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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

12 OCTOBER 1951

FROM: [REDACTED] EO 12958 3.4 (b)(1)

SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF IRANIAN POLITICAL SITUATION



(IT IS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED THAT NO DISTRIBUTION OF THIS REPORT BE MADE OUTSIDE OF THE AGENCY.)

1. BACKGROUND.

A. XENOPHOBIA. IRAN NOW IS ANTI-WESTERN BUT IS VIOLENT ONLY IN ITS MANIFESTATION AGAINST THE BRITISH BECAUSE THEIR PRESENCE IN IRAN UP TO THIS TIME HAS BEEN MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN THE PRESENCE OF ANY OTHER WESTERNERS (FOR EXAMPLE, THE ANGLO-IRANIAN OIL COMPANY, BRITISH BANK AND BUSINESS FIRMS BACKED BY A LONG HISTORY OF BRITISH INTERESTS IN IRAN). MOSSADEQ CAME TO POWER ON A WAVE OF XENOPHOBIA, THE FORERUNNER OF WHICH WAS THE ANTI-RAZMARA AND ANTI-COURT MOVEMENT (RAZMARA AND THE SHAH DESCRIBED AS SERVANTS OF THE BRITISH). IF THE UNITED STATES SHOULD CONTINUE TO SIDE SPECTACULARLY WITH THE BRITISH (FOR EXAMPLE, HARRIMAN'S REFUSAL TO PASS TO THE BRITISH MOSSADEQ'S "ULTIMATUM," AND THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE \$25,000,000 EXPORT-IMPORT BANK LOAN), THE BRUNT OF ANTI-WESTERN FEELING COULD EASILY COVER THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS GREAT BRITAIN.

B. DICTATORSHIP OF THE STREETS. THE MOSSADEQ GOVERNMENT IS THE PRISONER OF THE "STREETS." THE "STREETS" ARE COMPOSED OF TWO MAIN GROUPS: THE FOLLOWERS OF MULLAH KASHANI AND THE TUDEH PARTY (WITH SATELLITE FRONTS), BOTH OF WHICH ARE EXPLOITING TO THE FULLEST A WAVE OF GENUINE NATIONALISTIC FEELINGS OF A BROAD SECTION OF THE UPPER MIDDLE CLASS. ALTHOUGH KASHANI'S FOLLOWING IS POSSIBLY MORE NUMEROUS THAN THAT OF THE TUDEH, THE FORMER HAS NEITHER THE ORGANIZATION, DISCIPLINE, NOR REVOLUTIONARY AND CONSPIRATORIAL TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE OF THE LATTER. ACCORDINGLY, OF THE TWO THE MORE POWERFUL IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE TUDEH PARTY.

C. THE TRADITIONAL IRANIAN POLICY IS TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND GREAT BRITAIN. THE IRANIAN POLITICAL PENDULUM IS NOW SWINGING DANGEROUSLY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION BUT GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES THE IRANIAN SHOULD REACT AND TURN TOWARD THE WEST FOR SUPPORT (PROVIDING THE WEST IS NOT REPRESENTED BY GREAT BRITAIN ALONE).

2. MOSSADEQ'S GOVERNMENT HAS POWERFUL POPULAR SUPPORT.

A. MAJLIS OPPOSITION TO MOSSADEQ COLLAPSED ON 30 SEPTEMBER 1951. ABDUL RAHMAN FARAMARZI ANNOUNCED THAT THE OPPOSITION WOULD CEASE TO ATTACK THE GOVERNMENT AS LONG AS THE OIL DISPUTE WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. SOURCES BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE COLLAPSE OF THIS OPPOSITION IS FINAL. THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE IS A FACE-SAVING EXCUSE. THE OPPOSITION HAS GOTTEN "OUT ON A LIMB," DEPENDING UPON BRITISH POWER AND ROYAL COURT SUPPORT. BOTH FAILED TO COME THROUGH WITH THEIR SUPPORT AND THE OPPOSITION DEPUTIES FEAR FOR THEIR VERY LIVES.

