

Katouzian. Thus in the process of preparing these documents I need to thank very many individuals who helped me at every stage of the preparation.

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Those who helped me in Iran and should be acknowledged are my good friend from Bushire, Mr. Hasan Zangeneh, who came to my assistance and helped with the initial translation of portions of the documents. Engineer Mehran Salehian helped download portions of the CIA documents when our College access to the internet was down for nearly a month. Engineer Muhammad Jafar Farshidmzadeh, director of the computer center of the College of Letters and Humanities and Mr. Hashem Askari, a graduate student in Economics at Shiraz University helped at the computer center and my son Ardeshir and daughter Azadeh assisted me in the late hours of the night by tracking down several outstanding articles and photographs on the internet regarding Dr. Musaddiq. A former student, Mr. Mehdi Torabi and Mr. Mohsen Taheri helped with proof reading and corrections of the text. Another student, Ms. Afarin Tavakkoli prepared the bibliography and together with Ms. Maryam Bordbar, my graduate student, compiled the index to this volume. Mr. Reza Dehdashti was a constant source of help at

all stages of the work and I am most indebted to him for his dedication, and perseverance, particularly when our own deadlines seemed impossible to maintain. Finally, I need to thank Ms. Fareshteh Mutavvas, my computer layout specialist, who managed to go along with our demanding and urgent requests for having the text typed and retyped on numerous occasions. Ms. Faranak Boub, as usual, designed the cover according to my suggestions. To all of them I am greatly indebted.

A word about the documents and the translation. The texts in English contains numerous inconsistencies and typographical errors. In the translations an attempt was made to remove as many of these errors as possible without changing or omitting anything. Since parts of the text, particularly the Appendices were prepared separately, either in Tehran, London or Washington, inconsistencies are most prominent there than elsewhere. For example, Appendix B is the only one which contains its own "Table of Contents" while others do not. Even in a few cases the titles do not necessarily correspond with the titles in the text. Nevertheless, a deliberate attempt is made to remain faithful to the text. All additions or changes are provided in brackets. Empty brackets are indications of names omitted from the text which could not be retrieved. Names misspelled or mis-typed are corrected whenever possible. In instances where it was impossible to be sure, the incorrect name is provided in the footnote such as for example "General Vosua" which could very well be General Vosuq.

Finally this book is dedicated to the Iranian people, who have more than once shown their erudition, judgement and desire to shape their own destiny. In fact, since the Constitutional Revolution itself, the history of modern Iran can be summarized as a long and hard struggle between those who believed in and were committed to the principles of a constitutionally independent and modern democratic state and

those who didn't. In the long run, those who have been faithful to the principles of a constitutional government and have shown respect for the beliefs and opinions of the Iranian people have found a deep respect within the hearts and minds of the nation at large, and this respect has continued to grow with the passage of time. Dr. Muhammad Musaddiq is certainly one of those individuals who, along with other Prime Ministers in Iran's modern history such as the Qaem Maqam, Amir Kabir, and Mirza Hossein Khan Sepahsalar, tried to uphold the principles of service to his own country without fear of threat or pressure from foreign powers, be they British, Russian or American. Thus, despite those who have tried to discredit Musaddiq since the 1953 coup, his image and popularity as a dedicated and honest civil servant has continued to increase. These documents show that while Musaddiq was under political and economic pressure from all parties concerned - the U.S., Britain, the Shah and his supporters; as well as the left, the Soviets and their domestic clients the Tudeh Party - he gave in to neither side and remained independent to the very end. He shall always be remembered as the first truly nationalist leader after W.W.II, who was to oppose British Imperial powers in the Middle East.

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**DR. MUSADDIQ, THE CIA DOCUMENTS  
AND THE COLD WAR CRISIS IN IRAN**

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This study is an attempt to analyze the CIA documents and the Musaddiq era in light of the post W.W.II cold war crisis in Iran. As the documents themselves testify, the coup conducted in Iran was a great success story which owned its victory not to the details of the planning but rather to a chain of events neither foreseen nor predicted by the British or the Americans, and its outcome was more of an accident than foresight and erudition on the part of its organizers. Nevertheless, the victory marked the beginning of a chain of similar covert operations conducted by the U.S. and her Allies across the world during the cold war period until the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Questions which need to be addressed are what were the events leading to the coup and how was an agreement reached for such an operation. What is most obvious from these documents is that the coup was very diligently planned by the CIA as well as the SIS, and the final green signal was provided by the executive branches of both governments. Thus the coup was not a hasty decision taken by the lower echelons of the bureaucracy, but rather it covered an entire spectrum of high ranking administrative officials, including President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Churchill, as well as the State Department, the British Foreign Office, and their respective intelligence agencies in Washington D.C., London, Nicosia, Cairo and Tehran, not to mention their local agents who are frequently

mentioned in the documents as "assets"<sup>1</sup>.

This paper attempts to show that the post World War II atmosphere could not bear to see independent leaders emerge who wished to work for their own national interests. Musaddiq, who had a reputation for dedication and service to the Iranian people, could certainly not be tolerated under such a state of affairs. The new world order required dependent states which needed to make their position clear whether they were to affiliate themselves with the western world or whether they wished to join the Soviet club. Thus Musaddiq, and with it Iran, was one of the very first Middle Eastern states that became unknowingly a victim of the cold war politics between the United States and the Soviet Union.

