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Investigation of Components and Causes of Formation of Color Revolutions in the Central Asian Countries and Caucasus in Comparison with Recent Upheavals in the Arab Countries of North Africa and the Middle East

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ABSTRACT

Background: Social and political upheavals of the Arabic countries and changes in political relations of this important region of the world have attracted the attention of decision-making institutions and a lot of countries such as Russia. Supremacy feel of Russian to its former territory of the Central Asia that is due to the geopolitical situation and the importance of natural resources and energy of that region makes the occurrence of any social or political change in this region important for Russians. **Objective:** Aims of this study are as follows: Understanding a color revolution and its component and related issues; Comprehensive study of recent upheavals in the Arab countries; comparison of color revolutions of the Central Asian Countries and Caucasus with upheavals which had been occurred in the Arab countries. Study of possibility of spreading of Arab uprising to prone areas of the Central Asia and Caucasus. This study is descriptive-survey research. Data collection method in this study is taking notes from library resources, magazines and credible papers. Researcher based of reasoning and logical analysis of the collected data and its comparison and analysis using present methods will accept or reject the proposed hypotheses. **Results and Conclusion:** In the current situation of the region, continuation of the current political system and government of the Central Asia is the desire model for the Russian. Availability of the possibility of influence in the authoritarian and totalitarian government that are remained from the former Soviet Union is one of the important reasons of unwillingness of Russia to occurrence of any social or political changes in the Central Asia.

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INTRODUCTION

In the first decade of the 21th century, a surge of upheavals known as color revolutions occurred in the formerly communist countries of Central Asia and Caucasus that led to change of government in countries including the Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. The purpose of color revolutions is change in the ruling regime without violence and destruction that will obtain through civil protests and widespread strike, and during it the ruling system will changed by the strong opposition that are supported by foreign countries and international organizations. This events generally taken place in protest against election result, and they call their goal the victory of democracy. Use of titles such as Velvet, Rose, Orange and Tulip Revolution for these events return to the use of dissidents from a specific color or flower as a symbol of opposition. Many of experts consider the role foreign interferences in the emergence and spread of these upheavals, and evaluate it as a scheme in the interest of these countries and especially the United States of America.

In the years of 2010 and 2011, some uprising took place in the Southwest Asia and the North Africa, and because it happened in the Arab Countries, it became renowned as Arabic spring. Unprecedented set of uprisings, rallies and demonstrations happened in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain and Jordan, and in the smaller level in the Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Oman, Kuwait, Morocco, Mauritania and Sudan that led to fall and escape and death of authoritarian rulers. These demonstrations were begun at September 18, 2010 by Tunisian Uprising following the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in protest against corruption and ill treatment of the authorities. The success of the Tunisian street protests inspired demonstrations in several other Arab countries that had similar situation in an attempt to bring an end to their own autocratic governments, and that finally led to overthrown of governments in the Tunisia, Egypt and Libya (Niakoei Seyed Amir, 2011). Still, flames of this unrest are continuing in some Arab countries. There are major

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differences among experts about origin and nature of color revolutions and Arabic upheavals. On the other hand, there is another important issue that is it possible uprisings of the Arab countries of the Middle East spread to other region. The possibility of unrest has created serious concerns in long-term in Eurasia and especially in the Central Asian and Caucasus that in the past had experienced color upheavals.

This study tries to compare the color upheavals with Arabic uprisings, and study the possibility of its occurrence in the Central Asian region and Caucasus.

There, the main question of this study is as follow: what were the component and reason of formation of color revolutions in the Central Asian Countries and Caucasus in comparison with recent upheavals of the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East.

Methodology:

This study is descriptive-survey research. Data collection method in this study is taking notes from library resources, magazines and credible papers. Researcher based of reasoning and logical analysis of the collected data and its comparison and analysis using present methods will accept or reject the proposed hypotheses.

Theoretical framework of research:

Revolutions as one of major issues of Political Science have gained the attention of experts, and it has a prominent place in academic circles and a lot of discussion has been done about theoretical foundations of this phenomenon. Revolution besides being the epitome of political instability is considered one of the important phenomena that causing change in the human history. On the other hand, the complexity and diversity of revolution phenomenon and different interpretations of it by experts has led to its widespread typology.

