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NSC BRIEFING

26 January 1954

STATUS REPORT ON IRANIAN ELECTIONS

I. Balloting for 136 Majlis deputies began on 16 January in districts where government is strongest

A. Total of 22 deputies (from 19 of 82 constituencies) have been elected so far.

1. This is nearly third of total necessary for quorum of 69.

2. All successful candidates have been supported by government.

3. No voting yet in Tehran.

4. Defeat in Kashan (central Iran) of Kashani's son and Saleh, former ambassador in Washington and strong Mossadeq supporter, may be considered government accomplishment.

B. Balloting has been suspended in eight areas because of opposition to government's attempts to control voting and confusion over whom government was supporting.

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- II. Government may meet more opposition as voting up to now has reportedly been largely in "sure" districts
- A. Opposition has not yet appeared but will probably make a showing in such cities as Tehran, Tabriz and Kerman.
  - B. Balloting will probably continue for at least several weeks before enough deputies are elected to form 18th Majlis. Minimum of 69 needed to open Majlis.

- III. Elections for Senate are scheduled to begin in six cities, including Tehran, on 27 January

- A. These elections expected to give government overwhelming control of Senate, especially since half of 60 senators are appointed by shah.
- B. Opposition National Resistance Movement has published own list of senatorial candidates headed by former prime minister Mossadeq. Little chance that they will elect any sizable number.
- C. Senate, however, has occupied relatively unimportant position in Iran.

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IV. Conclusions

- A. Elected candidates bear out earlier impression that next Majlis will be no real improvement over past houses.
- B. It will contain a few capable men, many ordinary politicians, and a few downright crooks.
- C. When formal Majlis sessions begin, Tehran will again buzz with intrigue and behind-the-scenes activity, threatening any constructive government program.