The Islamic Revolution and Soft Power and the Strategy of the United States

Vahid Mohammadzadeh
PhD Student, Political Sciences, Azad University of Shahreza

ABSTRACT

Today, with the world becoming smaller and more complex by means of the increasing growth of mass communication tools such as the Internet and the satellite, the previous equations in regulating the relations between the countries have greatly changed and are replaced with new equations, in such a way that power is no longer directly used; rather, these countries intend to make changes in the target countries by peaceful means. These target countries are countries that struggle against the unilateral policies of imperialist powers, among which the country of Iran and the Islamic Revolution can be mentioned. Soft war is aimed at changing the views and thoughts of a nation in order to dominate it. The United States intends to start a soft war against the other countries by presenting a definition of terrorism and freedom. In this paper, it has been attempted to investigate the soft power of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in its struggle against the foreign agents.

INTRODUCTION

Dissolution of the monarchy of several thousand years in Iran, in light of formation and victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, led to the disruption of the equations of the superpowers in the world. Victory of the Islamic Revolution in the last decades of the twentieth century brought fresh hope to millions of people tired of tyranny and arrogance. It was a revolution that disrupted all the equations created by the West such as the two-column policy, and brought about a new form of the equations.

The Islamic Revolution, owing to its cultural and soft nature after its victory, brought about different consequences among strategic, scientific, educational and research centers and among the experts and scholars and the masses. The Revolution in Iran showed everyone that the Islamic ideology is strong enough to unite people and to overcome the problems and that faith can help Muslims achieve their desirable government. Among the main components of the Islamic Revolution of Iran that have managed to establish a new model, its Islamist, cultural, popular and anti-cruel nature can be mentioned. These are the same indexes that penetrate into the hearts of people tired of tyranny and imperialism and this is soft power; a soft power that abounds in pure Islam and the Islamic Revolution is full of that.

The Concept of Soft Power:

We are all familiar with hard power. We know that the military and economic force might cause other people to change their positions. Hard power can rely on inducements (carrots) or threats (sticks) but there are also times when we can achieve our goals without having to use this hard power. This method which is an indirect way to achieve one's goals is called “the second aspect of power” [8]. Power becomes charismatic when one can attract other people to one’s policies without having to appeal to any hard tools. In soft power, to encourage others to want the same things that one wants, is a way to use and deploy people without their having to do anything. Soft power is the ability to achieve desirable goals and aspirations by winning the support of the public opinions of the society and the experts and by public persuasion rather than coercion. This recent aspect of power stems from cultural resources, beliefs, faiths and social traditions and customs. Development of IT in the new era has led to the increasing growth of communications and has overstepped geographical borders. Today, this power has assumed a principal role in the arena of international relations and maneuver of political
units [8]. Soft power includes attraction and attraction usually leads to participation coupled with satisfaction. Simply and in behavioral terminology, soft power is the power of attraction and to use the terminology of resources, resources of soft power are assets that produce such attractions [8].

**Soft Power of the Islamic Revolution:**

Pure Islam in which religion is not separate from politics, is an Islam that has been considered a great obstacle to the tyrants, looters and oppressors since the time of the Last Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and the opponents of this Islam have tried to take away this main identity of Islam from the Muslims for their own illegitimate interests, and to propagate an Islam which is not at odds with the interests of the United States; an Islam which is the Islam of carefree affluent people and the Islam of Capitalism. We have no doubts that the Islamic societies have lost their identities and we also know that due to the rich identity of the Muslims, the imperialists will never leave them alone. What has worried the imperialists, specifically the U.S., is a revolution that took place in the last decades of the twentieth century in the country of Iran. What took place in Iran as the result of the Islamic Revolution changed a monarchy to a republic, and more importantly, this republic was not like the other republics and was an Islamic republic that looked for its definition and content through the values and beliefs of the religion of Islam and Shi’ism [7].

In the Islamic Revolution of Iran, we can see the social values the way they have developed. What can be considered of the Islamic Revolution at first glance, is that the Islamic Revolution is not a revolution enclosed within its own borders and is rather a revolution that is reflected from many perspectives. In what follows, we will briefly make mention of some instances of the soft power of the Islamic Revolution in the struggle against the plots of the alien countries.

**The Influence of the Islamic Revolution on Identity Formation of Muslims:**

As the Islamic Revolution of Iran placed a high priority on the Islamic teachings and introduced an Islam which intends to fight against the tyrants and is not an Islam introduced by imperialistic countries, it influenced the tyrannized and oppressed societies; so much so that what the revisionists, modernists and Islamic men of enlightenment had propagated in Iran merely as an ideal since the 19th century until the beginning of the movement, was what Imam Khomeini (R.A.) fulfilled in practice and the new era of “Renaissance”.

