

Democracy

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Committee of SWAPO Party.

One would have thought that we have learned from the past mistakes on this backbiting and backstabbing politics of succession. After all, the 2004 Extra-Ordinary Congress and its concomitant divisions began before that but the hope is that all of us

would want to avoid its repeat.

Having said the above, it is imperative to make this final point. It is my belief that no one in the Top 4 needs a campaign team in order to smoothen the ascend to any position in the party and ultimately government. These are all seasoned and popular politicians in their own right. Let us also not confuse the entire public with the propaganda of tribalism as a li-

cence to the Presidency. In my own opinion all the Top 4 leadership were elected on the basis of their qualities.

There is no doubt that tribal harmony and balance is very important, but so too the gender consideration. But to be driven by an agenda of non-Oshiwambo candidate as a manifesto to the presidency will introduce many other flaws such as whether all

tribes or races have agreed on such a candidate or whether we shall be guided by certain qualities before such a determination is made. Some are seeking public sympathy around the issue in the attempt to have a candidate that will serve their interest. This is democracy and probably allowed. However, in the same vein, democracy must also serve the interest of other sections of the population black

or white; rich or poor; young or old; men or women. All said and done, democracy is about choices and thus the right choice ultimately wins.

But all of us have a duty, individually and collectively, to minimize our emotional attachment to camp politics and maximize it to the democratic choices of the top Party structures.

The dirty camp politics

never helped in the past and it is unlikely to help in the future, but the Party structures provide certainty that human whims do not. Let us (inclusive of some media houses as well as those overt or covert campaign managers) surrender all to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SWAPO Party to provide us with guided democracy principles as we near 2012 Congress and beyond.

Protests in Iran unlikely to bring about regime change

By Adam Gonn

JERUSALEM, — After almost

one year and a half in hiatus, Iranian opposition forces took to streets again in the garb of

the Iranian Green Movement which is named after the color its members wore when they

protested against the re-election of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2009.

Analysts said it is a further step in a wave of protests that broke out in many countries in the Middle East since the overthrow of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the downfall of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

However, analysts said that despite the similarities of the protests in Iran, Egypt and Tunisia, there are huge differences when looking a bit closer.

AMERICAN INFLUENCE

Shmuel Bar from the Institute of Policy and Strategy in Herzliya said there are several important differences between Iran and Egypt, ranging from the type of regime to the degree of American influence.

First of all, the Egyptian military wasn't willing to use force against the demonstrations. Additionally, Egypt is an regional ally of the U.S., which has influence over the regime. Thus the military had to take into account that if it acts brutally, it's going to lose the U.S. support.

The Americans had the leverage to impose great pressure on Mubarak, since he was their ally, Bar said.

However, "the situation is absolutely different in Iran where the military is willing to use force, and it deter the protesters, which the Egyptian regime didn't have," Bar said.

The Iranian demonstrators knew that they did not have the American support, and even if they had, the Americans have no leverage over the regime.

And for the Iranian demonstrators, the issues are far more complex than just getting rid of Ahmadinejad, according to Bar.

"Even now, the Americans are only expressing very light criticism towards the regime, while at the same point in Egypt, the American were calling on Mubarak to step down," Bar said.

DIFFERENT CULTURES

Eldad Prado from the Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, told Xinhua that there are significant cultural differences between the two countries, in addition to the political ones.

In Iran, the protests began in June 2009 and went on to get pretty aggressive as a mass movement all the way until

December. But they died out due the extremely harsh and cruel reaction by the government, Prado said.

"The similarities between the situations in Iran and Egypt are that these movements are led by young people informed with Western values of democracy," Prado said.

"The political culture in Egypt is different from that of Iran," Prado said, adding that "Iran has a culture that focuses on martyrdom."

"In Iran, the slogan is 'death to the dictator,' while in Egypt, the slogans is 'the people want the regime to fall,'" Prado added.

DISSIMILAR PROTESTS

Ze'ev Maghen from the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University, said he believed that the numerous demonstrations across the Middle East have had an effect on reviving the Green Movement in Iran, which had been silent since the post-election demonstrations.

"In Iran, everyone is claiming the events in Tunisia and Egypt as their own," Maghen said. He said that both the government and the demonstrations have used the developments as an argument to prove their points.

The regime arguing that the demonstrations were inspired by the Islamic Revolution in 1979 while the pro-democracy movement, on the other hand, said that the revolts were sparked by a desire for freedom, he said.

While acknowledging Bar's view that the different responses of the armed forces played a role in how the protests developed, Maghen said that if Iranian protests developed to the extent it did in Egypt, most of the armies will eventually back down.

Maghen said there are also differences in how the regimes claim their legitimacy and authority in each country. "Mubarak doesn't have a religious claim, nor a democratic one."

"The Iranian leadership makes both of those claims. So it's much harder to rise up against them," Maghen added. (Xinhua)



Republic of Namibia

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