### The Nature of the CIA Documents

What can be concluded about the secret history obtained and released by *The New York Times*, which is the first detailed government account of the coup made public. The U.S. was most reluctant to disclose the files on Iran, and any information which would provide a more accurated picture of the covert operations. Robert Gates and R. James Woolsey, two former directors of the C.I.A. had promised to release the documents on Iran. However, shortly afterwards, it was announced that important documents related to the coup had been destroyed.

When this was announced several years ago, it was immediately assumed in Iran that this was a deliberate act in order to prevent historians and scholars from access to the actual events underlying the coup. While numerous accounts of the coup were available shedding light on the depth of U.S.

1. See Donald Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952-August 1953*. One significant case in point is the three Rashidian brothers who seemed to act more as British subjects than as Iranians, and were fully dedicated in the overthrow of Dr. Musaddiq, whatever the costs.



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and British involvement, a full and exhaustive account was yet to surface.<sup>1</sup> News of the destruction of these documents was a serious blow to hopes for a real and accurate account of events. Later it was explained that the documents believed to have been destroyed earlier, particularly in the early 1960's were essentially duplicates and that besides the present history, another 1000 pages of the documents remain classified and are available.<sup>2</sup> As reported by the *New York Times*, in an interview the State Department historian had stated that while his office had received a copy of the secret history several years ago, no decision had been reached to have it declassified and made public. Fortunately a former official of the C.I.A. released a copy of the document to the *New York Times*. However, hint of the existence of such a memoir was provided well over a decade ago by the author himself. In his detailed memoirs, Donald Wilber pointed at the existence of such a history. Although his memoirs was heavily censored by the C.I.A., he was allowed to refer to his secret history. "If this history had been read by the planners of the Bay of Pigs," Wilber wrote

1. For example the following studies have in recent years helped us to better comprehend different aspects of the 1953 coup in Iran: The most important account of the coup is that of Mark J. Gasiorowski's study entitled "The 1953 Coup d'etat in Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19 (1987), pp. 261-286; Kermit Roosevelt, *Counter Coup* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979. This has certain basic errors which were pointed out by Richard Cottam in *Iranian Studies*, vol. 14, Nos. 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 1981), pp. 269-72; Christopher Montague Woodhouse, *Something Ventured*, London: Grando, 1982, Chpters 8-9. Other more recent studies of interest are: Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions. The American Experience and Iran*, Oxford University Press, 1980; Richard W. Cottam, *Iran and the United States*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988; James A. Bill and Wm. Roger Louis, eds., *Musadliq, Iranian Nationalism, and Oil*, London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1988; James A. Bill, *The Eagle & the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1989; Hosna Kaveeziani, *Musadliq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1990.
2. See James Risen, "How a plot Convulsed Iran in '53 (and in '79)." Copyright 2000, *The New York Times* Company web site, page 2 of 4.

referring to the Kennedy administration, "there would have been no such operation ... From time to time, I have talks on the operation to various groups within the Agency, and in hindsight, one might wonder why no one from the Cuban desk ever came or read the history."<sup>1</sup>

The documents presented in this study are perhaps the latest and the most important collection of documents so far released on the 1953 CIA conducted coup d'état in Iran regarding which a great deal of controversy prevails. The *Times* also decided to publish the documents gradually and cautiously, and only after censoring the names of significant and critical players in the episode in fear, as it is initially expressed, of jeopardizing the lives of individuals and their families involved. But yet, another agency on the internet, known as the Cryptome organization managed to decode many of the names and to have them released over the internet. At one count at least over 80 instances of names and organizations were decoded and included in these very significant documents. Still they remain incomplete for as of now 25 names, and almost 21 lines of the nearly 200 paged documents remain a mystery, which one might hope will be recovered at some near point in the future.<sup>2</sup>

As the documents themselves testify, this study which is entitled *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran* was written in March of 1954 by Dr. Donald N. Wilber who had an active part in the entire operation. Donald Wilber, like many a good historian, believed that there is much to be learned from history. Consequently he faithfully fulfilled his duty as a historian and a responsible American citizen, forgetting that by documenting the true story of the coup d'état in Iran, he was

1. *Ibid.*, 3 of 4.

2. The omission of names are on pp. 2, 3, 7, 8, 26, 27, 29, 30, 37 and 40 of the Main Report and in Appendix B. Also a total of 20 lines have been omitted in Appendix A (p.5) and Appendix F (pp. 6 and 11).

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substantiating for the entire world, particularly for Americans, the modus operandi of the United States government and its covert C.I.A. actions abroad - a powerful and free nation which had in the name of democracy and human rights engaged in illegal and immoral acts and its American planners had stirred up considerable unrest not only in Iran, but the entire Middle East. In fact, with U.S. help, the Shah came to endure for another 25 years, not simply as a constitutional, but rather as an absolute monarch. Ironically, however, the coup organizers themselves foresaw the potential dangers involved and feared of its "blowback."<sup>1</sup> However, this occurred after 25 years, and in a dimension far more than it had been imagined.

The coup in Iran also marks the beginning of numerous covert operations undertaken by the United States in other third world countries at the very early stage of the cold war conflict.<sup>2</sup> Hence it should not be a surprise why the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran was so adamantly anti-U.S. from its onset. In retrospect one can better comprehend why the entire nation was angry at America for its total support of the Shah. Were moral questions at stake? What role or rather what rights did the Iranians have, if any? Was democracy or human rights a token or a privilege ordained for the west? Could the orient, Persians included, make claim to similar rights? These and many other questions though they cannot be readily answered, do at least make clear how the U.S. government saw the events and analyzed them in light of their own national interest and advantage.

