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**Iran Vs US: A Comparative Analysis
of Post-Election Scenario**

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Abstract

US and Iran elections are among the most important ones around the globe. In the backdrop of the intense relationship between the two countries, the recent presidential elections gained immense attention in the international media. The transition of power in both states was strikingly different. In the US, a democratic country, the power transition was tumultuous whereas in Iran, a theocratic country, the transition was smooth. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed account of the post-election scenarios in Iran and the US. It reflects upon both states' political maturity in the period mentioned above. The paper argues that the post-election scenario that emerged particularly in Iran has its implications on the existing narrative about Tehran which is known in the west as 'authoritarian'. The paper further argues that Trump's immature behavior has negatively impacted the US's image as a 'model of democracy' around the world.

Keywords: *US, Iran, Elections, Trump, Democracy, Political, Conservatives*

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The Post-Elections Scenario of Iran and the US: A Snapshot

In the backdrop of intense relationships between the US and Iran, particularly after the breakup of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions (JCPOA) by the Trump administration, presidential elections in Iran in June 2021 and the US in November 2020, gained unusual attention in the international media. The way both elections were held and ended up surprised everyone. Iran, even though a theocratic state, managed to have peaceful elections amid the pandemic and terrible economic conditions. On the other hand, the US, the world's oldest democracy, faced a huge embarrassment in front of the world.

Iranian president and opposition were able to display an example that the Western world never expected. Prioritizing Iran over political gains and objectives was evident from president-elect Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi sitting with his rivals after becoming assuming power and discussing the challenges that Iran was facing. In doing so, he has set an example of unity for the world that criticizes Iran for having an authoritarian regime as to how an actual leader treats his former election rivals.

On the other hand, the elections in the US were not as calm as was expected. Unlike Iran, the transition from Trump to Joe Biden was tumultuous. Trump, and Rouhani both lost in the elections, however, their behavior in the post-election was strikingly different. Trump followers stormed the White House and left the world's oldest democracy in chaos. The angry mob of Trump's supporters attacked the Capitol building and he didn't even criticize the mob for their violent actions. Trump claimed that the election was stolen by the deliberate attempt to cast the

vote through the mailing system by the democrat, which allowed Americans to avoid in-person ballot casting due to COVID-19 pandemic-related fears.

Iran has always been on the hit list of Western countries, especially for political reasons. So, when Iran saw the attack on US Capitol, the country jumped in, predictably. The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei compared the last US elections with the successful Iranian election, which was tarnished by the opponent's allegation of voter fraud, a bitter war of words, and even led to aggressive protests.¹ "The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Khamenei described the U.S. election as "election fiascos" and said that those same who were criticizing Iranian elections, compare this with the Americans' behavior after the elections when one of their candidates behaved very inappropriately toward the one who had won, and remember his statements and viewpoints."² Even though there are many reasons and points that need to be considered by the Iranian authorities, but their elections, no doubt controversial, still took place more peacefully and professionally than the US.³

In line with what has been mentioned above, this paper further reflects upon the political Im/maturity shown by Iran and the US in the post-US elections era. The paper argues that the post-election scenario that emerged particularly in Iran has its implications on the existing narrative about Tehran which is known in the west as 'authoritarian'. The paper further argues that Trump's immature behavior has negatively impacted the US's image as a model of democracy around the world.

Raisi's Response: A case of Iran's Political Maturity?

