(U) *"ZENDEBAD, SHAH!":* THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND THE FALL OF IRANIAN PRIME MINISTER MOHAMMED MOSSADEQ, AUGUST 1953

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(U) Source and Classification Note

(S) This study is based largely on classified records of the Central Intelligence Agency. Secondary sources proved invaluable in setting the historical context for TPAJAX, but the details of the operation itself come from classified sources. These sources are listed in the footnotes and bibliography.

(U) I have also examined relevant records from the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the National Security Agency. These records were not as plentiful or as helpful as I had hoped. I was nonetheless able to fill in some gaps with documents from these organizations. The vast majority of surviving documents on the operation itself remain with CIA, but for the reasons provided below even these are not as numerous as one might expect.

(S) Most of the operational files on TPAJAX, held in the Near East Division in the Directorate of Operations, were destroyed during a routine office cleaning in 1962. According to various sources, the Division needed more file space, and management told branch members to clean out their files. Much operational material was destroyed under the mistaken idea that because the operation was over, the documentary record was of no further use. Witnesses have confirmed this unfortunate event.

(U) Copies of cables sent between Tehran Station and Washington during the operation also were among the files the Division destroyed in its attempt to gain more filing space. At the time, the copies were already nine years old and no one thought that they were important. A record copy may have remained in the Agency's former Cable Secretariat for some time, but such records too have long since disappeared in routine house cleanings. An extensive search of CIA's archives has failed to uncover any surviving copies.

(U) Some *transcripts* of Station cables nonetheless survive because CIA had some of the cables microfilmed. I have been unable to determine when. In the late 1970s or

early 1980s, CIA's History Staff prepared transcripts of these documents and sent them to the Department of State's Office of the Historian, then researching a volume of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. There is every reason to believe that these transcripts, produced under the supervision of a professional historian, are authentic. The matters in the transcripts correspond in sequence and subject with events as we know them.

(U) The microfilm itself apparently has been destroyed, in accordance with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) guidelines. According to NARA, the microfilm had to be kept for 20 years and then could be destroyed. The record of destruction had to be kept for five years, at which point it too could be destroyed.

(S) CIA is not the only organization that has destroyed records relevant to TPAJAX. The State Department has destroyed three quarters of the records for the relevant time period belonging to the Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs (GTI) of State's Bureau of Near Eastern , South Asian, and African Affairs. These materials were in GTI files, Lot 57, D 529. According to State's *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954,* Vol. X, *Iran, 1951-54,* the documents covered "political and military matters and US economic and military assistance to Iran for the years 1946-1954."

(S) The present study It examines some of the issues currently occupying scholars: Why did the United States act against Mossadeq? Would Mossadeq's government have fallen even if the United States had done nothing? I have also exploited records of government agencies other than CIA, Finally, I have addressed the relationship between the operators in CIA's then–Directorate of Plans (now the Directorate of Operations) and the analysts in the Directorate of Intelligence, a missing dimension in all published histories.

(U) Some readers may think that this study is over-classified, but many of the crucial documents are still top secret after almost 50 years. Since this handful of documents contains information critical to the story, I have decided to use the material they contain even if it means restricting the potential readership.

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1 June 1998

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Chapter 1

(S) The Roots of TPAJAX

(U) Iran and the United States to 1951

(U) During the height of the Cold War in the 1950s, Washington considered the Middle East in general and Iran in particular to be among the great strategic prizes in the geopolitical and ideological struggle against the Soviet Union. It was not always so. For almost 175 years, American policymakers ignored Iran because they had no reason to do otherwise.

(U) That changed during World War II and the immediate postwar years. During the war, Iran was an important route for American aid to the Soviet Army, engaged in a life–or–death struggle with Hitler's *Wehrmacht*.[1] Soviet troops remained in northern Iran immediately after the war, encouraging pro-Communist separatist regimes in Iranian Azerbaijan and in the Kurdish region. For a time it appeared to Washington that Moscow would demand the "unification" of Iranian Azerbaijan with Soviet Azerbaijan, but this problem evaporated once Stalin understood that the United States would not permit such an aggressive move.[2]

(U) The United States would have preferred to withdraw from the Persian Gulf after the end of World War II, but the postwar British retreat and retrenchment "East of Suez" created a vacuum that the US felt obligated to fill. After London announced that it could no longer supply military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey, President Harry Truman publicly declared in March 1947 that the United States would support free peoples everywhere, "resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside

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[1](U) Eventually, almost a quarter of American aid for the Soviet Union came through Iran. Convoys using more northern routes lost about 20% of their cargoes to the Nazis; only 8% of cargoes sent to the Persian Gulf for shipment through Iran were lost. See, Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 284, 404.

[2](U) See, Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977); Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-73,* 2d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974); and John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972) for a discussion of the Azeri crisis in early 1946.

pressures."[3] For Iran, the Truman Doctrine—as this pledge came to be known—meant that the United States was replacing Britain as the main geopolitical counterweight to the Russians.

(U) For the first three years after President Truman's declaration, the United States paid relatively little attention to Iran even though that oil-rich country was experiencing serious economic problems, widespread discontent with the government, and growing agitation by the Tudeh—Iran's Communist Party.

(S) In April 1950, the Director of Central Intelligence, RAdm. Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, drew Secretary of State Dean Acheson's attention to "the urgent need for additional intelligence coverage of Iran." Hillenkoetter wrote that CIA was unable to draft reliable national intelligence estimates on the country because it simply did not have enough information. All the Agency could do, according to the DCI , was "tell US policy makers that some sort of crisis does exist, but [CIA] cannot confidently answer such specific pertinent questions as : (1) how serious the situation actually is; (2) how adequate are Iran's own resources for meeting its present difficulties; and (3) how capable the Iranian Government is of using these resources."[4]

(S) Hillenkoetter proposed two solutions. Either existing facilities could be expanded to seek information from more diverse sources or "coverage might be expanded through the establishment of a consulate in the strategically important southwestern part of Iran."[5]

(S) The records do not contain Acheson's reaction to Hillenkoetter's letter, but the still-classified copy in the National Archives has three handwritten notes attached to it. The first is from Fisher Howe, Deputy Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, forwarding the letter to John D. Jernegan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs. The second is from Jernegan to C. Vaughan Ferguson, Officer in Charge of Iranian Affairs, Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs. The final is from Ferguson to Jernegan.[6]

(S) Howe thought Hillenkoetter's letter was largely for the record, "to show that CIA is fulfilling its overall responsibility for calling attention to weaknesses in intelligence coverage." Jernegan had his own unspecified recommendations and doubted whether State should adopt CIA's. [redacted] The State Department clearly did not view the paucity of intelligence on Iran with the same urgency as CIA.

(U) Even without the most basic intelligence on Iran, two elements drove American foreign policy in the post-war Persian Gulf region: oil and the fear that political instability might jeopardize Western access to oil. Ever since Shah Muzaffar al-Din

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[3](U) *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States,* Harry S. Truman (Washington, DC, 1947), p. 179.

[4] (S) Letter from Director of Central Intelligence RAdm. Roscoe Hillenkoetter to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, 11 April 1950, Records of the State Department, RG 59, Lot 57, D 529, NND959286, "Iran 1946-54," box 4, National Archives and Records Administration.

[5] (S) Ibid.

[6] (S) Ibid.

[7] (S) Ibid.

granted William Knox D'Arcy an oil concession covering three-fourths of Persia (as Iran was known until 1935), Iranian oil had helped fuel the British economy in peace and war.[8] The United States was then producing enough oil for its needs, but it knew that Western Europe depended on oil exports from the Middle East. In January 1951, nine months after Hillenkoetter's letter to Acheson, the Central Intelligence Agency's Office of National Estimates (ONE) wrote that the British economy would suffer if it lost Iranian oil. The loss of *all* Middle Eastern oil, ONE said, would have profound and far–reaching consequences for the economies of the Western bloc.[9]

(U) Political instability in the Middle East and the Gulf region threatened the continuing supply of oil to the West.

Before the Cold War, the domestic politics of what later came to be called the Third World had made no impact on American foreign policy decisionmaking. During the Cold War, Washington could not afford the luxury of indifference because doing so would spur Soviet intrigue. Domestic politics almost anywhere abroad—and especially in strategically valuable areas—became important arenas for the international ideological struggle between East and West. Washington was determined to win this struggle through policies promoting long–term democratization. The result, American officials hoped, would be stability—and victory.

(U) Twisting the British Lion's Tail: Mohammed Mossadeq Nationalizes the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company

(U) An Islamic fundamentalist assassinated Iranian Prime Minister General Ali Razmara on 7 March 1951.[11] Razmara's death set in motion a series of events that were to bring American and British officials face to face with Mohammed Mossadeq, one of the most mercurial, maddening, adroit, and provocative leaders with whom they had ever dealt.[12]

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[8](U) One of the reasons the British Government eventually took over D'Arcy's concession when he ran into financial difficulties was to ensure a secure supply of oil for the Royal Navy. See, Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: the Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), pp. 137, 140-42, 151.

[9](U) NIE-14, 8 January 1951, *The Importance of Iranian and Middle East Oil to Western Europe Under Peacetime Conditions,* pp. 1-2. CIA estimated that if all Middle Eastern oil were lost, the non-Soviet world would have to impose an immediate and mandatory 10% cutback in consumption. In that event, the United States would have to implement rationing even though domestic production in those days met its own needs.

[11](U) A member of the Fadayane Islam underground organization assassinated Razmara.

[12](U) See Appendix D for a biographical sketch of Mohammed Mossadeq.

(S) Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi—who had become Shah when his father, Reza Shah, abdicated in 1941—appointed Mossadeq as Prime Minister on 29 April 1951. Shah's initial choice to succeed Razmara, Hussein Ala, had resigned after only a few weeks. Severe economic and political problems awaited the Mossadeq, and it was not obvious that he had the skill to solve them. In a Special Estimate prepared one month after he took office, CIA's Office of National Estimates (ONE) characterized Mossadeq as an "impractical visionary and a poor administrator," but in a strong political position that was unlikely to deteriorate in the foreseeable future.[13]

(U) Mossadeq's immediate concern was a struggle for control of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). By 1950 the British oil concession in Iran, which the Shah had renewed in 1949, was a sore point in relations between the two countries. In March 1951, when Mossadeq was a member of the Majlis (the Iranian Parliament), he submitted a bill, which the Majlis quickly passed, nationalizing AIOC. He signed the bill into law on 1 May 1951, just three days after the Shah appointed him Prime Minister. Nationalization went into effect on 2 May 1951 and was made retroactive to 20 March 1951.

(U) AIOC's nationalization brought Mossadeq and Iran into immediate conflict with Britain. The British government owned half of AIOC's stock and did not intend to let Mossadeq nationalize its assets without adequate compensation as required under international law.[14]

(U) Britain Responds to "The Antics of Incomprehensible Orientals"

(U) The two countries tried to resolve the dispute, but differing negotiating styles and the personalities involved hindered these efforts. Many Britons found Mossadeq's seemingly impossible demands and unpredictably shifting arguments inexplicable. L.P. Elwell-Sutton captured the mood of British policymakers at the time when he wrote, "Really, it seemed hardly fair that dignified and correct western statesmanship should be defeated by the antics of incomprehensible orientals."[15]

(U) Mossadeq found the British evil, not incomprehensible. He and millions of Iranians believed that for centuries Britain had manipulated their country for British ends. Many Iranians seemed convinced that British intrigue was at the root of every domestic misfortune. In 1951 Mossadeq told US Special Envoy W. Averell Harriman, "You do not know how crafty they [the British] are. You do not know how evil they are. You do not know how they sully everything they touch." Harriman protested that surely the British

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[13](S) SE-6, *Current Developments in Iran,* 22 May 1951.

[14](S) In March 1951 the CIA estimated that 6 to 8 percent of Iran's national income came from AIOC and that the AIOC contributed nearly one quarter of the Iranian Treasury's receipts. Office of National Estimates, "NIE-6: Iran's Position in the East-West Conflict," [Draft] 21 March 1951

[15](U) L.P. Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil: A Study in Power Politics* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1955), p. 258.

were like people everywhere; some bad, some good. Mossadeq was not persuaded. "You do not know them," he insisted. "You do not know them."[16]

(U) When it seemed clear that Tehran had no intention of compensating London for AIOC's assets, the British mounted a multi-pronged effort to reassert control over the company. They hoped legal and economic pressure would convince Mossadeq to settle on British terms. If not, they were prepared to force him from office and replace him with someone open to compromise on terms favorable to the AIOC.

(U) London first asked the International Court of Justice to arbitrate the dispute. Mossadeq rejected two British proposals because neither of them addressed the issue of Iran's sovereignty over its own oil. The British thereafter refused to deal directly with Mossadeq. They used economic weapons and then tried ostentatious military maneuvers in the Persian Gulf to try to weaken Mossadeq's negotiating position.

(U) In September 1951, Britain placed an embargo on shipments of steel, sugar, iron, and oil–processing equipment shipments to Iran—that is, on almost anything that the Iranians could exchange for dollars. The AIOC laid off 20,000 oil workers at the port at Abadan and Mossadeq had to put them on the government payroll. Gradually, the flow of Iranian oil to the rest of the world stopped.

(U) A British airborne brigade arrived in Cyprus and a Royal Navy cruiser and four destroyers exercised near the oil facilities at Abadan. The display of British force did not intimidate Mossadeq; he announced that the first shot would start a world war.

(U) Britain also considered covert action options while it maneuvered diplomatically and militarily. According to C.M. Woodhouse, MI6's Chief of Station in Tehran, the idea of overthrowing Mossadeq came from the Foreign Office, not British intelligence. Woodhouse himself thought that any move against Mossadeq had to have American support and participation. London had neither until the inauguration of President Dwight Eisenhower in January 1953.[17]

[16](U) Vernon A. Walters, *Silent Missions* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1978), pp. 247-48.

[17] (U) C.M. Woodhouse, *Something Ventured* (London: Granada, 1982), pp. 110-111.

(U) Mossadeq Challenges the Shah

(U) At the same time that he was quarreling with the British, Mossadeq also was struggling against the Shah. He insisted that the Shah should reign and not rule. To that end, he worked to enhance the power of the Majlis at the Shah's expense. The flash point came in July 1952, when Mossadeq resigned during a dispute over whether the Shah or the Prime Minister should appoint the war minister.

(U) During the elections for the 17th Majlis earlier in the year, vote–tampering by the Iranian Royal Court had convinced Mossadeq that the government's survival depended on control of the military. On 16 July he demanded the right to appoint himself minister of war. The Shah refused and Mossadeq resigned.[19] Mossadeq appealed directly to the public and accused the Shah of violating the Constitution.

(U) Mossadeq's resignation initially appeared to be a shrewd political move that underscored his mastery of Iranian politics and his ability to gauge and exploit public opinion. The Shah appointed Ahmad Qavam, Prime Minister during the Azeri crisis with the Soviet Union in 1947, to succeed Mossadeq. In response, the National Front, a broad coalition formed in 1949, organized mass demonstrations in Tehran demanding Mossadeq's return. The demonstrations turned violent—69 people died and more than 750 were injured—but the Shah refused to use the police or the military to restore order. Qavam lacked broad support and was unable to organize counter–demonstrations. For five days the National Front controlled the streets of Tehran and other cities. On 21 July 1952 the Shah bowed to the pressure and replaced Qavam with Mossadeq.[20]

(U) Once back in power, Mossadeq struck back at the Shah and the military. He transferred Reza Shah's lands back to the State, appointed himself Minister of War, forced the Shah's twin sister Princess Ashraf to leave the country, and forbade Mohammed Reza Pahlavi from communicating directly with foreign diplomats. By May

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[19](U) M. Reza Ghods, *Iran in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), p. 186. Mossadeq wrote

> I cannot continue in office without having the responsibility for the Ministry of War, and since Your Majesty did not concede to this, I feel I do not enjoy the full confidence of the Sovereign and, therefore, offer my resignation to pave the way for another government which might be able to carry out Your Majesty's wishes.

(U) Sepehr Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era* (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1982), p. 40.

[20](U) Ibid., p. 265. The National Front was a loose coalition of political parties professing liberal democratic aims and opposing foreign intervention in Iranian affairs. The National Front included the leftist, anti-Soviet intellectuals of the Iran Party; the workers and leftist intellectuals of the Toilers' Party; and the workers, bazaar merchants, and Islamic clergy of the Mujahedeen-i-Islam (Warriors of Islam) Party. Ayatollah Abul Quassem Kashani, later instrumental in the coup against Mossadeq, was one of the leaders of the Warriors of Islam. The ultranationalist Pan-Iranist Party, affiliated with the National Front but not a member, included many lower class toughs. The Tudeh (Iranian Communist Party) was not a member of the National Front but included itself among the parties opposing the government. Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'etat in Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (Aug. 1987): 262.

1953, according to Iranian specialist Ervand Abrahamian, "the shah had been stripped of all the powers he had fought for and recovered since August 1941."[21]

(U) The Prime Minister also seized the opportunity to purge the Iranian officer corps. He forcibly retired many Royalist officers, and cut the military budget 15%. To add to the insult, Mossadeq transferred 15,000 men from the military to the Gendarmerie, the military's bureaucratic rival. These acts fueled smoldering resentment among the dismissed officers and those few royalists escaping Mossadeq's purge.[22]

(U) Mossadeq used his popularity and ability to control the streets of Tehran to good advantage. When the British appeared intransigent during the oil negotiations, he simply severed diplomatic relations in October 1952. All British personnel left the country in an overland exodus at the beginning of November 1952.[23]

(U) Mossadeq's apparent political triumph rapidly turned sour. The National Front began to unravel in late 1952 and early 1953 as the Prime Minister grew increasingly dictatorial. By November 1952, Ayatollah Abul Quassem Kashani, a key Islamic cleric in the National Front, had turned against Mossadeq and quit the Front, as had Mozaffar Baqai's Toilers' Party. Kashani's defection was a particularly hard blow because his group, the Warriors of Islam, included the bazaar merchants of Tehran and many mullahs (Islamic clerics). Support from these two groups historically has been critical to Iranian governments.[24]

(U) The reasons for the defections were complex. Although 30 of the 79 deputies of the 17th Majlis, convened in February 1952, belonged to or identified with the National Front, they represented different constituencies and interests were united only in their opposition to the British. In addition, nationalization of the AIOC did not produce the bonanza for Iran that Mossadeq had hoped it would. He began to demand more and more power from the Majlis, and when the legislature granted the Prime Minister what amounted to dictatorial powers, Ayatollah Kashani resigned as Majlis speaker. Toilers' Party leader Mozaffar Baqai compared Mossadeq to Hitler and praised the army as a bulwark against Communism.[25]

(U) Some groups in the National Front continued to back Mossadeq. The Iran Party still supported him, as did the Third Force, a splinter group expelled from the Toilers' Party.[26] The Prime Minister also could still count on the backing of the Qashqai

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[21](U) Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 272-73.

[22](U) Ibid., p. 273.

[23] (U) Before leaving the country, C.M. Woodhouse ensured that all British contacts, like the Rashidian Brothers, would remain active. Roger Goiran helped him. Woodhouse, p. 116.

[24] (U) Manucher Farmanfarmaian in his memoirs describes the bazaar and the relationship of its merchants with the mullahs. "It [the bazaar] was a world unto itself, impregnable to the army, which could not easily enter its labyrinthine alleys. The leaders of the bazaar were weighty men, often tightly allied with the mollahs, and they could start riots or shut down the bazaar to instant political effect." Manucher Farmanfarmaian and Roxane Farmanfarmaian, *Blood and Oil: Memoirs of a Persian Prince* (New York: Random House, 1997), p. 36.

[25](U) Abrahamian, pp. 269, 277; Gasiorowski, p. 269.

[26](U) Abrahamian, p. 277; Gasiorowski, p. 269.

tribes and—more ominously—the Tudeh, Iran's Communist Party. As support for Mossadeq narrowed, the Tudeh would soon be the only group willing to take to the streets on his behalf

(U) Ayatollah Kashani's defection and increased squabbling among the deputies effectively paralyzed the Majlis. Opposition politicians—including former Mossadeq allies like Kashani—blocked the Prime Minister's legislation. In early June 1953, fistfights broke out in the Majlis. The Prime Minister won a temporary victory when Abdullah Moazemi, a Mossadeq supporter, succeeded Kashani as speaker in a close Majlis vote (41 to 31) on 1 July 1953. Mossadeq recognized, however, that the Majlis was hopelessly deadlocked and that dissolution and new elections were necessary to break the stalemate.[27]

(U) Under the Iranian constitution only the Shah could dissolve the Majlis. The government could request him to do so. Mossadeq knew the Shah would not agree to such a proposal, so he devised a plan to achieve the same end. He asked all National Front members and supporters to resign, which they did, and simultaneously announced the dissolution of the Majlis. The Iranian people, he held, could ratify or reject his decision in a referendum on the theory that popular will superseded the constitution. Iranian scholar Ervand Abrahamian has noted the irony in Mossadeq's rationale. "Mossadeq, the constitutional lawyer who had meticulously quoted the fundamental laws against the shah," Abrahamian wrote, "was now bypassing the same laws and resorting to the theory of the general will."[28]

(U) From 3 to 10 August 1953, Iranians voted on Mossadeq's bold and unconstitutional act. The results of the rigged election were never in doubt. Mossadeq purposely excluded rural areas from the balloting, ostensibly because it would take too long to count the votes from remote areas. The ballot was not secret, and there were separate polling places for "yes" and "no." In the end, Mossadeq claimed victory, gaining "over 2,043,300 of the 2,044,600 ballots cast throughout the country and 101,396 of the 101,463 ballots cast in the capital."[29]

(U) The dissolution of the Majlis and the tainted referendum alienated Iranian liberals and conservatives alike. Jamal Imami, a pro-British member of the Majlis, warned that Mossadeq was leading the country toward anarchy. Ayatollah Kashani declared the referendum illegal under Islamic religious law. At his trial in late 1953, Mossadeq defended his actions on the grounds of popular sovereignty. "In view of the Royal Court's flagrant interference in the electoral process, we had to suspend the

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[27](U) Mark J. Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 75.

[28](U) Abrahamian, p. 274; M. Reza Ghods, *Iran in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), p. 187.

[29](U) Zabih, p.111; Abrahamian, p. 274. See also, Homa Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.), pp. 187-88. In an interview appearing in the 22 August 1962 issue of *Deutsche Zeitung,* Mossadeq admitted that he dissolved the 17th Majlis to avoid a confidence vote that would have caused his government to fall.

remainder of the Majlis elections," he told the court. "What else was left to us but consulting the people in a most democratic method of direct plebiscite?"[30]

(U) A US Embassy assessment cabled to Washington shortly after the referendum stated that the dissolution of the Majlis "will graphically demonstrate truism of [Mossadeq's] regime that as opposition and discontent have mounted, Mossadeq has moved steadily in authoritarian direction using technique of mobocracy to maintain his hold on power and to eliminate influence Shah." Nonetheless, the Embassy thought Mossadeq's continued appeals to the street could boomerang because he lacked "any real authoritarian organization aside from armed forces." To compensate, according to the Embassy, he would be forced to rely increasingly on the Tudeh, thereby alienating the non-Communist followers of his Government.[31]

(U) Mossadeq Looks for American Support

(U) Mossadeq hoped for US support in his struggle against the British. Like many in the Third World immediately after World War II, he saw the United States as an anti-colonial power. His hopes were not entirely misplaced; the Truman administration saw some merit in his position.

(U) Secretary of State Acheson thought that the British were overly preoccupied with their oil interests and that London did not fully understand the broader Communist threat. He saw Mossadeq as a potentially important part of the solution to the problem of Soviet influence in the Middle East. In Acheson's view, the Iranian Prime Minister would in time become an effective bulwark against Soviet penetration into Iran. To that end, Washington consistently urged London to reach an equitable settlement with Tehran. Acheson apparently was convinced that an agreement would strengthen the Iranian government and promote regional stability.[32]

(U) Other considerations, however, complicated the Truman administration's approach. The United States was loath to side publicly with Iran or put excessive pressure on London. Washington needed cooperation and support from Britain—America's closest ally—elsewhere in the world. The war in Korea was not yet over, and the presence of British combat troops was an important symbol of Anglo-American solidarity. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), created in 1949, was still in its formative stages and depended upon British participation as evidence of Western unity

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[30](U) Ghods, p. 188; Zabih, pp. 112-13. For Kashani's views on the Shari'a, see Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, p. 187.

[31](U) Department of State Cable from Tehran to Secretary of State, No. 300, 12 August 1953. National Archives and Records Administration Record Group 319, Entry 57, box 27.

[32](U) Acheson criticized "the unusual and persistent stupidity of the [Anglo Iranian Oil] company and the British Government" when it came to Iran. See, Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), p. 501, quoted in Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), p. 453. Richard W. Cottam, *Iran & the United States: A Cold War Case Study* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), p. 102.

and determination. Vigorous American support for Mossadeq would have complicated American foreign policy in other parts of the world as well.

(U) President Truman had no patience with those refusing to view the Anglo-Iranian problem in a global context. When the US Ambassador to Iran, Henry Grady, wrote to Truman complaining that the White House was not listening to his advice, the President let him know exactly where he stood. "Let me tell you something about the Iranian Situation from this end," he wrote.

> (U) [we] held Cabinet meetings on it—we held Security Council meetings on it, and Dean, Bob Lovett, Charlie Sawyer, Harriman and all the senior staff of the Central Intelligence discussed that awful situation with me time and again . . . We tried . . . to get the block headed British to have their oil company make a fair deal with Iran. No, they could not do that. They know all about how to handle it—we didn't according to them.
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> (U) We had Israel, Egypt, Near East defense, Sudan, South Africa, Tunisia, the NATO treaties all on the fire. *Britain and the Commonwealth Nations were and are absolutely essential if these things are successful.* Then, on top of it all we have Korea and Indo-China. Iran was only one incident. Of course the man on the ground in each one of these places can only see his own problem.[33]

(C) The suggestion that British forces might occupy the port city of Abadan or launch some other military action against Iran set off alarms in ONE. In an April 1951 memorandum to DCI Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, ONE chief Dr. William Langer warned that the appearance of British troops in Iran might result in Soviet occupation of the northern part of the country under the terms of the 1921 treaty of friendship between Persia and Soviet Russia.[34]

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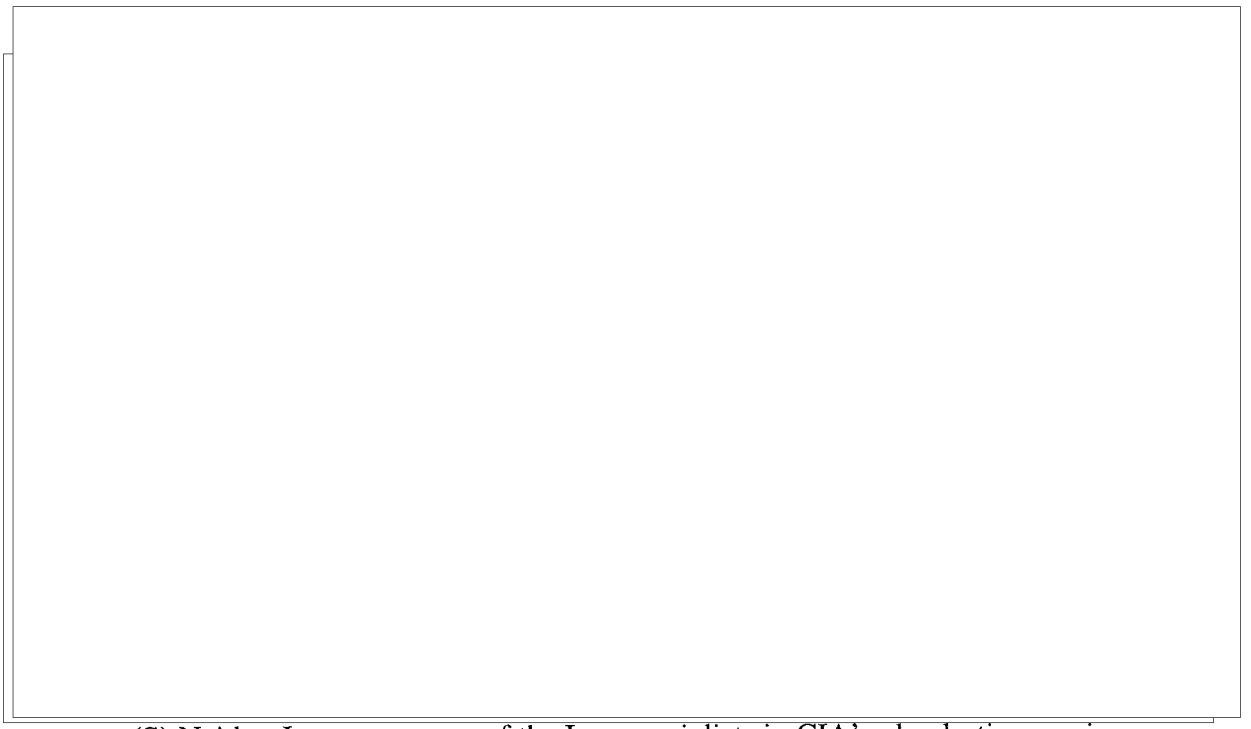
[33](U) Farhad Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh: A Political Biography* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 131-32, citing papers of Henry Grady. Emphasis added.

