

**AFTER THE COUNTERCOUP: ADVISING THE IMPERIAL ARMED FORCES OF  
IRAN**

**A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree**

**MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
(General Studies)**

**by**

**JOHN D. WILLIAMS, MAJ, USA**

**MMAS, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2010**

**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
2010**

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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 13-06-2008		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Master's Thesis		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> July 2009 – May 2010	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> After the Countercoup: Advising the Imperial Armed Forces of Iran			<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>		
			<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>		
			<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>		
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Major John D. Williams, USA			<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>		
			<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>		
			<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>		
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301			<b>8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER</b>		
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>			<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>		
			<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>		
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> Iran in the 1950s was in the cross hairs of the Cold War power struggle between the US and USSR. Strategically located, Iran became critical in the foreign policy endeavors of the Eisenhower Administration in the Middle East. After the decision to force Mohammed Mossadeq to retire as the Prime Minister, the United States gave more than \$700 million in mutual security assistance to the Shah of Iran from 1953-1959. In addition to the money, the US faced the challenge of transitioning the Iranian Armed Forces from an organization used by Iranian monarchs to quell unrest in the major population centers into a collective security partner with a trained and equipped military that could fight a delaying defensive campaign against a possible Soviet invasion. A Military Assistance Advisory Group was created and advisory efforts began. Iranian history, international rivalries, and the strategic constraints by continuous interference from policy makers in Washington and the Shah's embellished interests for Iran weighed heavily on the effort. This monograph discusses the strategic context of Iran in the 1950s, the national level deliberations regarding the importance of Iran and the amount of assistance required, and analysis of whether or not the USSR was deterred from intervening in Iran due to the US demonstrable commitment there. This case study parallels future decisions for policy makers as to the future roles and organizations necessary to conduct foreign internal defense and advising the militaries of allied nations. Success or failure at advisory operations has strategic consequences.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Containment, Deterrence, Middle Eastern Studies, Cold War, Advisors, US-Iran relations					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b>	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b>	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b>			
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Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: John D. Williams

Thesis Title: After the Countercoup: Advising the Imperial Armed Forces of Iran

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Monograph Director  
Bruce E. Stanley

\_\_\_\_\_, Reader  
William T. Dean III, Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, SAMS  
Stefan Banach, COL, IN

Accepted this 20th day of May 2010 by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, Graduate Degree  
Programs  
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

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## ABSTRACT

AFTER THE COUNTERCOUP: ADVISING THE IMPERIAL ARMED FORCES OF IRAN,  
by MAJ John D. Williams, total 58 pages.

Iran in the 1950s was in the cross hairs of the Cold War power struggle between the US and USSR. Strategically located, Iran became critical in the foreign policy endeavors of the Eisenhower Administration in the Middle East. After the decision to force Mohammed Mossadeq to retire as the Prime Minister, the United States gave more than \$700 million in mutual security assistance to the Shah of Iran from 1953-1959. In addition to the money, the US faced the challenge of transitioning the Iranian Armed Forces from an organization used by Iranian monarchs to quell unrest in the major population centers into a collective security partner with a trained and equipped military that could fight a delaying defensive campaign against a possible Soviet invasion. A Military Assistance Advisory Group was created and advisory efforts began. Iranian history, international rivalries, and the strategic constraints by continuous interference from policy makers in Washington and the Shah's embellished interests for Iran weighed heavily on the effort.

This monograph discusses the strategic context of Iran in the 1950s, the national level deliberations regarding the importance of Iran and the amount of assistance required, and analysis of whether or not the USSR was deterred from intervening in Iran due to the US demonstrable commitment there. This case study parallels future decisions for policy makers as to the future roles and organizations necessary to conduct foreign internal defense and advising the militaries of allied nations. Success or failure at advisory operations has strategic consequences.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The staff and faculty of the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, have been critical in this research process for me. Mr. Bruce Stanley laid a foundation for me over the first few months, as my Monograph Director, which provided me with a starting point to begin the research on the military assistance provided to the Shah of Iran from 1953-1959. Dr. Bill Dean from the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) followed up his oversight of my research paper during AY 08-09 with his expert insight and participation on my Research Committee this year. Conducting a historical case study of the massive military assistance provided by the Eisenhower Administration to the fragile Government of Iran, which the research has done, has enabled me to gain an understanding of the many intricacies in relationship between the United States and Iran. At a time when the US was rethinking their foreign policy approach to the Soviet Union, an eager Shah of Iran appeared on the international stage ready to barter. The dynamics and details of that relationship, and the tremendous amounts of resources committed to it by the US, has sparked an interest into Iranian history that I expect to continue long after graduation from SAMS. Prior to this research, I lacked any serious knowledge on the events leading up to the events in 1953 that created an all-powerful Shah, or how serious the importance of the debate about Iran was within the Eisenhower Administration. This monograph and the distinguished faculty that guided me were my most professionally enlightening experience this year.