Dr. Donald Wilber, the author of this revealing CIA secret history, was a close and trusted friend of the Shah ever since the coup of 1953. He certainly managed to faithfully

1. See Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, Appendix E, p.21.

2. One such successful coup was conducted in Guatemala in 1954. However, the 1961 CIA planned Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba was a total failure.

fulfill his dual role both as a scholar, with a deep interest in Iran<sup>1</sup> and a trusted part time CIA agent and analyst. In his academic works too he was always eager to present the monarchy as a legitimate institution suitably beneficial for the Iranian society. In his writings he fostered the view that the Pahlavi dynasty was no less than a benevolent monarchy dedicated to reform and to service and good will for its people. For example, in one of his works entitled *Four Hundred Forty-Six Kings of Iran* published in commemoration of the 2500th anniversary of the Iranian monarchy, he stated in the preface to this work that "the rulers (kings of Iran) were very conscious of their fleeting mortality, and took steps to ensure that memories of their reigns would long endure. These actions included devotion to pious deeds, the patronage of scholars, and the preservation of their mortal remains."<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the Islamic Revolution Donald Wilber published a book on the founder of the Pahlavi regime entitle *Reza Shah Pahlavi: The Resurrection and Reconstruction of Iran, 1878-1944*. In this relatively exhaustive work, he does not hesitate to show his disposition for Reza Shah and the titles within the book clearly reflect this. Such titles as "resurrection" and "reconstruction" of Iran and "my heart's grief has burned me" are clear indications regarding the author's sympathies for Reza Shah. Yet the CIA documents also reveal the fact that Wilber had little genuine respect for Iran or the Iranians as a

1. Dr. Donald Wilber has publications on Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, Ceylon as well as on the art of Islam. However, most of his works are on Iran and his most popular book which has been reprinted more than 10 times is entitled *Iran, Past and Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). His other more important works on Iran include *The Architecture of Islamic Iran: The Il Khaniid Period* (1955), *Persian Gardens and Garden Pavilions* (1962), *Contemporary Iran* (1963), *Persopolis. The Archaeology of Parsa, Seat of the Persian Kings* (1969), *Four Hundred Forty-Six Kings of Iran* (1972), and of course *Reza Shah Pahlavi: The Resurrection and Reconstruction of Iran* (1975).
2. Donald Wilber, *Four Hundred Forty-Six Kings of Iran*. Shiraz: Shiraz University Press, 1972, p.1.

whole. In several instances he demonstrates his disdain and disregard by referring to them as rather "long-winded and often illogical Persians,"<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere he states that "given the recognized incapacity of Iranians to plan or act in a thoroughly logical manner, we would never expect such a plan to be restudied and executed in the local atmosphere like a western staff operation." He continues by stating that "security among all local elements involved is a serious weakness inherent in the Persian character. We must be aware of the fact that security breaches might lead to repressive measures by Mossadeq."<sup>2</sup>

Looking at Wilber as a product of the post world war Macarthian analyst, one should not be surprised nor should one doubt his sincerity and dedication to serving and preserving American or rather CIA moral codes and values across the world. This is clearly reflected in his writings where he suggests in his secret history that "in recruiting these individuals [i.e. future CIA agents] over a considerable period of time the station [should] wittingly select people whose basic ideologies were in accord with U.S. policy toward Iran and the U.S.S.R."<sup>3</sup> What Wilber is proposing is that individuals with firm faith in the system should be considered to undertake such covert operations.

With the cold war approaching its height, there could be no such thing as a neutral state. The post world war clearly divided the world among those who believed in freedom, obviously the capitalist world of the west, or the opposing communist world headed by the Soviet Union. The latter, led by the "evil forces of communism," were determined to hasten human bondage by establishing the "dictatorship of the masses." The victory of Eisenhower in the Presidential election of 1952 and the coming to power of the Republicans further

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1. See Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, p.19.

2. *Ibid.*, p.11.

3. *Ibid.*, p.92.

assured an all out war across the world against the perceived communist threat. Perhaps Iran was the first country in the Middle East where the forces of good versus bad, democracy versus communism, as ordained by America was to be tested. And should it become necessary, in this covert and ugly battle, unknown to most Iranians, a national and dedicated leader of sound repute, was caught in between, trying to maintain the independence and integrity of his nation. Efforts to discredit Musaddiq and his government, by whatever means possible, including psychological warfare,<sup>1</sup> was a common technique. Often this meant accusing him to be a communist sympathizer, or an atheist, a freemason, anti-Muslim and an anti-Iranian.<sup>2</sup>

### Dr. Musaddiq and the Cold War Politics

Musaddiq had an impeccable record of service even before Reza Khan's coup d'état of 1921. He is said to have been born around 1882/1260 AHS<sup>3</sup> or perhaps 1885/1263<sup>4</sup> in a relatively wealthy family of landed nobility. As early as 1907/1285 he was elected as a deputy from Isfahan to serve in the first parliamentary session of the Majlis during the Constitutional period but his credentials were refused because of his tender age.<sup>5</sup> From 1909/1286 to 1913/1290 he studied

1. Ibid., pp. 19, 85.

2. It is noteworthy that the Study in his *Mission for my Country* infers that Dr. Musaddiq was a British agent working for British interest. See also the following sources:

حسن آیت، جهیز حقیقی مصداق السلطنه، فیما انتشارات اسلامی، ۱۳۶۰ (براهیم صدیقی، استاد بزرگ ملی شادان نعت، تهران کتابسرا، ۱۳۷۱، انتشارات هوشنگ میهنوی، ۱۳۷۱، کردن جهیز مصداق، «آدینه»، ش ۹۶ (۱۳۷۳)، ص ۶۴ و وحید میرزاده، «خرامسون بدون مصداق، دشتام سیاسی با واقعیت تاریخی»، ایران فردا، دوره ۷، ص ۶۳ (۱۳۷۸).

