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Iran Has Changed



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The anxiety that is being felt by pro-Iranian Arab groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and others, is clearly articulated in their overstated defense of Ahmadinejad and their denial of the uprisings seen in Iran. It is only natural for such groups to be overcome by fear as Iran represents the backbone of their existence, and whatever affects the regime in Tehran will undoubtedly affect them twofold.

On the Arab scene, Iran's defenders rushed to desperately defend it in the media, denying what the rest of the world has clearly seen in terms of hundreds of thousands of protestors being led by members of the [Iranian] regime itself [and therefore not influenced by foreign powers]. These Arabs insisted that the images that we are seeing, and the interpretation of what is happening, is nothing more than conspiracies, exaggeration, and lies. However in reality the excuses mentioned above is closer to [describing] their interpretation of what is happening [in Iran]. These Arabs are either in a state of self-denial, refusing to believe what is happening in Iran, or they are aware of the truth but want to paint a different picture for the Arab world, and especially for their own followers, who must be in a state of shock.

Hezbollah supporters - and I am not talking about its leaders or theorists - believed as late as yesterday that Iran was unified, and that the leaders of the Islamic Revolution saw eye to eye. However all of a sudden they began to hear accusations of treason, treachery, and corruption being leveled [from one side at another in Iran], and they witnessed a large-scale rebellion [in Tehran].

The pro-Iranian propaganda machine is making a mistake by fabricating lies with regards to the situation in Iran in an attempt to blind the Arabs. Everybody is aware that there are problems in Iran, and those wishing to follow up on this have begun looking for news on Iran in sources that they would not traditionally use. This is because the traditional partisan media [that they would ordinarily follow] only presents reassuring news about the Iranian regime; news which casts doubts on the stories broadcast by other news media.

In the face of this overwhelming flood of facts, images, and first-person accounts [of the situation in Iran] it is only natural that many would defect to other news media in search of the truth, especially since the uprising against Ahmadinejad has lasted this long. This uprising began following the announcement of his re-election on 12 June and has yet to come to an end.

Regardless of whether Ahmadinejad remains President – which seems more and more likely – or not, and regardless of whether the opposition stays the course, Iran has changed, and will increasingly change [away from its current ideology]. This means that the pro-Iranian propagandists who are concerned over their future and the future of their groups in the Arab world should think carefully before speaking.

Without a doubt, the future in Iran is ambiguous. However the Iran of yesterday will not survive regardless of the outcome of the current events. The unified Iran, with regards to a unified regime, a unified public, and a unified ideology, is over. The hardliners will not be able – even if they remain in power – to ignore the large portion of society which has rejected and protested against their ideology, and this includes their foreign policy strategy.

The opposition has criticized Ahmadinejad on every single issue, until he had no choice but to bring up the issue of the Holocaust. In a televised debate with Ahmadinejad, Sheikh Mehdi Karrubi condemned this, and said "What good will it do to engage in this old controversy that only serves to harm Iranian interests?"

Moreover, the Iranians are now boldly speaking out against the squandering of the Iranian public's money on Hezbollah and Hamas projects, especially as Hamas only spends their money on fighting [rival Palestinian group] Fatah. This is not to mention the Houthi militia in Northern Yemen and other groups [that Iran helps to finance].

The opposition in Iran may not be solely motivated by politics, but also as a result of the strictness of Iranian society. The Iranian citizen can no longer accept sharing his daily bread with a handful of individuals in power who use this to fulfill their ambitions, regardless of whether Ahmadinejad or Moussavi is President.

* Published in the London-based ASHARQ ALAWSAT on June 21. Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed is the general manager of Al -Arabiya television.