IRAN'S SOFT POWER IN FOREIGN POLICY

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Abstract- Soft power is a word which is used in the theories of international relations in order to describe the ability of a political system such as the government. An ability which affects the behavior or interests of the other political institutions via cultural and ideological methods The concept of the unified nation, Islamic awakening and Islamic resistance were same of the concept which entered by Iran's Islamic Revolution in the world political literature. although domestic problems, imposed war and economic sanctions were some of the problems for Iran in its way toward its higher goals but these matter couldn't prevent Iran's soft power from affecting the security of Middle East and Southwest Asian region. The Islamic Revolution's main goal is to participate the Middle East nations in shaping to their destiny and reach to the democratic process and regional security. These efforts weren't fruitless and it seems that the Arab Spring and the recent awakening in Islamic countries have been affected by Islamic Republic of Iran's soft power .There for the main question of this research that which components of Iran's Islamic Revolution have been effective on contemporary Islamic movements and the Arab Spring phenomena. The Hypothesis of this research is that the developments of Arab Spring and Islamic awakening in the region are inspired and affected by Iran's Islamic Revolution and thoughts.

Keyword- soft power, Iran ,Arab Revoulution, Islam.

I. INTRODUCTION

From late 80's after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Islamic movements in the Islamic and Arab countries have gradually taken steps towards formation and strength. To this date, war and internal conflicts between nations and governments such as Palestine and Lebanon and also political riots in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Kuwait and Bahrain still continues. As the thesis of this article, the most important factor in Arab movements is Islamic Revolution of Iran which realized its' effect through using tools of soft power embedded into new political ideas with regard to the Islamic ideology. The victory of Islamic Revolution of Iran forced all countries of the region to revise their calculations. Iran which used to be the base for supporting the US and its Western allies became the main supporting base of Islamic and Muslim nations. Many a country such as Palestine, Lebanon and other Muslim countries followed the model of Islamic Revolution of Iran and naturally this ended up with an Islamic revolutionary awakness leading to identity transformation in the Muslim nations and forming a front against dictatorial Arab governments of the Middle East.

Iran's 1979 revolution laid the foundation for new type of relations in the region which emerged from an identity pattern with special structure of Islamic civilization.This brough about reconstruction of network of relations in Arabic and Islamic region which was completely different from the one rxisting before the Islamic Revolution of Iran. In the course of the Islamic revolution, rather than any confrontation and hostility, Islamic forces went to unite with national and nationalist forces. Since Islam is essentially having a comprehensive and extensive framework which embraces all of the "children of nation" regardless of their political orientation, this was quite natural.

II. SOFT POWER OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

According to research conducted, success of Islamic Revolution of Iran gave Arab Spring a new meaning and turned it into reality. It can be argued that the first reflection of victory of Islamic Revolution of Iran manifested in the continued authority of this country despite facing with various crises especially in the confrontation with the West which resulted in an increase of Iranians self-esteem and made them hopefull that they may return to the Islamic Golden Age.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran had the emergence of a new theory of revolution among general theories of revolutions dubbed "Cultural Revolution Theory" (Shojaeian, 2003) which is an expression of the soft power of Iran's Islamic Revolution rooted in Islamic and religious beliefs resulting into the revolutionary theorists pay more attention to this aspect of revolutions and at the same time enriching the literature on theory that was poor back then. As such today we see hundreds of books and articles written over cultural landscape of this revolution because as theorists believe, culture is the most dominant aspect of Iranian revolution.This has led to the recent inclusion of a theory known as the "Religion as the Cause of Revolution"in cultural theories of revolution which gained attention and Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals using it as the theoretical basis of their revolution analysis. (Jamalzadeh 2012 and booted, 1994: 454).

About the nature and causes of the emergence of popular movements in the Middle East and North Africa from the perspective of soft power, it should be said that many analysts consider those developments

to be an extension of the influence of Islamic Revolution of Iran's soft power in the region; because they believe in the engine of popular uprisings in the Middle East to be the revival of Islamic values rooted in the Soft power of Islamic school, Shari'a and the teachings of the Islamic Revolution of Iran that strongly emphasizes over the development and integration of Islamic thought against the tyranny of the regional government. In this regard, many Arab revolutionaries' demands bear a lot of similarity with demands of the Iranian revolutionaries in the 70's.

III. EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE OF IRAN IN RESOLVING REGIONAL CRISES

International environment is important in the regional and extra-regional stance of countries because this stance will influence the way foreign policy is conducted. The impact of Islamic Revolution on Muslim people and the start of Arab spring in Muslim countries, threatened the interests of many regional governments and even great powers and led to an increase of soft power and the status of Iran's regional and trans-regional stance. The Iranian government attaches great importance to regional and international cooperation, especially when these interactions have an impact on national security. Access to channels of communication in regional and inter-national levels is one of those requirements that by itself creates a kind of soft power for each country. More than anything else, this is due to the geographical location, natural resources and general conditions which pave the way for country's performance in regional and international level.