Focusing on the Iranian post-election situation, the Iranian presidential election candidate depicted a unique example of harmony when all the former presidential candidates named: Mohsen Rezaei, Mohsen Mehr-Alizadeh, Saeed Jalili, Amir Hossein Ghazizadeh, Naser Hemmati, and Ali Reza Zakani had a meeting with the newly elected Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi at his office. Raisi described the dialogue with the presidential contestants to be a fruitful one as well. He added that such a compassionate approach will definitely resolve the persisting issues and undo the knots in people's lives.⁴

In Iran, working with people of different mindsets is a big deal and it seemed like they have prioritized Iran's national interests over their political agendas. Similarly, in Asian countries like Pakistan, India, and European countries like England, good relations at the start are seldom visible. It is seen that the opposition and government are always at loggerheads. The opposition parties make sure to create hurdles for the existing government. In the case of Iran, Ebrahim's predecessor Hassan Rouhani's attitude was also positive. Keeping in mind that Raisi lost the last elections to Rouhani, the outgoing Iranian President Hassan Rouhani congratulated his successor, Ebrahim Raisi, on winning the elections during the in-person meeting.⁵ Raisi at the end of the meeting said that the dialogue with the friends was very cordial and articulated their sentiments and opinions that the new regime would execute its best efforts to resolve the country's problems, according to the mandate and live up-to-the trust and work for the betterment of the Iranian citizen.⁶

It is appreciated that all parties expressed concern about the country, its ideology, religious boundaries, and solving the economy for the welfare of the people.⁷ Noticeably, politicians and leaders around the globe make various political statements and promises but they are hardly ever kept. But the Iranian president-elect calling his competitor's friends, acknowledging their opinions, and hearing what they have to say is nothing less than astonishing. In his statement, it is clearly seen that Raisi is recognizing that all of them are united and want to solve Iran's problems. A noteworthy statement was given by Raisi that "the election campaign is over and now is the period of friendship, empathy, and cooperation to solve the problems of the people, which is a public concern" demonstrates the level of political maturity between the ruler and the opposition leaders.⁸

In the US, the post-election scenario was chaos and turmoil. The US elections were filled with allegations, blames, and even violence. A smooth and peaceful transfer of power was not seen which was quite problematic for the world power. The peaceful transfer of government and power from the former president to the next is a symbol of strength in the American democratic process. After becoming the president of the United States in 1797, John Adams wrote to his wife, Abigail about George Washington's action when the oath-taking ceremony was over, Washington paid a visit and cordially congratulated him.⁹ But this has not been the case every time and the most recent elections are evident.

The elections in Iran though were not much participated by the general public but nothing like the Capital building incident was seen. The role of leaders and their attitudes towards handling the post-elections situation is also important. Iranian

president and opposition were able to display an example that the Western world never expected. Prioritizing Iran over political gains and objectives was depicted by them. On the other hand, the US, the world's oldest democracy, faced a huge embarrassment in front of the world.

Trump's Response: Shattered America's democratic image?

Focusing on the elections of 2020, it was clear that the transition from Trump to Biden was not going to be a smooth one. Trump complained very aggressively about the ballots and said that the ballots were a disaster.¹⁰ When the reporter urged for a comment on the rioters, Trump exclaimed that "get rid of the ballots, and one would have a very peaceful transfer. He also said that there won't be a transfer, frankly, there will be just a continuation."¹¹ Joe Biden said that in such circumstances the military may be deployed to remove Trump from the White House.¹² The behavior of Trump was quite condescending from the beginning. All these allegations and statements made the US look bad in front of the world. This all made one predict what was going to happen.

The role of the leader and his party in every election is very important. The leader provides direction to his supporters and followers. The kind of politics a leader does is often depicted in the action of his supporters. For example, if we look at a slightly different example; Modi's BJP government in India, the Bakhts are full of violence, intolerance, bigotry, and Islamophobia. Modi's training and support for extreme right-wing parties negatively influenced the environment of secular India and made it a

majoritarian state, intolerant of other religious minorities in India. It is not a state that Gandhi or Nehru had envisioned.

Similar happened in the US. Trump's behavior has made the US suffer from such a chaotic situation. His speeches, conferences, and interviews showed his support for white supremacy. The US as a country that runs on ideology faced many issues because of this white nationalism and white supremacy that is prevailing in the masses. Such a diverse nation like the US where people from all over the world live. Where ethnicities from the entire globe live and work together under the flag of the US, a nation that is called a nation of immigrants. The Native Americans barely exist in the US. All white, black, Asian, etc. people came as immigrants mostly or were forcefully brought. When a diverse country tries to focus on nationalism then it becomes more systematic racism.

