

## Feasibility assessment of the Velvet Revolution in Iran

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**Abstract:** A minimum degree of conflicts is natural in any community, especially in human communities due to variation in opinions, preferences, and perceptions. These conflicts are more in the Third World countries that their persistence will lead to the outbreak of crises and social gaps. In today's Iran, we are facing with the explosion of economic, political, and social expectations of the Islamic Revolution, modernization, and globalization process. In analyzing whether there is the possibility of occurrence of a velvet revolution in Iran or not, in addition to differences in the political-social atmosphere of Iran and distinction between the actors of this atmosphere with the actors present in the velvet revolutions, limitations and obstacles to the realization of such a movement in Iran should be mentioned on the one hand and also tools and methods of using soft power by the Islamic Republic of Iran should be identified on the other hand. Hence, despite there have been plans to establish a velvet revolution in Iran in order to realize the idea of soft overthrow of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Three theoretical approaches and views can be mentioned for the occurrence and responsible actors of the color revolutions:

##### 1.1.1. Domestic factors:

One view believes that domestic developments and conditions of countries in the region is the main factor and substrate for the occurrence of the color revolutions. Deteriorating political and economic condition inside the country such as instability of government, domestic dissatisfactions, poverty and social-class gap, financial and administrative corruption and bribery among top officials, restrictions on the freedom of speech and thought, and the exercise of doctorial measures and methods are some of the main factor for the occurrence of such revolutions. These factors underlie the outbreak of crises in the country and provide the substrate for the occurrence of the velvet revolution.

##### 2.1.1. External factors:

Unlike the first view, the second view believes that external factors and actors play an important role in these revolutions. This view argues that foreign actors, considering their role and influence in these countries, could direct these countries towards the revolution based on their own wishes and goals. In other words, foreign actors and factors had the leading role and domestic factors played a supporting role.

##### 3.1.1. Combination of factors (both internal and external factors):

Based on this approach, domestic developments and factors under lay the occurrence of these revolutions and provide the substrate for the influence of foreign factors and actors. In other words, domestic factors accelerate the role, influence, and effectiveness of foreign actors.

Therefore, some political factors are involved in this political phenomenon:

- 1- Assistance of capital lords and upper social classes
- 2- Widespread campaign of the West-oriented political activists
- 3- The support of Western colonial governments

The study of countries that have experienced the color revolution shows that some problems have caused dissatisfaction among the people. For example, economic problems or issues arising from the bureaucracy system and negative attitude towards the regime's performance causing the emerge of a paradox in which national macroeconomic costs leads to negative results that its reason mostly lies in the management of these costs.

### 2. How the foreign actors support the velvet revolution in Iran:

It should be noted that the U.S. mainly focuses on two approaches in supporting the velvet revolutions. These two approaches include help changes within a country and imposing pressure from out. All financial and educational aids and imposing political and media pressure are done through embassies, international institutions such as the "Soros Foundation", statements and declarations of political official, and international media such as TV, Radio, and so on. However, the U.S. and the West's

supports for software subversion and the velvet Revolution in Iran are more complicated than in the independent republics of the former Soviet Union. This is due to the sensitivity of Iranians on the issue of independence and their public opposition against foreign intervention, while these sensitivities are not very strong and serious in the independent republics of the former Soviet Union. However, allocated funds from the U.S. for a velvet revolution and chaos in Iran were non-public and non-formal before 2005, but then the U.S. government publicly began to allocate many funds to overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran. The U.S. allocated a budget of 3 million dollars as "support for democracy in Iran" in 2005. On February 14, 2006, a budget of 75 million dollars was approved for the promotion of democracy and human rights in Iran, 20 million dollars of it was allocated to support the efforts of civil society groups inside and outside Iran including the active media and non-governmental organizations on law and human rights. The U.S. Congress allocated 66 and 75 million dollars in 2007 and 2008 to support and promote democracy in Iran. The funds dedicated in 2009 and 2010 to create chaos in Iran indicate the high importance of Iran to the U.S. compared with other countries in the region. "George Shultz," the U.S. former foreign minister, summarized the objectives of Democracy and Civil Society Project, an important pillar of the U.S. foreign policy, in the following items:

- 1- Educating and training the future leaders of Third World countries and the Muslim world, especially in the fields of culture, politics, and media.
- 2- Establishment of democratic institutions such as market, guilds, and writers, artists, etc. and financial and intellectual supports of the U.S for them.
- 3- Promotion of popular words such as democracy, participation, civil society, political development, pluralism, opens society, transformation, agreement, and partnership.

