

Middle East Dialogue...Glorious Past, Uncertain Future

ASSESSING IRANIAN SECURITY CAPABILITIES: THE CASE OF THE GREEN MOVEMENT PROTESTS, 2009-2012

Martin Scott Catino, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor of Graduate Military Studies
School of Security and Global Studies
American Military University

Introduction and Thesis:

The Green Movement protests that occurred in the aftermath of the 2009 Iranian presidential elections were the largest protests since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the most serious challenge to the current regime in Tehran. The sheer numbers of protesters, their diverse backgrounds and widespread geographical locations, along with their prominent positions in social and political leadership, demonstrated both the strength and the depth of the opposition. Moreover, the severe security measures used by Tehran to suppress the revolution further indicated the potency of the protesters as a political force of reform.

Yet, the Green Movement failed to either unseat the rule of the ayatollahs or bring the reforms so heroically championed. The security measures executed by Ayatollah Khamenei and his supporters were effective in curtailing the gathering, movement, and expression of reformists as well as their leadership activities. The leadership, policies, operations, and tactics used by the security forces to check the Green Movement reveal extensive capabilities that are critical for understanding the challenges that reformists will likely face in the future.

This study will analyze the capabilities of the security forces of the current regime demonstrated during the severe repression of the Green Movement. Moreover, this paper will give particular attention to the grassroots or human terrain reaction to the security measures and therefore analyze popular support as a variable in security operations and capabilities.

Methodology:

This study of Iranian security capabilities exercised during the Green Movement protests relies on primary sources of both reformist and regime supporters. Journalist accounts, human rights reports, and other eye-witness views are also critical. Furthermore, expert security assessments such as *Jane's Defense Review*, *Strafor Global Intelligence*, and *International Crisis Group* are central to the research design. This paper will also utilize human terrain analysis to isolate the population and its effect on security operations.

Thank you for considering this conference paper proposal for inclusion in the Middle East Dialogue 2015: Glorious Past, Uncertain Future.

Contact Information:

Martin Scott Catino, Ph.D.
Email: martin.catino0@mycampus.apus.edu