3. See:

مرغسی، مشیر، دکتر مصداق در دوره قاجار و پهلوی، تهران نشر هنر، ۱۳۷۸، ص ۲۸۱.

4. British documents designate Musaddiq's year of birth around 1885. See F.O. 416/883 (Jan. to June 1931), Enclosure in No. 9, "Biographies of Leading Personalities in Persia," under "Musaddiq, Dr. Muhammad Khan."

5. See:

مرغسی، مشیر، دکتر مصداق در دوره قاجار و پهلوی، ص ۲۸۱.

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first in Paris and then in Switzerland, acquiring a doctorate degree in Law. His dissertation was on the inheritance laws of Islam which was initially published in Geneva and later translated and published in Persian on more than one occasion. He remained a silent but watchful politician during WWI, teaching at the School of Political Science in Tehran and active on the sidelines, writing articles, opposing the British and Russian interference in Iran's domestic affairs and supporting political parties and societies that stood for democratic principles and social justice. After World War I he opposed the 1919/1297 proposed Agreement with the British and as objection to Vosuq ud-Dowleh's government, who had sponsored the Agreement in collaboration with Lord Curzon, he left Iran and headed for Switzerland in order to express his disgust and objection.<sup>1</sup> However, upon his return later that year, he was appointed by Ahmad Shah as the Governor of Fars and then in July 1920 he was appointed Minister of Justice for a period of four months, followed by an appointment as Minister of Finance in June 1921. For the six months that he remained in charge, he sought and obtained authority from the government to purge and reform the Ministry of Finance which was deeply corrupt and inept.<sup>2</sup>

1. The 1919 Agreement was viewed with grave suspicion and encountered serious objections among Iranian parliamentarians and politicians on several grounds. Foremost it bound Iran to Britain for its defence, its advisors, and its trade. In other word, for the nationalist and constitutional minded Iranians, this effort was a legal act of coercion on the part of Britain to control Iran's political and economic affairs for the post-war period. See Peter Avery, *Modern Iran* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1967), p.206-9.
2. Regarding Musaddiq's performance at this Ministry, the British documents state that "during his six months' tenure of the portfolio, he destroyed indiscriminately the good with the bad, and at the end organisation was worse than before, as he proved himself entirely incapable of making reforms." See F.O. 41688 (Jan. to June 1934), Enclosure in No. 9. "Biographies of Leading Personalities in Persia", under "Mussadeq, Dr. Muhammad Khan."

However, this period was short lived for soon after the February 1921 coup and the formation of Sayyid Zia's Cabinet, Musaddiq resigned, unwilling to recognize the new government, and for a brief period he sought sanctuary among the Bakhtiari in the Bakhtiari country. But soon thereafter he was appointed as the Governor of Azerbaijan (18 February 1921 to 11 July 1922)<sup>1</sup> and Minister of Foreign Affairs for a period of four months in the Cabinet of Moshir ud-Dowleh (13 June to 26 October 1923).<sup>2</sup> He was also elected to the 4th, 5th and 6th sessions of the Majlis from Tehran.<sup>3</sup> In the 6th session he openly expressed his objection to a change of the Iranian Constitution as well as a change of dynasties which was under consideration. Musaddiq very soon aligned himself with the minority faction of the Majlis, headed by the prominent and outspoken Ayatollah Muddares. However, the voice of the minority could not change Iran's destiny, for Reza Khan managed to maneuver the Majlis into voting an end to the Qajar dynasty and appointing a new one, namely that of the Pahlavi dynasty.<sup>4</sup>

It was obvious from the very beginning that Musaddiq could not freely engage in politics or serve his country under Reza Shah's dictatorial regime. His outright opposition to Reza Khan in the 6th Majlis turned him into a permanent enemy of the Pahlavis, and measures were taken to prevent him from being re-elected for future terms. Musaddiq too, unlike very many older politicians, was not willing to compromise his position or views and yield to Reza Shah's dictatorial measures without speaking out his mind. Even among those who disliked Musaddiq, he was noted as an independent and ardent

1. 28 Bahman 1300 to 20 Tir 1301.

2. 23 Khordad to 4 Aban 1302.

3. F.O. 416888.

4. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, p.135.



nationalist who was opposed to foreign interference in Iran's domestic affairs. Therefore, during the 15 years of the Reza Shah's dictatorial rule, he confined himself to his village of Ahmadsabad and withdrew from active politics for most of the period.<sup>1</sup>

With the occupation of Iran by the Allies in 1941, and the exile of Reza Shah, the scene was set for the rise of Musaddiq to power and prominence. On the one hand the repressive atmosphere of the period was now totally removed. All social and political groups who had undoubtedly felt the dictatorial measures of the Reza Shah period were now free to make their demands heard, and in the process they asked for an initiation of their basic rights.<sup>2</sup> Thus while the occupation of Iran with all of its negative social and cultural implications was an undeniable fact, the consequences of such an occupation brought with it a fresh atmosphere of political freedoms and expressions only to be matched with the post W.W.I. period (1918-1925) until the accession of Reza Shah in December 1925.