2. Color revolutions of the Central Asian and Caucasus:

Color revolution was a pattern for “transition to the western democracy” in the Central and Eastern Europe Countries. Color revolution is kind of overthrowing the government and transition of power by political upheavals.

All of color revolutions, except Kyrgyzstan’s revolution, won during street protests and without use of violent tools. Focus of color revolutions is in the election period. In this method, dissidents announce that election is sham and they pursue two main goal, annulment of the election and holding it again under monitoring of international observers, and using this method they challenge the political system and ruling government.

Difference of these upheavals with social movements is that social movements are kind of natural movement which are formed according to community needs in which movement begin from down to up and by the masses, and gradually they grows and form a coalition and after specification of leader and slogans of movement, they will take serious form.

In the social changes theories, revolution refers to the fundamental changes that lead to overthrowing of a socio-political system and substitution of it by another socio-political system. In the opinion of Leon Trotsky, one of the leaders of the October Revolution, the most obvious feature of any revolution is direct and violent intervention of the masses in historical events.

Color revolution is a movement design from up to down and by opposition elites of current political system or by incumbent government and support of opposed and hostile foreign powers. This type of planning is designed by political groups and parties to change the political structures and achieving the specific objectives that mainly is gain of political power. Therefore, this phenomenon cannot be considered a natural movement of individuals for changing of political structures. However, color revolution cannot be categorized in the known patterns and classic of political sociology about social’s variations and changes. Color revolution is a new and postwar phenomenon, and hence it can be called modern or velvet coup instead of color revolution. Three color revolutions means Velvet Revolution of Georgia, Orange Revolution of Ukraine and Tulip Revolution of Kyrgyzstan have the same path and pattern. On one hand, Moscow's inability to preserve its former influence, and on the other hand, West reaches to this conclusion that working with this kind of leaders which for solving problems look at Moscow is useless. In the next stage, under the title of “program of support for democracy promotion” obvious and comprehensive support will be done by the West for the anti-Russian dissidents in those countries. After that, considering the wide range of propaganda that is launched by support of the West and the USA about an election, parliamentary or presidential election, control of the situation will became difficult for leaders of government, and power will be passed to the pro-West opposition through a controlled way. Color revolution cannot be called revolution as its scientific and known meaning of it. Not only color revolution is not led to improve of standards of living in those societies, but also it will impose an unfortunate and anti-human situation on the people of those societies. With careful examination of the color revolutions, we can noticed that events which happened is not led to social profound changes that is expected from a revolution or democratization of the country, and it was limited to the changing of leaders of government and changing of balance of power between the West and the Russia. During years after the collapse of the East Bloc, because of

domination of market economy and democratization, widespread poverty and socio-economic insecurity have been imposed on people of those country which remains from the Soviet Union and the former East Bloc.

It should be noted that this new revolutionary individuals have been from the official of the ruling government, and in those years, they had role in political decisions that have been taken at the macro level. In the Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, the former Minister of Justice in the cabinet of Shevardnadze's government, took the leadership of the movement, and he was supported by Zurab Zhvania, the former chairman of the Georgia parliament, and Nino Burjanadze, the chairman of the Georgia parliament.

In the Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko in the cabinet of Leonid Kuchma's governments served as the chairman of central bank and also was the Prime Minister, also, Yulia Tymoshenko that was an icon of the Orange Revolution was the Prime Minister until the September 2005, and was the Deputy Prime Minister for the fuel and energy sector in the cabinet of Viktor Yushchenko. After the Orange Revolution, her name was in the case of financial corruption and because of that she was in prison for a period of time.

In the Kyrgyzstan, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, one of the two main leader of the Tulip Revolution, was the Prime Minister in the cabinet of Aghayev's government.

3. Changes and upheavals of Arab countries:

Despite similarities and continuation of spread of upheavals of the Middle East from one country to another country, in fact there are sometimes fundamental and structural differences among these countries.

About the prospect of the Middle East countries, it should be explained that by searching in occurred upheavals in the contemporary history of the world, possible outcomes of social and political changes can be predicted better. USSR dominated countries were the first countries that experienced color revolutions. Experience of these countries shows that they were not successful in the long-term period, and because of political and economic instability resulting from the revolution, people of those countries wants their previous condition. This issue is a burglar alarm for occurred upheavals in the Tunisia, Egypt and other Arab countries, while again people of Egypt gathered in the Tahrir Square and expressed their disapproval of the implemented reforms. About the Libya and Yemen revolutions, it should be said that while the rulers of the two countries strongly resist against the wishes of the people, but considering battles become attrition, their fall are possible with the passage of time.