[34](C) William L. Langer, Assistant Director National Estimates, Memorandum for Director of Central Intelligence Walter Bedell Smith, "Situation in Iran," 20 April 1951 (emphasis added).

(U) In February 1921, Persia, as Iran was then known, and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RFSFR) [the USSR did not exist until December 1922] signed a treaty of friendship. Article VI gave the RSFSR the right to send troops into Persia if a third party tried to use that country as a base from which to attack Soviet Russia. Russian troops would cross the border only if Persia proved incapable of removing the threat itself. In an exchange of explanatory notes in December 1921, the Russians made clear that the treaty applied "only to cases in which preparations have been made for a considerable armed attack upon Russia . . .by the partisans of the regime which has been overthrown [the Tsarist Government] or by its supporters . . . ." Leonard Shapiro, ed., *Soviet Treaty Series: A Collection of Bilateral Treaties, Agreements and Convenstions, Etc., Concluded Between The Soviet Union and Foreign Powers,* vol. 1, *1917-1928* (Washington, DC: The Georgetown University Press, 1950), pp. 92-94, 150-51.



(S) Neither Langer nor any of the Iran specialists in CIA's clandestine service—the Office of Special Operations (OSO), and the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC)—thought the Tudeh was strong enough by itself to topple Mossadeq. As long as the central government remained able to deal with events, Langer and others saw the danger of a Tudeh coup as negligible. "Tudeh represents a serious threat in view of the opportunities awaiting it," OSO and OPC specialists agreed in January 1952, "but does not yet have the intention or the ability to gain actual control of the government at this time either by force or political means."[38] CIA's operators thought that the Tudeh would come to power only through chaos and impotent central authority.

(U) Although the documents in CIA's files do not indicate that Smith relayed Langer's concerns to President Truman, he evidently did so because the administration subsequently let London know that the US Government disapproved of *any* military action against Iran. At a British cabinet meeting in September 1951, the government of

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(U) Strictly speaking, the USSR could not have invoked Article VI if a small British force occupied Abadan in 1951. Abadan is far from the Soviet-Iranian border and the few troops the British contemplated sending could not have made a "considerable armed attack" upon Soviet forces. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the USSR would have found some pretext to occupy northern Iran had Stalin desired.

[38](S) R.L. Hewitt, Memorandum to Sherman Kent, 8 January 1952, "Conversations with OPC and OSO Specialists Concerning the Tudeh Problem," History Staff Records, Job 840B00443R, Box 4, Folder 11, ARC.

Prime Minister Clement Attlee decided that it "'could not afford to break with the United States on an issue of this kind.'"[39] A potential military crisis had passed.

(S) As of 30 July 1952, the State Department and CIA were committed to supporting Mossadeq. That evening, CIA representatives met at the State Department with Secretary of State Acheson, Under Secretary of State David K.E. Bruce, Charles Bohlen, Henry Byroade, John Jernegan, and Robert Joyce, all of the State Department.[40] The participants decided that "It is the policy of the Department of State to maintain the present government in Iran so long as this government has the authority to govern, *or until it appears certain that the government will be taken over by the Communists.*"[41]

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[39](U) H.W. Brands, *Inside the Cold War: Loy Henderson and the Rise of the American Empire, 1918-1961* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 234.

[40](U) Henry A. Byroade, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs; John D. Jernegan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs; Charles E. Bohlen, Counselor of the Department of State and member of the Senior Staff, National Security Council; Robert P. Joyce, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State.

[redacted]

(U) As of November 1952, CIA's Office of National Estimates thought that Mossadeq would remain in power for the near future and that a Tudeh coup was unlikely. According to an ONE estimate, if the unrest plaguing Iran in 1952 continued through 1953, "rising internal tensions and continued deterioration of the economy and of the budgetary position of the government might lead to a breakdown of government authority and open the way for at least a gradual assumption of control by Tudeh." ONE thought Soviet intervention into Iran was unlikely "unless there is a far more serious deterioration of Iranian internal stability than is foreseen in this estimate. However, the USSR has the capability for greatly increasing its overt and covert interference in Iran at any time, to the detriment of US security interests."[46]

(U) During the last two months of 1952, both ONE and the Iran Branch of the DDP watched events in Iran and hoped things would not change radically. Their hopes were soon dashed.

(U) Foggy Bottom's Differences with Whitehall

(U) As the foregoing indicates, Washington and London had fundamentally different perspectives on the events in Iran and on their consequences worldwide. These differences complicated the State Department's and Foreign Office's search for a common policy. At times the problems must have appeared insolvable.

(U) In January 1952 an internal memorandum in the State Department's Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs identified two areas of disagreement. The United States and the United Kingdom had differing views on the strength of nationalism in Iran (and therefore on Mossadeq's political strength), and on the global consequences of Tehran's failure to reach an oil settlement with London.[47]

(U) The State Department recognized that Iranian nationalism was a potent and growing force, making an oil settlement on British terms unattainable even if Mossadeq fell. In contrast, the British disparaged Iranian nationalism as merely a "passing storm."

[46](U) Office of National Estimates, "Probable Developments in Iran Through 1953," NIE-75, 13 November 1952.

[47](U) Memorandum, "Varying British and American Appraisals of the Iranian Situation," 14 January 1952, Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs, Department of State, RG 59, Records of the Department of State, Records of the Office in Charge of Iranian Affairs, 1946-54, Lot 57, D 529, Box 40, National Archives and Records Administration.

It had no roots and would "pass and its leaders fall as soon as it is demonstrated that their policies have brought Iran to the brink of ruin."[48]

(U) More specifically, American officials feared that a British failure to compromise with Mossadeq would enable him to whip up Iran's virulent nationalism further, with potentially disastrous results. The West might well lose so much of its influence that it could not stop Tehran from moving the Soviet orbit. Or the Iranian political situation could simply descend into chaos, in which case the Soviet–backed Tudeh—Iran's best organized, best financed, and most effective political organization—would be ready to fill the vacuum. In the State Department's view, such developments would jeopardize the security and stability of the entire Middle East, would serve notice that the West could not preserve the independence of important Third World states, and could deprive the West not only of Iran's oil but ultimately that of its Arab neighbors as well.[49]

(U) In contrast, the British regarded Iran as basically a conservative country that would not seek Soviet help nor collapse internally if London held out for the kind of oil settlement it wanted. The British also feared that a "bad" settlement (one not on their terms) would severely diminish their global political and economic power, already starting to decline with the post–World War II emergence of independence movements in much of the British empire.[50]

(U) The only suggestion for resolving these differences offered in the State Department's internal memorandum further consultation to determine the "political, military, economic, and psychological effects of the loss of Iran to the west as balanced against the political and economic effects of an agreement with the Iranians on the oil situation which might prejudice other concessions elsewhere and diminish British prestige throughout the world." The memorandum concluded that unless the US and United Kingdom agreed on the importance to the West of an independent Iran, there was little chance the two would be able to forge a common policy.[51]

(U) Eleven months later the National Security Council set forth basic US policy toward Iran. NSC 136/1 emphasized that the United States was committed to preventing Iran from falling under communist control and that Iran's strategic position, its oil, and its vulnerability to Soviet political subversion or military attack made it a tempting target for Soviet expansion. If the Tudeh Party seized or attempted to seize control of the Iranian government, the document argued, the United States should, in conjunction with the British, be ready to support a non-communist Iranian government militarily, economically, diplomatically, and psychologically.[52]

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[48](U) Ibid.

[49](U) Ibid. The State Department memorandum noted that American influence was waning daily as more and more Iranians identified the United States with British interests. The State Department assessed British influence as negligible.

[50](U) Ibid.

[51](U) Ibid.

[52](U) United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-1954,* Vol. X, *Iran 1951-1954* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1989), pp. 529-34.

(U) American Policy Turns Against Mossadeq

(U) Dwight Eisenhower did not immediately turn his attention to Iran after taking the oath of office in January 1953. His campaign pledge to end the Korean war had priority, and only weeks after the inaugural festivities Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin died. The new administration was faced with reevaluating Soviet-American relations. Under these circumstances, events in Iran receded into the foreign policy background—temporarily.[53]

(U) The British had never given up hope of executing a covert action to remove Mossadeq, and continued to test the American response. After Mossadeq severed diplomatic relations with Britain in October 1952, the indefatigable Woodhouse met in London with Foreign Office officials, including Anthony Eden, to consider options available to Britain. According to Woodhouse, Eden said that no covert operation would succeed unless it had American support. Woodhouse "took his words as tantamount to permission to pursue the idea further with the Americans, particularly with the CIA." This he did, arriving in Washington in mid-November 1952 after Dwight Eisenhower's victory.[54]

(S) Woodhouse met with State and CIA officials and argued that political conditions in Iran made that country subject to a serious Communist threat. He did not stress the oil issue. His reception at Truman's State Department was "chilly"; at CIA, he met with initial skepticism. Walter Bedell Smith told him "'You may be able to throw out Musaddiq, but you will never get your own man to stick in his place.'" Frank Wisner and future DCI Allen Dulles showed increasing interest and eventually warmed to the idea of planning a covert operation to remove the Iranian Prime Minister. Woodhouse writes that Dulles enlisted "a young academic expert on Iran to examine the situation with us."

(S) Allen Dulles became DCI in late February 1953 and promptly apprised the President of the situation in Iran. Mossadeq, Dulles told the President, remained the single strongest Iranian political leader. With the Shah showing no inclination to marshal the armed forces for a move against Mossadeq, the situation, in Dulles's words, was "slowly disintegrating." If a showdown developed between the Shah and Mossadeq, "and a real armed conflict ensued between the two opposing elements, the communist Tudeh elements might come up as the victors with their relatively small but well organized group of supporters, and with the assistance of the Soviet Embassy in Tehran, disposing of plenty of funds."

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[53](U) Brands, p. 272.

[54] (U) Woodhouse, pp. 116-17.

[55] (U) Ibid., p. 119.

(U) President Truman's and Secretary Acheson's policy of encouraging the parties to reach an equitable oil settlement had reached a dead end. Neither the British nor Mossadeq appeared willing to back off from their publicly stated positions, which each by this time held with something approaching religious fervor. To London's relief, the new US administration abandoned the search for a negotiated end to the crisis. Perhaps now, the British hoped, Washington would finally begin to see Mossadeq as the demagogue London thought he was and take appropriate action.

(U) Also in March 1953, State Department officials and British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden met to discuss the Iranian situation. Eden found the Americans much more receptive to the British viewpoint than they had been under Truman and Acheson. The collapse of the Anglo-Iranian oil negotiations had changed the Americans' attitude; Washington now considered Mossadeq a source of *instability* and feared that his continued tenure invited a Tudeh coup.

(C) The State Department agreed with Eden that Mossadeq had to go, but its reasons differed from his. For Eden and his government, Mossadeq's policies damaged "British prestige, influence, and vital commercial interest." For the Americans, Mossadeq represented a weakened Iran and its increasing vulnerability to Soviet domination.[58]

(U) The United States suspected the Soviets of trying to take advantage of the deteriorating situation in Iran. In the US view, Soviet leaders undoubtedly saw Mossadeq's troubles as a diplomatic opening, and if he wanted to try to play Moscow against Washington, the Soviets would let him. The Kremlin would help him. The

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[58](U) Cottam, p. 103.

potential benefits to the Soviets of cultivating Mossadeq were great: a docile southern neighbor at a minimum, and beyond that, a chance to draw a strategically important country into the Soviet sphere of influence.

(S) The Soviet-Iranian negotiations were front page news in *The New York Times* on 11 August 1953. Iranian Ambassador to the United States Allahyar Saleh met for 90 minutes on the 11th with John Jernegan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs. Jernegan learned that Iran was interested in maintaining good relations with the United States as well as the Soviet Union.

(S) Upon leaving the State Department, Saleh met a group of waiting reporters wanting to know whether the meeting had anything to do with Iranian-Soviet negotiations and whether the US had reason to be concerned about such talks. Saleh replied that the American Government should be pleased about the negotiations because they might resolve claims arising from Iranian expenses incurred in furthering American policy aims in World War II.

(U) The Iranian-Soviet negotiations were never held. On the day he met with Jernegan, Saleh could not know that the Mossadeq government would remain in power

only eight more days. President Eisenhower apparently had already made the decision to oust the Iranian Prime Minister.

(U) Mossadeq's Successor: Ayatollah Kashani or Fazlollah Zahedi?

(U) At this point, there was no consensus on who should replace Mossadeq. US officials briefly considered backing Ayatollah Kashani, the former Mossadeq ally, who had a large following and had become a strident opponent of the Prime Minister.[60]

(S) CIA Headquarters viewed the prospect of a Kashani government with alarm. According to a Special Estimate published on 14 October 1952, a Kashani-led Iran would be worse for Western interests than if Mossadeq stayed in power. Such a regime would be even more difficult on the oil issue and would be more resistant to Western influence. The military, or even Mossadeq's followers, might well overthrow Kashani. The worst consequence of a Kashani government would be the "progressive general deterioration of Iran possibly leading to the eventual assumption of power by the Tudeh."[61]

(U) Opinion gradually settled on General Fazlollah Zahedi as Mossadeq's successor. Zahedi had served as an irregular soldier under the Shah's father, Reza Shah, in 1915 and subsequently rose through the ranks of the Iranian Army. In 1942 the British arrested him for his activities under Nazi agent Franz Mayer and deported him to Palestine. Zahedi worked for the Germans because of his anti-British views; he was not generally thought to be pro-Nazi. The British released him on VE Day in 1945. Zahedi retired from the army in 1949 and subsequently served in a series of mostly honorary posts. He was Minister of the Interior in the early 1950s.[62]

(S) Zahedi's association with the Germans during the war was not the only blot on his record. Although he was a staunch anti-Communist, the CIA thought him "like all

[redacted]

[61](S) Office of National Estimates, "Prospects for Survival of Mossadeq Regime in Iran," SE-33, 14 October 1952, p. 3, Records of the Office of National Estimates, Directorate of Intelligence, ARC.

[redacted]

Iranians on the public scene [not] noted for honesty, consistency, reliability and strength of convictions."[63]

(U) The State Department recognized that he was not the ideal candidate, but was qualified because he seemed "friendly to the United States and Britain and would be acceptable to both Governments."[64] Even more importantly, he was willing to take the job.

(S) Zahedi was the only opposition figure meeting two other important criteria: he had consistently opposed Mossadeq, and he had a significant following. Other potential candidates either had a longer record of opposition or more followers, but none had both. Zahedi claimed to have the support of Ayatollah Kashani, court officials, elements of the armed forces, influential merchants in the bazaar, and most of the Iranian people. This last assertion, at least, was dubious, for as [redacted] an Iranian specialist working as a consultant for DDP's Near East and Africa Division, observed: "It is far more likely that the man in the street continues to admire Mossadeq for his strong stand against the British and as a symbol of resurgent nationalism. However, this element is of no practical value to either side unless effectively organized and led."[65]

(U) Whoever succeeded Mossadeq would be able to count on US support. In March 1953, an internal memorandum by the State Department's Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs outlined the steps the United States was likely to take if Mossadeq fell. Although American officials would limit their public pronouncements to expressions of unwillingness to interfere in the internal affairs of another country, privately they would use non-US channels to assure the Shah and new prime minister that Washington was eager to help. Sensitivity to Iranian concerns that the country was being turned into a foreign base would preclude ostentatious and immediate American military assistance, but privately the Americans could assure Tehran that meaningful military aid (trucks, communication equipment, and other items that also had civilian uses) would be forthcoming.[66]

(U) Eisenhower Turns to CIA

(U) President Eisenhower had several options for implementing Mossadeq's removal. He could use military force to invade Iran, but that was impractical for obvious reasons. He could keep hoping that a diplomatic solution would appear. That option too was not viable; diplomacy had already failed and the political situation in Iran was worsening daily. Finally, he could turn to CIA for a covert political operation; the National Security Council had decided that covert action was a legitimate instrument of US policy.[67] This alternative held the promise of attaining the result the administration

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[63](TS) Ibid.

[64](TS) State Department, "Proposal to Bring About Change of Government in Iran," 25 June 1953 [redacted]

[65](TS) Ibid.

[66](U) "Measures Which the United States Government Might Take in Support of a Successor Government to Mosadeq," March 1953, Department of State, Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Issues, RG 59, Lot 57, D 529, Box 40, National Archives and Records Administration.

[67](U) In NSC 10/2.

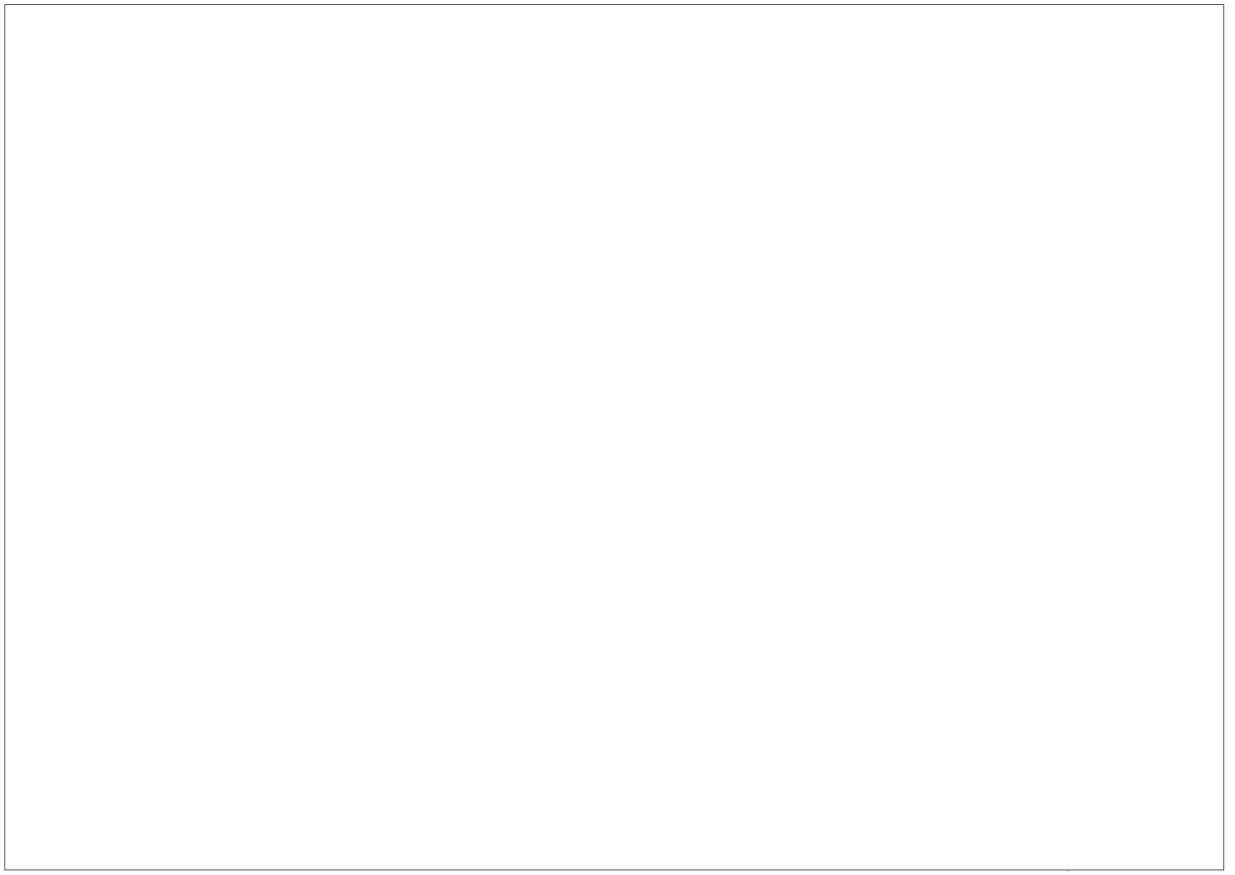
wanted with a minimum of cost and attention. If such an operation went sour, Washington could disavow any knowledge or connection.

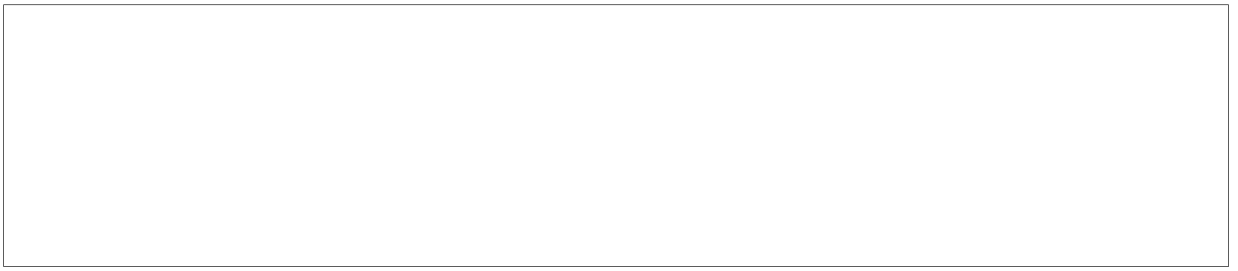
(S) No one in CIA suggested or even hinted that Mossadeq should be assassinated.

(U) Available documents do not indicate who authorized CIA to begin planning the operation, but it almost certainly was President Eisenhower himself. Eisenhower biographer Stephen Ambrose has written that the absence of documentation reflected the President's style:

> (U) Before going into the operation, Ajax had to have the approval of the President. Eisenhower participated in none of the meetings that set up Ajax; he received only oral reports on the plan; and he did not discuss it with his Cabinet or the NSC. Establishing a pattern he would hold to throughout his Presidency, he kept his distance and left no documents behind that could implicate the President in any projected coup. But in the privacy of the Oval Office, over cocktails, he was kept informed by Foster Dulles, and he maintained a tight control over the activities of the CIA.[69]

[69](U) Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* vol. 2, *The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 111. Ambrose repeats this paragraph verbatim in *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), p. 333.





Chapter 2

(U) Planning the Operation

(S) Responsibility for planning and executing TPAJAX fell to the Near East and Africa Division[1] (NEA) in the Directorate of Plans (DDP). The DDP, CIA's clandestine service, was less than a year old when it received the TPAJAX assignment. Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith had created the directorate in August 1952 by combining the Office of Special Operations and the Office of Policy Coordination. The two had been rivals, and Smith hoped their merger would prevent continued friction and duplication of effort.

(U) Kermit "Kim" Roosevelt, grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt, was the chief of NEA Division. A 1938 Harvard graduate, Roosevelt had embarked on a scholarly career teaching government to undergraduates—first at Harvard and then at the California Institute of Technology. He joined the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II and worked for the chief of the organization's Secret Intelligence Branch in the Near East. After the war he compiled the official OSS war report and then returned to the Middle East as a writer for the *Saturday Evening Post.*[2] In 1947 he published *Arabs, Oil, and History: The Story of the Middle East.*[3] C.M. Woodhouse of MI5 wrote in his memoirs that Roosevelt "had a natural inclination for bold and imaginative action, and also a friendly sympathy with the British."[4]

(S) Roosevelt did not "look" like an operative (Kim Philby called him "the last person you'd expect to be up to his neck in dirty tricks"), but was an intellectual with

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[1] (U) The name went through several permutations before settling on Near East and Africa Division.

[2](U) Burton Hersh, *The Old Boys: The American Elite and the Origins of the CIA* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), p. 331; G.J.A. O'Toole, *Honorable Treachery: A History of U.S. Intelligence, Espionage, and Covert Action from the American Revolution to the CIA* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1991), p. 458; *Who's Who, 1964-65.*

[3](U) Kermit Roosevelt, *Arabs, Oil, and History: The Story of the Middle East* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press [1947] 1969).

[4] C.M. Woodhouse, *Something Ventured* (London: Granada, 1982), p. 120.

specific ideas on how to counter Soviet influence in the Middle East.

[redacted]

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9(U) Although CIA almost certainly would have hired him as a permanent staff employee, Wilber refused and preferred to work under contract. He lived in Princeton and did not wish to leave. A contract enabled him to work at CIA without requiring him to move to Washington. Wilber continued his contract relationship with CIA until the 1960s.

