Iran Data Portal

Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat
The Office for Strengthening Unity

The Office for Strengthening Unity (*Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat - DTV*) was founded in 1979 as a central organization to organize student Islamic Associations against the influence of Marxist or Islamist-Marxist groups on university campuses. Some of the founders of DTV were students who had seized the American Embassy.

After the Cultural Revolution in 1980 when all opposition groups were purged from the universities, DTV was the only active student organization to continue. "Its major functions were limited to propaganda, political control, and ideological challenge of any oppositional voice."[1] It also mobilized students to serve at the front during the Iran-Iraq war. In respect to domestic politics, DTV could be regarded as part of the left-wing of the Islamic Republic and one of the supporters of Mousavi's government during the 1980s.

From the end of the Iran-Iraq war until the 1997 presidential election, DTV, like other left-wing organizations, experienced a transformation and began to advocate reformist ideas such as political and social freedoms, increased public participation in political decision-making, and pluralism. DTV became an active member of Mohammad Khatami's campaign for the presidency and after his landslide victory in 1997 became a member of the "Dovom-e Khordad Front", a collection of reformist political groups.

In 1999, when security forces attacked the dormitories of Tehran University at night after political demonstrations against the forced closure of Salam newspaper, DTV took an active role in leading the subsequent countrywide protests.

In the 2000 parliamentary elections, it participated as one of the groups in the reformist coalition and managed to send four members of its central committee to parliament. In 2003, these members staged a sit-in in parliament protesting the crackdown on student activists.

Eventually, in 2002, DTV left the Dovom-e Khordad front, criticizing Khatami and other reformist parties for allegedly losing opportunities and being too conservative in confrontations with hardliners. The other important event during this time was the division of DTV into two branches: the minority or Shiraz branch, and the majority or Allameh branch. The majority branch was an oppositional group criticizing hardliners for anti-democratic policies and reformists for timidity, while the minority branch defected to the conservative camp.

From 2003 onward, the group stopped participating in elections and has sought only to monitor civil society and guard against the government. As a result, it boycotted the presidential elections in 2005. However, during Ahmadinejad's government, pressures increased on DTV, and the group revised its political position, supporting the reformist candidate Mehdi Karroubi in the 2009 election.

Organizationally, DTV is a central committee elected by the representatives of the student Islamic Associations of all universities. The representative of each Islamic Association is elected by its central committee, which is in turn elected by the student body of each university. Before 1997, only members of the Islamic Associations were able to participate in the election of the central committees. After 1997, Islamic Associations changed their statutes and allowed all students to vote for the members of central committees. However, after 2005, Ahmadinejad's Ministry of Higher Education forced the Associations to limit their elections again to only their members; this produced new tensions between the government and DTV.

[1] Mashayekhi, Mehrdad. 2001. "The Revival of the Student Movement in Post-Revolutionary Iran." International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society. 15(2). p. 292.

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