



A Succinct Note on Iran Today

Iran is on the verge of an economic and social collapse. New sanctions are potentially capable of overturning Iran's economy over a relatively short period of time; however, should civil resistance and people's campaign against the regime not be able to keep pace with the unfolding developments, it will be unclear whether the new situation would lead to the collapse of the Islamic regime of Iran. Even if it leads to the overthrow of the regime, it is unclear what might happen next. Will we face a failed and disrupted state or will a secular democratic system form and come to power?

Iran and its regime are grappling with the following five big ruptures and rifts:

- (a) **Socio-economic divergence (mainly involving the Iranian blue-collar workers, teachers and other deprived social strata):** Given the increasing economic pressures on these lower-income classes, helping them in various forms in their protests which have soared during the recent months plays a pivotal role in exerting pressure on the regime. Help, to name a few, may be in the form of raising public awareness about such protests, advising them on legal issues on how to proceed and funding the preparation of banners, publishing communiqués, etc.
- (b) **Sexual disparity (justice in rights for women):** This is a fertile ground for the fight against the regime for a myriad of obvious reasons; however, the bad publicity for women's rights by a number of opposition (or so-called opposition TV channels and groups, the legislations governing the financial relations between couples such as men's financial obligations before and after divorce, and a number of other legislation in Iran, the dichotomy of being a submissive wife vs. becoming an abusive and rebellion woman of no ethical principles (a dichotomy highly welcomed and celebrated by the regime to scare the people about women's rights) have negatively impacted most attempts to promote this cause even among many females who are mothers and sisters seeing their sons and brothers being victims of asymmetric spousal relationship. This *per se* has created a tremendous amount of resistance among a considerable number of people, both men and women. On the basis of first-hand observations and knowledge of this multivariable equation in the present-day Iran, the sexual disparity is a delicate arena to play on and requires delicately planned platforms to transform it into a powerful means to bring the regime onto its knees.
- (c) **Ethnic and religious inequality:** The ethnic and religious inequalities have been pervasive not only in certain deprived provinces where ethnic and religious minority populations are concentrated but also in other regions of Iran during the last century, especially in the last four decades. The Iranian regime, on one hand, suppressed these minorities' demands through brutal crackdowns, and on the other hand, presented itself as the savior of the country's integrity claiming that absent of such crackdowns the country

would have been disintegrated. This is patently false. The high pride of most of the Iranian people for their historical heritage has played a crucial role in marginalizing the separatist spectrum that have attempted to capitalize on the ethnic and religious minorities. According to our Azari freedom-fighters, the number of Iranian Azaris as the proponents of secession of the Azarbaijan provinces from Iran is estimated to be between fifty and one hundred thousand. The number of separatists in Iran's Kurdistan, mostly having communist dispositions is way less than that. Despite the facts, the Islamist regime is still successful in selling itself as the savior of sovereignty and integrity of Iran, and thereby has managed to spread the fear, among a vast majority of the people, of anarchy and disintegration should the regime be toppled. This illusion must be disenchanting delicately. Given the good relations with the non-separatist freedom-seekers from among these ethnic and religious minorities, and the mindset and preparedness of the majority of the people for justice and human rights regardless of the ethnicity or religion, it would be conceivable to disarm the regime and release the huge social powers against the inequalities without the fear of any anarchy or disintegration. That said, it must be reiterated that there have been long-standing suspicion, and conspiracy theories, among many of the Iranian people to the effect that certain foreign powers have been, and still are, planning to tear the country apart. This issue must be addressed by these "foreign countries", delicately and subliminally, assuring the Iranian people that a failed disintegrated state in the region with the geopolitical positioning of Iran would not be in line with the interest of any regional and international order.

- (d) **Government's incompetence in addressing the fundamental problems for the people, i.e. water management, air quality and job creation:** Notwithstanding the fact that these problems are on the agenda to unveil the regime's severe lack of competence more and more, and measures to resolve one or all of these problems through non-government entities and in collaboration with western companies, especially the US and Israeli companies (to be disclosed *ex post facto* and at the right time), would be a devastating blow to the never-ending enmity propagandized by the regime, and would function as a sobering heads-up for the least smart communities to figure out how much they have lost because of the regime's idiotic enmity with the free world. The mechanisms as to how to implement such projects without creating any sensitivity and backlash by the regime can be shared when needed.
- (e) **Cultural disconnect between the medieval theocratic regime and the modern-thinking people especially the youth:** This item including the demands propounded and sought after by the Iranian youth must primarily be taken into account through certain TV programs to be tailored to enlighten the youth and synergize their efforts to exert pressure on the regime.

Although the above rifts tremendously increase risks for the country, they at the same time provide for opportunities for the civil resistance and democracy movement in Iran to capitalize on them to organize the vast majority of people around clear economic and social demands to bring the Islamic regime to its knees. A successful implementation of any plan to this end will undoubtedly help a smoother transition to post-Islamic era in Iran.

In addition to a huge number of measures which are being taken by the pro-democracy activists in and out of Iran, the following measures occupy outstanding places:

- a) **Civil protests** which include a big spectrum of non-violent actions (e.g. wall graffiti, pickets, demonstrations, etc.)
- b) **Civil disobedience** of various kinds ranging from country-wide disobedience to locally-tailored to tackle certain geographical and/or social issues (e.g. strikes, non-payment of energy bills, , boycotting government events and ceremonies, non-compliance with city halls' directives, etc.)
- c) **Assistance for defections** among the regimes supporters and increasing the costs for the regime's collaborators

The question would be who may have the potential to implement the above, coordinate actions among the majority of opposition groups, and make the most out of the present situation in Iran. The fact of the matter is that the Iranian people have a bitter memory of bestowing the government to a particular group. Totalitarianism in Iran has led to widespread corruption and bloody killing of dissenters and dissidents. Therefore, promoting a particular group or individual may satisfy the proponents of that group or individual, but it scares a large number of people and makes them hesitant about the cause and the outcome of their sacrifices.

The alliance and synergy by the astute opposition groups and figures of that country demands, *inter alia*, five boosters:

- 1) **Dedicated media** (Satellite TV channel, social media, and the like);
- 2) **Support of the international community** (governmental and non-governmental entities);
- 3) **Financial support and fund-raising;**
- 4) **Expansion of the civil resistance infrastructure** (organizational expansion and provision of tools and equipment for actions, etc.)
- 5) **Attraction of the Iranian regime's elites** for a "soft landing" in the process of transition to a secular democracy in Iran.