When considering the Islamic Republic of Iran it's geographical location and rich natural resources, as well as the nature of Islamic Revolution which is derived from revolutionary ideology based on Shiite Islam, we see it having potential capacities from the perspective of different dimensions of soft power. Consequently, if implementation of those different aspects of soft power is realized, then a much higher promotion of Islamic government could be expected. Due to numerous reasons some of which referred to later, Iran has provided the background and qualifications to gain spiritual strength and improve its' popularity in the region. Active diplomacy of recent years has contributed to adoption, restoration and consolidation of specific policies a total of which helped remarkably conmmunicating positive image to the international public opinion and obtaining cultural hegemony and soft power in the World.

IV. MODELING IRAN

In Iran, Islamism in the form of a clear and coherent idea took shape and was developed from the 1960s onwards. Certainly its peak was in June 1963 in the case of Feyziyeh Religious School in Qom where subsequent protests in some cities in support of clergymen and scholars led to clergies and government coming face to face. With suppress of the Islamic movement led by Imam Khomeini in November 1964 and his exile to Turkey and then to Najaf, intellectual and movemental aspects of his thought became known not only in Iran but also in other Muslim countries. Following the victory of Islamic Revolution in February 1979, Islamists took the full political power and no longer a fighter group ,the Islamist opposition became a political authority which was supposed to implement its' plans and programs to run the affairs of society. Islamic Revolution of Iran was an important milestone in Islamic movements in the Middle East and even the World, but given the ethnic and religious differences between Shiite Iran and majority Sunni Muslim World, secular Middle Eastern states were making malicious propaganda with a high amount of emphasis on differences between Shiites and Sunnis on the one hand and Arab and Ajam discrepancies on the other hand. In fact, they tried to show that supporting and following the example of Iran would be equal to enslavery of the Arab World (Esposito, 2007: 66-75, zolfaghari, 2012).

However, shortly after the Islamic Revolution went victorious, the idea of spreading Islamic revolution to Arab countries of the Persian Gulf and occurance of movements such as the anti-Shah protests of Iran in countries such as Iraq, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, firmly paniced Arab governments to the extent that government crackdown and even expelling Shiite and Islamists from their countries was followed (Simbar, 2006: 45). So one could argue that the model of Islamic Revolution as a model for Islamist movements in the Persian Gulf region and the Middle East was, and still, holds true and through past decades it has been effective in formation of movements like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine and Hizbullah in Turkey and other countries in the region (Simbar, 2011: 77).

V. EXAMPLES OF IRANIAN INFLUENCE ON MUSLIMS

In this section general exmples regarding influence of the Islamic Revolution on Muslims will be represented. These will help in understanding the relationship and influence of Islamic revolution on wave of Arab Spring in the Muslim World.

The Political Consciousness: Immediately after victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iranian men and women created several spontaneous revolutionary groups by which to communicate and exchange their experiences with people around the World. This led to increasing the demands of youth and people of the region, so that it can be claimed that many theorists opposed to dictatorial regimes in the Muslim World were inspired by Iranian revolutionary ideas.

Unity of Religion & State: In the contemporary World, Islamic movements are among the most important

political groups. This religious movements believe in close relationship between politics and religion. In other words, from the very first days after the victory of Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini expressed the doctrine of Islamic Revolution universalism as the highest and most widespread manifestation of the relation between religion and government building. Development of a new phenomenon called political Islam, or Islamic Political Thought among thinkers and theorists of international relations and the future of the Islamic World developments can be assessed alongside the issue of Iran's soft power.

Challenges in Way of Realization of Soft Power: Perhaps problems of the Muslim World are largely due to divisions in its' leadership. (Though here we do not mean to evaluate the leader, regardless of his identity or location). Hence leadership position requires a person who owns a broad perspective and understanding of the current state of the Muslim World and its strengths and weaknesses as well as internal and external conditions of it. The leadership of the Islamic World could through expert groups be equipped with the necessary information to resolve problems.

So basically public support and public base is necessary for completion of leadership and such base is supplementary to leadership so that kind of intellectual, movemental and emotional interaction exist between leaders in their decisions and people in their executive missions. The author believes that the diversity of Muslim s in the present situation is not an obstacle, because if a leader's base is strong enough, others can not prevent from implementation of devised programs. They may create problems for it but they can not destroy its programs.