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B. MOSLEM RELIGIOUS GROUPS, WHO AT ONE TIME MIGHT HAVE BEEN DIVERTED FROM KASHANI AND FROM HIS PRO-MOSSADEQ STAND, HAVE NOW RALLIED TO THE NATIONAL FRONT BANNER. IN A LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 1951 NAVAB SAFAVI, LEADER OF THE FEDAYAN-I-ISLAM, MADE PEACE WITH KASHANI; A LETTER FROM BURUJURDI OF QUM (THE OUTSTANDING SPIRITUAL LEADER OF IRAN) TO THE SHAH URGED HIM TO SUPPORT MOSSADEQ.

C. KASHANI'S ENORMOUS INFLUENCE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS DEMONSTRATED ON 3 SEPTEMBER 1951 BY THE GENERAL CLOSING OF THE BAZAARS THROUGHOUT THE NATION AT HIS REQUEST AND BY THE ORDERLINESS OF THE PARADES HE SPONSORED IN FAVOR OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THE SAME DAY.

D. THE SHAH HAS TAKEN A STAND IN FAVOR OF MOSSADEQ AND AT LEAST SINCE 17 SEPTEMBER HAS REFUSED TO LISTEN TO BRITISH ENTREATIES TO RALLY OPPOSITION IN FAVOR OF SEYYED ZIA TABATABAI. AT MOSSADEQ'S REQUEST THE SHAH HAS ORDERED THE PRINCESS ASHRAF OUT OF THE COUNTRY (SHE LEFT IN LATE SEPTEMBER 1951), THEREBY SHOWING THAT HE WOULD NO LONGER (THAT IS, FOR THE TIME BEING) CONDONE COURT INTRIGUES IN POLITICAL MATTERS.

E. THE TUDEH PARTY AND PEACE FRONT ORGANIZATIONS ARE BACKING MOSSADEQ, ALBEIT ONLY ON SPECIFIC ISSUES. AS LONG AS MOSSADEQ'S POLICY REMAINS INTRANSIGENT AGAINST THE BRITISH, THE TUDEH IS BEHIND MOSSADEQ. THE TUDEH DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN THE MOOD AT THIS TIME TO MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT, AS EVIDENCED BY THE FACT THAT THE TUDEH APPARENTLY ACCEPTED THE POLICE ORDER NOT TO CELEBRATE PUBLICLY THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PARTY (3 - 7 OCTOBER 1951).

3. THE BRITISH POSITION IN IRAN HAS COLLAPSED.

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A.



B. THE INFLUENCE OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY UPON THE SHAH AND HIS COURTIER HAS PRACTICALLY CEASED TO EXIST, MAINLY BECAUSE THE SHAH IS INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE STRENGTH OF THE "STREETS", AND FEARS THE "STREETS" AT PRESENT MORE THAN HE FEARS THE BRITISH. NO OTHER PRIME MINISTER PRIOR TO MOSSADEQ COULD CLAIM SUCH SPONSORSHIP. THE SHAH DARES NOT TALK BACK OR STEP OUT OF LINE. HE IS FULLY AWARE NOW THAT THE POLITICAL WAVE WHICH BROUGHT MOSSADEQ INTO POWER WAS IN GREAT PART AN ANTI-COURT WAVE.

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C. THE CAMPAIGN OF INTIMIDATION SUPPORTED BY CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE NATIONAL FRONT AND CONDONED BY MULLAH KASHANI (BUT NOT CONDONED BY MOSSADEQ) HAS CONTRIBUTED TOWARD CURRENT ELIMINATION OF BRITISH-SPONSORED OPPOSITION. (SEE ALSO PARAGRAPH 2 A ABOVE).