During and after World War II, the prevailing political atmosphere allowed freedom of expression and principles of democracy to grow after more than 15 years of absolute rule by Reza Shah. The Iranian constitution was a landmark achievement which had been signed into law by Muzaffar ud-Din Shah in 1906 through the relentless efforts of numerous Iranians, particularly the more democratic and anti-colonial minded intellectuals and clerics, supported by the more conservative masses from the bazaar and the guilds, all of whom had initially rallied together towards "instituting a house of justice." However, this was soon changed into a demand for a constitution whereby the absolute powers of the monarch

1. *Ibid.*, p.150.

2. See Homi Kharazmi, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co, Ltd., Chp. 4, "Occupation and Interregnum."

would be limited by the separation of the legislative and the judiciary branches of the government.<sup>1</sup>

Musaddiq was a true parliamentarian who had stood for basic principles even before the Pahlavi's had gained the throne. He had sided with the minority in the Majlis to oppose a change of dynasties in 1924 on the basis of its unconstitutionality. Though he was from a wealthy landed aristocracy, he had more than once proven himself to stand for the rights of the majority and to uphold the constitution and its democratic principles of social and political rights and freedoms.

Although the Iranian government had declared her neutrality from the very beginning of World War II, Reza Shah was more than indifferent. His pro-German tendencies were self evident. Before the German invasion of Russia, Iran's geo-strategic position was not a critical consideration by the Allies. But with the Russians in dire need of arms and supplies particularly after the initial setbacks, Iran's south-north railway and supply route were regarded as a vital link to help the Soviets and to support the Allied war efforts.

Reza Shah's refusal to expel all Germans from her territory was used as a mere excuse by the British and the Russians to invade Iran simultaneously, both from the north and the south, on 25 August 1941.<sup>2</sup> The occupation was complete in a matter of days and Reza Shah was forced to abdicate in favor of his son, Muhammad Reza, and leave the country.

Following the occupation of Iran, the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance was signed on 29 January 1942 between Iran,

1. Venessa Martin, *Islam and Modernism, The Iranian Revolution of 1906*, London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1989, Chapter 5, "Constitutionalism and the Law of Islam."

2. For documents concerning the occupation of Iran see:

صفاالدین زهرائیان، ایران در اشغال متفقین؛ مجموعه اسناد و مدارک ۲۲-۳۳۱۸، تهران: مؤسسه خدمات فرهنگی، رسد، ۱۳۷۱.

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Britain and Russia under the terms of which the Big Powers agreed to "respect the territorial integrity, the sovereignty and the political independence of Iran," to withdraw their troops no later than six months after the cessation of hostilities, and "to use their best endeavors to safeguard the economic existence of the Iranian people against the privations and difficulties" which the war had inevitably imposed.<sup>1</sup> This was one way of assuring Iran that her political integrity was respected by her occupiers.

The central government in Tehran had no effective control of the country following the chaos that ensued after the forced abdication of Reza Shah. Such lack of an effective control allowed all independent or dependent political and social groups to openly resume their activities, pressing their demands against the inexperienced and fragile central government. With the northern Iran occupied by the Russian forces in 1941, the Tudeh Party officially declared its existence in January 1942. Most of the Iranian communists were released from jail after the Russian occupation, and many who had taken refuge in the Soviet Union now returned to support the Tudeh cause. Among them were Jafar Peshavari who, with Russian help, later formed the Azerbaijan People's Republic in November 1945.

Towards the end of the War the Russians increased their pressure for a northern oil concession from Iran, and on September 1944, Sergei Kavtaradze, Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, who visited Tehran made his demands clear that he had come to sign an oil concession for the five northern provinces of Khorasan, Gilan, Mazandaran, Asterabad and Azerbaijan.<sup>2</sup> The government of Prime Minister

1. See Arthur C. Milspaugh, *Americans in Persia*, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1946, p. 276; also W.S. Haas, *Iran*, London: Oxford University Press, 1946, p. 252.

2. For general Soviet economic policies in the east see Violet Connolly, *Soviet*

Muhammad Sa'ïd stood firm refusing to give in despite immense pressure on the part of the Tudeh and the forces on the left. As a result Sa'ïd's government was forced to resign<sup>1</sup> and was replaced by premier Murtaza Qulî Bayat in November 1944.<sup>2</sup> To temporarily solve the oil issue, Dr. Musaddiq proposed a Bill, passed by the Majlis on 2 December 1944, which prohibited the government of Iran from granting an oil concession to any party without prior approval of the Parliament. This temporarily postponed the Russian demand for an oil concession.

With the world war coming to an end in Europe in May 1945, Iran became a focal point of the Big Power rivalry. Iran sought to try and maintain its own independence and integrity in order to reconstruct its economy. Rampant inflation, governmental inefficiency and domestic chaos was on the rise and the presence of foreign troops in the north and the south had made the administration of the country nearly impossible. Different political groups each imposed their demands on the government making it more difficult than ever to govern, such as the communists or Tudeh on the left, and the Fida'iyan of Islam on the right. The nationalist trend, however, seemed to predominate and its popularity was on the rise, both in Iran as well as the entire Middle East.<sup>3</sup>

When on 19 May 1945 Iran demanded from the British and the Russians to withdraw their troops in accordance with the terms of the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance signed in 1942, the British complied but the Russians were reluctant to

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Policy in the East*, London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

1. Fakhreddin Azimi, *Iran: The Crisis of Democracy*, London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., pp. 99-112.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.113-123.