Due to imperialism’s long history of annihilation of the Islamic identity of the Muslims, nobody thought that Islam could be revived in political terms. Investigation of the developments prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran emphasizes the point that the Muslims hadn’t managed to retain their identity, but with a brief look at the developments in the wake of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, we realize that these victories and movements are the results of the development of Muslims and their being influenced by the Islamic Revolution and its soft power. With a study of the destiny of the revolutions taken place in life, we realize that in all revolutions the element of people is missing. For instance, the French revolution can be mentioned. The French revolution was not the result of the popular movement and rather, simply due to complete desperation in resolving economic, political and social conflicts, the country desperately appealed to Etats Generaux and gave in to them and it was then that popular movements were formed which led to the rise of the Revolution [7]. Also, regarding the Russian Revolution, it can be stated that the opposing forces, in most categories and parties, did not assume they could succeed in the Revolution; this did not mean that the Russian Revolution failed so soon since due to limited popular uprising and economic crisis, the country finally gave in; but the Islamic Revolution took place when the Iranian monarchy was at the height of its power and had the power to suppress any dissents; nevertheless, it was the people’s power that could, led by Imam Khomeini (R.A.) lead to the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Among the instances of people’s presence, we could make mention of people’s presence in the war fronts of right against wrong, who by their participation could demonstrate the might and power of the Islamic Revolution in the struggle against the threats. Among the other instances of people’s presence in the arena of the Revolution, people’s presence in the critical periods of the last two decades could be mentioned which included the comprehensive threats of oppression and tyranny in the form of soft war and mental and cultural operations, specifically after the presidential elections of 2010 when, by their presence, people showed their power and stood against the plots of the domestic and foreign agents. For instance, the demonstrations of the people of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Palestine, etc. can be mentioned. The elegance of the Iranian people’s participation in fulfillment of the Islamic Revolution led to the popularity of the Islamic Revolution and caused the other countries in the region (or the Middle East) to make use of this model for dissolution of dictatorships.

**Religious Ideology of the Revolution:**

God Almighty says in the beginning of Surat ‘Āli ‘Imrān (Family of Imran), verse 19: “Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam”. This is the very pure Islam which the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), on the order of God, had the mission of passing on to people in “the age of ignorance”. This religion is popular with all the people and if it is introduced, presented and actualized properly, all people will willingly accept it. This was the action that
Imam Khomeini (R.A.) took and introduced this religion to the people in the world as the basis of the Islamic Revolution. The Islamic Revolution of Iran was a revolution that fought and became victorious in the name of Islam and with the motto of “Allahu Akbar!” and based on Islamic and Shiite ideology and symbols and under the leadership of a clergy that was educated in Islamic concepts [7]. As the result of this revolution, all the Muslims in the world came to reflect upon the question of how the Islamic Revolution managed to achieve victory by means of religious ideology. In fact, Islam has soft power in its nature and the Islamic Revolution managed to introduce it.

The Islamic Revolution and the Muslim Unity:
Among the other components effective in the soft power, the concept of unity can be mentioned which can be highly effective in the achievement of the goals of the Islamic Revolution. God Almighty, in Qur'an, depicts unity with regard to the rope of Allah: “And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.” (Surat 'Āli `Imrān (Family of Imran), verse 103). Through the importance of unity, it can be realized that by unity the hearts of Muslims become one (they become unified in heart and soul) and that unity is a positive source. Among the components that the enemy uses in its tactical measures is the destruction of unity which could be translated as “schism” or “division”. History shows that Muslims have suffered the greatest damages due to division and lack of unity; yet the Islamic Republic introduced a discourse which was the enhancement and encouragement of unity among the Muslims according to religious pluralism and ethnic diversity.

Unity is a concept that Islamic leaders have greatly emphasized and have also followed in practice. “We believe that Islam has ordained the Muslim unity and the unity of the believers in God as one of the religious practices” (Sahifa of Imam Khomeini, vol.7, p.116). Among the goals that are related to the promotion of unity and neutralization of the plots and plans of the enemies, one could make mention of the holding of tens of conferences and meetings and weekly nominations as the Week of Unity and also the Conference on Islamic Unity. It is the Islamic unity that is considered as soft power and can resist the enemies’ plots and machinations. Now, we can see the catastrophes that our enemies cause for the Muslims, which is due to the poor unity of the Muslims in the world.

