



Turkish Perspectives on Iran

OE Watch Commentary: The recent events in Iran have sparked a debate in neighboring Turkey, where many have compared them to Turkey's Gezi Park protests of spring 2013. The accompanying passages from Turkish sources shed light on this debate, which centers upon the question of whether external powers are "stirring up trouble" in Iran. While some newspapers argue that this is the case, others caution against such conspiracy theories, saying that the public's demands should be heard.

As the first passage from pro-government daily *Sabah* claims, the events have turned bloody due to the intervention of "external powers" and "false news," and are reminiscent of the Gezi park protests in Turkey. The second accompanying passage from Turkish pro-government *Yeni Safak* news source goes even farther and points to the US and Israel as being behind the protests. Other similar opinions have also blamed foreign powers, suggesting that they are trying to contain Iran's expansionist policies in Yemen, Iraq and Syria.

However, there have been others who have cautioned against such conspiracy theories. The third passage features an analysis by Taha Kılınç, who claims that it would be incorrect to view the protests as "America is stirring up trouble in Iran." Kılınç notes that the people on the streets in Iran are simply "exhausted from poverty and being politically let down, [and] are protesting issues that have accumulated over decades..." He also notes that Iran's expansionist policies in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon have placed a financial burden on the Iranian public, which is frustrated that the "mullah class is getting richer" while they suffer in poverty.

The final passage by academic Mensur Akgün points out how the instability in Iran is likely to impact Turkey negatively. He argues that an unstable Iran will make the Syrian crisis harder to resolve, and will increase tensions in the Gulf. It will also make the situation in Yemen more difficult, and possibly increase chaos in the Middle East.

The Gezi Park protests of May 2013 were sparked following a police raid on a peaceful sit-in by about 500 environmentalists against the planned demolition of Gezi Park in central Istanbul. Police used pepper spray, tear gas, and water cannons to break up the demonstrators, after which tens of thousands of protesters all over Turkey joined together in peaceful demonstrations. Over the course of two months, two and a half million people engaged in peaceful demonstrations in 67 of Turkey's 81 cities. Their frustration was fueled by concern that their individual liberties were eroding; and concern that freedoms of speech, media, assembly, minority rights and the rule of law were breaking down at an alarming rate. The Turkish government pointed to "foreign powers" and their collaborators for instigating the protests. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

"... not every protest is a 'conspiracy.' In fact, using the word conspiracy for every event might be a conspiracy itself."

Source: "Gezi provokasyonu şimdi İran'da sahnede (The Gezi provocation is now on stage in Iran)," *Sabah.com.tr*, 3 January 2018. <https://www.sabah.com.tr/dunya/2018/01/03/gezi-provokasyonu-simdi-iranda-sahne>

The demonstrations in Iran which started as a protest against rising prices, have turned into a bloody event which spread all over the country due to false news and external powers' intervention. The events are reminiscent of the Gezi provocation.

Source: Tamer Korkmaz, "İran'daki ateşi kimler yaktı? (Who lit the fire in Iran?)," *Yeni Safak*, 3 January 2018. <https://www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/tamerkorkmaz/irandaki-atesi-kimler-yakti-2041834>

The chaos plan, whose scenario was written in Washington, is being implemented in Iran. The events in Iran these days are a close relative of the Gezi Protests that we had five years ago!

The US-Israel axis is what has cause the protest in Iran. In other words, the CIA has taken part in the deep operation in Iran, along with the MOSSAD.

Source: Taha Kılınç, "İran'ı kim karıştırıyor? (Who is stirring up trouble in Iran?)," *Yeni Safak*, 3 January 2018. <https://www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/tahakilinc/irani-kim-karistiriyor-2041825>

...Iran is once again experiencing protests. At this stage, it would not be correct to paint the protests as "America is stirring up trouble in Iran." Because what we have here are people who, exhausted from poverty and being politically let down, are protesting issues that have accumulated over decades...

Iran is currently ruled by an administration that finances conflict/war in at least four countries (Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon) and organizes the opposition in at least two countries (Bahrein, Nigeria). Of course, this expansionist policy of a country where the "Islamic Revolution" claim has been expeditiously turning into a Shia fanaticism puts a financial burden on ordinary people. Adding in the factors of the mullah class, which has been getting richer, the restriction of freedoms under the pretext of religion and the corruptions that have been revealed; the revolt of masses, whose only share in all this was poverty, is inevitable. We should consider this before saying "Foreign powers are stirring up trouble in Iran."

Interpreting the situation as "foreign powers who wish to take advantage of this situation anytime anything happens in a Muslim country" might cause us to miss the bigger picture....

... not every protest is a "conspiracy." In fact, using the word conspiracy for every event might be a "conspiracy" itself.

Source: Mensur Akgün, "İran'in sorunu aslında bizim de sorunumuz (Iran's problem is actually also our problem)," *Karar.com.tr*, 3 January 2018. <http://www.karar.com/yazarlar/mensur-akgun/iranin-sorunu-aslinda-bizim-de-sorunumuz-5856>

"If Iran becomes unstable... we as Turkey will also be impacted. If Iran is destabilized, the solution to the Syria problem will become more difficult, and tensions will increase in the Persian Gulf. The Yemen problem will become unsolvable. The new Saudi leadership will target Lebanon, and maybe Jordan.... the Middle East will face chaos... The already sensitive balances in the region will be disrupted...."