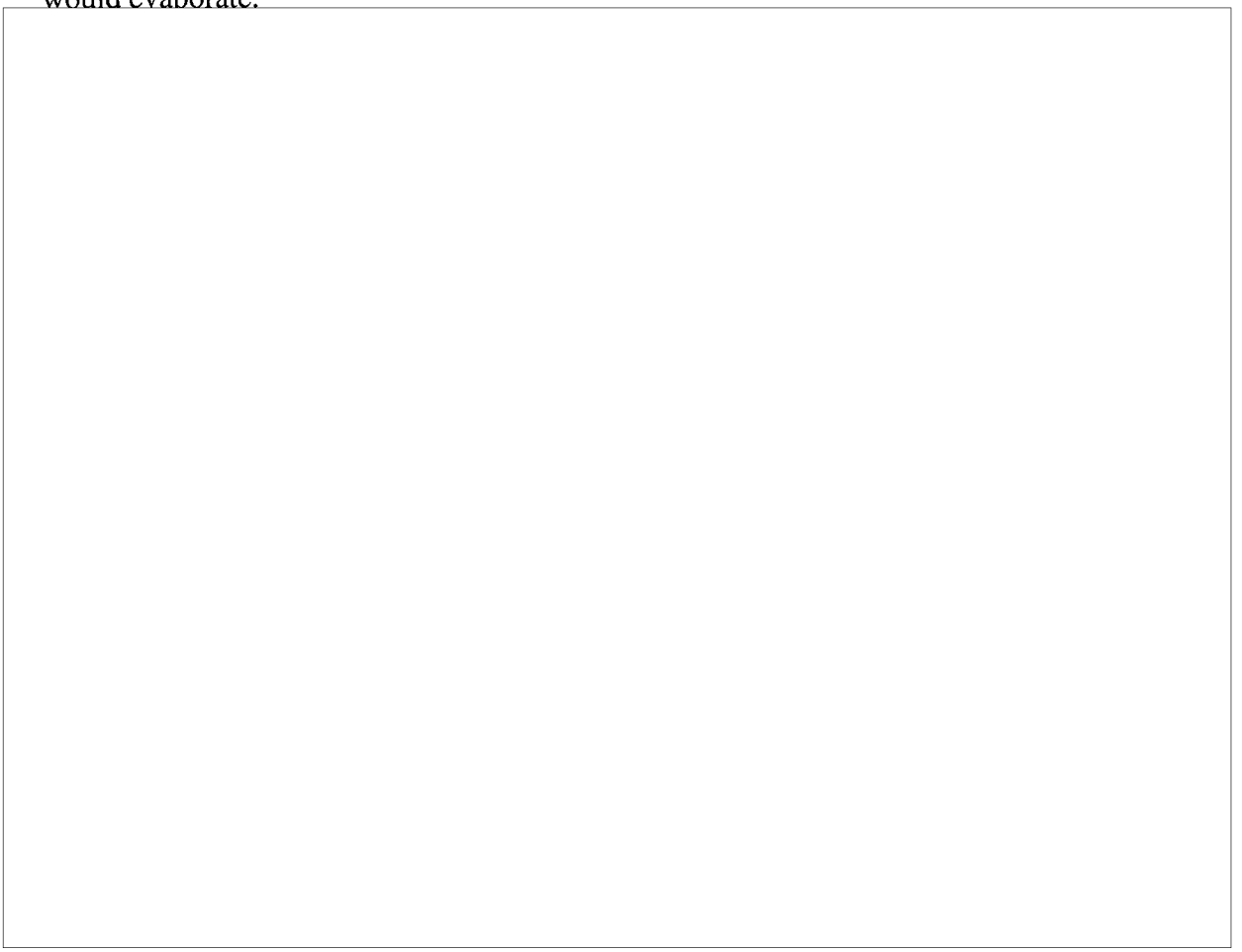
[redacted]

(U) According to the military attachés, it was important to recognize the difference between allegiance and control. The Shah enjoyed the allegiance of almost all Iranian Army officers; they had been raised to regard their monarch as a symbol of loyalty and patriotism. Whether he wielded any "control" was more problematic. His failure to assert himself against Mossadeq was causing confusion and consternation as officers risked their careers by backing him against the Prime Minister. The attachés concluded that "if the Shah were to give the word, probably more than 99% of the officers would

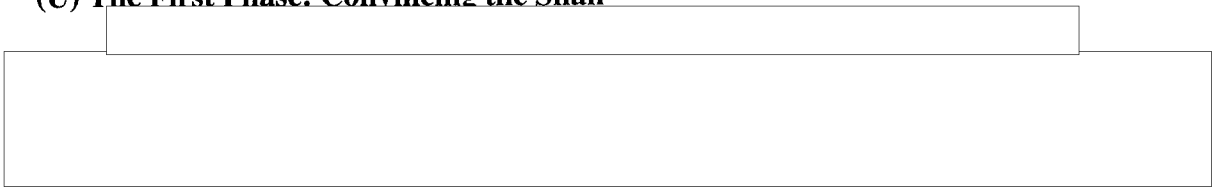
[27] (U) M 175 from USARMA Tehran to Department of the Army, Department of the Air Force, Department of the Navy, "Control of the Armed Forces of Iran," 11 August 1953, National Archives, RG 319, Entry 57, box 27. The distribution list shows that CIA received nine copies of the attachés' assessment.

comply with his orders with a sense of relief and with the hope of attaining a state of stability."[28]

(U) Mossadeq, through Army Chief of Staff General Riahi, a Mossadeq loyalist, actually controlled the Army. Iranian officers considered legal—and would obey—any order of the Shah coming from the Chief of Staff. The officer corps considered the Shah's silence about the Chief of Staff's actions as implied consent. Failure to follow orders even under these conditions was tantamount to treason. The American military attachés concluded that if the Shah opposed the Chief of Staff, or if the Chief of Staff with the Shah's support opposed the Prime Minister, Mossadeq's control of the Army would evaporate.[29]

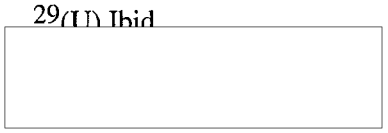


(U) The First Phase: Convincing the Shah

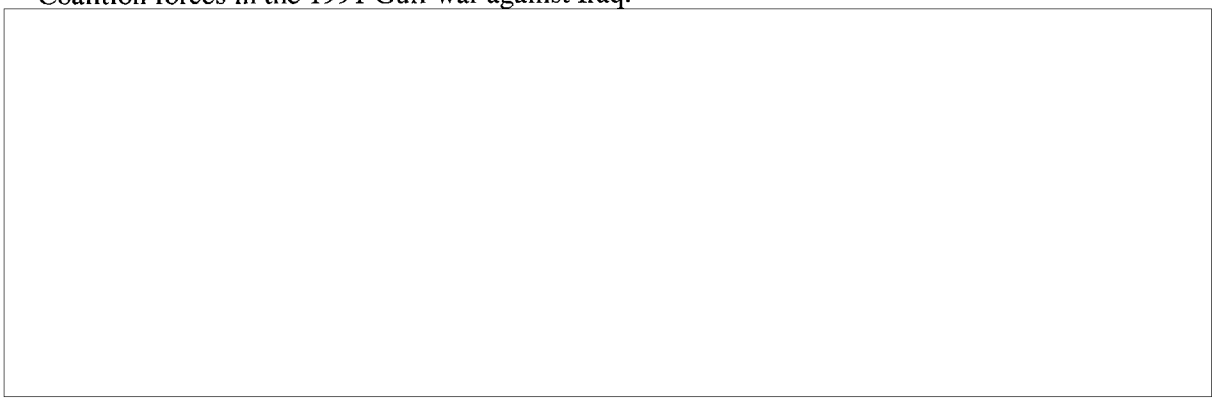


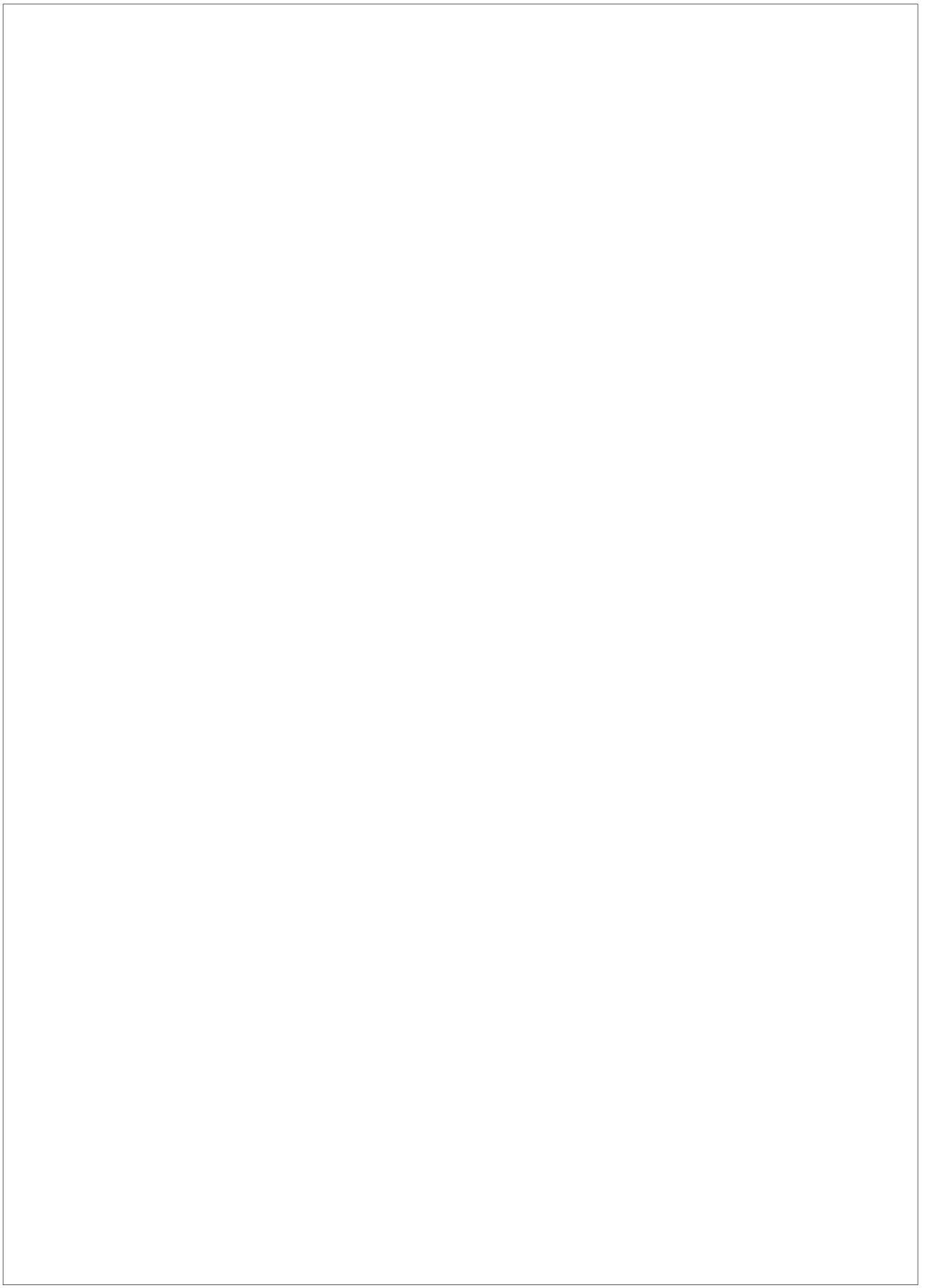
[28](U) Ibid.

[29](U) Ibid.



[34](U) Schwarzkopf was the father of the American general of the same name who led US and Coalition forces in the 1991 Gulf war against Iraq.





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[45](U) Donald N. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1986) , p. 189.

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[48](U) The Shari'a is Islamic religious law, intended to guide all aspects of social activity. See, William O. Beeman, "Patterns of Religion and Economic Development in Iran from the Qajar Era to the Islamic Revolution of 1978-79," in *Gobal Economics and Religion,* ed. James Finn (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), p. 78.

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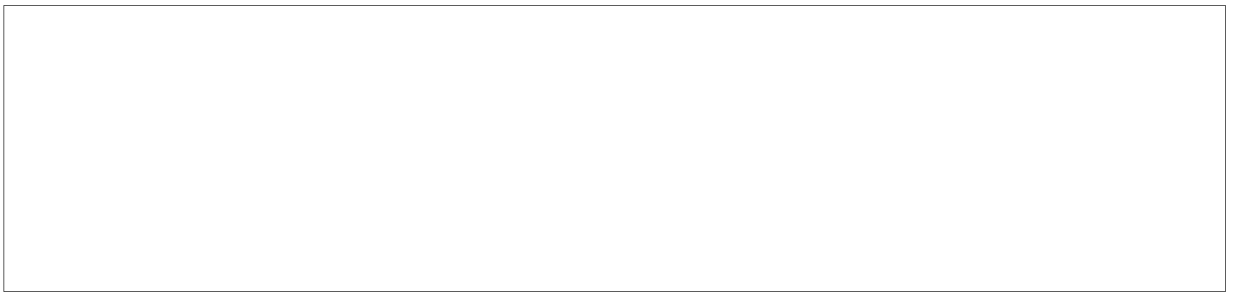

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59(U) H.W. Brands, *Inside the Cold War: Loy Henderson and the Rise of the American Empire 1918-61* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 282.

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(U) Final Approval

(S) On 25 June 1953, senior foreign policymaking officials met at the State Department to hear Roosevelt outline the final plan for TPAJAX. President Eisenhower did not attend, but other top officials did: Secretary of State John Foster Dulles; Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson; DCI Allen Dulles; Undersecretary of State and former DCI Walter Bedell Smith; Deputy Undersecretary of State Robert Murphy; Robert Bowie, head of the State Department's policy planning staff (and subsequent CIA Deputy Director of Intelligence in the late 1970s); Henry Byroade, Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East; and US Ambassador to Iran Loy Henderson.[61]

(U) After Roosevelt's briefing, Secretary of State Dulles polled the meeting. Allen Dulles and Walter Bedell Smith were strongly in favor of proceeding; the others agreed but were less enthusiastic. Henderson did not like covert operations but thought the United States had no choice in this case.[62]

(U) Nor did CIA have to notify Congress of its impending operation. Allen Dulles may have informally told key Senators like Richard Russell, as well as key members of the House of Representatives, what the Agency was doing, but CIA's files contain no record of these conversations.

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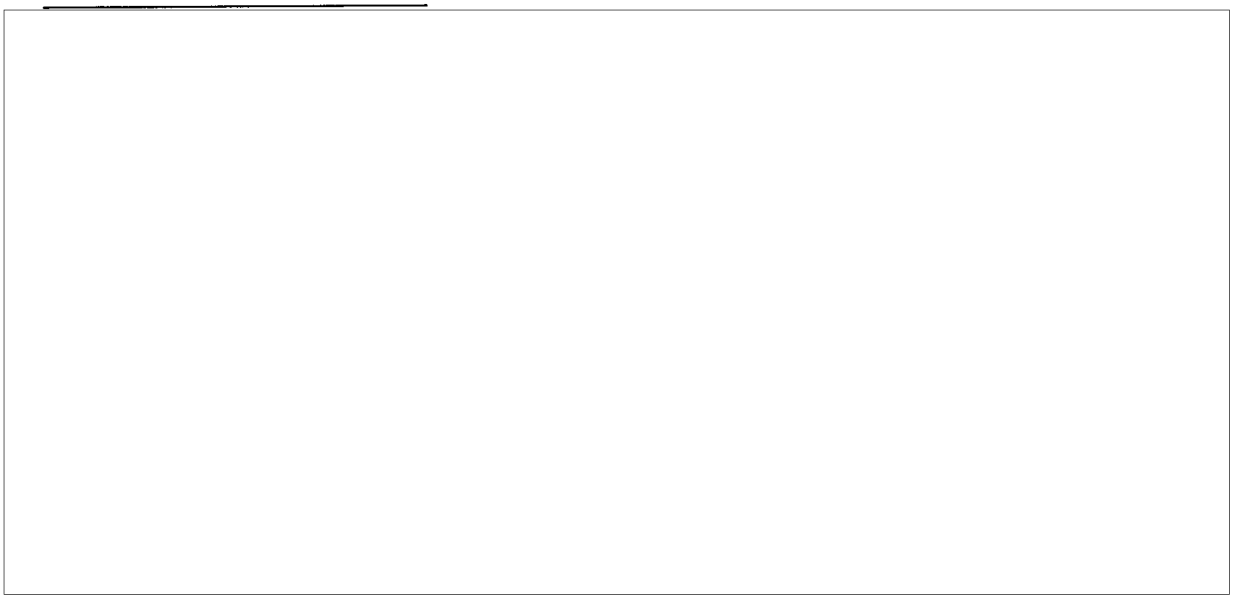
[61](U) Brands, p. 281. Eisenhower's absence should not be read as passivity or disinterest. The President knew what was going on but preferred to keep himself out of all formal deliberations. His orders and briefings were given orally with no record kept.

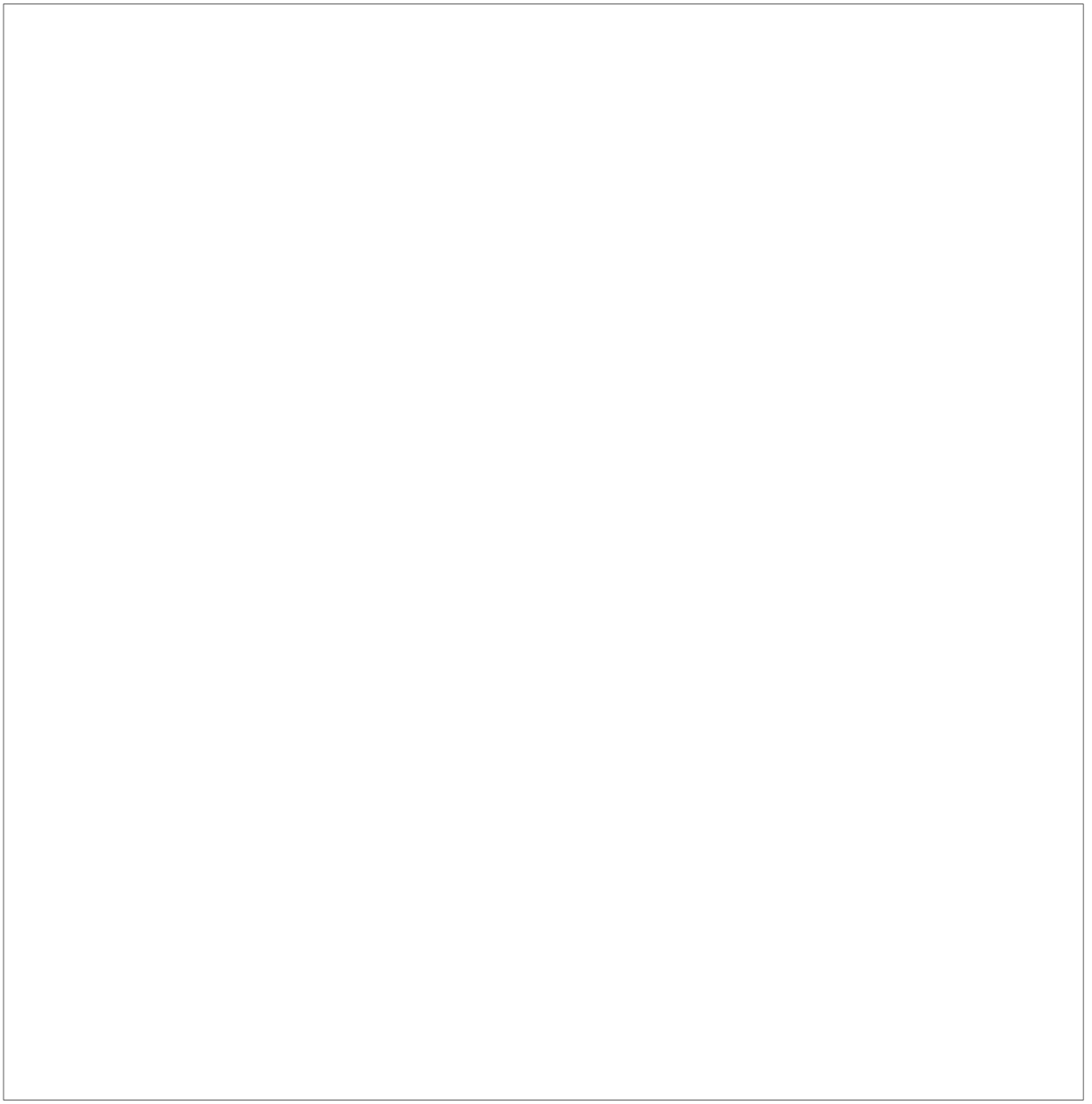
[62](U) Ibid.

[64](U) In December 1974 the Hughes-Ryan Amendment required a Presidential "finding" for each covert action, and President Gerald Ford's Executive Order 11095 (16 February 1976) required that the Executive Office notify Congress of all Presidential findings.



Chapter 3

(U) Execution and Initial Failure



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[6](U) The absence of relevant intelligence in Carroll's file is curious. Foreign intelligence assets, not covert action assets, collect the sorts of information Carroll needed. Two possible reasons explain the paucity of information. Either the foreign intelligence assets had not been tasked properly, or, as is more likely, their focus up to this time had been on the Soviet Union and its activities rather than on Iranian activities. The USSR invariably was the main target of the American intelligence effort, and most if not all of CIA's foreign intelligence assets in Tehran were almost certainly trying to collect information on the Soviets.

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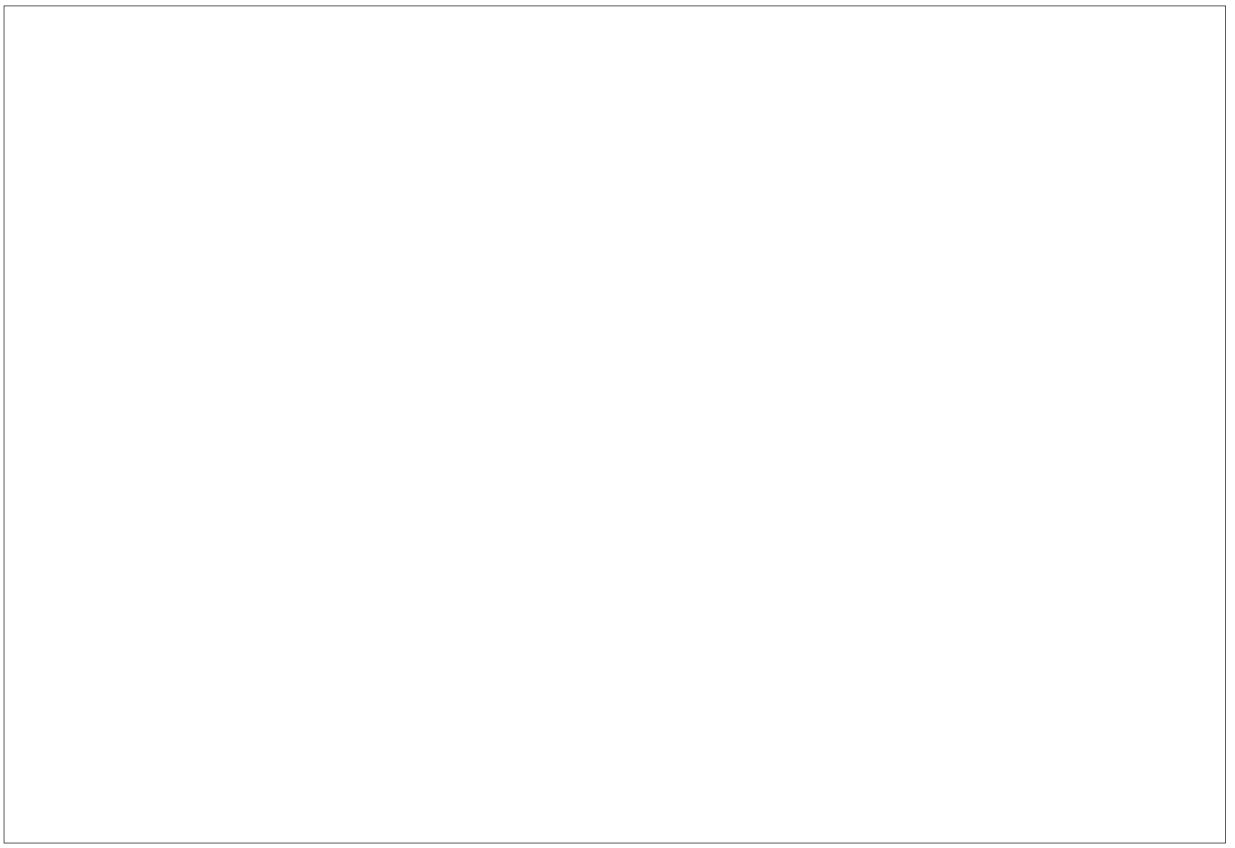

(U) TEXT BOX: The Corrupt and Impotent Iranian Army

(S) The Iranian Army in 1953 was understrength, underequipped, and ill prepared to repel invasion, suppress a country-wide insurrection, or defeat Tudeh subversion. Its 125,000 men comprised eight divisions, nine independent brigades, and one military police brigade. According to a US Army Intelligence Staff Study in December 1952, the Iranian officer corps was corrupt and lacked leadership ability. Promotions were based on politics rather than merit. The enlisted men were mostly tough peasants who uncomplainingly endured hardships and privations unthinkable to Western soldiers. These traits made the enlisted ranks amenable to discipline but made instilling initiative almost impossible. The absence of modern weapons and shortage of ammunition made training almost nonexistent. The US Army report concluded that Iranian Army units had no offensive capability and negligible defensive capability.[13]

(S) The General Staff positioned the divisions and brigades with an eye toward suppressing Iran's sometimes unruly tribes, rather than where they would be best able to defend the country against a Soviet invasion. Accordingly, most of the divisions were in the south and east, rather than along the northern border with the USSR. The table below lists major Iranian units and the tribal areas in which—or adjacent to which—they were deployed.[14]

Unit	Location	Tribal Area
1st Mountain Brig.	Tehran	
2nd Mountain Brig.	Tehran	
3rd Mountain Brig.	Tehran	
1st Armored Brig.	Tehran	
2nd Armored Brig.	Tehran	
Military Police Brig.	Tehran	
3rd Infantry Div.	Tabriz	
4th Infantry Div.	Rezaieh (Orumiyeh)	
5th Infantry Div.	Khorramabad	Lur
6th Infantry Div.	Shiraz	Qashqai
7th Infantry Div.	Kerman	
8th Infantry Div.	Meshed (Mashhad)	
9th Infantry Div.	Isfahan (Esfahan)	Bakhtiari
10th Infantry Div.	Ahwaz (Ahvaz)	Arab
Gurgan Ind. Brig.	Gurgan (Gorgan)	Turcoman
Kermanshah Ind.	Kermanshah	Lur
Sanandaj Ind. Brig.	Sinneh (Sanandaj)	Kurd
Resht Ind. Brig.	Resht (Rasht)	Shahsavan

[13] (S) US Army, G-2 (Intelligence), Intelligence Staff Study, "Estimate of the Capabilities of the Iranian Armed Forces Including the Employment of Iranian Tribes as Auxiliaries," 15 Dec 1952, Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Lot 57, D529, NND 959286, "Iran 1946-54," Box 4, National Archives and Records Administration.

[14] (S) Ibid.

(U) Securing the *Firmans*

(U) The first phase of the operation began on 15 July 1953, when Asadollah Rashidian went to the French Riviera to meet Princess Ashraf. He explained to her that Mossadeq posed a continuing danger for Iran and that she should convince her brother to dismiss him. She was unenthusiastic.

(U) The Princess also was convinced that Mossadeq would do whatever he could to prevent her return. She had already written to the Prime Minister three times, saying that she wanted to come back to Iran because she could no longer afford to live in Europe. When she saw, with some prompting, that a surreptitious visit to the Shah might improve her chances of returning home permanently, she began to warm to the idea.

(U) Princess Ashraf arrived in Tehran on 25 July 1953 and met with her brother four days later. She was unable to convince him to sign the *firmans* and left Tehran the following day.

[redacted]

[23](U) The arrival of Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Lavrentiev in Tehran on 1 August 1953 probably heightened Washington's and Roosevelt's sense of urgency. Lavrentiev had been ambassador to Czechoslovakia in 1948 and had been behind the Communist coup that deposed pro-Western Czech President Benes. Lavrentiev replaced Ivan Sadchikov, who left Tehran for Moscow in July 1953.

[redacted]

(U) Manucher Farmanfarmaian, a member of the Iranian nobility, was present when Nassiri brought the documents to the Shah and relates in his memoirs the circumstances of this historic event. One afternoon the Shah was relaxing outside with a circle of friends. A butler approached and whispered into the Shah's ear, and the Shah replied loudly, "Tell him to come in." A man in a dark suit whom Farmanfarmaian did not recognize appeared from behind some trees and, after a few words with the Shah, presented him with a document. The Shah asked if anyone had a pen; Farmanfarmaian offered his. After signing the document, the Shah noted that the pen would be worth much more now that he'd used it to sign the paper. "A fortune?" Farmanfarmaian joked. "Perhaps," the monarch replied. "Perhaps it will bring us all luck as well." Farmanfarmaian writes that he "found out later that the messenger had been sent by Kermit Roosevelt and the document the Shah had signed appointed General Zahedi prime minister."[28]

(S) Nassiri returned to Tehran with the signed documents late on the evening of 13 August.[29]

In his book *Countercoup,* Roosevelt notes that nothing could be done on the

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[25](S) Donald Wilber, *Operation TPAJAX* (draft), March 1954, Directorate of Operations Records, Job 80-1701, Box 3, Folder 11, p. 26, ARC.

[26](U) Nassiri later became the head of SAVAK. In 1978, former Agency officer Miles Copeland met General Nassiri to discuss Ayatollah Khomeini and the deteriorating situation in Iran. Copeland found Nassiri "even stupider than Kim [Roosevelt] said he'd be." The General regaled Copeland with "fairly bloodthirsty details of how he could have put an end to the demonstrations within a week if only the Shah had given him free rein." Miles Copeland, *The Game Player: Confessions of the CIA's original political operative* (London: Aurum Press, 1989), p. 251.