The Soft War against Iran and Its Goals:
Soft war is a set of measures that looks for diversity in the cultural identity and acceptable behavioral models and strives for a kind of domination in the three dimensions of government, economy and culture. There is no agreement concerning the starting time of the soft war in the history of the Islamic Republic. The public perception is that after the ineffective practices of imperialist countries in the dissolution of the Islamic Revolution and specifically after the "Iraqi Imposed War" in Iran, a change was made in their attitudes toward the Islamic Revolution and that was influence through soft power. In short, it can be said that the great powers have realized that military and economic tools can no longer help them achieve their goals as in the past and their emphasis on culture results from the fact that when a race and nation manages to preserve its culture during its golden age, that country’s heritage will linger on in the future ages. Thus, imperialistic powers strive to take away that culture from independent nations. The history of the Islamic Revolution shows that military solutions can’t destroy it and the enemies of the Islamic Revolution have now fully realized this. This is why the project of cultural invasion has started [2] and they have left behind stages such as raids, massacres and cultural assaults [3] behind and have reached a cultural war or a soft war. At present, we do not try to defend ourselves against the soft war; we rather started the soft war in the first place as the Prophets and the Holy Imams also struggled against their enemies through the soft war (the clarity of the plans yesterday, today and tomorrow). The futility and inefficiency of the models that the liberal and capitalist world has shown have been so far proved and this has been due to the Islamic Revolution’s efforts for identification of the religious ideology. We should challenge the western theorists by use of the political theories of Islam and theorization, and expose the materiality of their theories to all the nations in the world, especially the Muslims in the world.

Implementation of the soft war project against Iran at the present time should be attributed to the spread of the sense of hatred toward the U.S. in the world public opinion and according to the leaders of the White House, Iran is the main center for creation of this hatred. Soft power is not political advertisement and it rather includes intellectual debates and public values. The west media war against the world of Islam and also the third-world countries is a clear example of the issue which can be interpreted as the media world war [6]. The American soft war includes two fundamental goals: management of the power transfer imposed on non-state agents; in this regard, the procedure that the U.S. pursues in Iran can be briefly explained, and cultural transformation for great influences over the public opinions in the society; political transformation in order to show the inadequacy of the regime, creation of the fear of poverty, war and foreign powers (mental insecurity) and invitation to submission (dissolution of the morale of resistance), propagation of the morale of despair and hopelessness instead of happiness and social development, making the young generation indifferent to the important issues in the country, reduction of the morale and efficiency of the military and creation of dissidence among their
different organizations, black propaganda through different ways, aggravation of public discontent with the government and efforts to show the criticality of the circumstances are some of the goals through which the U.S. has used its soft war against Iran and has targeted the authorities in the regime in order to affect the functions of the authorities and to promote this war by inclusion of inadequate persons that are dependent on the West in the system.

The Components Threatening the Soft Power of the Islamic Revolution:

According to the soft power of the Islamic Revolution and the aggravating factors of this soft power, some of the components that threaten the soft power of the Islamic Revolution can be thus mentioned:

1. Inattentition to the country’s development
2. Lack of national unity and solidarity
3. Inattentition to the scholars of the Seminary for Islamophobia
4. Negligence of the enemies’ conspiracy and plot, specifically global imperialism, etc.

The enemy’s threats that are in the form of soft power prove this point that the enemy has prepared an organized attack against the soft powers of the Islamic Revolution. Although the Islamic Revolution has so far managed to resist against these threats, in substantive terms and in terms of cultural dimensions, by reliance on Islam and its belief values, the enemy has targeted the values of the Islamic Revolution through soft war for years so as to show the inadequacy of the Islamic Revolution in political, economic and cultural areas. Among the threatening components of the soft power we can see that the enemy mostly tries to make the country dependent and to bring about political and economic problems for the country by destabilizing the country; nevertheless, national solidarity can resolve many problems and it is the main source of power [4].

Conclusion:

The Islamic Revolution of Iran has proved that by its soft power it has managed to have influence over other people’s thoughts without threats and high costs, the height of which can be seen in determination of the pure religion of Islam and its ideal of justice. In fact, by informing the oppressed people in the world, the Islamic Revolution of Iran has managed to present a model of progress and development to the world in light of Islam and to speak of freedom and justice in addition to inhibiting the interference of the foreign countries. To this end, the Islamic Revolution of Iran must, in the first place, resolve the domestic obstacles to progress and introduce itself as the first economic and military power in the region and to play its role, which is being an example for the Islamic countries, by membership in Islamic contracts. The soft war is developing new dimensions by the enemies. Thus, the Islamic Revolution must be able to resist this soft war of the enemies, specifically the U.S., by mobilization of domestic facilities and forces and establishment of national unity and solidarity, so as to set the example of an Islamic country that has managed to reach success for the world. The U.S. and the West have started aggression and war, while envying the Islamic Revolution. With the motto of improvement of freedom for humans and democratization of “moderate Islam”, the U.S. has launched new operations in this regard [1]. Through our practices, we must expose the false claims of the imperialist and oppressing countries such as the U.S. to the world and this can be achieved only through hard work and solidarity of the Islamic countries.

REFERENCES