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Experts: Iranian regime will not turn into military dictatorship in near future

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Sept. 21--Despite the growing influence of military forces on the political and economic life of Iran, the establishment of military dictatorship in the country in the near future is unlikely, experts say.

"It is an overstatement to contend that the Iranian regime is turning into a military dictatorship, **Ted Galen Carpenter**, vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, wrote in an e-mail to Trend. However, it is clear that the Revolutionary Guard is playing an increasing role in Iran's political affairs and that the Ahmadinejad government seems more dependent on the support of the Guard than any previous regime."

On Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called upon responsible civic and religious leaders in Iran to take measures on the control of the state administration, and expressed concern about the growing influence of the military and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in the country's political life, especially after last year's presidential election.

"When you assign the rights of military so that they can suppress legitimate protests and demonstrations, you are giving impetus to and release the forces that no one knows where can take you, she said. And I know that this causes a concern of people inside Iran itself."

During her visit to Qatar in February this year, Clinton said that Iran becomes a military dictatorship, and warned that the IRGC has so much power that gradually replaces the government.

According to Carpenter, indeed, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's cozy relationship with the Guard leadership is making the senior clerics nervous, and it may be one reason why there has been so much resistance to some of the president's appointees.

IRGC is an Iranian elite unit, created in 1979 from the paramilitary detachments of the Islamic Revolutionary Committees, the supporters of Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini. Many of those from the IRGC are represented in the government, and their number increases. IRGC is the real power in society, which is represented not only in administration, but also in financial and commercial sectors. IRGC has extensive economic interests in the defense arms, construction, oil and nuclear industry.

The IRGC also includes Basij paramilitary forces as an equal part of its command structure, which provides substantial funding for and strengthens its presence in

Iranian domestic politics.

During the June and December's riots in 2009 in Iran, representatives of Basij, called to ensure safety, used firearms against the demonstrators.

"A regime change of some sort is similar to what took place in Pakistan -- is certainly not out of the question," James Forest, professor of criminal justice and criminology at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell wrote in an e-mail to Trend.

Ahmadinejad has made some enemies throughout his tenure, so no doubt there are some members of the Iranian powerful elite who are right now discussing the potential costs and benefits of this sort of power transition.

Professor of International Relations at Tehran University Davud Germidas-Bavand believes that impression about the possibility of establishing a military regime in Iran created due to the significant influence of the IRGC on all spheres of politics, economics and security, as well as due to the presence of a large number of ex-generals and members of the IRGC in Ahmadinejad's government.

"The influence of the IRGC on the political and economic life in Iran is related to the fact that initially after the formation of the IRGC, a decision was made on self-funding of structure, which led to its involvement in many economic projects, including energy," Germidas-Bavand told Trend by telephone from Tehran.

D.Khatinoglu contributed to the article.

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