[28] (U) Manucher Farmanfarmaian and Roxane Farmanfarmaian, *Blood and Oil: Memoirs of a Persian Prince* (New York: Random House, 1997), p. 292. Farmanfarmaian says that the Shah signed the *firman* on a Sunday in the second week of August. This cannot be correct, for the *firman* was not signed until 13 August. The second Sunday in August was the ninth, and the third Sunday was the sixteenth.

[29] A State Department cable reported that the *firman* appointing Zahedi read:

> View of fact situation of nation necessitates appointment of an informed and experienced man who can grasp affairs of country readily, I therefore, with knowledge I have of your ability and merit, appoint you with this letter Prime Minister. We give into your hands duty to improve affairs of the nation and remove present crisis and raise living standard of people.

Gordon H. Mattison, Telegram to Department of State, 16 August 1953, Tehran No. 342,

13th or 14th—Thursday and Friday—because Thursday afternoon and Friday comprise the Iranian weekend. Effective action would be impossible until Saturday 15 August.[30]

(S) The Shah's *firmans* changed the entire character of TPAJAX. No longer was the operation essentially a military coup with the aim of installing Zahedi as Chief of the General Staff and then Prime Minister. Now it was an exercise of the Shah's constitutional prerogative and authority. Mossadeq's failure to abide by the *firmans* would make his tenure as Prime Minister illegal.

[redacted]

[30](U) Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 171.

[redacted]

(U) American Diplomatic Moves

(S Newspaper articles and statements from senior American government officials hammered home the theme that the US could not work with the Mossadeq government. On 29 June 1953, President Eisenhower sent a letter to Prime Minister Mossadeq making it clear that further American foreign aid would not be available. The letter appeared in the press 10 days later. On 28 July Secretary of State Dulles held a press conference in which he answered a planted question about the American view of Communist activity in Iran. "The growing activities of the illegal Communist Party in Iran and the toleration of them by the Iranian Government," Dulles said, "has caused our Government concern. These developments make it more difficult to grant aid to Iran." President Eisenhower asserted at the Governors' Conference in Seattle on 4 August that the United States would not sit by and watch Asian countries fall behind the Iron Curtain.[34]

[33](U) Ibid. (S). Wisner's idea of the "public" probably was narrow. Most Americans did not read *The New York Times* and could not have told him whether Iran was in the Middle East, South America, or North Carolina.

[redacted]

Just before midnight on 15 August, Col. Nassiri set out with two trucks of soldiers to arrest Mossadeq. When Nassiri arrived at Mossadeq's home to deliver the *firmans* and arrest the Prime Minister, he found himself surrounded and arrested instead.[37]

(S) Troops loyal to Mossadeq took the other participants into custody by early morning Sunday 16 August. By 0500 pro-Mossadeq troops and tanks ringed the Prime Minister's house. At 0545 Radio Tehran announced that the government had foiled a coup.[38] Riahi informed the commanders of all military formations of the attempted coup and ordered them to monitor morale in their units and to prevent disorder and disturbance in their areas. Riahi's and Mossadeq's quick reactions effectively emasculated the military's participation in TPAJAX.

(U) The original plan for a military operation had failed abysmally. Upon hearing of Nassiri's arrest, the principal anti-Mossadeq figures lost their courage. For example, General Batmangelich, who was to have captured Riahi's headquarters, turned back when he saw the troops surrounding the building. Batmangelich and Col. Akhavi soon found themselves under arrest. The Shah, for his part, left the summer palace in the suburbs of Tehran and flew to Baghdad via Ramsar.

[redacted]

(S) The Shah's flight to Baghdad was no surprise, given his temperament and his inability to withstand any kind of psychological pressure. The Shah later portrayed his flight to Baghdad as part of the operation.[39]

[39]In his memoirs, the Shah said:

> However, following a pre-arranged plan, the Queen and I had left Tehran before learning of the revolution's success. It had been decided weeks before that if Mossadegh should use force to resist his deposition, we would temporarily leave the country. I had decided upon this move because I believed that it would force Mossadegh and his henchmen to show their real allegiances, and that thereby it would help crystallize Persian public opinion.

Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1961), p. 104.

(U) Ambassador Henderson, who had left Iran to distance himself from the operation, returned to Tehran on 16 August. He immediately sought and received an audience with Mossadeq. The ambassador asked the Prime Minister if he believed the Shah had issued orders dismissing him and appointing Zahedi. Mossadeq replied that he had never seen such documents, that he would not believe them if he saw them, and that in any event the Shah was powerless to dismiss him. According to Mossadeq, the Shah could not, on his own authority, demand a change in the government. Notwithstanding the Iranian constitution's provision that the prime minister serves at the pleasure of the monarch, Mossadeq contended that his power came from the people rather than the Shah.[42]

(U) At noon on Sunday 16 August, Mossadeq issued a brief statement over Radio Tehran: "According to the will of the people, expressed by referendum, the 17th Majlis is dissolved. Elections for the 18th session will be held soon." Minister of Foreign Affairs Hoseyn Fatemi held a press conference that afternoon in which he reviewed the events of the coup and announced that the Acting Minister of Court Abul Ghassem Amini had been

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[42](U) H.W. Brands, *Inside the Cold War: Loy Henderson and the Rise of the American Empire 1918-1961* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 235, 285.

arrested.[43] Fatemi made several violent speeches virulently attacking the Shah and ordered the monarch's statutes in Tehran torn down.[44]

[redacted]

(U) Washington Reacts

(S) Nassiri's arrest and the subsequent roundup of many anti-Mossadeq principals shook official Washington. A US Embassy cable to Washington on 16 August blamed the coup attempt's failure squarely on "the commonly appreciated difficulty in operating when confronted by current Iranian incapacity for large scale organized effort under clandestine conditions, and when confronted by unforeseen difficulties."[46]

(S) Without knowing the extent of American involvement in the move against Mossadeq, CIA's Office of Current Intelligence (OCI) analyzed the consequences of the failed military coup.[47] An OCI assessment in the *Current Intelligence Bulletin* on 16 August stressed Mossadeq's continued mastery of the situation. According to OCI, the Prime Minister could be expected to move against his enemies and proceed arbitrarily. "The shah's flight, the involvement of the commander of the imperial guards as leader of the coup, and the imperial decrees to remove Mossadeq and appoint General Zahedi prime minister," OCI asserted, "present Mossadeq with the opportunity of reducing the Shah's position still further or attempting to eliminate the monarchy altogether."[48]

(C) On 17 August, OCI published a more in-depth analysis, opining that the coup's failure had broken the will of Mossadeq's opposition. In the analysts' view, no group appeared willing to act after Mossadeq apparently had some ringleaders under

[redacted]

[45](S) TEHE 724, 18 August 1953.

[46](S) TEHE 704, 16 August 1953.

[47](U) See Appendix E for a discussion of the limited role that CIA's analytical components played before and during the operation.

[48] (TS) Office of Current Intelligence, *Current Intelligence Bulletin,* 16 August 1953, p. 3.

arrest and forced others into hiding. Even if such a group emerged, OCI was pessimistic about its chances for success.[49]

(C) OCI thought the Shah's involvement had created new dangers for the monarchy and amounted to an "open invitation" for Mossadeq to proceed against him. If the Prime Minister did not succeed in forcing the Shah to abdicate, "he will manage to strip from [the monarch] the remaining vestiges of power." "Mossadeq," OCI concluded, "[may] be expected to retain political control but will probably assume a more dictatorial position and indulge in more chicanery to maintain himself."[50] The situation seemed irretrievable to US analysts unwitting of NEA's plans to try again.

[49](C) "Assessment of the Iranian Situation," 17 August 1953, Office of Current Intelligence,

[50](C) Ibid.

Chapter 4

(U) Victory

(S) The US Embassy in Tehran may have been ready to write off TPAJAX, but Kermit Roosevelt was not. He knew that the elements for success were still present even though the anti-Mossadeq Iranian military leadership had collapsed ignominiously at the first hint of resistance. Mossadeq remained politically isolated and the military, for all its inactivity, was basically pro-Shah.

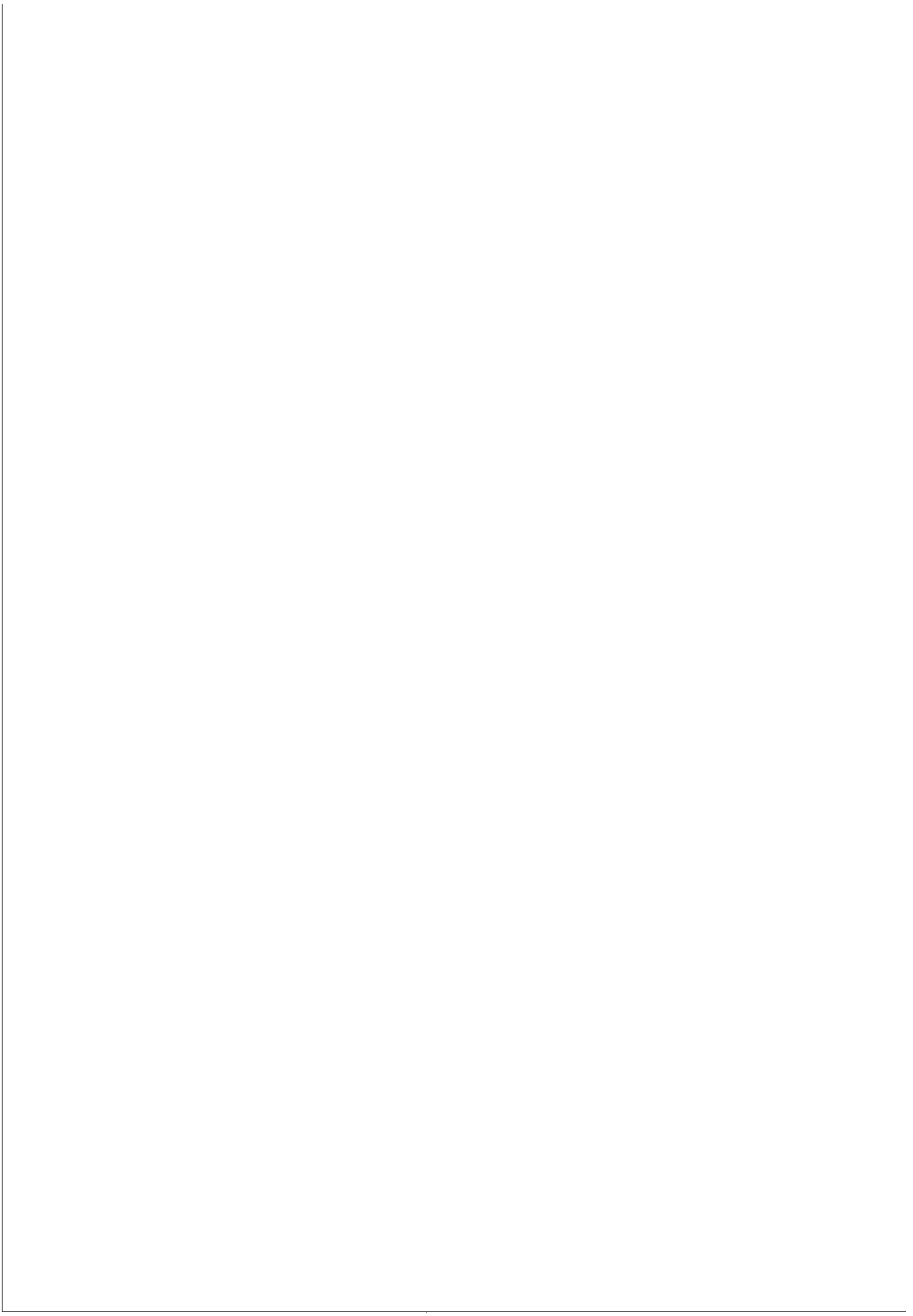
(S) CIA no longer viewed TPAJAX as a military coup; it was now a political action designed to swing the Iranian military away from the illegal Mossadeq government and place the armed forces squarely and actively behind the Shah and the legal Zahedi government. Inducing the military to move in this direction would require a rapid, concentrated, and effectively improvised psychological warfare campaign to publicize the notion that Mossadeq had launched a coup against the legitimate government. Roosevelt wanted to control events to the extent possible, but he was also prepared to react to them and take advantage of fluid situations.

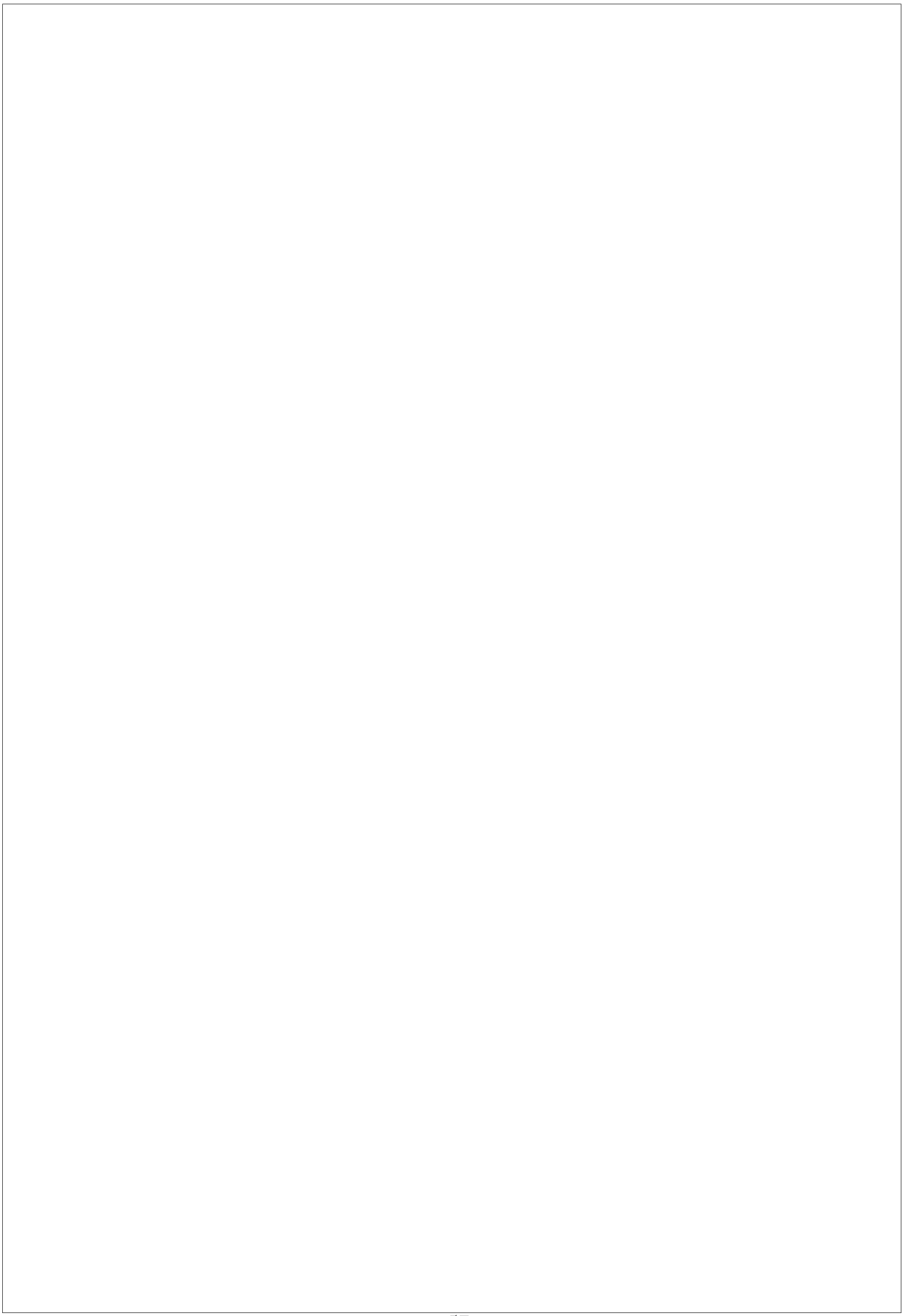
(U) Sunday 16 August: Roosevelt and the Station Regroup

(U) Roosevelt knew he held at least two powerful cards in the Shah's *firmans.* Although Zahedi was hiding from Mossadeq, under the Iranian Constitution he was the legal Prime Minister of Iran and Mossadeq was not. Roosevelt was convinced that if he could publicize and emphasize that theme, Mossadeq could not retain his illegal grip on power for long.

[redacted]

[1](U) Love covered the entire crisis for *The New York Times.* His reports made the front pages of the newspaper from 17-24 August 1953.





(U) TEXT BOX: *"A Terrible, Terrible Coincidence" in Rome*

(U) When the Shah arrived in Rome on 18 August, CIA faced a potential disaster. By coincidence, DCI Allen Dulles was there on vacation. When the Shah checked into the Excelsior Hotel, Dulles was standing next to him trying to do the same thing.

(U) John Waller remembers that he got a call from Frank Wisner between 0200 and 0300. Wisner was agitated. "He's gone to Rome," Wisner told Waller. "A terrible, terrible coincidence occurred. Can you guess what it is?" Waller could not.

(U) "Well," Wisner continued, "he went to the Excelsior Hotel to book a room with his bride, and the pilot, there were only three of them, and he was crossing the street on his way into the hotel. Guess, . . . can you tell me, I don't want to say it over the phone, can you imagine what may have happened? Think of the worst thing you can think of that happened."

(U) Waller said, "He was hit by a cab and killed."

(U) "No, no, no, no," Wisner responded impatiently, by this time almost wild with excitement. "Well, John, maybe you don't know, that Dulles had decided to extend his vacation by going to Rome. Now can you imagine what happened?"

(U) Waller answered, "Dulles hit him with his car and killed him."

(U) Wisner did not think it was funny. "They both showed up at the reception desk at the Excelsior at the very same moment. And Dulles had to say, 'After you, your Majesty.'"[25]

(U) The meeting between Dulles and the Shah was completely fortuitous but fraught with embarrassment for the US Government and CIA had the news media learned of it. They did not, so the incident passed unnoticed. Wisner's reaction strongly suggests that the meeting was coincidental. It was unlikely that he would have called Waller at 0200 in a panic and revealed sensitive information over an open telephone line if there had been a plan for the DCI to meet the Shah in Rome.[26]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[26](U) In writing of this incident in *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles*, Peter Grose says that "Of all the conspiracy theories that later swirled around the personage of Allen Dulles, none has made a convincing case to accommodate this unfortunate proximity." Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy: the Life of Allen Dulles* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), p. 367.

(U) At this point, members of Iranian *Zuhrkhaneh* (exercise clubs)—weightlifters, wrestlers, and acrobats—appeared at the head of the crowd. Their involvement was almost certainly the work of the Rashidian brothers and was a brilliant stroke that showed a profound understanding of Iranian psychology.

(U) Iranians idolize acrobats and weightlifters in the same way that many Americans idolize baseball, basketball, or football players. The sight of these men tumbling or exercising in unison with dumbbells drew a crowd in an astonishingly short time. Moreover, the country's most famous athlete, Shaban "Bi Mohk" (Shaban "the Brainless") Jaffari, was in the lead and began chanting pro-Shah slogans. The effect was electrifying.[36]

(S) the influence of the mullahs on the demonstration was clear. Holy men had galvanized many of the poor of South Tehran by hammering on the themes that the Soviet-backed Communists were taking over, the Shah was gone, and Mossadeq was to blame. The streets of Tehran, which had belonged to the Tudeh 24 hours earlier, now belonged to a different crowd. The few Tudeh members appearing on the streets around mid–morning 19 August saw that they were hopelessly outnumbered and lost their enthusiasm for a confrontation.[37] They were swept away like so much chaff.

(U) The swelling crowd headed for the offices of the pro-Mossadeq and anti-American newspaper, *Bakhtar Emruz.* Security forces watched passively as the crowd demolished the newspaper's office. By 1000 the crowd was headed for Mossadeq's residence at 109 Kakh (Palace) Street, which was ringed with tanks and troops loyal to the Prime Minister.

(U) The troops guarding the residence were unsure of what was happening. When confronted with the large, angry crowd, some of the soldiers opened fire. The fighting escalated as pro-Shah troops returned fire. Mossadeq climbed over the wall surrounding his house and escaped.

(U) The size and fervor of the demonstrations were critical in encouraging the military to come down on the side of the Shah and Prime Minister Zahedi. Although some members of the officer corps opposed Mossadeq, Roosevelt could not be certain that their units would follow their orders in the absence of evidence that the general population would back them up. The Iranian army has a long tradition of waiting to see who controls the streets before it acts.

(S) By 1130 the military evidently had concluded that Mossadeq was through. Truckloads of pro-Shah soldiers sped through the streets of Tehran, and many troops joined the mobs that were shouting "Zendebad Shah!" while waving pictures of the monarch.

[38](S) Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[39](S) Ibid., p. 11.

[40](S) Ibid., p. 12.

(U) The broadcast in the afternoon of 19 August was confused and chaotic, but there was no doubt that pro-Shah forces had captured and were controlling Radio Tehran. The first indication came when the announcer said, "The people of Tehran have risen today and occupied all the government offices, and I am able to talk to you all through the help of the armed forces. The government of Mossadeq is a government of rebellion and has fallen."[41] Seven minutes later, amid much confusion and shouting on the air, a Col. Ali Pahlavon said,

> (U) Oh people of the cities, be wide awake. The government of Mossadeq has been defeated. My dear compatriots, listen! I am one of the soldiers and one of the devotees of this country. Oh officers, a number of traitors, like Hoseyn Fatemi, wants to sell out the country to the foreigners.
>
> (U) My dear compatriots, today the Iranian royalists have defeated the demagogue government by which Fatemi was ruling. The Iranian nation, officers, army, and the police have taken the situation in their hands.
>
> (U) Premier Zahedi will assume his post. There is no place for anxiety. Keep tranquil.[42]

(U) The broadcast stopped. After seven minutes it continued with a woman shouting,

> (U) Oh people of Iran, let the Iranian nation prove that the foreigners cannot capture this country! Iranians love the King. Oh tribes of Iran, Mossadeq is ruling over your country without your knowledge, sending your country to the government of the hammer and sickle.[43]

(U) A major from the Iranian army said that he was an infantry officer "retired by Mossadeq, the traitor. We proved to the world that the Iranian army is the protector of this country and is under the command of the Shah." Much confusion followed, after which Radio Tehran played the national anthem and then went off the air.[44]

(U) Wednesday Afternoon 19 August: *"Zendebad, Shah!"*

[redacted]

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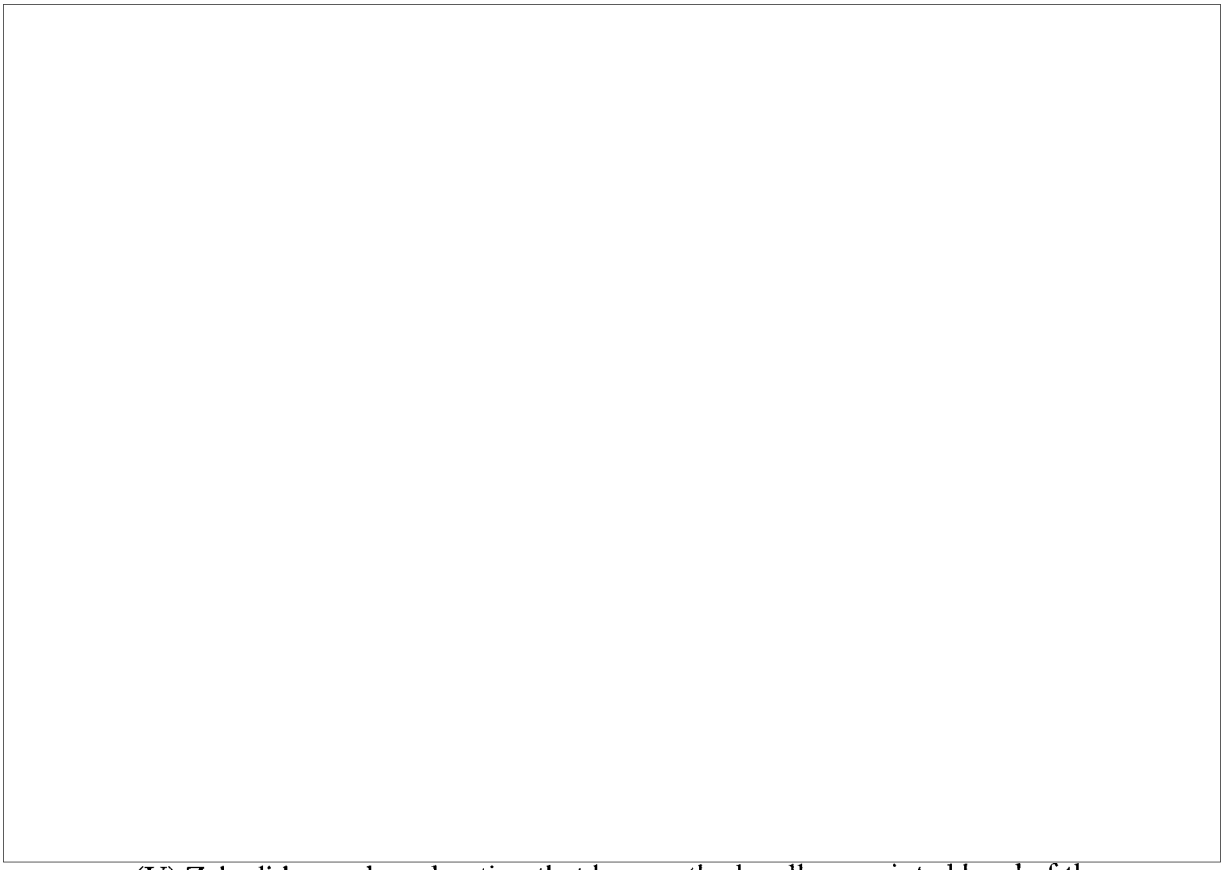
[41](U) Intercept from Tehran Iranian Home Service, 19 August 1953, 1200 GMT, Records of the Directorate of Operations, Job 79-01228A, Box 11, Folder 14, ARC

[42](U) Intercept from Tehran Iranian Home Service, 19 August 1953, 1207 GMT, Records of the Directorate of Operations, Job 79-01228A, Box 11, Folder 14, ARC.

[43](U) Intercept from Tehran Iranian Home Service, 19 August 1953, 1214 GMT, Records of the Directorate of Operations, Job 79-01228A, Box 11, Folder 14, ARC.

[44](U) Ibid. Radio Tehran went off the air at 1222 GMT.