Like in India. The control and caste supremacy in India depicts that even the so-called biggest democracy in the world would become an epitome of intolerance, xenophobia, and hatred. In India, we see the example of institutionalized racism. The treatment of extremist Hindus with Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and especially scheduled or outcast Hindus is straight-up inhumane. Mob lynching, mob justice, and violence have become a norm in modern-day India. The winning of the BJP and especially Mr. Modi can solely describe and predict where India is heading today.

US citizens lost their jobs working in different countries. They have been made to believe that this all is others' fault and that is why the white supremacist is xenophobic. Trump was the person who made them believe that they were solely suffering because of others and that he would make sure that all those job

opportunities and investments come back to the US. In recent times many politicians aggressively globalized their businesses, shifting their wealth and factories to Mexico and the like. Trump mentioned during his speech at Monessen, Pennsylvania that globalization has made the economic elite donate a lot to politicians. I used to be one of them he exclaimed hate to say it but it is true.¹³ He said many such statements which depict this to be something he had citizen's support and attention. Trump's vote bank was also from white-majority areas mainly.

Xenophobic statements were commonly used by Trump from time to time. Trump started his presidential campaign last year of his term with really malicious words for Mexico.¹⁴ He said; "they are not our friend believe me. He said, before disparaging Mexican immigrants that they're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime and they're rapists."¹⁵

It can be said that the conservatives or ultra-conservatives are always more prone to violence, showing objection and anger through violent means. Many conservatives have quite a loose relationship with reality. The right-wing's dissent from what usually people think of as accepted reality starts with political matters.¹⁶ Conservatives often reject facts and figures and label it as God's will if something bad happens or they blame it on their enemies or the communities they are not fond of. Former President Donald Trump's inciting stance on the COVID pandemic, which he believed originated in China, his statements prompted anti-Asian content on social media and perpetuated more racist attitudes.¹⁷ The Asian American community in the US has experienced a remarkable rise in incidents of hate crimes.¹⁸

Whenever a candidate loses, his supporters often protest and refuse to accept the results but the aftermath of Trump's loss

was fascinating. Trump's declarations about a rigged November 2020 and his invocations to "fight" and "Stop the Steal" incited followers to march to the Capitol, preventing Congressional confirmation of the victory of President-elect Joe Biden.¹⁹ Trump told interviewer Maria Bartiromo that they were peaceful people and that they were great people.²⁰ Former US President using such positive words for those who made a joke of the US was quite problematic.

Is Iran's Political Maturity Sustainable? Some Concluding Thoughts

Iran somehow managed to break the hopes of all the countries who have hoped it would fail and that the elections would be a mess. Even though Iran saw a low turnout in the 2021 elections and the grievances of the people are still there which can be seen through low participation and null votes but managing the post-elections situation was without doubt exemplary. However, the new government in Iran would have to take certain confidence-building measures to gain the trust of the people.

True democracies require a smooth transition of power from the predecessor to the successors which is being seen in Iran now and due to which the democracy in Iran is benefitting. And if this all is just a mere show then Iran is going to face a lot of problems in the future. The people already showed a lack of interest in these elections which means that the government has to take various steps to gain their trust and acceptance. The opposition would create problems as well for the government instead of standing together to fight the issues. The talks about JCPOA would also face issues that would not be small. The

democratic system would suffer as well in this whole scenario and the already shady political system would become more doubtful.

Given that, Iran's political maturity might or might not be sustainable depending on how internal power dynamics emerge in the near future. If the same energy and attitude that Raisi and the opposition have demonstrated, Iran's image as an authoritarian country would begin collapsing. Iran's political system which has been a joke in front of the world would change and it would increase Iran's political system's credibility. The entire JCPOA situation can be handled much better when there is no opposition creating problems in the way.

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