In this regard, Islamic unity does have priority because unity is not merely a legal issue that is subject of dispute between Muslim s and the diversity of their ijtihad, nor is a theological issue that Muslim s have disputed over due to different lines of thought, rather it is an existential issue, since Islamic Unity means unity of the principles and values of religions, it is about creation of a conscience and inner unity in Islamic character of muslim s that gathers all muslim s on the basis of their common points to talk about their point of discussions and somehow try to prioritize understanding and unity over any other way.

We shall feel an Islamic character based on similarities and commonalities existing between Muslims and know differences in terms of Ijtihad as enriching the Muslim World and not hindering their unity. European Union is an interesting example of unity in the political and economic security interests. The author believes that monism experiences both at the union and at the level of convergence, enables us to cooperate and develop plans for current and future status of the Muslim Ummah, we can take some elements of the experiences of others that fit the current situation of Muslims, although some of the features and conditions governing non-Muslim nations are different from Islamic countries.

VI. ARAB WORLD DEVELOPMENTS & IRAN NATIONAL SECURITY

When analyzing recent developments in the region and the development of popular anti-authoritarian revolutions in western allied Arab countries, many analysts consider strengthening the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran against its regional competitors as one of the most important consequences of such developments which is caused by the semantic structure of the Islamic Revolution and its' interaction with movements in the Arab World (Abbasi, 2012: 25 and Mohammadi, 2012). So some of the national security implications of Islamic Awakeness on national security of the Islamic *Republic of Iran are as follows:*

Conservative Arab States Increasing Pressure on Iran: Arab Spring has intensified the tension between Iran and conservative Arab states of the region. Following these developments, there has been a dramatic increase in Iran's regional policies. During all these, Arab states such as Kuwait, Bahrain, Yemen and Jordan, along with Saudi Arabia sought their interests in cooperation with western allies and were at odds with Iran.

Upseting The Balance of Power in The Region: Arab Spring in the Middle East and the subsequent collapse of leaders and political structures in Libya and Egypt on the one hand, fear of some leaders in the region from being too close to the US, reduction in legitimacy and popularity of regional Arab governments and imported security on the other hand, ultimately resulted in change of the balance of power in the Middle East. This is due to the inability to mobilize domestic resources and psychological distrust in foreign unity and alliances. As many experts in the Middle East believe, in terms of changing the balance of power, the said balance has changed in favor of Iran and Turkey. Although, complex political and security conditions in front of Iran has made it difficult to use these opportunities.

For reasons such as the Iranian nuclear issue and Iran-Saudi contests over formation of popular government in Iraq, relations between Iran and Persian Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, has never been a friendly and favorable one.

Increasing Competition & Conflict in The Region: Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are the most important countries who played an active and key role in the events of recent popular uprisings. Although a small country like Qatar tried to increase its' credibility in the region by working with regional and international major powers, perhaps it is safe to say that in recent events, Qatar and Saudi Arabia played a diplomatic role and United Arab of Emirates took the Financial-military role.

Relations between Iran and Persian Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, has not been so warm and

friendly for reasons such as Iran's nuclear issue and the Iran-Saudi contests in the development of popular government in Iraq, but discontent and popular uprisings in the East, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Yemen and Arabic countries' misconception of Iranian involvement and encouraging Shiites to rise up against the Arab governments, exacerbated the dispute with Iran;

These factors led Saudi Arabia and other Arabic countries to take a confrontational stance toward Iran and its allies in the region, including Syria and Iraq.

Efforts to reduce Iran's power in Iraq, intensifying religious divisions as well as supporting Syrian protesters and seeking to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad in Syria are among measurements taken by the Arab countries that will have direct effects on national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Dehghani Firouz Abadi & Farazy, 2012: 181).

CONCLUSION

Political discourse of Islam is a sum of discourses where Islamic solidarity is common to the whole World. Islamic Revolution of Iran was able to promote its political discourse and to be the voice of the Muslim Ummah in a way that spread of this discourse and the depth of its impact on the Muslim Ummah, feared some non-democratic rulers in the Middle East. Today, the Muslim World has reached a stage of maturity that requires moving towards positive effective measures.Today's Islamic movements is shaped and formed in connection with human rights and justice and to achieve the rights of humans it will face any obstacle, it will take away all chains and leg straps from the hands and feet of mankind and solely focus on human rights. As a result, Islamic Ummah and united society is realized for all human beings.

Islam always takes the middle road and does not recognize extreme individualism of capitalism or limitless freedom in individual ownership and does not allow for the majority of society to be enslaved by the World powers. Meanwhile, Islam is in contrast with the absolute Socialism, this is because it ignores competition and individual characteristics of people. Islam is against the reign of the totalitarian states due to individual talents and creativity of people become standstill. Islam takes a fundamental and approach-based atitude to justice and truth to deal with any extremism arising (Simbar, 2006, 14-25).

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