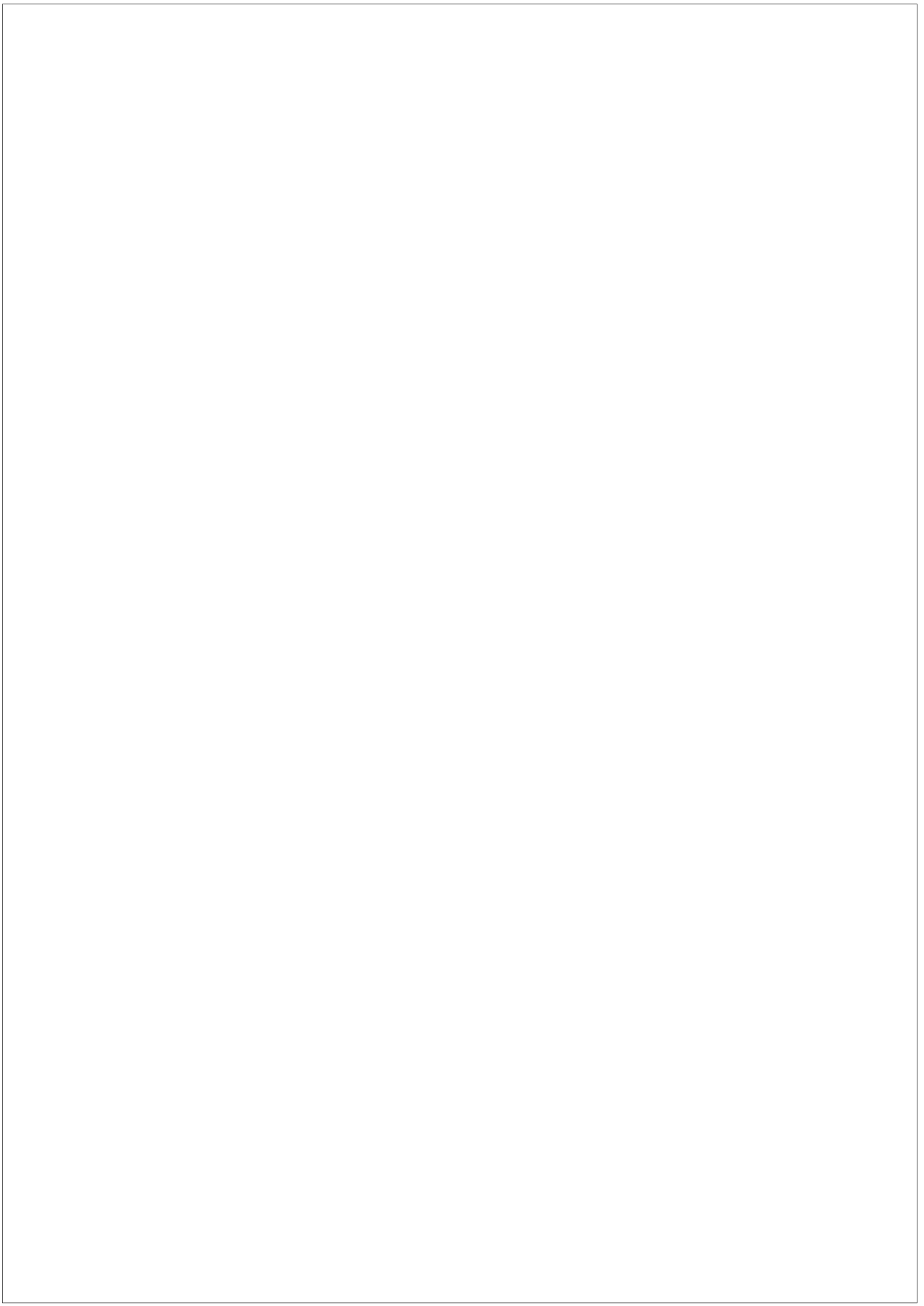


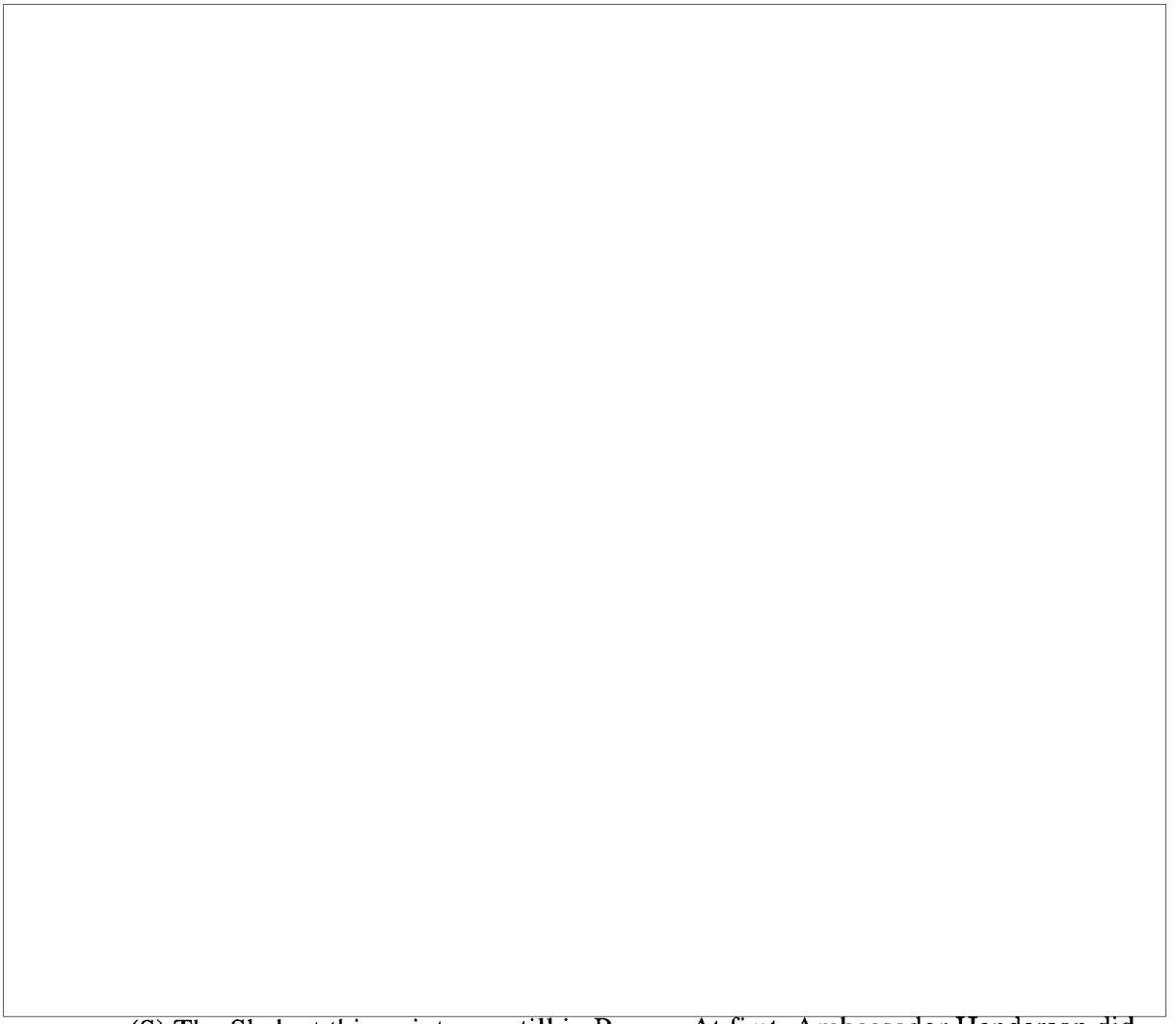
(U) Zahedi began broadcasting that he was the legally appointed head of the government.[48] He also promised, to Roosevelt's chagrin, that he would boost living standards, provide free health services to the poor, and modernize agriculture.[49]

[48] (U) According to the State Department, the Embassy monitor reported Zahedi's transmission as follows:

> Dear Compatriots:
> In the name of Almighty, I address you.
> I have been appointed your Prime Minister by order of His Majesty.
> Past governments have made many promises but have achieved very little.
> Nation must know I am lawful Prime Minister on Shah's orders. Principal points my program are: Rule of law; raising standard of living; free health services for all; mechanization of agriculture; road construction; public security; individual and social freedom; cooperative societies.
> Long live Mohamed Reza Shah Pahlevi.

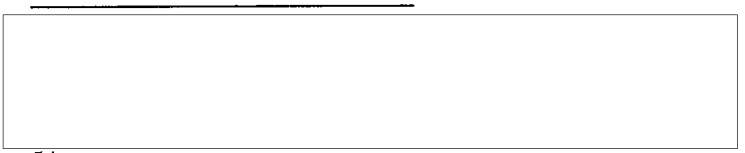
Telegram from US Embassy Tehran to Secretary of State, No. 406, 19 August 1953. National Archives, RG 319, Entry 57, box 27.





(S) The Shah at this point was still in Rome. At first, Ambassador Henderson did not want the monarch back in Tehran until popular pressure for his return became overwhelming.[54] Washington, however, thought it was a good idea for the Shah to return as soon as possible. The State Department had reversed itself and now was strongly urging the Iranian ruler to make a statement thanking his people for their support and promising to return. CIA Headquarters added that "We feel it extremely important for Shah to return immediately since issue is still in doubt and his presence just might make all the difference."[55]

(S) State favored pressuring the Shah if he hesitated. Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith wanted to remind Mohammed Reza Pahlavi of two points: (1) his actions were constitutional, legal, and in keeping with Iranian practice and tradition, and (2) had he stayed in Tehran, perhaps the earlier military coup attempt would have



[54](S) TEHE 745, 19 August 1953.

[55](S) Dir 16330, 19 August 1953.

succeeded. The initial failure, Smith thought, was in part a result of the Shah's sudden departure, "leaving behind only pieces of paper which are not too meaningful or forceful in Iran at best let alone when they are the subject of controversy as to their validity."[56]

[redacted] he arrived in the Iranian capital on Saturday 22 August to a tumultuous and emotional welcome.[57] His plane stopped in front of the ranks of the Imperial Guard, drawn up to greet their sovereign and commander. Kennett Love described the scene for *The New York Times* as the new Prime Minister met the Shah's airplane:

> (U) General Zahedi half-entered the plane and kissed the Shah's knee, then backed from the door to allow the 34-year-old Emperor to descend. The Shah wore the gold-braided blue gray uniform of the Air Force Commander in Chief that had been specially flown to Baghdad for his return. His eyes were moist and his mouth was set in an effort to control his emotions.[58]

The Mossadeq era was over.[59]

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[56](S) "Items for inclusion in messages to possibly Rome, Baghdad and Tehran," 19 August 1953, [redacted] The points that Smith wanted to impress upon the Shah came from the Iranian ambassador in Washington.

[57](S) TEHE 749, 20 August 1953.

[58](U) *New York Times* 23 August 1953

[redacted]

(S) CIA estimated that the short–term prospects for Zahedi's government were good. "Although many Iranians will regret the downfall of Mossadeq and will thus provide a source of future opposition to the new regime, most of this group will probably acquiesce at least temporarily in the change." The Tudeh Party lost much of its support in the upsurge of anti-Communist, pro-Shah sentiment. CIA thought the Tudeh unlikely to recover its support in the near future. Zahedi faced a formidable task in dealing with the disparate elements responsible for Mossadeq's downfall, and he probably could not count on the Shah's strong support. The Shah had never supported any of his past prime ministers consistently, and CIA did not believe this would change.[60]

[60](S) Office of National Estimates, "The Current Outlook in Iran," SE-49, 26 August 1953, Records of the Office of National Estimates, Directorate of Intelligence, ARC.

Chapter 5

(U) Aftermath

(U) Zahedi Consolidates His Government

(S) The situation in Tehran was still fluid, and no one knew if the Tudeh might try to instigate an armed revolt against Zahedi that could have led to civil war. Neither Zahedi nor his new military Chief of Staff, Gen. Batmangelich, wanted to take any chances. Batmangelich spent the first two days of his tenure as Chief of Staff ordering selected Iranian Army units to Tehran. Batmangelich may have intended to augment the security forces already in or enroute to Tehran or he may have wanted to ensure enough "show troops" to greet the Shah when he returned.

(S) Batmangelich ordered battalions from Isfahan, Kerman, Tabriz, and Khorramabad to leave their garrisons for Tehran. These cities are widely separated and cover the country from the northwest to the southeast. The Chief of Staff may have ordered other units as well, but there is no evidence supporting additional troop movements of additional units.

(S) Each battalion enroute to Iran's capital had 358 enlisted men, 79 non-commissioned officers, and five or six officers. They left with weapons, full equipment, provisions for two days, and one fire unit of ammunition. Batmangelich was anxious that the units arrive in Tehran on time, and ordered them to report their progress while enroute.

(U) The different and widely separated home garrisons of the battalions made them unlikely co-conspirators against the new regime. The chance that any of these battalions would refuse to follow Zahedi's orders was remote.

(U) The five brigades in the Tehran garrison had not covered themselves with glory during the civil unrest ousting Mossadeq, and Batmangelich and Zahedi no doubt thought it prudent to have other troops in the capital who probably would not hesitate to crush a Tudeh-led coup attempt. Batmangelich clearly intended these forces for more than ceremonial purposes; troops do not parade or pass in review with live ammunition.

(S) Mossadeq's fall did not mean an immediate end to the problems that had bedeviled Iran's relations with the West. Almost immediately after TPAJAX, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Henry Byroade wrote a memorandum addressing two issues: How will the change in government affect Iranian policies, and what attitude should the US Government take toward the Zahedi government?[1]

(U) Byroade noted that a revolution of nationalism was sweeping Asia and that any effective leader had to base his program on nationalist aspirations or face political suicide. Zahedi, therefore, was not likely to reverse many of Mossadeq's policies. Byroade warned that American policymakers would be unwise to assume "Iran will turn a new face toward the West in the immediate future." Nonetheless, he argued, Zahedi merited American support. His fall, in Byroade's opinion, would "open the way to chaos and a struggle for power in which only the Tudeh organization would be likely to win."[2]

(U) Two complications affected American support for the new Iranian Prime Minister. Zahedi lacked solid political support in his own right. He could expect the Shah to thwart his efforts to create a strong government, since the Shah distrusted *any* strong leader—or anyone who might emerge as a strong leader.

(U) Zahedi's options were limited. He could not become a military dictator as long as the military remained loyal to the Shah, nor could he seek broad–based civilian support without calling for new Majlis elections. The Majlis was notorious, in Byroade's words, for its "destructive criticism" and there was no guarantee that a new Majlis would cooperate with Zahedi. In short, Byroade wrote, "there is no cause for jubilation that our problems are ended in Iran. On the contrary, the future can be expected to bear remarkable similarity to the recent past."[3] It was a sobering antidote to the euphoria at the highest levels of CIA.

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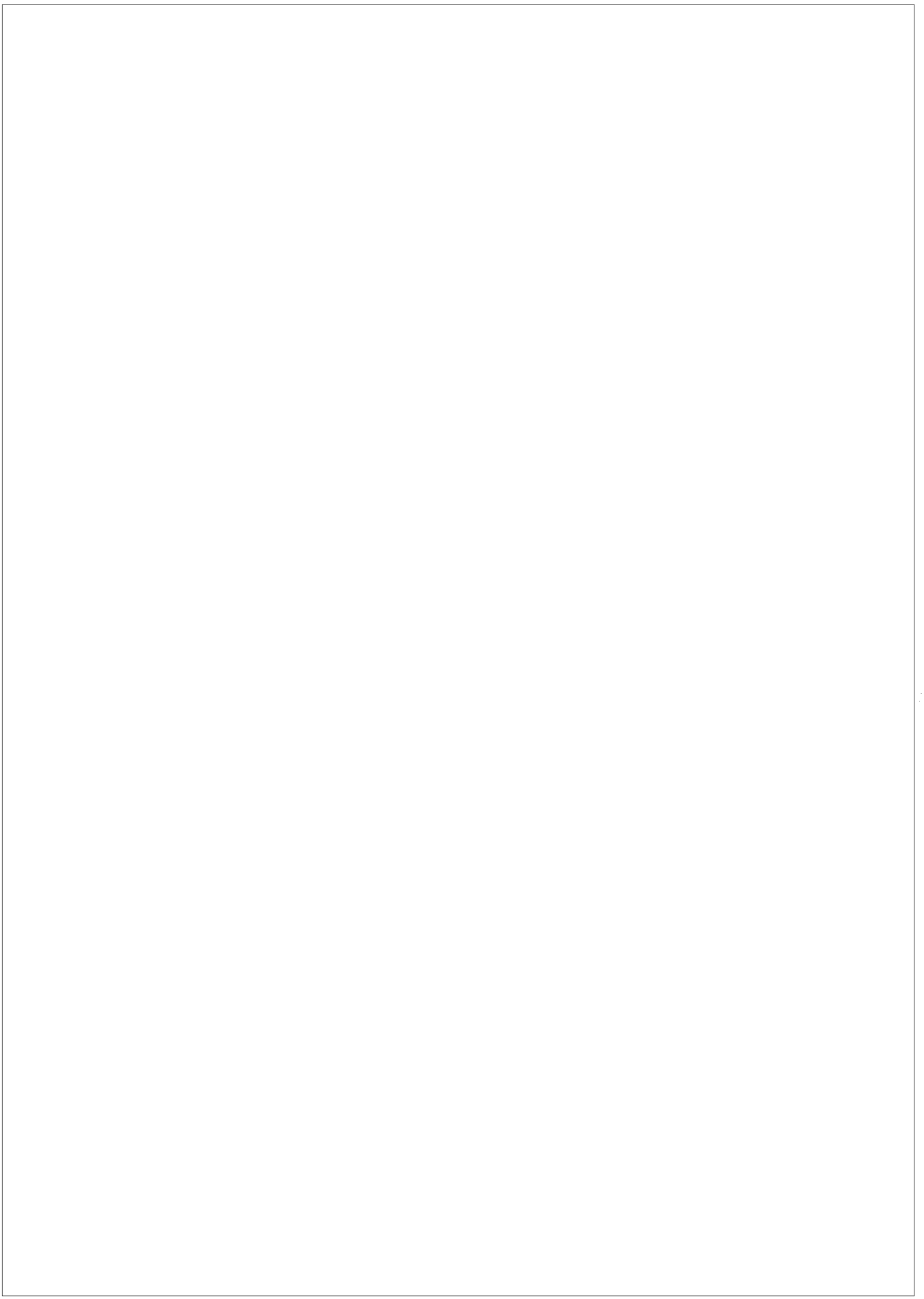
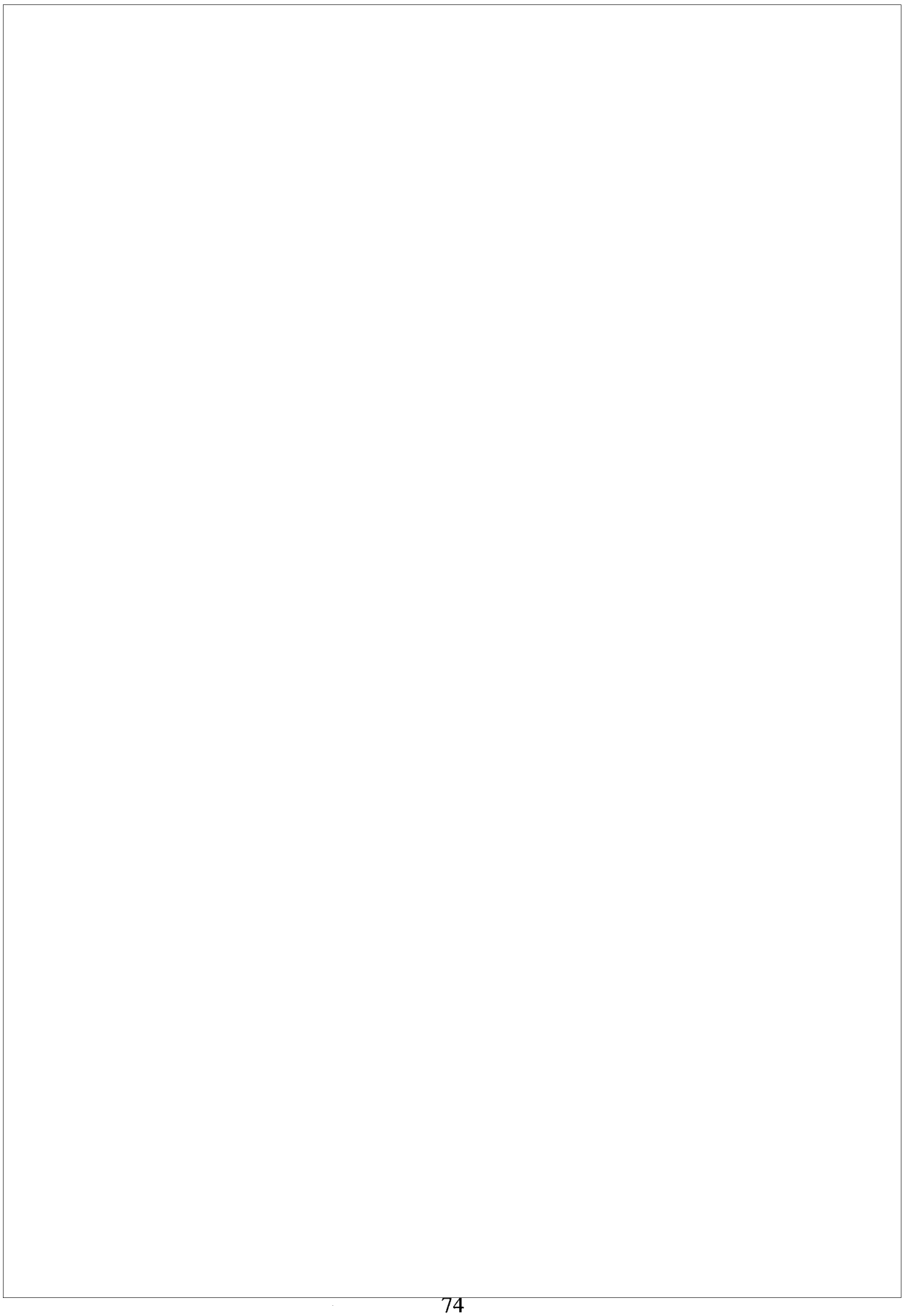
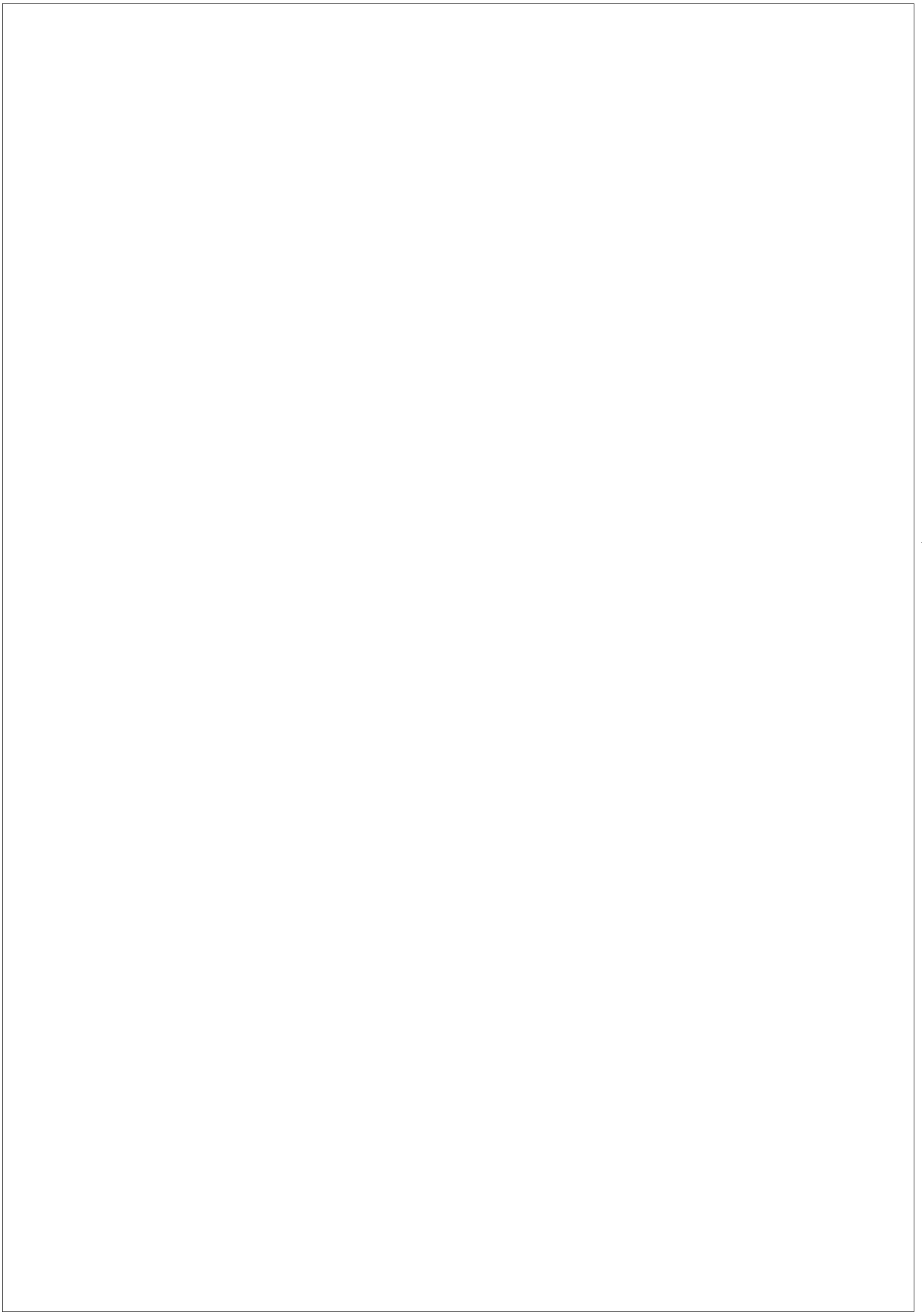
[1](U) Memorandum from [Henry A.] Byroade, NEA, to Mr. Bowie, S/P, "Iran," 21 August 1953, RG 59, Records of the State Department, Records of the Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs, Lot 57, D 529, Box 40, NARA.

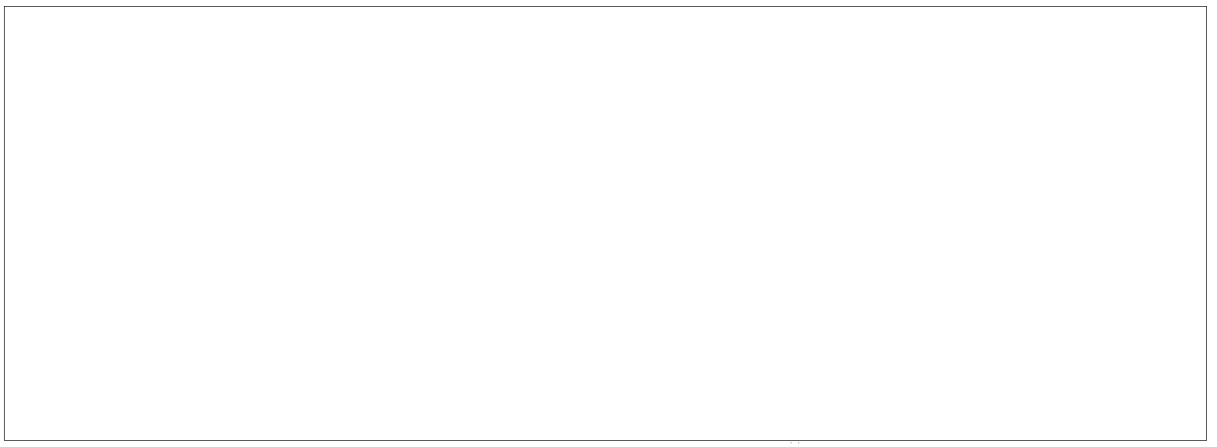
[2](U) Ibid.

[3](U) Ibid.