4. THE SOVIET UNION IS IN A RELATIVELY STRONG POSITION TO REAP ADVANTAGES.

A. THE TUDEH PARTY HAS GREAT POTENTIALITIES. ALTHOUGH INSIDE INFORMATION IS INADEQUATE, THE FOLLOWING CLUES ARE IMPORTANT:

(1) AS EARLY AS 1946 THE TUDEH HAD ORGANIZED WORKERS IN ABADAN TO A POINT WHERE THEY SUCCESSFULLY STAGED A GENERAL STRIKE.

(2) SINCE THE RAZMARA CABINET, THE TUDEH HAS ENJOYED GREATER FREEDOM OF ACTION WITH CORRESPONDINGLY INCREASED EFFICIENCY.

(3) IN 1950 THE TUDEH ORGANIZED PEACE FRONT GROUPS.

(4) IN DECEMBER 1950 THE TUDEH WAS IN A POSITION TO STAGE THE ESCAPE OF TEN OF ITS LEADERS FROM THE TEHRAN JAIL.

(5) IN APRIL 1951 THE TUDEH QUICKLY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE INEPTITUDE OF BRITISH LABOR RELATIONS IN ABADAN TO STAGE ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL GENERAL STRIKE.

(6) IN JULY 1951 THE TUDEH WAS ABLE TO MASS TEN THOUSAND DEMONSTRATORS IN THE STREETS OF TEHRAN AND ORGANIZE THEM IN SEMI-MILITARY ORDER.

(7) IN THE PAST YEAR THE TUDEH HAS BEEN SIGNALLY SUCCESSFUL IN CONDUCTING LARGER SCALE PROPAGANDA.

(8) AN ESTIMATE OF TUDEH AND FRONT GROUPS FOR THE TEHRAN AREA IN SEPTEMBER 1951 WAS A MAXIMUM OF THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND, WHICH APPEARS TO BE A CONSIDERABLE INCREASE OVER A YEAR AGO.

(9) THE ECONOMIC SITUATION STANDS TO DETERIORATE FURTHER, WHICH PAVES THE WAY FOR FURTHER INCREASE IN THE POWER OF THE TUDEH PARTY.

B. THE POLICY OF THE NATIONAL FRONT AT THIS TIME PLAYS DIRECTLY INTO SOVIET HANDS.

(1) IT HAS CAUSED MISUNDERSTANDINGS BETWEEN LONDON AND WASHINGTON. THE BREACH COULD BE MADE TO WIDEN FURTHER.

(2) IT CALLS FOR THE PHYSICAL EXPULSION OF THE BRITISH FROM IRAN.

(3) IT HAS UNDERMINED THE PRESTIGE OF THE ANGLO-SAXON POWERS IN THE NEAR EAST.

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(4) IT LAYS THE GROUNDWORK FOR A COMMON FRONT OF NATIONALISTS IN THE NEAR EAST AGAINST ANGLO-SAXON "IMPERIALISTS." (THIS POLICY, FAVORABLE TO THE SOVIET UNION, CAN BE CARRIED OUT MUCH MORE SMOOTHLY BY THE MOSSADEQ GOVERNMENT, A BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENT, THAN BY A TUDEH GOVERNMENT.)



(5) THE SOVIET "SIDING" WITH IRAN AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN EARLY OCTOBER 1951 HAS INCREASED SYMPATHY FOR THE SOVIETS EVEN IN THE RANKS OF THE NATIONAL FRONT.

C. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT SOVIET INFLUENCE IN IRAN HAS TO CONTEND WITH:

(1) THE ARMY, POLICE, AND GENDARMERIE WHICH REPRESENT IN THE HANDS OF THE SHAH AND THE GOVERNMENT COMPARATIVELY WELL-ORGANIZED, CENTRALIZED, AND MASSIVE REPRESSIVE FORCES, WITH NOTEWORTHY SHORTCOMING SUCH AS PENETRATION IN CERTAIN QUARTERS, CORRUPTION, AND SO FORTH.

(2) POPULAR RESISTANCE TO COMMUNISM WHICH STEMS FROM RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS AND A REVIVAL OF NATIONALISM.

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