### 3. Feasibility of a velvet revolution in Iran:

About the events of the Iranian presidential election in which Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected for the second term, the question is that can we name these events a velvet revolution or not? It should be firstly noted that the true hypothesis about the events in Iran in June of 2009 is a combination of the soft overthrow and a velvet revolution. In other words, events in June 2009 can be defined within the soft overthrow, in terms of causes and substrates, and within the color revolutions, in terms of methods, strategies, and tactics. So, these events should be discussed in two parts; on the one hand, the internal and external causes and underlying factors of soft

overthrow in Iran should be studied and on the other hand, the similarities of the methods used in the events of June 2009 with the methods of color revolutions should be reviewed. However, the realization of these plans and projects are faced with enormous barriers, constraints, and challenges. Additionally, the Islamic Revolution of Iran can take advantage of soft power and tools against soft threats

### 4. Fighting agents against the velvet revolution in Iran:

Islamic Republic of Iran and Iranian society have fundamental differences with the target countries of the velvet revolution causing the outbreak possibility of this kind of revolution in Iran appears to be unrealistic. Some of the factors and evidence that can prove this hypothesis are as follows:

- 1- Lack of the required factors and conditions for the outbreak of a velvet revolution in Iran.
- 2- lack of support for the outbreak of a velvet revolution in Iran by elites, political parties, and student movements.
- 3- Inability of the political parties and NGOs to mobilize and organize the people.
- 4- Negative sensitivity of Iranian society to foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Iran, unlike the countries that undergone the velvet revolution.
- 5- Religious roots of Iranian society and anti-revolutionary and anti-Islamic nature of the post-election events.
- 6- Lack of support for the mainstream of the leaders of such movements by the people in Iran.

This point should be also noted in the explanation of some topics in this part that the Islamic Republic of Iran, in terms of human capital, has developed and grown in different political, cultural, economic, and scientific fields during the years after the Islamic Revolution. This has reduced the vulnerability of Iran's regime due to the cut of dependences and developing a human and intellectual independence.

In regard to human capital, some components such as unity and solidarity within the national identity, mutual trust between people and government, life expectancy, participation, and strong bonds of faith can be mentioned. The strength of social capital has significantly caused the likelihood of emergence of deep gaps and conflicts in the society. The role of popular-belief institutions such as Basij, military forces affiliated to the government, and religious clergymen as one of the components of the strength and power of the Islamic Republic of Iran against internal and external plots is not deniable. So, a great majority of Iranian society,

with any intellectual and political orientation, have a fixation on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### 5. Conclusion:

Despite some internal supporting movements for the velvet revolution in Iran, the natural substrate of election and some internal cultural and social damages emerged in previous years, and the extensive efforts by the U.S. and the West for soft overthrow using the velvet revolution in Iran during the presidential election in June 2009, and presence of some requirements and substrates for the events of Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan to happen again in Iran, this velvet revolution was failed in Iran for more important and more fundamental reasons rooted in differences between the Islamic Republic of Iran and those republics, because there is a subtle distance and border between the occurrence possibility of a phenomenon and its success that these two should be separated. Although the emergence of a phenomenon needs some factors and requirements, these are only necessary conditions and its success needs other factors and substrates as sufficient conditions. As some substrates and factors indicate the efforts of some inside and some outside the country for the outbreak of a velvet revolution in Iran, there are some factors and substrates inside the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iranian society that cause the failure and defeat of this movement. Hence, the victory of a velvet revolution is not feasible in our country for many reasons and is faced with various restrictions and obstacles. In addition to the quite different political-social conditions of Iran from the countries that have undergone the velvet revolution. Briefly, the following factors are considered as obstacles to the influence of the velvet revolution in Iran:

#### 1.5. Religion:

According to the social conditions of Iran, religious values create shared values between people and can be useful in the creation of shared space for communication networks based on values (religious values are institutionalized values of a significant part of Iranians and unifying factor for many people).

#### 2.5. Increased efficiency:

The exact mechanisms of government must be able to reduce the gap between the righteous

demands of the people and government services. The more disabled the government is in doing its responsibilities towards people and providing their requirements, the more the loss of social capital will be.

#### 3.5. Seeking participation:

The government is obliged to pave the way for the participation of people in different areas in order to legitimize its authority and prevent the gap between people and the governance. Any trend that creates a gap between people and officials will reduce the social capital.

#### 4.5. Development of social and political participatory institutions:

Development of these institutions, whether at the local or at the national level, and more communication between national and local participatory institutions. However, there should already be an agreement between different parts of society on political system, the Constitution, and the arrangements relating to the distribution of power.

#### 5.5. Active participation in the international arena:

Acceleration the process of detente in foreign relations and resolving the problems and tensions between Iran and other countries in order to reduce the possible interventions of external factors and costs resulting from them and also provide the opportunity to attract foreign investment to resolve the economic problems faster.

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