4. Comparison of color revolutions of the Central Asian Countries and Caucasus with recent upheavals in the Arab countries:

Color revolutions in republics which became independent from the former Soviet Union was an example of social changes, and while was called revolution, but considering the lack of fundamental changes and their occurrence in a short period of time bring this question to the mind that is it possible to call them revolution. These republics were in the Nation-State period. Because of weakness of the government in these countries along with influence of external factors on the process of transition, and even in some cases obvious interfere of the foreign country in the design of these upheavals, therefore, these upheavals cannot be called revolution, and they are known as changes with feature of post-Soviet societies. Mainly these revolutions took place in the period that the USA, after the fall of the bipolar system, conducted extensive efforts to dominate the world using new world order and in the framework of process of globalization.

Upheavals of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and other Arab countries took place in a time that failure of the new world order and the unipolar system have been manifested, and also protest against unfair structure and rules of international law and their disproportion with the current situation is become widespread not only in the minds of Muslim nations but also in the minds of independent countries.

Because of widespread demonstrations and will of people for the change in North Africa and the Middle East revolutions, it would strengthen this viewpoint that recent events of the region can be categorized in revolutions of the world.

In all these movements, the majority of people are on the scene, and change in the structure of the political system is will of the people, and discontent is general, and fundamental values of social and political system is changing.

A lot of efforts by the USA, Europe and some political elites of these countries have been done to manage the massive movement of Muslim people, and reduce the importance of these movement in the mind of people of the region to a limited protest, coup or change of government. Recent upheavals of the region are fundamental revolution which while the West tries to manage these movement. These upheavals are present a new approach to analyze the contemporary revolution based on Theory of Revolution in the theoretical aspects.

Without doubt, the absence of foreign factors in the creation of these upheavals place these movements along the fundamental revolutions and far from color revolution of post-Soviet republics.

While people of the region expressed their disapproval about economic condition, poverty, corruption and discrimination in demonstrations, also they expressed explicitly their hatred and aversion toward tyranny and dictatorship systems.

Factors that leads to strength and unity of revolutionaries of the region are as follows:

Severe dependence of governing systems to the USA, failure in following up of national interests and the interests of Muslim nation, incontrovertible following of dictated policies of the USA, following of compromise policy with the Israel.

Conclusion:

Study of color revolutions shows that in all of them, there were a set of domestic factors as precondition of occurrence of revolution and in relation with foreign factors, they proceeded into violent or peaceful revolution, and due to trend of upheavals and level of strength or weakness of both sides, it led to defeat or victory.

Authoritarian, dictatorship and totalitarian governments with a wide range of economic and livelihood issues, insecurity, unemployment, and other issues are created the precondition of occurrence of revolution and upheaval.

Improper and weak performance of government, closing the path of gradual change of policies and programs based on vote of people in the election cause public dissatisfaction, and therefore, increase the probability of occurrence of social movements and revolution.

Support of western powers was significant and tangible in color revolutions. Foreign countries mostly because of their interests and consequence of fall of current government and due to positive or negative consequences of the outbreak of revolution, and by considering the result of these movement reacted to these upheaval.

Study of color revolutions of the Central Asian Countries shows that backgrounds and extensive domestic factors along with effective foreign factors had a significant role in the success of those movements.

To date, rulers of four Arab country have been forced from power in Tunisia under the leadership of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Egypt under the leadership of Hosni Mubarak, Libya under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi, and Yemen under the leadership of Ali Abdullah Saleh. Also, major protests have broken out in the Syria under the leadership of Bashar al-Assad and Bahrain under the leadership of Al Khalifa, and they challenge and face with serious problems. The other Arab countries seems stable.

The question of this study is that what were the causes of these protests, and why some of them succeeded and other failed. For answering to this question, contributing factors have been studied in the six category of political, economic, social, cultural, military and foreign, which each one of these factors have been noted in the two period of long-term and short-term.