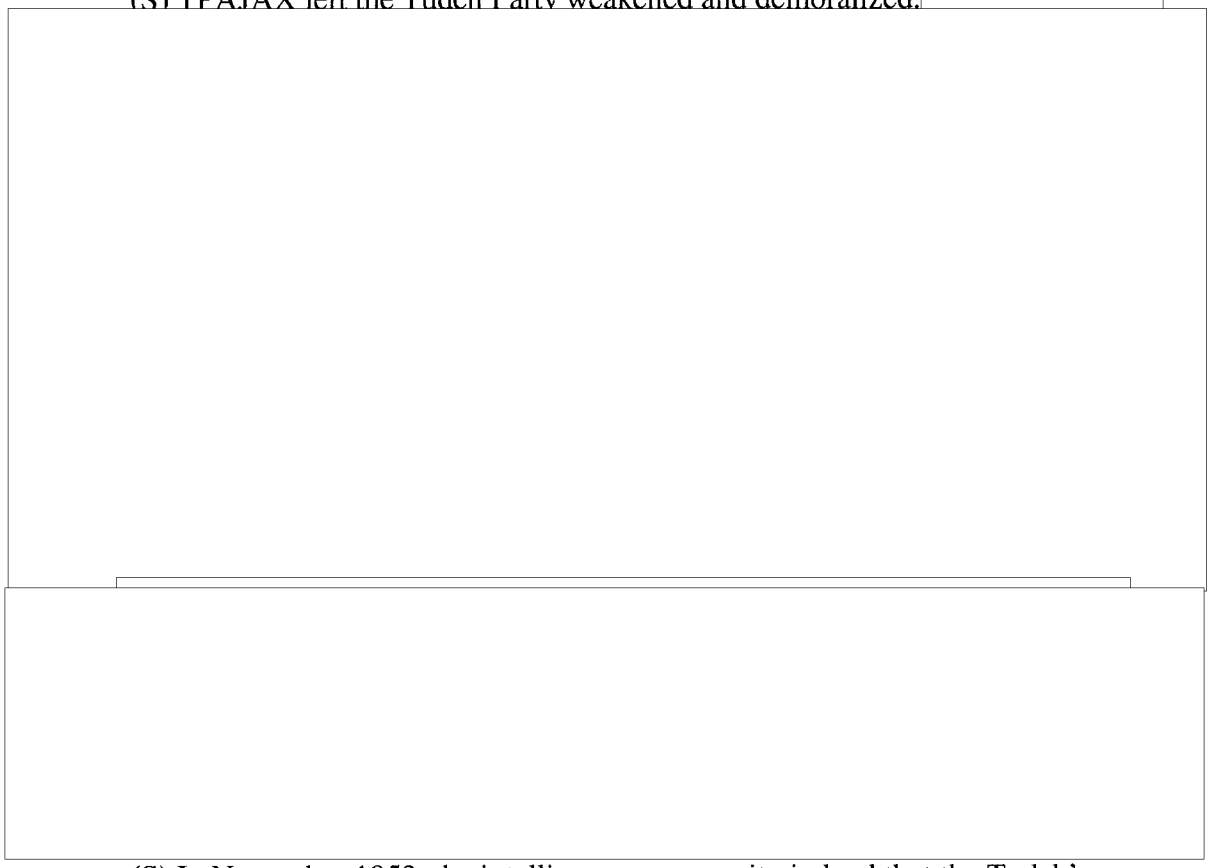




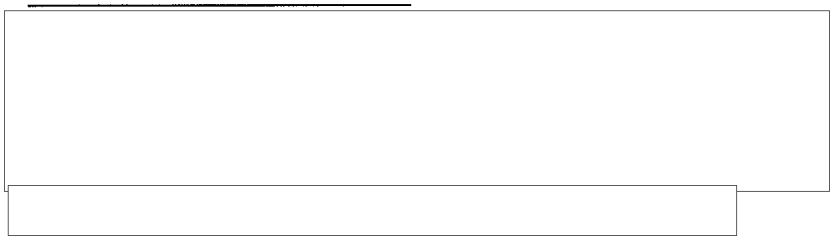


(U) The Tudeh Party

(S) TPAJAX left the Tudeh Party weakened and demoralized.



(S) In November 1953, the intelligence community judged that the Tudeh's disarray made it unlikely that the Party would seize power. In a National Intelligence



Estimate entitled *Probable Developments in Iran Through 1954,* ONE wrote that the Tudeh had been seriously disrupted, with many of its most active members under arrest. Zahedi, moreover, had purged known Tudeh sympathizers from government agencies. Even so, in ONE's view, the Tudeh was not impotent and still remained capable of sabotage and terrorism.[21]

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[21](S) Office of National Estimates, NIE-102, "Probable Developments in Iran Through 1954," 16 November 1953, p. 2, Records of the Office of National Estimates, Directorate of Intelligence, ARC.

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(U) Until the archives of the former Soviet Union are fully opened, it will be impossible for scholars to know the exact reasons why the Tudeh did not act. Perhaps Bahrami was right in suggesting that it was only because the Tudeh was unprepared, but the reasons are probably more complex. Stalin had been dead for only five months, and the new leaders were probably reassessing his policies. They almost certainly recognized the importance of Iran to the United States (and to the Soviet Union) but may have been unsure how much freedom of action they had. In any event, since the Tudeh was so closely directed from Moscow, it is unlikely that the Iranian Communists decided on their own to do nothing

(U) Whatever ill effects or career damage Lavrentiev suffered from Mossadeq's fall were temporary. He eventually returned to his post in Tehran and stayed until May 1955, when Moscow recalled him to participate in a commission trying to resolve outstanding Soviet-Iranian border and financial disputes.

(U) Kermit Roosevelt

(S) The American intelligence and diplomatic communities feted Kermit Roosevelt when he returned to Washington. It is no exaggeration to say that TPAJAX owed its success to him, inasmuch as Headquarters and the State Department were ready to abandon the project after the initial failure on 15 August. Roosevelt had quickly seen that the essence of the operation had changed into a political action. Success came from

his initiative, quick thinking, calm analysis, and ability to recognize turning points and act decisively upon them.

(S) Although CIA did not conduct an investigation or post-mortem analysis of the operation to determine what the Agency did wrong and what it did right, Roosevelt in September 1953 talked about his role in TPAJAX before a group that included President Eisenhower, Secretary of State Dulles, the Cabinet, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and others [redacted] Roosevelt kept his audience enthralled for two hours and emphasized that the operation had succeeded because it enjoyed the support of the Iranian army and the people. It also succeeded because he did not have Washington second-guessing his every move. Cables from Tehran were scare during the critical days of 16-19 August—for a good reason. "Gentlemen," Roosevelt joked to general applause, "I made a point of not letting you know what was happening." No one seemed more amused than Allen Dulles.[26]

(S) Roosevelt cautioned his audience not to draw the wrong lessons from TPAJAX. "Now we'll think we can walk on water, everywhere," he said, "and we've got to be careful and restrain ourselves."[27]

(S) Roosevelt had long thought that contradictions in American foreign policy would continue to make covert action necessary. In 1952 he wrote that, at least in the Middle East, as long as American words do not match American deeds "so long will our orthodox diplomacy in the area be hamstrung and our reliance upon clandestine operations increase."[28] Outside the Middle East, he wrote, strategic considerations—chiefly the fear of losing French or British support for NATO—"often require or seem to require our pursuit of a policy which alienates large segments of the Islamic-Asian world." Roosevelt also believed that the United States had a tendency "to develop policy in terms of irrelevant traditional formulae."[29]

(U) Secretary of State Dulles did not heed Roosevelt's admonition. The Secretary was already contemplating a similar operation in a country half a world away from Iran and much closer to home.[30] Officials in CIA's Directorate of Plans had been working since 1952 on schemes to depose Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz. Like Mossadeq, Arbenz was willing to turn a blind eye to Communist machinations in his country. Unlike Mossadeq, however, Arbenz appeared to be a Communist sympathizer. Even the most bitter anti-Mossadeq partisans did not claim the Iranian Prime Minister was a Communist or a sympathizer.[31]

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[28](C) Kermit Roosevelt, Chief, Division of Near East and Africa, Directorate of Plans, Memorandum, "General Observations on the Operational Problems Confronting NEA Division," 7 October 1952 [redacted]

[29](C) Ibid.

[30](U) Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 210.

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(U) Roosevelt's knowledge of the Middle East gave him the confidence to play the situation in Iran by ear without much Headquarters involvement. His lack of Latin American expertise would have precluded a similar approach in dealing with Guatemala. Control from Headquarters would necessarily have been tighter, restricting his freedom of movement.[34]

(U) There was another important distinction between Iran and Guatemala. Arbenz controlled a comparatively stable Guatemalan Government; Mossadeq presided over a shambles. At the start of 1953, according to Iranian specialist Kuross A. Samii, "Iran resembled an old ship swept away by a storm with no one aboard capable of dealing with

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[32] (S) See Nicholas Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Washington, DC: CIA History Staff, 1993); Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (New York: Doubleday, 1982); and Richard H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

[34](S) Ibid.

the attendant frenzy." By August, Mossadeq "was barely holding on to the broken sails of his sinking ship. Everything considered, whatever might be said of the morality or the legality of American action, it still should not be characterized as having overthrown a stable regime in Iran."[35] What worked in Iran, Roosevelt sensed, probably would not work in Guatemala because the circumstances were so different.

(S) Neither CIA nor the US Government heeded Roosevelt's warnings about the seductiveness and danger of covert action, and PBSUCCESS went forward successfully. With the overthrow of Arbenz, many in the State Department and CIA thought American action had narrowly averted a Communist government in Guatemala. The relative rapidity and ease with which TPAJAX and PBSUCCESS had accomplished their objectives, however, deceived CIA officials. They drew the erroneous lesson that the Agency could alter world events in the Third World at will and with minimal expense. It would take the debacle at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 to vindicate Roosevelt, but by then the man who had brought down Mossadeq had resigned from CIA.[36]

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[35](U) Kuross A. Samii, *Involvement By Invitation: American Strategies of Containment in Iran* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), p. 143.

[36](U) Roosevelt, *Countercoup*, p. 210.

Chapter 6

(S) Evaluating TPAJAX

(U) During the 1979-81 Iranian hostage crisis, a reporter asked President Jimmy Carter whether he thought that "it was proper for the United States to restore the Shah to the throne in 1953 against the popular will within Iran." Instead of correcting the reporter's loaded question, the President replied, "That's ancient history, and I don't think it's appropriate or helpful for me to go into the propriety of something that happened 30 years ago."[1]

(U) Many diplomatic historians, intelligence historians, and political scientists do not consider TPAJAX "ancient history." Eighteen years after President Carter's remark, the questions implicit in the reporter's query persist and continue to stir controversy.

(S) The extensive secondary literature on TPAJAX and other American covert operations in the early 1950s focuses on a single issue, whether stated or implied: Was the operation in the US national interest? With this question as a guide, this chapter evaluates the covert action as its contemporaries saw it and as we view it retrospectively.

(S) TPAJAX and the National Interest: the Contemporaneous View

(S) Official Washington thought that TPAJAX was a stunning victory for the West. The operation almost certainly prevented Iran from sliding into political anarchy and becoming a target too tempting for the Tudeh and its Soviet mentors to ignore. In the short term, a stable Zahedi Government permitted a rapid settlement of the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute, thereby restarting the flow of oil and providing a much–needed boost for the sagging Iranian economy.

(S) At the time, neither Washington nor London could foresee the long–range benefits that would flow from TPAJAX. The pro-Western, strongly anti-Communist

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[1](U) President Jimmy Carter, "The President's News Conference of February 13, 1980, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Jimmy Carter*. Book I–January 1 to May 23, 1980 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 307.

policy of the Zahedi Government that the United States obtained at minimal cost[2] would last for 26 years. Secure in the knowledge that the US would support Iran against the USSR, the Shah was able to turn his attention to domestic matters. He began a series of far-reaching modernization efforts, including land reform and steps toward the emancipation of women.

(U) TPAJAX came at a time when the events in pre-war Europe were a fresh memory. Americans had seen how Nazi subversion could destroy a country like Czechoslovakia. They had seen the consequences of weakness and appeasement before Nazi and Japanese demands. They had suffered the incalculable cost of failing to act when action might have stopped further aggression. Many were determined never again to let the appearance of weakness and indecision encourage aggression.

(U) Neither the White House nor State Department had the slightest doubt that the Soviets coveted Iran and would do whatever they could, short of war, to bring that country within the Soviet orbit. The Azeri crisis of 1947 showed that unless checked, Stalin would continue to test the West's resolve.

(U) Stalin's death in March 1953 added a dangerous element of ambiguity to Soviet intentions. Who would succeed the late dictator, the "breaker of nations"?[3] Would Soviet policy become more or less aggressive? Would the Soviets reoccupy Iranian Azerbaijan? Would they encourage the Tudeh to topple Mossadeq? The White House, the State Department, and CIA struggled to find answers to these questions.

(U) Sending American troops to Iran was never a practical option for logistical and political reasons. An American military occupation almost certainly would have led to war. The USSR would have invoked the terms of the 1921 Treaty of Friendship Between Iran and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic and occupied the northern part of the country. Iran would have been divided into a Communist north and a free south. Fear of partition lay behind Washington's objection to the proposed British occupation of the port city of Abadan early in the oil nationalization crisis.

(U) A covert political operation promised to attain American foreign policy and strategic in objectives Iran without the threat of war. CIA gave the Eisenhower administration flexibility where diplomacy had failed and military action was not practical. In addition, CIA gave the US Government "plausible deniability." If a covert action went awry, the President could deny American involvement. With these considerations in mind, and given the widely held Western outlook on the international

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[3](U) Historian Robert Conquest's term. See, Robert Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations* (New York: Viking Press, 1991).

situation in general and on Soviet intentions in particular, the Eisenhower administration's decision to act in Iran was reasonable and understandable.

(S) TPAJAX and the National Interest: The Retrospective View

(U) A kind of historical hubris results from the belief that because we know far more about the consequences of past acts than contemporaneous actors could know, we are more likely than they are to have a correct interpretation of events and of cause and effect. We cannot know the consequences of decisions not made or actions not taken any more than contemporaries did. Nevertheless, time and knowledge of past events provide the historian with a perspective not available to contemporaries.

(U) Some historians argue today that TPAJAX was not in the US national interest.[4] Maintaining that American policymakers in the 1950s defined national security narrowly, these historians emphasize that actions intended to enhance American power ultimately have the opposite effect if they violate democratic ideals. In this view, intervening in domestic political processes in foreign countries inevitably undermines US national security by weakening the values on which US security rests in the long run.

(S) Specifically, critics of TPAJAX contend that it damaged American national interests for a number of reasons. In their view, it returned the Shah to his throne illegally. The operation removed a popular, legitimately elected Prime Minister from office (who some now claim would have fallen eventually even without American intervention). Finally, American action created a reservoir of resentment among the Iranian people that helped create the conditions for Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolution in 1978-79.[5] In short, what appeared to be a short–term success ultimately proved to be a failure.

(U) This critique deserves careful attention; its more thoughtful and articulate proponents appear to make a persuasive case. The Shah *did* leave Tehran, to return only when he was certain Mossadeq was gone and American support for the Peacock Throne assured. Mossadeq *was* popular among some segments of the population. Some Iranians *were* disillusioned with the United States. They had hoped that the US, as the great postwar anti-colonial power, would not intrigue against their country as the British and Russians had done. A close examination of the facts, however, reveals flaws in the revisionist critique.

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[4] See, e.g., Wilbur Crane Eveland, *Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980); Barry Rubin, *Paved With Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).

[5](U) C.M. Woodhouse, one of the British principals in the operation, deals with this point in his autobiography *Something Ventured.* He contends that what Britain and the United States saw in 1953 was vastly different from what happened in 1979. The proper analogy, he asserts, is to the events in Afghanistan from 1973 to 1980: the overthrow of a weak monarchy by nationalist forces, who in turn would be overtaken by indigenous Communists, who in turn would call in the Soviet Army. C.M. Woodhouse, *Something Ventured* (London: Granada, 1982), p. 131.

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(U) Did CIA Restore the Shah to His Throne?

(S) TPAJAX did not "restore" the Shah to his throne either technically or constitutionally. Although the Iranian monarch left Tehran during the operation, he never abdicated. Mossadeq's argument that the Shah's *firmans* were invalid was disingenuous. The Iranian constitution gave the Shah the right to dismiss the Prime Minister. As soon as Mossadeq refused to obey the Shah's legal order, he was rebelling against constitutional authority. From that point on, TPAJAX became an operation to remove the usurper Mossadeq and permit Zahedi, the legitimate Prime Minister, to take office. Unlike Mossadeq's government, Zahedi's government recognized the Shah's constitutional authority.

(S) Did CIA Act Against a Legitimate Leader Enjoying Popular Support?

(U) Although there is no doubt that Mossadeq captured the imagination of segments of Iranian society with the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1951, his political support dwindled steadily. By August 1953 he did not command mass support. The Tudeh and splinters of the National Front were the only political parties willing to support him.

(U) The pro-Shah sentiments of the Tehran crowds on 19 August 1953 were genuine. Although CIA had a hand in starting the demonstrations, they swelled spontaneously and took on a life of their own that surprised even Kermit Roosevelt. Many average Iranians seemed convinced that they had to choose between the Shah and Communism. In marching against the Tudeh, Iranians were supporting the Shah. Iran expert Donald Wilber's plan to make this choice explicit had worked.

(S) By August 1953, Mossadeq's support was vociferous but increasingly narrow. The Shah's support was latent but deep, and took a crisis—like the news of Tudeh demonstrators pulling down the Shah's statues—to awaken. Khorramabad residents, for example, wildly rejoiced at hearing of the monarch's return and threatened to destroy the homes of Tudeh leaders. Security forces prevented them from doing so.

(U) Before dismissing reports like those from Khorramabad as propaganda, it must be remembered that CIA was able to influence directly events only in the capital city, and there only barely. Kermit Roosevelt had neither the money nor the agents to initiate the kinds of demonstrations that took place in Iran's widely separated cities.

(U) Has CIA's Role Been Exaggerated?

(S) If Mossadeq's growing unpopularity invalidates one criticism of TPAJAX, it strengthens another. As indicated above, some historians argue that Mossadeq's deteriorating political base made it likely he would have fallen without American intervention. In this view, TPAJAX was unnecessary because Iranian domestic politics would have solved the problem itself.

(S) The American role is one of the new debates among academicians. Books published before the Iranian revolution of 1978-79 tend to assign a central role to CIA

and Kermit Roosevelt.[6] Post-revolutionary authors like Sepehr Zabih take the opposite position. Zabih asserts that ascribing a large role to CIA and SIS understates "the complex interaction of external and internal political forces of this era."[7]

(U) American University's Amos Perlmutter belongs to the school of thought that considers Mossadeq's fall inevitable regardless of Western actions. In a foreword to Zabih's *The Mossadegh Era: Roots of the Iranian Revolution* Perlmutter writes that CIA's "role in these climactic events was not very significant, despite some of the heavily unsubstantiated claims of the old boys such as Kermit Roosevelt."

> (U) To a large extent, the return of the Shah and the downfall of Mossadegh were made possible by divisions among the political forces of the left and right, the left split among nationalists, Marxists and Communists and the right split among the reactionary and xenophobic clergymen and their more liberal counterparts.[8]

(U) Perlmutter is correct in saying that Iranian political divisions made the fall of Mossadeq possible, but merely because something is possible does not ensure that it will happen. CIA's role was significant. Without Kermit Roosevelt's leadership, guidance, and ability to put some backbone into the key players when they wanted to quit, no one would have moved against Mossadeq. Iran had many political factions but few legitimate leaders—and even fewer leaders with the discipline and will necessary to take risks.

(U) A key difference between Mossadeq and his domestic opponents was his ability to control the streets. Although much of the National Front had deserted the Prime Minister, the Tudeh, by this time Iran's only disciplined political party, rallied to him when its aims and Mossadeq's coincided. Tudeh demonstrations intimidated the opposition and kept the army on the sidelines. Mossadeq's opponents would have been unable to overcome these disadvantages without outside help.

(U) The notion that Mossadeq would have fallen anyway ignores the realities of Iranian politics. *No* group was able, without help, to contest control of the streets of Tehran with the Tudeh. The opposition needed a rallying point and a psychological trigger. Roosevelt provided both and gave Tehranians a choice between the Shah and the

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[6](S) Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979). Dr. Donald N. Wilber, one of the principal characters in TPAJAX, was one of many criticizing Roosevelt's book.. "Of its 217 pages," Wilber wrote in his own memoirs, "about 100 are fillers, reviewing recent history. Concerning Operation AJAX itself, the book is not meticulously correct in reporting meetings where plans were drawn up or in quoting those who were there. In my opinion, it should have been subjected to a full editorial revision." See Donald N. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1986), p. 9. Mark Gasiorowski writes that *Countercoup* has many mistakes and omissions. See Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'etat in Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (Aug. 1987): 261.

[7](U) Sepehr Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era: Roots of the Iranian Revolution* (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1982), p. 126.

[8](U) Amos Perlmutter, forward to *The Mossadegh Era: Roots of the Iranian Revolution* by Sepehr Zabih (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1982), p. vii.

Tudeh. Ordinary Iranians were willing to demonstrate their support for the monarch only when they became convinced, through the pro-Shah demonstrations in the streets, that others were doing the same.

(S) The actual events of TPAJAX suggest how a purely Iranian operation would have fared without CIA direction. When Mossadeq arrested Imperial Guard commander Col. Nassiri, the other principals became disheartened and went into hiding. Gen. Batmangelich turned around when he saw troops loyal to Mossadeq surrounding the General Staff office building. The operation collapsed before it started.

(U) Historians arguing that Mossadeq would have fallen anyway fail to answer a critical related question: Without US intervention, what would have replaced him? In August 1953 Iran seemed more likely to degenerate into chaos than to experience a stable transfer of power from Mossadeq to someone else. No potential prime minister was strong enough to command a majority in the Majlis, or even to form a coalition government out of the factions and splinter groups comprising Iranian politics. If Ayatollah Kashani, whom the US had briefly considered supporting in mid–1953, had somehow been able to succeed Mossadeq, his government might have resembled Ayatollah Khomeini's regime more than Fazlollah Zahedi's.

(S) Was TPAJAX Responsible for Khomeini's Islamic Revolution?

(U) If the United States and United Kingdom had not intervened in Iran's chaotic politics in August 1953, would Ayatollah Khomeini have been able to launch his Islamic Revolution 25 years later? Asking this question is like asking whether World War II would have been fought if Germany had won World War I and Hitler had remained an obscure corporal. We cannot know the consequences of events that did not happen, but we can engage in informed speculation.

(U) Revisionists contend that CIA stifled Iran's drive to democracy and strengthened the rule of the autocratic Shah, thereby making Khomeini's revolution all but inevitable. Despite its faults, in this view, Mossadeq's Government represented the popular will. His government reflected a vision for Iran's future that the Shah did not share. Mohammed Reza Pahlavi wanted to transform Iran into a modern Westernized state; his people preferred a more traditional society.

(U) In removing Mossadeq, the revisionists continue, the United States and Britain effectively strangled traditional Iranian nationalism. Frustrated and resentful, the people rose 25 years later in rage against the Shah and the United States, disparaged as the "Great Satan." For there can be no doubt that despite years of official American and British denials, most Iranians have been convinced of the CIA's role in Mossadeq's fall.[9]

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[9] (S) One of the participants in TPAJAX assured the author that many Iranians only suspected the American role in the operation, subject of bazaar rumors for years. *The Cambridge History of Iran*'s assessment is probably more accurate. "Nevertheless, Iranians have never had the slightest doubt that the C.I.A., acting on behalf of the American and British governments, organized the conspirators and paid the pro-Shah mobs led by toughs from southern Tehran which, together with army units, were in control of the streets by nightfall on 19 August. By 1982 this tenacious rumour had been fully confirmed and is now seen as incontrovertible" (footnote omitted). Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville, eds., *The Cambridge*

(U) A problem with this thesis is that Mossadeq's Iran was not moving toward democracy. The Prime Minister's increasing political isolation and the fragmentation of the National Front, as documented above, had weakened his position and made him desperate. His dictatorial grab for power from the Majlis alienated his former allies and gained him new political enemies. Iran was, to repeat Iran specialist Kuross Samii's apt metaphor, "an old ship swept away by a storm with no one on board capable of dealing with the attendant frenzy."[10]

(U) In fact, Khomeini's revolution was a reaction against secularism, modernization, and the Shah's misrule, not a push for a return to the National Front. The streets of Tehran rang with shouts of fanatical support for Khomeini rather than nostalgic calls for Mossadeq. The Ayatollah was not interested in Mossadeq or the things he stood for. The last thing Khomeini wanted was a secular government with multi-party participation. He would have called for fundamentalist revolution against *any* government, including a National Front or Tudeh Government, that promoted modernization, the emancipation of women, and secularization.

(U) Edward Shirley, the former CIA DO employee who journeyed through revolutionary Iran, argues that the revisionist thesis also underestimates the role the clerics played in TPAJAX. Without the support of Ayatollahs Kashani and Behbehani, Shirley doubts the covert political action could have succeeded. What the ayatollahs did in 1953 with American and British help, they might have been able to do later without such help. Alternatively, given Mossadeq's growing political weakness and isolation from Iranian society, the clerics may have defeated him and the National Front in general elections.

(U) In short, according to Shirley, the 1953 aborted-democracy theory is appealing, but is "too convenient in its diabolization of the CIA and MI6, and too Persian in its determination to make someone else responsible for failure."

(S) TPAJAX and the Future of American Covert Action

(S) TPAJAX exerted a powerful influence on the DDP's thinking about covert action. Unfortunately, Allen Dulles and others in the DDP did not evaluate their experience critically and apparently drew dubious conclusions. The easy success of the Iranian and Guatemalan operations seemed to herald a "golden age" of covert action, and a sober reappraisal of the utility and flexibility of covert action as a foreign policy instrument did not occur until President John Kennedy fired Dulles after the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.[11]

(S) Dulles and his colleagues were correct in regarding covert action as an important weapon of Cold War foreign policy, giving the President the means to halt or

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History of Iran, vol. 7, *From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 263.

[10](U) Kuross A. Samii, *Involvement by Invitation: American Strategies of Containment in Iran* (University Park, PA: the Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), p. 143.

[11](U) See Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: the Untold Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

reverse developments he deemed harmful to American interests. This capability freed the US from merely reacting to Soviet moves or threats of moves and permitted American action without the threat of direct military confrontation. Moreover, early American covert action successes notified the Soviets that the United States was an able player in the game of high–stakes international intrigue it had only recently joined.

(S) Leading DDP figures erred in relying on covert action too heavily and resorting to it too readily. As an intelligence professional, Dulles must have recognized the limits and risks of covert action. The success of TPAJAX and PBSUCCESS, however, was seductive. Kermit Roosevelt's warning that covert actions like TPAJAX would succeed over the long run only with the support of the indigenous military and population fell on deaf years. The operation in Guatemala seemed to show that both elements could be neutralized quite easily—the military by paramilitary operations and elements of popular opposition by psychological operations.[12]

(S) Peter Grose, Dulles's biographer, writes that the DCI drew a straight line from Guatemala in 1954 to the Bay of Pigs in 1961. Any doubts Dulles may have had about TPAJAX and PBSUCCESS vanished as both operations unfolded and benefited from unexpected luck. Both operations may have made Dulles and the DDP overly confident that in these sorts of operations "something would turn up" that would lead to ultimate success. They miscalculated in assuming—and expecting—that the Bay of Pigs invasion would follow the same pattern.[13]

(S) Perhaps the most important and unique result of TPAJAX was to strengthen CIA's position within the government as an instrument of policy and solidify its responsibility for clandestine activity. Up to this point, the Agency had not been taken seriously [redacted] The fall of Mossadeq was a watershed in demonstrating *civilian* clandestine operational expertise and in putting a *civilian* intelligence agency at the forefront of planning and executing covert operations. After TPAJAX, the military could not argue, as it had during the Congressional hearings for the National Security Act of 1947, that civilians did not have the background, training, or experience for clandestine activity.

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[12](U) Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), p. 384.

[13](U) Ibid.

Postscript

(U) The Shadow of the Pahlavis

(S) The political landscape of Iran today is vastly different from what it was in 1953, but the motivations of some of the players remain essentially the same.

(S) Iran continues to draw Moscow's attention for several reasons. Its size and strategic location make it a potential threat to Russian interests. The Cold War may be over, but that does not mean Russian and American national interests in the Middle East coincide. A sense of competition in the region lingers, even if its consequences are no longer potentially catastrophic. TPAJAX appears to have forestalled but did not end the Russian drive for influence in Iran.

