

IRAN'S COUNTER-REVOLUTION



SUMMARY OF A 'MIDDLE EAST FORUM' WEBINAR WITH 'AMIR TAHERI'



17 FEBRUARY 2023



Amir Taheri, an Iranian-born columnist, was executive editor-in-chief of the daily *Kayhan* in Iran in 1972-79 and editor-in-chief of the French weekly *Jeune Afrique* in 1984-87. He is the author of 13 books.

SUMMARY OF TAHERI'S COMMENTS

- Taheri began his comments by saying that the kind of internal unrest resulting from continued protests by a disgruntled Iranian public against the Islamic regime in the course of the past 5 months have not ended.
- He then made reference to the following incidents that had taken place only in the last few days:
 - Anti-regime and anti-Russian slogans being chanted in a football stadium in Isfahan that had hosted a football match between a Russian and a local team.
 - A substantial statement demanding change that has been released from local unions and activists on the scene inside Iran.
 - Continued open pressures applied by Molavi Abdul Hamid in Zahedan and his call for a new national constitution based on popular will, etc.
- Taheri said that it thus followed that in the aftermath of the death of some 600 people, 8 executions and more than 20,000 arrests (some of which have been released)¹, the country is in a "strange situation".
- Taheri said that for regime change to happen in Iran, it is important that 5 conditions needed for challenging the regime should be met:
 - 1. Loss of legitimacy ---- something that has happened now both at home and in the international arena;
 - 2. There should be a fall out by key players within the regime --- another factor that has already happened given especially the recent statements that have come out by the likes of Mir Hossein Moussavi and Mohammad Khatami;

¹ Some of his figures are contested by open sources.

- 3. Emergence of an alternative source of moral authority --- a factor that has now been achieved with key celebrities from all fields joining the bandwagon.
 - 4. Fall out from key segments of the regime's coercive forces --- something that has happened with defections from the IRGC and other security forces².
 - 5. Emergence of a clear alternative --- the only factor not yet in hand.
- Taheri said that minus a clear alternative, nothing can happen.
 - However, with inflation at 80%, the national currency in free fall, and 700 out of 900 towns in protests, the regime does not have enough forces for crushing its opponents.
 - However, in the absence of a clear leadership, continued unrest can lead to a vacuum - something that is of huge concern to all the major powers (e.g., Europeans who do not want another huge migration resulting from the fall of the mullahs).
 - That is why efforts are now being made in trying to unify the opposition, especially since there is now full agreement that the current regime is incapable of being reformed and that any future regime must be an inclusive one.
 - Taheri was of the view that work on the creation of what he called a "Council of Coordination" was now underway along with the need for drafting a new constitution (or as he would prefer going back to the pre-revolution 1906 Constitution).
 - Taheri ended his comments by saying that we will now need to see what happens in the aftermath of 2 important conferences discussing the future of Iran that have been planned for 18 February (referring to the presence of some notable opposition figures at the Munich Security Conference and others at a human rights conference in Oslo).



² This is a claim that has not been validated.