Despite some similarities of occurred upheavals of Arab countries of the Middle East with color revolutions, there are significant differences in terms of its nature, its causes, unrest form and its results. In the field of political factors it should be said that system was oppressive and inflexible. Also, the lack of free and critic press is another important factor. In the short-term, while system was dictatorship, but it had a limited degree of press freedom. Moreover, period of power of the ruler in these countries was very long, and sometimes lifelong. In the aspect of economic factors, systems that have been affected from the Arabic spring had following features:

Having a low general income, having a low per capita national income, exist of deep class gap, spread of unemployment and having a very high inflation, having foreign debts, having weakness in the manufacturing sector, and finally lack of good management in the energy sector and therefore waste of resources.

In the aspect of important social factors on protests of people, it can be noted to the high rate of population growth, high proportion of youth population to the elderly population, exist of class gap, discrimination and corruption in the government.

In terms of short-term, having higher youth population, same identity, and higher social gap are reasons of easier victory of Arabic Spring in those countries.

Because all of these Arab countries were Muslims, the most important cultural factor that had impact on upheavals of Middle East countries was the Islam.

In terms of short-term, it can be noted to the influence of Arabic culture in some sub-identity belonging and national culture of countries.

Also, repression of people by the military, police, and security forces to protect government against oppositions was another important factor of widespread unrest in those Arabic societies. Furthermore, formation of small military and paramilitary groups was from other short-term effective factors on upheavals of Arabic Spring of the region.

In the case of foreign factors in the long-term, it can be referred to the interference of powers in governments of the region for many decades that it had impact on protests of people, and it is common features of those countries. This factor cause people of Arab countries have always negative feeling toward foreign countries. But, in the case of foreign factors in the long-term, it can be referred to the declaration of neutrality of foreign countries during street protests of people and exist of kind of consensus between foreign countries for acceptance of change in those countries. It is worth to say that the interference of foreign countries in upheavals of Arab countries was been much lower compare to color revolutions in the Central Asian Countries and

Caucasus. Arabic uprisings specifies that dissatisfaction of people in these countries has very deep historical root which it has revealed itself in appropriate circumstances in the form of unexpected crisis. Experience of involved countries in the crisis shows governments that are able to get the support of significant portion of the population, even a strong minority, and also keeps the main body of the army's loyalty, have been able to cross from the crisis. Prevention of rulers from the formation of a global consensus against themselves and using appropriate tactics are two points that Arabic governments of Middle East have learned from each other after shock of the fall of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia.

There are many reasons and motivations for the revolution in the Central Asia, but for various reasons, the likely changes of the Central Asia will not be copy of what that happened in the Arabic countries. First, Arabic countries had not been a model or pattern in Central Asia, and basically they had no effective presence in there. Turkey, Iran and Western countries have been more active in Central Asia compare to Arabic countries, and presence of Arabic countries have been restricted to construction of mosques and translation of their literature. Second, Arabic countries have different approaches with its Central Asian partners, and some of Central Asian countries basically in their development model have no attention to the Arabic countries. For example, the pattern of political, social and economic development of Kazakhstan is towards developed Europe, and the pattern of a country like Saudi Arabia has no place in it.

The only way for causing unrest in the Central Asia is creation of dissension and schism between elites of those countries.

In the Central Asian countries, social networks and internet will have no role in the social and political upheavals, and what that can cause social upheavals in those countries are kind of tendency to return to the old and traditional values. These two factors, social networks and internet, in the Arab countries except Egypt and Tunisia did not had an important role.

Seasonal departure of young people and labor force to the Russia, Kazakhstan and other countries is from factors that reduce elements that lead to protests in those country. Another factor that reduce elements that lead to protests is that each of these countries are kind of involve in a particular way of living and economic life. For example, Kyrgyzstan is the transiting place of Chinese goods to the region, Tajikistan is the transiting place of drugs to the region and etc. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia are three countries in the Central Asia that have preconditions of dissension and schism between their elites, and hence, they have necessity characteristics of any change and upheaval. In these countries.

Social and political upheavals of the Arabic countries and changes in political relations of this important region of the world have attracted the attention of decision-making institutions and a lot of countries such as Russia. Supremacy feel of Russian to its former territory of the Central Asia that is due to the geopolitical situation and the importance of natural resources and energy of that region makes the occurrence of any social or political change in this region important for Russians. In the current situation of the region, continuation of the current political system and government of the Central Asia is the desire model for the Russian. Availability of the possibility of influence in the authoritarian and totalitarian government that are remained from the former Soviet Union is one of the important reasons of unwillingness of Russia to occurrence of any social or political changes in the Central Asia.

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