3. For Nationalism in Iran after the war, see Richard Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979. For nationalism in the Middle East particularly the Arab world see, Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, 5th edition, New York: Praeger, 1988, chapter 6.

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withdraw, particularly from the northern provinces of Iran. With Russian help in December of that year, Jafar Peshavari formed an Azerbaijan People's Republic. Soviet union claimed neutrality but did not allow the Iranian troops to advance forward in order to suppress Peshavari and his forged Republic. with the support of Britain and the United States, the Iranian government appealed to the United Nations, charging that the USSR was interfering in her internal affairs. The problem was however solved by the clever political move of Premier Ahmad Qavam<sup>1</sup> who, during his first term in office (January-December 1946), managed to negotiate an agreement with the Russians on 4 April 1946 encouraging their immediate withdrawal from Iran in return for an oil concession in the north which they were insistent on having. It was agreed that a Russo-Iranian Company was to be formed in order to exploit the northern oil, with the Russians holding 51% of the total share.<sup>2</sup>

Following the signing of the agreement the Russians who were faced with numerous domestic problems were eager to leave and they withdrew their troops by 9 May 1946. By December of that year the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan Republics collapsed and their leaders fled to Russia.<sup>3</sup> Since the oil agreement had to be approved by the Majlis, after a long delay of nearly 18 months the Majlis refused to have it ratified by a vote of 102 to 2.<sup>4</sup> The Russians were very angry but were in no position to bring in the Red army. This tactical move by the Government of Qavam and the nationalist government was a major political victory for the Iranians.

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-163.

2. For the Soviet oil policy in the east see: Olof Caroe, *Wells of Power, The Oilfields of South-Western Asia*, 1957.

3. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion. The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 36.

4. George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948; A Study in Big-Power Rivalry*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1949, pp. 220.

Iran's domestic economic problems however became more apparent for the years following 1948 (1327) when the deterioration of the Iranian economy made itself felt more than ever. Domestic food production had declined because of bad harvest, and consequently the country was forced to rely more and more on food imports in order to provide for its essential needs. Iran's volume of imports had escalated by 62% for the 1949-50 and the country was faced with an acute shortage of foreign currency.

To make matters worse the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) had turned down Iran's request for a loan of \$650 million for a seven year development program which it had carefully developed with the help of an American Consulting firm, the Overseas Consultants, Inc. Both the Government and the Majlis were very hopeful that American support of her request for a loan would be forthcoming. Such optimism was based upon previous American overtures in support of Iran's independence and territorial integrity, particularly in light of her insistence that all foreign troops leave Iran immediately after the cessation of war hostilities. However, America made no commitment, nor did it pressure the IBRD to commit itself to a loan.

As a result, the Iranian government demanded early in 1949 that to meet the shortage of its foreign revenues, royalties from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company must be increased. This was not a new, but rather an old demand. Even before the war had ended, Iranians had repeatedly expressed their desire for a revision of the AIOC's royalty formula. They were displeased with the terms of the 1933 oil agreement and had also compared the favorable terms of the royalty formula in existence in Venezuela and other Latin American countries. Thus the growing demand for a change of the status quo regarding Iranian oil was on the rise and when the AIOC refused to compromise or yield to the Iranian request for a

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new agreement based on a fifty-fifty formula, the Majlis accordingly did not ratify the Supplementary Oil Agreement of 1949-50. Thus Prime Minister Ali Mansur's government fell only after 3 short months in office<sup>1</sup> followed by the Government of General Razmara, who was assassinated on 7 March 1951.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime the demand for nationalization had intensified to such a degree that even British confidential documents indicate that London was certain that no Government could endure without its support for nationalization.<sup>3</sup> Now that the British were willing to concede to the terms of a 50-50 agreement, it seemed too late. The Majlis deputies, particularly the National Front, were not satisfied and would accept nothing short of nationalization.

Ala's interim government was determined to calm matters, and reduce the domestic problems, and solve the oil issue as well as it could. But following the Persian new year of March 1951 the oil workers strike in the southern oil fields intensified the problem which Ala managed to handle rather well. However, the British government and the British Embassy were set on promoting Sayyid Zia, a well known Anglophil, for the position of the next prime minister. "In the eyes of the British officials, the premiership of Sayyid Zia was the only hope of saving the AIOC and preventing the erosion of British interests and prestige in Iran, and Sayyid Zia himself seemed whole-heartedly prepared to oppose and suppress the oil nationalization movement."<sup>4</sup>

In 15 March 1951 the Majlis passed a "Single Article" bill nationalizing the Iranian oil industry. This was confirmed by the Senate on 20 March 1951, and on 25 April the Majlis oil

1. Azimi, pp. 213-25.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 226-45.

3. For Shepherd's statement see Azimi, p. 249.

4. Azimi, p. 253.

committee approved a 9 point bill which was passed by both the Majlis and the Senate and later signed into law on 2 May 1951.