(U) The average Iranian still believes that the British and Americans are ominipotent and that if they removed Mossadeq, either or both somehow put the mullahs in power. Edward Shirley's *Know Thine Enemy: A Spy's Journey into Revolutionary Iran* recounts several conversations he had with Iranians while traveling through that country. One asked Shirley for help:

> (U) 'Americans should help us. Your secretary of state was spit upon by Khomeini. He calls Iran the most evil state in the world, but he does nothing. Unless you want Iranians thinking that you like the mollahs, you should bring them down. The British put them in, and America should drive them out. The young Shah, he is like his father, a coward. And the United States wastes money on him. Iranians don't want to fight anymore. They need a sign from America.'

Another told Shirley it did not matter what Iranians thought. "'It only matters what the Americans and the *Englisss* think. They hold the power. The *Englisss* have always had the clergy in their pockets.'" [2]

[redacted]

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[2] (U) Edward Shirley, *Know Thine Enemy: A Spy's Journey into Revolutionary Iran* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), pp. 75, 106.

[3] (U) See Harold Bloom, *The Lucifer Principle: A Scientific Expedition into the Forces of History* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995), pp. 264-70. SAVAK's successor in the Islamic Republic of Iran is the Vezarat-e Ettela'at va Aminat-e Keshvar (VAVAK), known in the West as the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS). According to historian Carl Wege, VAVAK "is noted primarily for assassinating Iranian dissidents abroad" and has been doing so since the revolution in 1979. Its first victim was the Shah's nephew Shahriar Shafiq (in Paris, December 1979), but is most famous victim was former prime minister Shapour Bakhtiar, assassinated in August 1991. Carl Anthony Wege, "Iranian Intelligence Organizations," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 10 (Fall 1997): 289. Heritage Foundation Senior Policy Analyst James Phillips writes that "more than a dozen Iranian dissidents have been assassinated in European cities since 1987." VAVAK even struck in the

[redacted]

United States, murdering Iranian political activist Ali A. Tabatabai, founder of the Iran Freedom Foundation, in his Bethesda, Maryland home in July 1980. James Phillips, "The Challenge of Revolutionary Iran," Heritage Foundation Committee Brief No. 24, 29 March 1996.

[redacted]

5 (U) "Iran: Internal Security," DODOD 141-2B, 21 May 1993. The information in this report is classified TOP SECRET UMBRA NOFORN; the title is unclassified. The report, already five years old, states that Iran's various tribes have not been a serious threat to Tehran's rule for several years. No reporting since then has warranted a qualification or change of that opinion.

Appendix A

(S) TPAJAX Chronology

8 January 1951	Office of National Estimates (ONE), Central Intelligence Agency, publishes NIE 14, *The Importance of Iranian and Middle East Oil to Western Europe Under Peacetime Conditions.*
7 March 1951	General Ali Razmara, Iranian Prime Minister, assassinated.
16 March 1951	ONE publishes SE 3, *The Current Crisis in Iran.*
5 April 1951	ONE publishes NIE 6, *Iran's Position in the East-West Conflict.*
29 April 1951	Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi names Mohammed Mossadeq as prime minister of Iran.
2 May 1951	Iran nationalizes the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, retroactive to 20 March 1951.
22 May 1951	ONE publishes SE 6, *Current Developments in Iran.*
August 1951	Anglo-Iranian oil negotiations collapse.
September 1951	Britain embargoes shipments to Iran of iron, steel, sugar, oil processing equipment, and other goods that could be resold for dollars.
12 January 1952	Iran orders all British consulates closed by 21 January.

4 February 1952	ONE publishes NIE 46, *Probable Developments in Iran in 1952 in the Absence of an Oil Settlement.*
16 July 1952	Mossadeq resigns as Prime Minister.
21 July 1952	After five days of demonstrations and rioting by members of the National Front, the Shah renames Mossadeq Prime Minister.
31 July 1952	DDP Wisner reports to DCI Smith that the consensus at a meeting at the State Department on 30 July was that for the moment there was little the CIA could do in Iran.
14 October 1952	ONE publishes SE 33, *Prospects for Survival of Mossadeq Regime Iran.*
22 October 1952	Iran breaks off diplomatic relations with Britain.
13 November 1952	ONE publishes NIE 75, *Probable Developments in Iran Through 1953.*
20 November 1952	National Security Council issues NSC 136/1, *The Present Situation in Iran.*

[redacted]

[redacted]

26 February 1953 Allen Dulles sworn in as DCI.

[redacted]

[redacted]

March 1953 [redacted] Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith concludes that Mossadeq's tenure in office is inimical to US interests. State Department authorizes CIA to consider operations that would replace Mossadeq.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

28 May 1953 Prime Minister Mossadeq asks President Eisenhower for American financial aid.

[redacted]

[redacted]

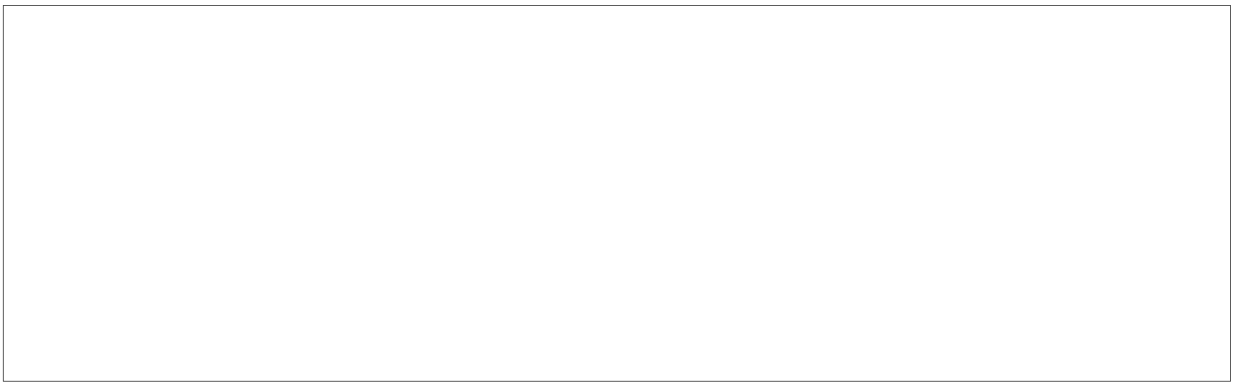
3 June 1953	Ambassador Henderson arrives in Washington for consultations.
8 June 1953	Ambassador Henderson briefed on TPAJAX in Washington.

[redacted]

29 June 1953	President Eisenhower informs Mossadeq that Iran will not receive further US aid until the oil nationalization issue is resolved.

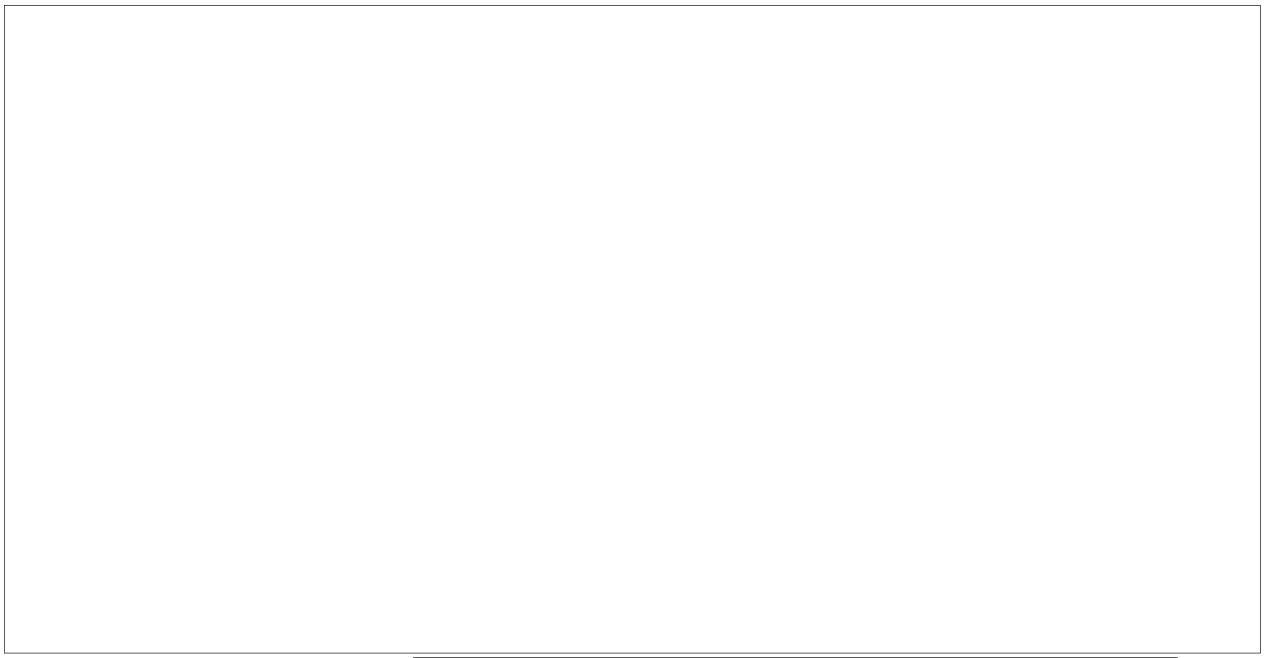
[redacted]

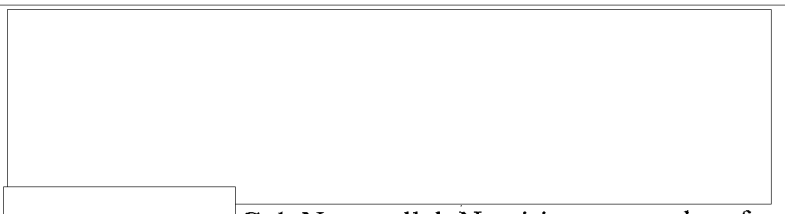
11 July 1953	President Eisenhower, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and DCI Allen Dulles approve TPAJAX.
21 July 1953	In Tehran the National Front and the Tudeh Party stage demonstrations commemorating 21 July 1952.
23 July 1953	British Ambassador to the United States Roger Mellor Makins presents assurances to Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith that UK Government would be flexible in its approach to oil question.
25 July 1953	Princess Ashraf arrives in Tehran.
28 July 1953	Secretary of State Dulles gives a press conference in which he says that "Recent developments in Iran, especially the growing activity of the supposedly illegal Communist Party which appears to be tolerated by the Iranian government, have caused us concern."
29 July 1953	Princess Ashraf meets with the Shah but is unable to convince him to dismiss Mossadeq.
30 July 1953	Princess Ashraf leaves Tehran at request of Mossadeq government after having spoken to the Shah.

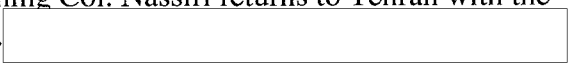


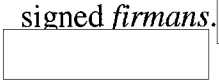
4 August 1953 — President Eisenhower states at Governors' Conference in Seattle that the US will not stand by and let Asian nations fall behind the Iron curtain.

7 August 1953 — Asadollah Rashidian again meets with the Shah, who agrees that action should be taken on 10 or 11 August.



12 August 1953 —  Col. Nematollah Nassiri, commander of the Shah's Imperial Guard, takes the *firmans* by plane to Ramsar.

13 August 1953 — Late in the evening Col. Nassiri returns to Tehran with the signed *firmans*. 



15/16 August 1953

During the night of 15/16 August, Col. Nassiri tries to deliver the *firmans* to Mossadeq dismissing him, but is arrested. General Taghi Riahi, Mossadeq's chief of staff, has troops at strategic points in Tehran.

16 August 1953

At 0545 Radio Tehran announces an abortive coup. At 0600 Mossadeq meets with cabinet to receive reports on the situation.

16 August 1953

Radio Tehran broadcasts message at noon from Mossadeq: "According to the will of the people, expressed by referendum, the 17th Majlis is dissolved. Elections for the 18th session will be held soon."

16 August 1953

Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatemi holds a press conference at 1400 at which he makes anti-Shah statements.

16 August 1953

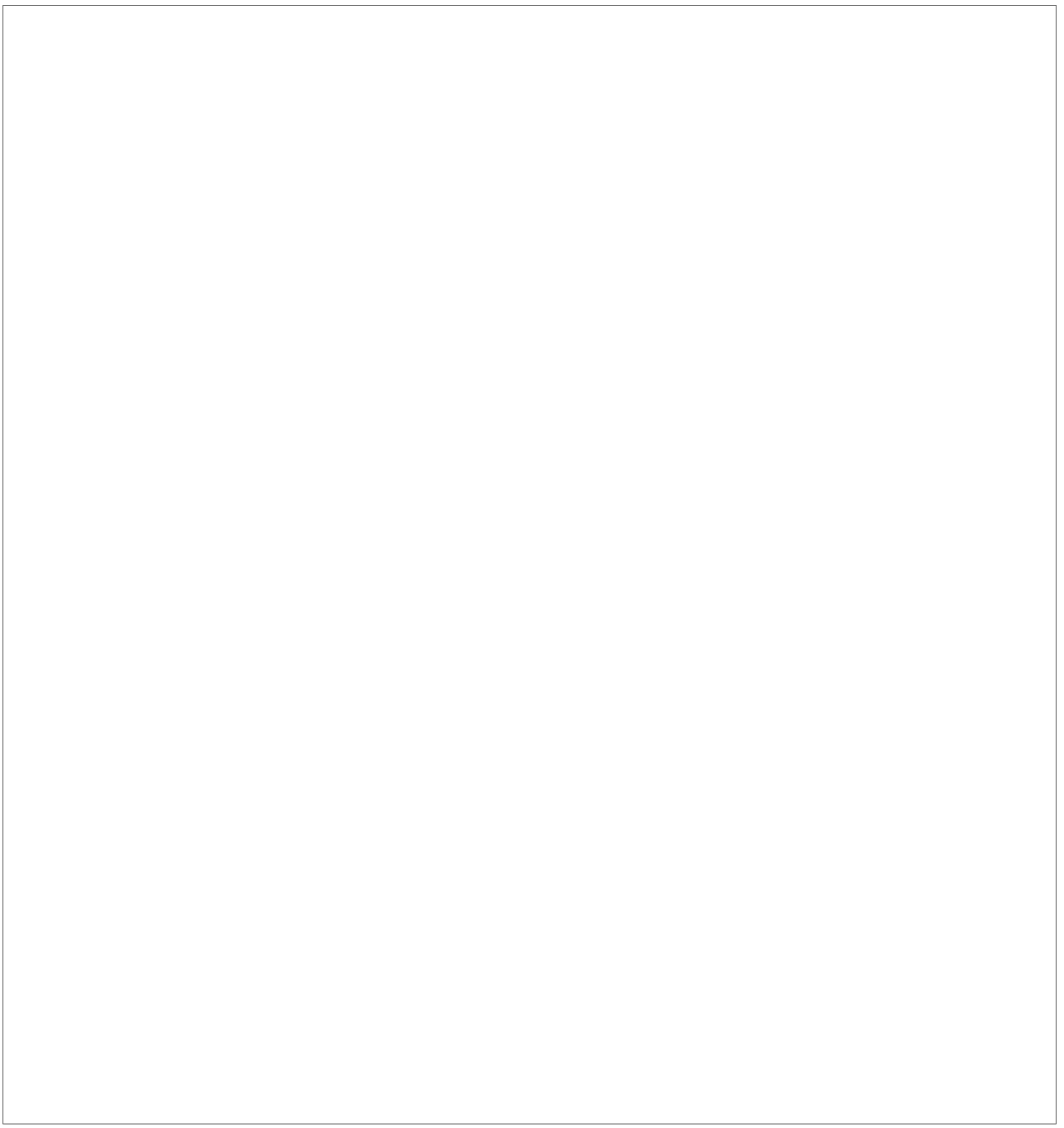
Crowds mass in Majlis Square around 1930 to hear speeches attacking the Shah. Crowds learn for the first time that the Shah had fled.

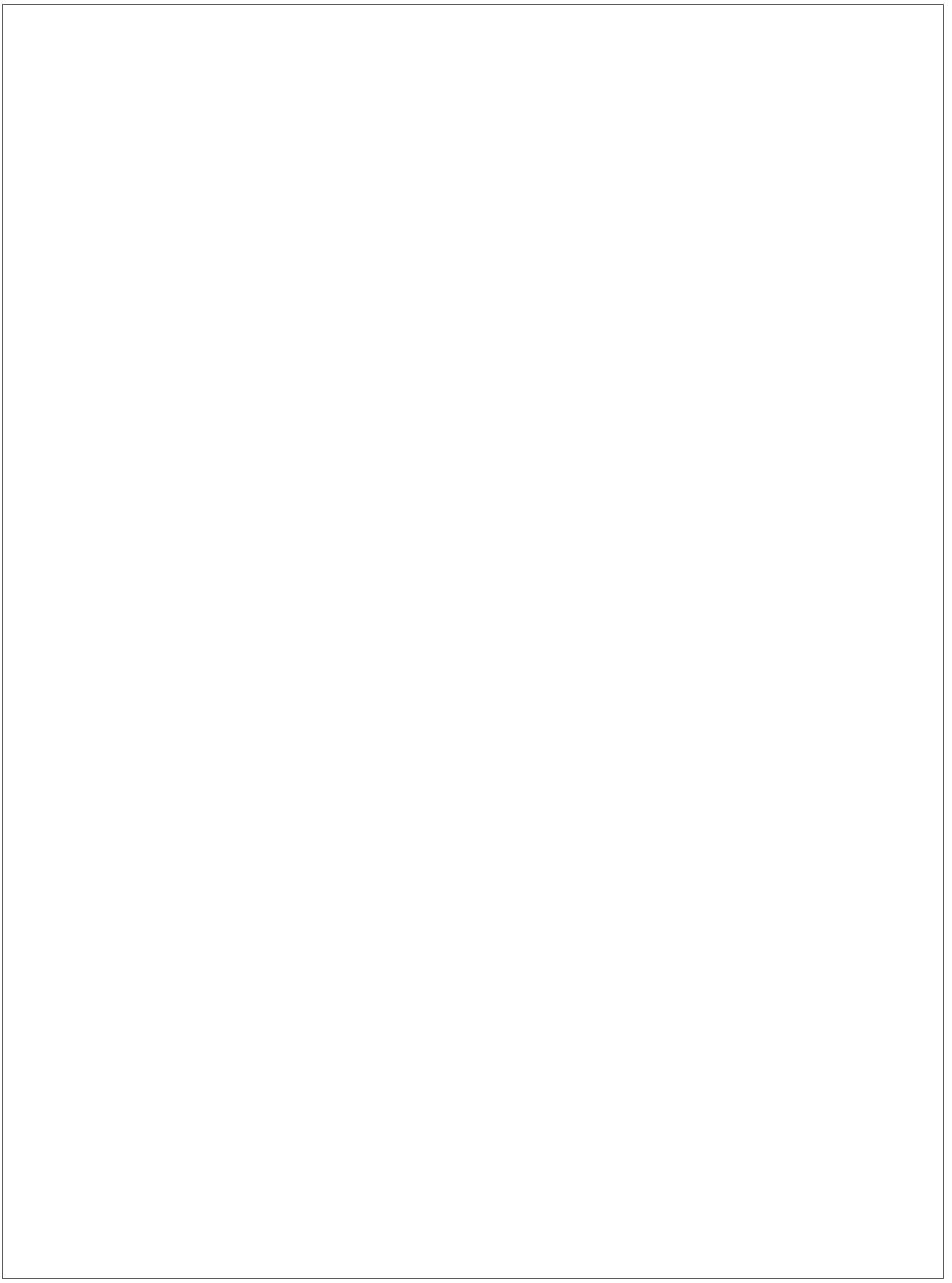
17 August 1953

Radio Tehran at 1030 calls on General Zahedi to surrender.

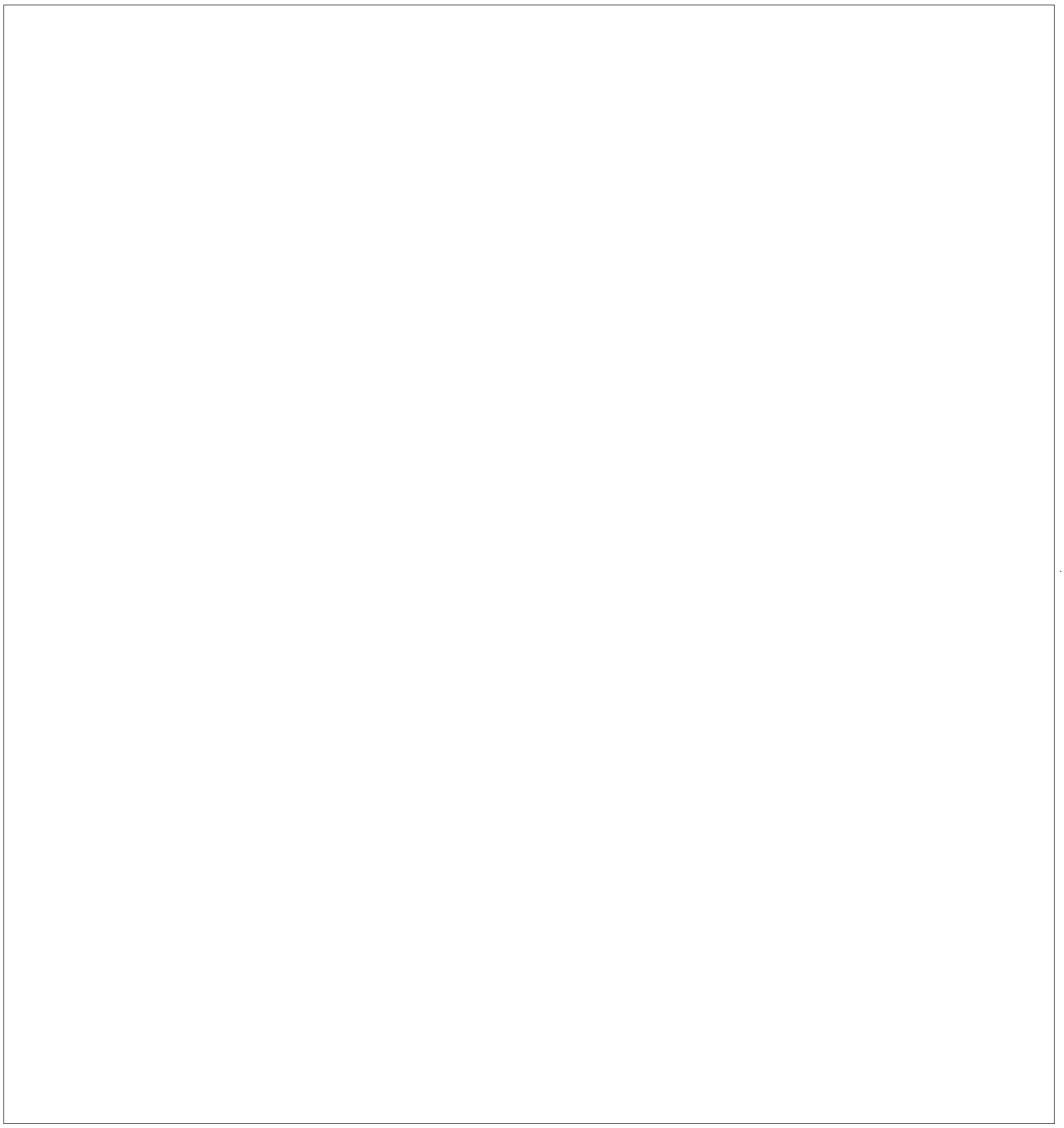
	[redacted]
18 August 1953	Shah leaves Baghdad for Rome on a commercial flight. Some morning newspapers run copies of the *firman.*
18 August 1953	Sporadic violence breaks out.
19 August 1953	Pro-Shah groups assemble at 0900 in the Tehran bazaar. Newspapers continue to print the *firmans* and alleged interviews with Zahedi quoted as insisting that his government is the only legal government.
19 August 1953	Pro-Shah truckloads of soldiers posted in mid–morning at key points in Tehran.
19 August 1953	Gen. Riahi tells Mossadeq at 1030 that he no longer controls the army.
19 August 1953	Radio Tehran falls into royalist hands at 1420.
[redacted]	[redacted]
19 August 1953	Zahedi speaks over Radio Tehran at 1725. He seems to be consolidating his hold over the government.
19 August 1953	Mossadeq's house is destroyed in the evening around 1900.
5 December 1953	United Kingdom and Iran agree to reestablish diplomatic relations.
21 December 1953	An Iranian military court in Tehran sentences Mossadeq to three years' solitary confinement for disobeying the Shah's order dismissing him and for dissolving the Majlis.

Appendix B





Appendix C



Appendix D

(U) Biographical Sketch of Mohammed Mossadeq

(U) Mohammed Mossadeq was born in Tehran on 16 June 1882 into a prominent political family.[1] After working for several years in the Ministry of Finance, he left Iran to pursue advanced studies at the University of Liege in Belgium and the University of Neuchatel in Switzerland. He received a doctorate of laws (LL.D.) from Neuchatel in 1914. Mossadeq returned to Iran in 1915, ostensibly to resume his career in the Ministry of Finance, but was elected to the Third Majlis that same year. He later served as Governor-General of the Province of Fars (1921), Minister of Finance (1921-22), Governor General of Azerbaijan (1922), and Minister of Justice (four months in 1923).[2]

(U) In January 1924, Mossadeq took his seat in the Fifth Majlis as an elected deputy from Tehran. The central issue before the Majlis was the termination of the Qajar

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[1](U)Various writers give different dates of birth. Barry Rubin asserts that Mossadeq was born in 1881; James A. Bill uses the 1882 date; Faramarz S. Fatemi claims Mossadeq was born in 1879; Mossadeq's entry in the 1951 edition of *Current Biography* gives 1879 as his year of birth. Farhad Diba's *Mohammed Mossadeq: A Political Biography* probably comes closest to solving the mystery. Diba says that the confusion stemmed from an error on Mossadeq's identity card. Mossadeq registered with Precinct 3 of the Tehran police, and the clerk made a mistake converting the Arabic year into the Iranian year. The error made the future Prime Minister appear older than he really was. The family Koran, which surfaced years later, records that Mossadeq was born 16 June 1882. *See*, Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 58; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 53; Faramarz S. Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran: The Background History of Russian and Anglo-American Conflict in Iran, Its Effects on Iranian Nationalism, and the Fall of the Shah* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1980), p. 54; Farhad Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh: A Political Biography* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 3.

[2](U) Fatemi, p. 54; Bill, pp. 53-54, *Current Biography, 1951*, p. 444.

Dynasty and the establishment of the Pahlavi Dynasty under Reza Khan.[3] Mossadeq, related to the Qajar family, strongly opposed Reza Khan's ascension as Shah and continued to oppose him after the Majlis voted him hereditary Shah in October 1925. Mossadeq's outspokenness brought him to the attention of the British Legation. In the Legation's listing of prominent Iranians, Mossadeq's entry read, "Poses as a jurist and talks a lot of nonsense. Is nothing but a demagogue."[4]

(U) Reza Shah did not tolerate Mossadeq's defiance for long. He banished the troublesome deputy from Tehran to his native village at Ahmadabad, outside of Tehran, and later imprisoned him. For all practical purposes, Mossadeq was out of Iranian politics from 1926 to 1941.[5]

(U) World War II changed Mossadeq's fortunes. The future prime minister left prison when British and Soviet troops occupied Iran in August 1941 and Reza Shah abdicated in favor of his son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.[6] In 1944 Mossadeq Tehran again elected him to the Majlis. He gained national recognition during the 1940s for strongly opposing Iranian oil concessions to foreign powers—including a concession the Soviets demanded during the Azerbaijan crisis in 1946. His opposition to the USSR's support of breakaway Azerbaijan was not as vociferous. He rose in the Majlis to propose changing the constitution to transform Iran into a federation of semiautonomous states, including Azerbaijan. The other deputies shouted him down.[7]

(U) Mossadeq's prominence and the public's perception that he was a man of principle for having stood up to Reza Shah propelled him into a leading role in an emerging political force known as the *Jabha–yi Milli* or National Front.[8] His work in the 16 Majlis as the chairman of the Parliamentary Oil Commission (a body the Majlis established to review the options open to the government, then renegotiating the United Kingdom's oil concession) drew even more attention to him. He began to attract a following in the streets and bazaar, and was becoming a formidable political figure.[9]

(U) When an Islamic fundamentalist assassinated Prime Minister Gen. Ali Razmara in March 1951, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi replaced him with Hussein Ala. Ala held office a little more than a month before resigning on 27 April. The Majlis then voted to recommend that the Shah appoint Mossadeq as Prime Minister. The Shah did so on 29 April 1951.[10]

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[3](U) On 31 October 1925 the Majlis elected Reza Khan as "hereditary" Shah. *Current Biography, 1951*, p. 444.

