



Iranian regime cracks down on anti government movement

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Tehran is rocked by anti government protests as the pro democracy movement emerges for another fight against the hated regime

Proof that the pro democracy protests are not simply an feature of the Arab world is the re-emergence of the movement in Iran. Massive protests in 2009 shook the regime, but the army and police maintained control and defeated the movement on the streets. Now protesters are back, and the movement looks set to gain more momentum in the coming weeks.

Iranian government supports and opposition demonstrators have clashed at a funeral for a student killed in the protests, in Tehran. It is still unclear if the student was part of the opposition movement in Iran, but the rage felt by the movement over the violence of the police is clear. People hate the state security forces and the semi-fascist thugs in the Basiji militias.

The street protests in Iran have exposed the hypocrisy of the Iranian regime to the recent demonstrations in Egypt. President Ahmadinejad hailed them as having been inspired by the Iranian revolution (and Islamic counter revolution) of 1979. He along with Iranian state TV Press TV, was happy to applaud the bravery of those on the streets of Egypt, but when the protests came to Tehran they sung a different tune.

Iran's movement takes up a different position in the recent revolutions and uprisings since, unlike the premiers of countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Bahrain, Ahmadinejad does not have a pro-Western, pro-Israel position. However deep resentment to the undemocratic regime still exists. Any uprising in Iran will be very different than in countries like Egypt, since the US and Israel would be more keen for Ahmadinejad to be removed by protests. Quicker than the blink of an eye Secretary of State for the US Hilary Clinton spoke out in support of the protests yet in Bahrain the US government is adopting a 'wait and see' approach to the movement. So it is not just the Iranian mullahs who are hypocrites!

These protests have inspired strong threats from pro-government forces, threatening repercussions for those who have taken part in opposition demonstrations and organization. Members of Iran's parliament have threatened trials with execution penalties for opposition leaders Mousavi and Karroubi, who in the wake of Tunisia and Egypt, have re-emerged as the bourgeois leaders of the opposition movement. A pro-government rally has been called for this week, which could see a large counter demonstration.

It was also reported that two warships that were previously planning to enter the Suez Canal were turned around and returned so as not to aggravate tensions within the region.

The dynamics of the protests could change drastically in Iran if the working-class comes out in force. Economic hardships have increased due to international sanctions and the recent cancellation of fuel subsidies. As many commentators have noticed, the working class taking mass action, as they currently are in Egypt, is a game changer in the trajectory of the unrest in the middle east. The danger is that the mass movement is co-opted by pro imperialists

who manipulate it for their own interests. Overthrowing the regime must not allow the US to establish a pro western regime, something that would only strengthen the power of Washington and London in the region.

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