Ah's caretaker government had not been consulted and it immediately resigned only after 46 days in office. As mentioned earlier, Sayyid Zia who was a natural candidate for the premiership was favored by both the British and the Shah. However, since a strong popular person who could implement the nationalization law was required for the task, Dr. Musaddiq was recommended by the Majlis, and though he had on more than one occasion refused the premiership earlier, this time he accepted, simply to make sure it did not fall in the hands of Sayyid Zia.

After the Majlis and the Senate had voted strongly in support of Dr. Musaddiq as premier, the Shah signed the royal decree on 29 April 1951. Musaddiq's first term as premier lasted until July 1952 and his goals were essentially centered upon implementing the 9 point nationalization law and reforming the parliamentary and municipal electoral laws of the country. Musaddiq chose his cabinet carefully from among the young, the well educated and the nationalist technocrats who were dedicated to serve Iran with little attachment to the traditional elite. He also had strong support from the Majlis and the Senate and a reassurance that he would have their full support to deal with the British, both firmly and decisively.

To help solve the deadlock that had prevailed between the British and the Iranian government, President Truman sent Averell Harriman to mediate the problem. Sir Richard Stokes was also sent as the head of a British delegation to solve the problem. Although at this stage the British were willing to give in to the previous demands for a 50-50 agreement, Iranians kept on insisting that the British staff of the future Iranian Oil Company should be brought under the Iranian jurisdiction and supervision, for as Musaddiq had stated on more than one



occasion, "nationalization of oil would be an empty move if the oil company were to remain a nest of spies."<sup>1</sup>

By 13 June 1951 the Majlis and the Senate passed a law to evict AIOC. The British tried to reciprocate by toppling the Musaddiq government and by enforcing an economic blockade of the country. By September 1951 Musaddiq ordered the British staff of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company to leave and the eviction process was to be completed by 1 October 1951. For a while Clement Atlee, the British Prime Minister, considered occupying the city of Abadan in order to reciprocate, but President Truman discouraged him, fearing the consequences of such a move.<sup>2</sup> Another source of Musaddiq's domestic problems was the Shah himself, who wanted to see an end of the oil dispute and preferred a settlement rather than a confrontation. The Musaddiq government had tried to gain control of the military and when the disagreements run high in July 1952, Musaddiq symbolically submitted his resignation in protest, and the Shah immediately accepted, appointing Ahmad Qavam, a favored British candidate who belonged to the established aristocracy and with whom the British were very comfortable to deal with. Both Sir Francis Shepherd, the British ambassador and Loy Henderson the American ambassador, were also in favor of such an appointment.

Qavam's government lasted for less than a week (16-22 July 1952)<sup>3</sup> because of the general riots that ensued as a protest. This uprising is called the July uprising and was summoned by deputies loyal to Musaddiq.<sup>4</sup> Masses of the people came out demonstrating in favor of Musaddiq and even the Tudeh party supported him in the bloody street riots which

1. Richard W. Cottam, *Iran and the United States*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988, pp. 97-98.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

3. 25-31 Tir 1331.

4. For a detailed and a complete account of the July uprising see:

حسنی مکی و قایم حسینی، تهران: نشریات ایران، ۱۳۶۶

resulted in heavy casualties. Since the Shah realized that the rioters were also aiming at him, he immediately dismissed Qavam and Musaddiq was called in to form a new cabinet. In July the International Court of Justice also dismissed the U.K. application to submit the dispute for consideration, regarding it to be a domestic issue. As a result, the stage was set to overthrow the government of Dr. Musaddiq through covert operations. The British Embassy was shut down in the Fall of 1952, and Britain was now in dire need of U.S. support. The Truman administration was reluctant to consider a coup. In fact, Dean Acheson, President Truman's Secretary of State, had a clear and a realistic understanding of the growing nationalism in Iran, and regarded it as a reliable counter-balancing force against the Soviet hegemony and the Tudeh activities in Iran.<sup>1</sup> However, with the new government of President Eisenhower acquiring office in January 1953, events began to change dramatically. The new and conservative Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles feared communism, and had little understanding of the nationalist trend in the developing countries of the Middle East. Thus, as Kermit Roosevelt testifies, the Anglo-American collaboration towards organizing a coup began in February 1953. As a result, British covert machinery and contracts together with American planning and money organized the coup which is the subject of analysis in the next section of this paper. One event which certainly helped to hasten the success of the coup in Iran was the death of Joseph Stalin in 5 March 1953. His death and the domestic problems that ensued in the Soviet Union immediately after, left the Iranian communists without leadership during the intensive months of the coup d'état. As a result, the Tudeh was left on her own, long enough to act contrary to its own goals and objectives, as witnessed during

1. Cottam, *Iran and the United States*, pp. 102-104.

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the events of 18 August, where its demonstrations actually helped the American and the British cause, rather than its own. The success of the coup had managed to topple perhaps the first genuinely nationalist leader of the post war Middle East who was affiliated neither with the west nor with the east, but was fully committed to serve the welfare of his own people. However, all groups were set to bring down the fall of Dr. Musaddiq - the big powers as well as the left, the religious forces, the Fida'iyan of Islam,<sup>1</sup> the Shah, the traditional aristocrats, and the common people who had no particular interest in one group or another. Thus the only hope for a legal and popular national democratic government to grow and flourish was lost for an unseen period of time.