[4](U) Wilfred Knapp, "1921-1941: the Period of Riza Shah," in *Twentieth Century Iran*, ed. Hossein Amirsadeghi (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1977), p. 28.

[5](U) Bill, p. 54.

[6](U) Reza Shah abdicated on 16 September 1941.

[7](U) *Current Biography, 1951*, p. 445.

[8](U) See chapter 1.

[9](U) Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville, eds., *The Cambridge History of Iran,* vol. 7, *From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 253.

[10](U) *Current Biography, 1951*, pp. 444-45.

(U) Western statesmen did not know how to take the new Prime Minister because he neither looked nor acted like they thought heads of government should look and act. Secretary of State Acheson, for example, described the Prime Minister as "small and frail" without "a shred of hair on his billiard-ball head; a thin face protruded into a long beak of a nose flanked by two bright, shoebutton eyes." Mossadeq's mannerisms were quirky to Western eyes, and Acheson likened his quick, nervous movements to a bird hopping on a perch.[11]

(U) Mossadeq knew how to play the role of a frail old man when it suited his purposes. He cried, moaned, and fainted when addressing the Majlis. His nose ran. He often conducted state business from his bed and delivered speeches in pink pajamas. In naming him "Man of the Year" *Time* magazine dubbed Mossadeq "an appalling caricature of a statesman."[12]

(U) Mossadeq's apparent physical frailty and almost constant illness masked an indomitable will. The US Ambassador, Henry F. Grady, warned that the Prime Minister "is not to be discounted. He's a man of unusual ability, well educated at European universities, and of great culture. He is a Persian gentleman."[13]

(S) CIA did not nor underestimate Mossadeq, but it also did not minimize the magnitude of the problems facing his new government. In a Special Estimate prepared a month after Mossadeq became Prime Minister, the Office of National Estimates characterized him as an "impractical visionary and a poor administrator," but added that

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[11](U) Dean Acheson, *Present At the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), p. 503.

[12] (U) C.M. Woodhouse relates how Mossadeq's histrionics took in Majlis Deputy Hassan Alavi, a medical doctor. "Musaddiq was making an impassioned speech, all about the British milking his country like a wicked landlord milking a peasant's cow. Alavi knew it was all nonsense, but listened with tears of emotion in his eyes. Suddenly Musaddiq collapsed on the floor of the Majlis, apparently unconscious. Alavi rushed forward, pushing other Deputies aside and crying: 'Let me through! I'm a doctor!' He reached Musaddiq to take his pulse, in an agony of dread lest the great national leader had been taken from them. Then Musaddiq slowly opened one eye and winked at him. Alavi laughed admiringly at the joke against himself." C. M. Woodhouse, *Something Ventured* (London: Granada, 1982), pp. 113-14. Vernon Walters relates a similar story with an unnamed Majlis deputy (probably Alavi) in *Silent Missions*. Vernon Walters, *Silent Missions* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978), p. 247.

[13](U) Henry F. Grady, "The Real Story of Iran," *U.S. News and World Report*, 19 October 1951, p. 14. Quoted in James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 55. C.M. Woodhouse had a low opinion of Grady and considered the United States inadequately represented in Tehran during the oil crisis. "The American [Grady] was a business tycoon whom I had previously encountered in Greece," Woodhouse wrote in his memoirs. "He was known (at any rate to his wife) as 'President Truman's trouble-shooter,' which meant that he was being rewarded for his contributions to the Democratic Party. Fortunately he was soon replaced by an able career diplomat, Loy Henderson, and he went off to shoot trouble elsewhere." C. M. Woodhouse, *Something Ventured* (London: Granada, 1982), p. 109.

he was in a very strong political position unlikely to deteriorate in the foreseeable future.[14]

(U) After TPAJAX, Zahedi's forces found and arrested the former Prime Minister on 20 August 1953. His fate then lay in the Shah's hands. The monarch discussed several options with Ambassador Henderson: trial, execution, commutation of sentence, internal exile, or exile.

(S) Washington urged the Shah to avoid any action that might make Mossadeq a martyr. A public trial was inadvisable for this reason. CIA favored having him fade from sight by "enforced residence in a small village" under strong surveillance. The State Department opposed a public trial but made no other recommendation.[15]

(U) Mossadeq's trial before a military court began on 8 November 1953 and ended on 21 December. The deposed Prime Minister appeared in court in a bedjacket and according to *The New York Times,* "alternately bellowed defiance, threatened suicide, challenged the public prosecutor to a wrestling match and resorted to histrionic weeping."[17] On 11 January 1954, the court sentenced him to three years of solitary confinement, starting from the date of his arrest, 20 August 1953.[18] He was convicted of disobeying the Shah's *firmans* and illegally dissolving the Majlis.

(S) The Shah seemed satisfied with the sentence. He told Ambassador Henderson that a longer sentence might have generated public sympathy for Mossadeq. If the sentence had not included solitary confinement, the Shah would not have been in a position to commute it to banishment, which he intended to do (and did do in 1956). Iranians generally consider simple imprisonment no worse than banishment and not worthy of commutation.[19]

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[14](S) SE-6, *Current Developments in Iran,* 22 May 1951.

[15](S) Dir 16678, 21 August 1953.

[17] (U) This description appears in Mossadeq's obituary in *The New York Times*, 5 March 1967.

[18](S) L.P. Elwell-Sutton writes that the court's decision came on 21 December 1953. I have used the January 1954 date because it appears in a State Department cable summarizing Mossadeq's trial and imprisonment. *See,* L.P. Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil: A Study in Power Politics* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1955), p. 7, (U) ; Dispatch 864 from American Embassy Tehran to Department of State, "What to Do With Dr. Mosadeq?—A Knotty Problem for the Government," 11 April 1956 (S)

[19] (S) Loy W. Henderson, "Memorandum Summarizing Conversation Between the Shah of Iran and Loy W. Henderson, American Ambassador, on the Afternoon of December 22, 1953," attachment to Dispatch 368 From American Embassy, Tehran to Department of State, 28

(S) The Shah confided to the Ambassador that he had sent a statement to the trial judge before sentencing. He told the judge that nationalizing the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had served the interests of Iran and that Mossadeq had had the monarch's support during his first year as Prime Minister. Consequently, he harbored no personal animus toward Mossadeq for what the latter had done during the rest of his tenure.[20]

(S) The monarch explained that he had sent the statement for two reasons. First, he wanted to make clear that he favored nationalizing the AIOC so that the nationalists did not think he had abandoned them. He said he encouraged nationalism but wanted to direct it himself. Second, and more importantly, he wanted to distance his regime from the British and dispel the impression that Iran was under London's thumb. Because it appeared that the return of the British to Iran would coincide with Mossadeq's sentencing, the Shah wanted to emphasize that he supported Mossadeq's attitude toward Britain during the first year of his prime ministership.[21]

(S) The Shah was pleased with the results of his intervention into Mossadeq's trial. He thought that he had thrown the former Prime Minister off balance and had disarmed Mossadeq's supporters.[22]

(U) Mossadeq, however, was far from off balance. From his confinement in the Second Armored Brigade's prison in Tehran,[23] he immediately appealed to a higher military court. The military appeals court affirmed the sentence on 21 April 1954. The former Prime Minister then appealed the military tribunal's decision to the Supreme Court, Iran's highest civil court. Under the Iranian Constitution, such an appeal could occur only with the Shah's permission. On 21 May the Shah agreed to let the Supreme Court review the case.[24]

(U) In January 1956, Mossadeq wrote to the Supreme Court asking for an early decision and the opportunity to be heard in person. He sent another letter to the Court a month later outlining the reasons why the military court had no jurisdiction over him.[25]

(U) The Supreme Court issued its decision on 12 March 1956. Without addressing the merits of the case, it ruled that the lower military court had jurisdiction to try Mossadeq. The Court added that it reached its opinion under "special circumstances." On 1 April, Mossadeq protested that the Supreme Court had not heard him before reaching its decision, that the Court committed a crime of its own in not calling him to

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December 1953. [redacted] The routing slip shows that CIA received seven copies of Henderson's report.

[20](S) Ibid.

[21](S) Ibid.

[22](S) Ibid.

[23](S) The American Embassy in Tehran reported that Mossadeq's confinement "has been very comfortable." According to Timur Bakhtiar, the Military Governor of Tehran, Mossadeq occupied "a small cottage, has his food sent in from his family if he doesn't like the best the prison has to offer, and enjoys a large library, a gramophone, and a radio. He can exercise in the open air whenever he wants to, but he still seems allergic to exercise." Ibid.

[24](S) Ibid.

[25](S) Ibid.

argue his own case, and that the military court had no jurisdiction over him. His protest went unanswered.[26]

[redacted]

(S) The documents do not indicate why the Shah changed his mind and decided to try Mossadeq. His chronic indecision and the considerable pressure that the US had exerted against making Mossadeq a rallying point for the Shah's opponents are the most likely explanations. That is not to say that the Shah's initial inclination to hold a public trial despite Washington's opposition was anathema to all the US officials involved. As Roosevelt remarked in a debriefing after TPAJAX, "I would be more inclined to trust his [the Shah's] judgment and Zahedi's about it than I would ours. I mean they know the psychology of the situation, and certainly from here [Washington] we can't tell it."[29]

(U) Mossadeq left the Second Armored Brigade's prison in Tehran on 4 August 1956.[30] The Shah then banished the former Prime Minister to his village at Ahmadabad outside Tehran, where he remained until his death from intestinal bleeding (a chronic condition from which he had suffered for 42 years) on 5 March 1967.[31]

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[26](S) Ibid

[redacted]

[31](U) L.P. Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil: A Study in Power Politics* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1955), p. 7; Faramarz S. Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran: The Background History of Russian and Anglo-American Conflict in Iran, Its Effects on Iranian Nationalism, and the Fall of the Shah* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1980), p. 55; New York *Times*, 5 March 1967.

Appendix E

(S) CIA and TPAJAX: The Tension Between Analysis and Operations

(S) TPAJAX illustrates the philosophical tension inherent in planning covert operations. Preparation must balance the need for fully informed decisionmaking with the need for strict operational security. The former requires that those with knowledge relevant to the operation be intimately involved from the start, while the latter requires that the number of people involved be kept to a minimum.

(S) An ideal operation is not at either extreme and acknowledges the inevitability of tradeoffs. Covert actions might have to be planned on less–than–perfect knowledge to ensure that they remain covert, and there may have to be compromises on absolute security in order to take advantage of relevant available expertise. How to balance these conflicting requirements has been a recurring issue throughout the history of CIA's covert operations. TPAJAX offers the intelligence historian some clues on how this tension might be resolved in some cases.

(S) TPAJAX was planned and executed with far greater concern for operational security than for ensuring that the planners had all relevant information. There is no evidence that the [redacted] in Kermit Roosevelt's NEA Division consulted either the Office of National Estimates (ONE) or the analysts in CIA's Office of Current Intelligence (OCI) at any stage of the operation. ONE and OCI might not have provided much help because they had chronic difficulty getting intelligence reporting from DDP—a problem that itself reflects poor communication between the analysts and collectors.

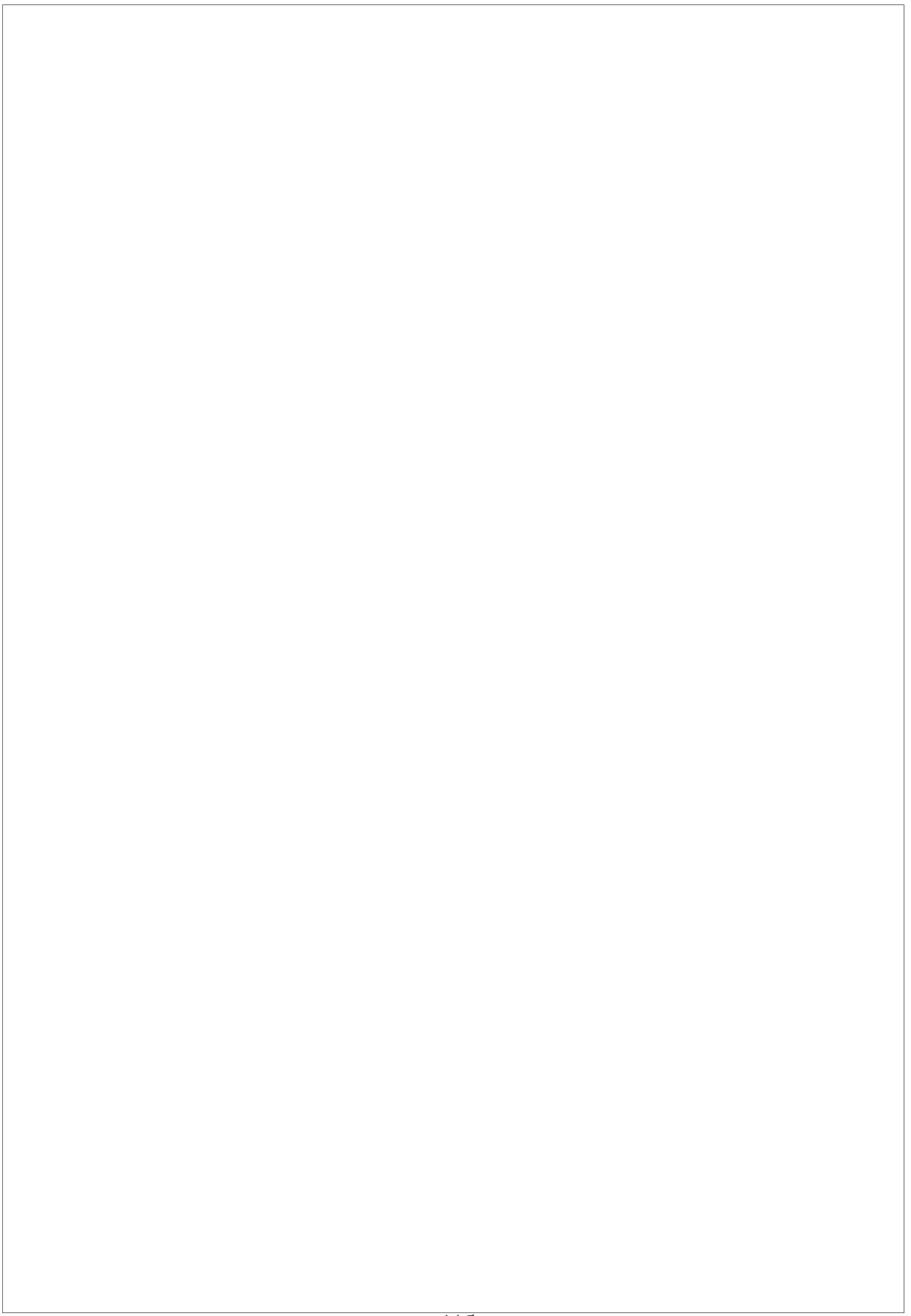
(S) The Office of National Estimates and TPAJAX

(U) The Board of National Estimates (BNE) in ONE was responsible for producing long-range appraisals of world events. These appraisals, known as National Intelligence Estimates, represented the intelligence community's best thinking on a particular topic. ONE did not concern itself with day-to-day events, concentrating instead on trends and probable future courses of action of other nations. Primarily because the Soviet Union was the focus of its attention, ONE wrote few national intelligence

estimates on Iran. These priorities changed when Mossadeq's Iran became a critical issue in US foreign policy.

(S) ONE did not always have the cooperation of the clandestine services when drafting an estimate. In 1951, the year before DCI Walter Bedell Smith merged the Office of Policy Coordination and the Office of Special Operations into the new Directorate of Plans, Dr. William Langer, head of BNE, asked CIA's [redacted] to seek OSO's views for an upcoming national intelligence estimate on Iran. OSO management resisted [redacted] request, telling him (1) that OSO had too many similar requests from ONE, (2) that OSO personnel "were not paid to 'estimate,' but to produce facts," and (3) that OSO personnel could barely keep up with their assigned duties, much less help ONE do its job.[1] OSO clearly was not interested in dialogue with analytical components for the purpose of producing a superior analytical product.

[redacted]



(S) The Office of Current Intelligence and TPAJAX

(U) The tension between ONE and the clandestine services was unfortunate but not potentially crippling to American policymakers during fast-breaking events. ONE concentrated on larger perspectives that were not sensitive to daily crises. The Office of Current Intelligence (OCI), on the other hand, analyzed events as they happened. OCI analysts could help shape policymakers' views and decisions during crises. What they wrote could have an immediate impact.

(S) In the summer of 1953, OCI was responsible for keeping the President informed about daily events that might affect US foreign policy.

(S) OCI initially conducted its analysis of the unfolding events in Iran in ignorance of the developing American role.

wrote that Mossadeq had been faced with many plots in the past but had always defeated them, and that there was no reason to believe that he would not do so again.[8]

(U) *The day before DDP executed the operation* someone finally called does not remember who), said that there was an imminent covert action, "and on this side of the house your analysts are saying there's no chance that it'll work." At this point analysts finally received a briefing.[9]

(U) "From an analytical point," says, "this changed the situation completely. This was a major piece of information that we didn't have, and that if we had known it ahead of time, we would have phrased things differently, or maybe simply kept our mouth shut about it until it went off."[10]

(U) The problem identified was, unfortunately, old and persistent. R. Jack Smith, later a Deputy Director for Intelligence, was the head of the current intelligence staff of the Office of Reports and Estimates in the old Central Intelligence Group. In his

[8](S) Interview with 25 September 1995, transcript, p. 16.
[9](S) Ibid., p. 17.
[10](S) Ibid.

book *The Unknown CIA: My Three Decades With the Agency*, Smith writes that clandestine reporting was absent from the current intelligence publications his office produced. He later discovered the reason. Rather than going to analysts, the "best clandestine reports were being hand-carried by top clandestine services people over to senior people in the White House, the State Department, and the Pentagon." In contrast, Smith's office saw "mostly inconsequential scraps of information about foreign personalities, especially the officer of local communist cells." Analysts routinely were denied access to critical information from clandestine sources, but Smith, not knowing differently, thought that what he had was the best American espionage could offer. It was not.[11]

(S) After TPAJAX [redacted] tried to develop closer personal ties with the DDP on his own. He did not expect DDP to tell him what was going on all the time, but he wanted to develop a relationship so that "they would trust me enough that they might tell me things that otherwise wouldn't get on paper, and so on. And by the same token to demonstrate to them that we could help them."[12]

(U) [redacted] gradually built a rapport with DDP officers that he says paid off for both sides. Nonetheless, he thinks that more cooperation could have improved the intelligence product immensely. When he went to the DDP in 1957 "and started clawing through the files, one thing that struck me was how much useful intelligence information was in the operational files but had never made it out into intelligence reports because the reports officer or whoever had just not spotted it as intelligence report material."[13]

(U) [redacted] is philosophical about the limited contact that he and the other analysts in his branch had with the people on the Iranian desk in the Directorate of Plans. There was, he says, "indeed a very deep gulf, institutionally, and policy wise" and surmises that the reason lay in differences between overt and covert employees. He and his fellow analysts were overt; many DDP employees were covert. From the DDP's perspective, overt employees were not sufficiently sensitive to security issues. "There was a measure of distrust,' [redacted] believes, "on the DDP side against these overt analysts who probably had loose tongues and if we [in DDP] talk too much they'll [OCI analysts] go blabbing around town, ..."[14]

(U) John Waller [redacted] makes the same assessment of the relationship between the analysts and operators. In a July 1995 interview, Waller suggested two additional reasons for the unofficial separation between the two directorates. First, most Iranian specialists in the DDP were OSS veterans who had spent substantial amounts of time in the Middle East. They had acquired their

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[11] (U) Smith's best source of information was sensitive State Department cables. While valuable, CIG's (and CIA's) analytical over-reliance on these cables meant that the "daily intelligence summary was essentially a digest of top State telegrams." Intelligence reports from military and naval attachés were, in Smith's words, "markedly inferior." R. Jack Smith, *The Unknown CIA: My Three Decades With the Agency* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, Inc., 1989), pp. 41-42.

[12] (S) Interview with [redacted] p. 19.

[13] (S) Ibid., p. 20.

[14] (S) Ibid., pp. 9-10.

knowledge from practical experience and thought that knowledge acquired this way was superior to the academic knowledge many Directorate of Intelligence (DI) analysts prized. Second, the DDP officers' relationships with the DI analysts were informal. "There was a lot of time," Waller said, "before you sort of had a wiring diagram that put us [DDP] together with the DI. It was all based on if you need their help, go get it, but you'd better know who you were talking to. There's no point in talking to a man who's only read the books you've read."[15]

(U) Bureaucratic differences probably played an important part in reinforcing the separation between the DDP and the DI. DDP officers may have thought that if the DI were included in covert action planning, analysts would begin to challenge DDP's preeminence in covert operations. Similarly, DI analysts may have feared that DDP operators would question their analytical preeminence and that close association with a covert action would raise questions about their intellectual objectivity. Philosophical, organizational, and physical separation ensured that these kinds of issues seldom touched off bureaucratic warfare.

(S) At least in the case of TPAJAX, the relationship between the DDP and the DI contrasted sharply with the relationship between DDP and the State Department. After the operation, John Stutesman of State sent a letter to Roy Melbourne, First Secretary of the Embassy in Tehran, telling him of the close personal relationship he had developed with CIA's John Waller and Roger Goiran. "John Waller and Roger Goiran are men," Stutesman wrote, "upon whose judgment we can all rely without qualification and Arthur Richards [Director of the Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs, Department of State] and I have been happy to observe that they go out of their way to maintain friendly and close relations with us, asking our advice often upon subjects which their organization might not normally discuss with working levels in the Department."[16]

(U) Allen Dulles's Personal Directorate of Intelligence

(S) The highest levels of management in CIA did nothing to discourage the estrangement of the Directorate of Plans from the Directorate of Intelligence, and in fact reinforced it. Allen Dulles ignored the Agency's analytical arm during TPAJAX, preferring to use personal acquaintances as sources of information.[17] He had numerous contacts across the world and throughout American society from his pre-war days as an attorney and his wartime service in the OSS.

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[15](S) John H. Waller interview with the author, 7 July 1995, p. 42.

[16](S) Letter from John H. Stutesman to Roy Melbourne, First Secretary, US Embassy, Tehran, 6 November 1953, Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Lot 57, D 529, NND959286, "Iran 1946-54," box 4, National Archives and Records Administration.

[17](U) Peter Grose's biography of Dulles captures this characteristic well. "Institutional ties never inhibited Allen from nurturing his own private networks of diverse colleagues and friends, many dating back decades, upon whom he would call in his regular trips to Europe for civilized exchanges among men and, increasingly, women of the world." Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), p. 319.

(U) Personal relationships were important to Dulles, and he tended to trust the information he got from people he knew. On Iran, much of this information came from Brig. Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Max Thornburg, an oil company executive. There is no evidence that Dulles ever passed on information from these sources to analysts in ONE or OCI.[18]

(U) Schwarzkopf had spent considerable time in Iran, had trained the Iranian Gendarmerie during World War II, and knew the Shah well. His knowledge extended beyond Tehran because the Gendarmerie operated in provinces across the country. Through his work with this police force, Schwarzkopf became a storehouse of knowledge about Iran and was happy to share it with Dulles.[19]

(S) Max Thornburg ran Overseas Consultants, Inc., a firm that advised Middle Eastern governments on oil and economic questions. In 1950 he was in Iran as a consultant to the government, advising Iranian officials about the country's seven year economic plan.

(S) Thornburg gained unusual access to then-Deputy Director (Plans) Allen Dulles and key State Department officials. He maintained a steady correspondence with both CIA and State about events in the Middle East. He was not shy about telling "Allen" what he thought should be done, and consistently urged that the US had to change the psychological climate in the Middle East. He also argued that the Shah was not weak, but only "young, beaten-down and understandably skeptical about any real support coming from the United States or Britain."[21] Thornburg sat in on several sessions with Dulles and drafted some papers for CIA.

(U) The Consequences of Analytical Exclusion

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[18] (U) Schwarzkopf, father of the American general heading coalition forces in the Gulf war, formed the New Jersey State Police in 1921. He was head of the State Police at the time it investigated the Lindbergh kidnapping in the early 1930s.

[19](S) John H. Waller interview with the author, 7 July 1995, pp. 41-42.

[20] (U) For background on Thornburg's activities in Iran from 1947 to 1951, *see* Linda Wills Qaimmaqami, "The Catalyst of Nationalization: Max Thornburg and the Failure of Private Sector Developmentalism in Iran, 1947-1951," 19 *Diplomatic History* (Winter 1995): 1-31.

[21](S) Letter, Max W. Thornburg to Allen Dulles, 10 February 1953, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence Records, Job 80-R01731R, Box 13, Folder 563, ARC.

(S) The consequences of the analysts' exclusion from TPAJAX can be examined from two perspectives: its effect on analysis itself (product and process), and its effect on the preparation and execution of the operation.

(U) Exclusion damaged the analytical *product* because it prevented analysts from basing their judgments on complete information. Exclusion harmed the analytical *process* because it impeded the creation of a valid framework for assessing future developments.

(S) Had they been apprised of the US role in deposing Mossadeq, analysts probably would have been more circumspect in concluding that because he had turned back coup attempts in the past, he was likely to prevail again. Knowledge that this time the United States was supporting the Prime Minister's opponents with extraordinary measures might have changed or tempered this judgment. Inclusion in TPAJAX planning might have made analysts more inclined to recognize the operation's potential for success.

(S) It is less certain that the segregation of analysis from operational planning affected the conception and execution of TPAJAX. The analysis that [redacted] and his colleagues wrote was essentially incompatible with the planned covert political action, but [redacted] conclusions did not dissuade the President, the Secretary of State, and the DCI from executing TPAJAX. Under these circumstances, one can make a strong argument convincingly that analytical exclusion had negligible consequences for TPAJAX.

(S) It is possible, nevertheless, that fully informed analysis might have enhanced the operation. The DI's more scholarly and detached perspective and its methodology for assessing a dynamic situation perhaps could have helped NEA clarify the assumptions upon which TPAJAX was based, and how changes in those assumptions might affect the operation.

(U) The operation's initial failure provides the most conspicuous evidence that the absence of analytical expertise may have been detrimental. Mossadeq arrested Col. Nassiri, and the military challenge melted away. Headquarters wanted to call off the operation. Had the planning taken into account the possibility—even the likelihood—that segments of the Iranian military would react this way, DDP could have had contingency plans in effect instead of relying on Roosevelt's improvisation.

(S) Advances in collection technology have given today's analyst access to an almost bewildering array of sources inconceivable to his colleague of 44 years ago. Signals intelligence, imagery, and information from exotic collection platforms are available to analysts but generally are unavailable to those planning covert action programs. The exponential growth of information derived from these sources has made the consequences of ignoring analysis more serious today than was the case in 1953.

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