter 3: Is Iran’s Green Movement Related to Uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt?

Chapter Preface

Yes: Iran’s Green Movement Is Related to Uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt

Iran’s Green Movement Inspired Protests in Tunisia and Egypt

Barbara Slavin

The Islamic regime in Iran maintains that the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt are similar to Iran’s 1979 Islamic Revolution, but the Arab protests are almost entirely secular, and Iran’s green movement contends that the Arab revolts were inspired by its 2009 protests. Meanwhile, the Iranian regime is executing a record number of prisoners in an apparent crackdown aimed at preventing new protests in Iran.

The Protests in Tunisia and Egypt Are Victories for Iran’s Green Movement

Hamid Dabashi

Iranians are closely monitoring and delighting in the protests in Tunisia and Egypt because the spread of revolution is a victory for Iran’s green movement, even though protesters in Iran failed to achieve complete victory. The root causes of all these uprisings are the same—corruption, cruelty, and the politics of despair.

Egypt’s Political Unrest Offers Lessons for Iran’s Green Movement

Muhammad Sahimi

The demonstrations in Egypt provide several lessons for Iran and its pro-democracy green movement. In both countries, real change can only come if the military withdraws its support for the ruling regime and if the protest movement can become an all-encompassing movement that includes the poorer parts of society.
No: Iran’s Green Movement Is Not Related to Uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt

The Situation in Iran Differs from That in Tunisia

Steven Heydemann

The explanation for why mass protests in Tunisia succeeded in ousting its authoritarian regime while the green movement protests failed in Iran is based on four differences between the two countries: (1) Tunisia’s army refused to shoot protesters; (2) Tunisian political power was concentrated in an increasingly isolated ruling family; (3) Tunisia’s protesters had a clear goal of overthrowing the regime; and (4) Tunisia is a smaller, more homogeneous country that is easier to control.

The Arab Revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt Transcend the Shortcomings of Iran’s Islamic Revolution

Roxane Farmanfarmaian

Westerners worry that the protest movements in Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan might be taken over by Islamic fundamentalists, but the movements are really broad-based popular uprisings that are not tied to Islamist organizations or ideas. Arab protesters seek dignity, work, and freedom and see Islamic extremism and religious governance as just another type of authoritarianism.

Chapter 4: What Is the Future of Reform in Iran?

Chapter Preface

Iranians Remain Hopeful of Eventual Reform

Jane Bao

Despite the Iranian regime’s crackdown on the green movement, many Iranians outside of Iran remain optimistic that Iran’s highly educated younger generation will push for ideas like human rights, political accountability, and transparency and will eventually bring change to Iran.
Iran’s Green Movement Needs Better Organization and Strategy

Karim Sadjadpour

The green movement faces many problems in its quest to bring change to Iran. Besides the fact that many of the movement’s leaders are either in prison or under house arrest, the opposition lacks organization and strategy. Nonviolent street protests do not work when armed regime forces are willing to kill protesters and die to retain power.

The Iranian Green Movement Faces Numerous Foes

Azadeh Moaveni

The Iranian government regime is not all that the green movement must contend with. The movement also faces opposition from Western media, Iranians living in other countries, neighboring Arab nations, and Iranian and Arab television networks.

Other Middle East Revolutions May Energize the Iranian Green Movement

Scott Peterson

After more than a year of silence, and despite heavy repressive tactics by the Iranian government, thousands of green movement protesters staged demonstrations in February 2011 in solidarity with the successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. Commentators deem this as evidence that Iran’s opposition movement is still alive in people’s hearts and could be energized by the uprisings throughout the Middle East.

Iran’s Green Movement Will Not Rise Up After Protests in Tunisia and Egypt

Hooman Majd

US officials may hope that Iran’s green movement will be rejuvenated by the protests in Tunisia and Egypt, but that is unlikely to happen. Persians in Iran have little in common with Arabs, and Iranians’ struggle for representative government does not depend on the removal of a single dictator. Rather, Iran is politically divided and many Iranians still support its Islamic system.
Iran’s Leaders Are Unlikely to Allow Any Opening for Protest

Daniel Brumberg

Green movement supporters see similarities between Egypt’s revolution and the protests in Iran, but there are significant differences between the two opposition movements. Most notably, the government in Iran, unlike Egypt’s, is an Islamist regime that considers any negotiation with the opposition to be an attack on the ideological purity of the regime. For this reason, Iran’s leaders are unlikely to allow any type of protest in the near future.

The Iranian Green Movement Must Operate on Its Own Timetable

Mohsen Milani, interviewed by World Blog

There were relatively small pro-democracy protests in Iran following the revolution in Egypt, but Iranian security forces effectively contained them. Iran’s green movement cannot base its actions on events happening elsewhere; the new wave of democracy comes more easily to pro-American regimes than to Iran, so Iran’s opposition must set its own timetable.

The United States Must Stop Obstructing Iran’s Pro-democracy Movement

Chris Hedges

Iranians have a long history of fighting tyranny and repression, and Iran once had a democratically elected government until it was toppled by a 1953 coup orchestrated by the United States. Ultimately, this led to the radical Islamic Revolution in 1979. The United States should change its policies, pull its troops out of all Middle East countries, and align itself with opposition movements that share democratic ideals.

Organizations to Contact

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