### **Incentives for a Planned Coup:**

The initial plan for a coup was drawn by the British, when they were fully convinced that there was no prospect for further negotiations with Dr. Musaddiq's government. The plan was foremost presented to the Americans. President Truman who was at the end of his term in office, did not give into pressures for a coup. However, with the inauguration of the Eisenhower presidency in January 1952, the stage was set for the coup. John Foster Dulles, the conservative Secretary of State, took it upon himself to convince Eisenhower as to the need for such covert operations. For Dulles there was no neutral ground upon which Middle East countries could stand. The cold war had begun and the communist states would have to be fenced in. A popular nationalist government which would be lenient towards basic principles and towards communism could jeopardize the entire country, as well as the region on a very broad scale. Thus in order to defeat communism and

1. Dr. Musaddiq was threatened to death by the Fida'iyan of Islam on several occasions. See Azimi, *Iran: The Crisis of Democracy*, p. 260

communist sympathizers, it was deemed essential to support the Shah against any form of a nationalist government. A government that would rule with an iron fist, and would show no sympathy towards communism, was preferred. The outcome of an absolute monarchy was a reaction against the public will and the nationalist government of Dr. Musaddiq. Consequently, support for an absolute regime at the cost of suppressing democracy, the free press, and all political parties concerned, was inevitable. Indeed, the Shah clearly pointed this out in his memoirs, that following the coup he decided to rule rather than to reign over his country.<sup>1</sup>

From the documents it is clearly evident that while the U.S. was initially disinterested in a coup, the Eisenhower administration was inclined to support it. U.S. prime motive for getting involved was certainly geo-strategic rather than oil. In drawing up preliminary plans for presentation to the Shah, both U.S. and Britain emphasized that their respective "governments consider [the] oil question secondary."<sup>2</sup> However, U.S. overall policy in getting its share of the world oil should not be overlooked.<sup>3</sup> Britain was not at all pleased to witness the United States take the initiative in its own hand, particularly since Britain had made the initial move and hinted it at the Truman government. However, it had little choice but to reluctantly play along. Consequently Britain participated in the coup, helping it both financially as well as providing its so called domestic assets and contacts, the most important of which were the Rashidian brothers.

General Banmangelich had contacted U.S. officials as

1. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961.
2. See Appendix A, p. 2.
3. Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1946-1953*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972. See especially chapter 15, "Uter to Empire: The Near East and Mastery of the World's Oil," pp. 403-27.

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early as March of 1953 encouraging them to conduct a coup in Iran. The CIA also provided a sum of \$1,000,000 for covert operations as early as 4 April 1953. This sum was used essentially for illegal purposes, such as for bribes to Majlis deputies, propaganda leaflets, creating unrest and for hiring thugs to demonstrate against Dr. Musaddiq.

The CIA and SIS both sought to maximize their resources by using all the elements at their disposal to discredit Dr. Musaddiq and to associate him with the Tudeh party, accusing him to be a communist sympathizer and thus playing upon the religious sentiments of the people. An effort was made to contact both the religious elements within the bazaar as well as the religious leaders. One such intermediary was Ayatollah Behbahani who was approached for help in order to transfer the Shah's requests to a more prominent religious personality, such as Ayatollah Borujerdi.<sup>1</sup> But as far as one can detect, at least Ayatollah Borujerdi did not respond to his call for help,<sup>2</sup> even when the Shah sent him a telegram asking him for support prior to his return from exile. However, contacts with Ayatollah Kashani were more readily established, and following the success of the coup, one of his sons spoke on the Tehran radio in support of the Shah.<sup>3</sup>

Money was also distributed widely among the public, particularly the thugs and the bazaar elements, to publicize against Mussadiq<sup>4</sup> and to demonstrate support for "God, king, and country." Sham bombing of the house of one of the religious leaders was conducted in order to show Musaddiq to be an incompetent leader, unable to protect Islam and its ulama. Also a wide scale propaganda was carried out not only within the country, but also abroad. Attempts were made to

1. See Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadegh of Iran*, p. 52.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

4. *Ibid.*, Appendix B, p. 15.

have international newspapers such as the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* involved in the affair by writing stories about the Shah's dismissal of Musaddiq and his eminent replacement by General Zahedi. This tactic was successful to some degree.<sup>1</sup>

However, the coup was finally set around soliciting support for General Zahedi and was to be carried out in two separate stages. The initial stage was to try and vote Musaddiq out of office by bribing the Majlis deputies in order to have them present in the Majlis so that they would have sufficient members required for a quorum. This was vitally needed in order to acquire a vote of "no confidence" against Musaddiq.<sup>2</sup> The second stage was a military coup d'état which was to be carried out if the initial plan failed. Contact was also made with the Qashqai tribal Khans to solicit their help in support of Zahedi. While the latter incident was only briefly mentioned, Dr. Katouzian provides ample evidence substantiating the case.<sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact, two coup d'état's were carried out. The first was to take place on 16 August but was a failure because it was exposed through several channels. Foremost the Tudeh party was well informed and warned against it several days in advance.<sup>4</sup> Since the Tudeh members had infiltrated all levels of the government and the military, it was quite possible that the information was acquired by their own agents. It could have also leaked through other channels, particularly Iranian agents in contact with the CIA or the SIS.<sup>5</sup> The CIA document itself verifies that far too many individuals knew about the

1. Ibid., p. 86. Also see the article on the *New York Times* web site by James Risen, "C.I.A. Tried, with Little Success, to Use U.S. Press in Coup." Copyright 2000, *The New York Times* Company.

2. See Dr. Katouzian's article in this volume.

3. Ibid.

4. See Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, p. 47.

5. Ibid., p. 19.