I chose this topic based on a conversation I had with Mr. Stanley early in the academic year. As my seminar discussed potential topics for monographs, I was interested in continuing the research I had done last year at ACSC on whether or not a separate Unconventional Warfare

Combatant Command was necessary today. He recommended this area of research as being of benefit, and Dr. Dean endorsed the topic. My research began with my previous interest.

I am appreciative of the proofreading done by Ms. Valerie Badgett, a coworker of my mother at Elkhart High School in Elkhart, Texas. Furthermore, I would like to thank Herbert Pankratz and the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas for the generous use of the first rate facility. The professional staff at the Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth has been more than helpful in this pursuit of knowledge. Finally, my wife and children, Miranda, Grace, JR, and Scott, ensured that I never lost sight of why the academic study of this topic and the entire curriculum at SAMS remains important; this great nation deserves the best trained and most competent officer corps today in order to protect our way of life for our children tomorrow.

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## ACRONYMS

AIOC	Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
ARMISH	American Mission to the Iranian Army
BP	British Petroleum
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DOD	United States Department of Defense
DOS	United States Department of State
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
GENMISH	American Military Mission with the Imperial Gendarmerie
GOI	Government of Iran
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
ICA	International Cooperation Administration
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MDAP	Military Defense Assistance Program
MSP	Mutual Security Program
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PDRK	Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea)
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
SAVAK	Iranian State Intelligence and Security Organization
SEATO	Southeastern Treaty Organization
SOF	Special Operations Forces



UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USG	United States Government
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UW	Unconventional Warfare
WWII	World War II

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## INTRODUCTION

In the 1950s, the United States (US) Army conducted advisory operations all over the free world. Today, the US Army is reevaluating the roles, organizations, training, and doctrine necessary for global advisory efforts. The primary advising force after the Vietnam War was Special Operations Forces (SOF). However, after September 11, 2001, and the ensuing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, SOF focused more on missions that maximized their lethal capabilities such as direct action and special reconnaissance operations. Now, theater commanders rely on SOF for their precision strike, rapid movement, and their language competencies and capabilities. SOF is sixty years old with over thirty years of advisory experience.

The current trend of increasing the conventional army to advise should not be viewed as a deviation from the recent tradition of using SOF as advisors. History highlights the consistent role conventional forces have had in advisory operations in the past. While the United States Army weighs the different options, the advisory efforts in Iran in the 1950s provide a model for conventional forces to analyze the projected advisor requirements. This monograph focuses on Iran, where the conventional army was responsible for the advisory effort. Specific audiences for this monograph are doctrine writers, United States Special Operations Command, United States Central Command, and Department of the Army Staff.

The complaint that the SOF community has neglected advising foreign militaries and caused the conventional Army to fill the vacuum has merit, as witnessed by conventional forces committing exceptional resources to accomplish a core SOF task. However, the current debate focuses on whether the United States Army needs a permanent advisory group or if the on-going mixture of conventional forces and special operations forces are sufficient.

In favor of a permanent advisory group, John Nagl explicitly states, “The Army should create a standing advisory command with responsibility for all aspects of the advisor mission – from doctrine through facilities.”<sup>1</sup> The argument calls for the permanent expansion of the conventional force structure, training, and attitudes for advisory capabilities. The counter-argument calls for renewed focus of the Army on war fighting skills and avoiding the creation of organizations that tackle only the short-term problems associated with nation building in Iraq and Afghanistan and drain limited Army resources away from conventional warfare capabilities. “The choice should be to build an army on the organizing principle of fighting,” highlights Colonel Gian Gentile.<sup>2</sup>

The case study begins at the operational level. But, by the conclusion, the findings are at the strategic level because foreign internal defense is an important component of strategies of containment and deterrence. Nagl’s proposal addresses foreign internal defense and advisory operations in unconventional warfare. However, US advisory operations to Iran in the 1950s highlight the additional application of foreign internal defense to conventional warfare. The model has utility today, as the United States identifies military approaches, organizational structures, and needed capabilities for the contemporary operating environment.

The United States Army advised foreign militaries in a wide variety of countries, including Iran, during the World War II administrations of President Roosevelt and Truman. Before 1952, military assistance was grouped into Mutual Defense Assistance Programs. Then the United States Government (USG) relabeled military assistance as Mutual Security Programs (MSP). The Mutual Security Act of 1954 codified the presidential responsibility for military assistance by stating, “No assistance shall be furnished...unless the President shall have found

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<sup>1</sup> John Nagl, “Institutionalizing Adaptation: It’s Time for an Army Advisor Command.” *Military Review*, September – October 2008, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Gian Gentile, “Let’s build an Army to Win All Wars.” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2009, 28.

that furnishing such assistance will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace.”<sup>3</sup> The responsibility forced the accountability of the Executive Branch to the Legislative Branch.

The US Army increased advisory efforts after the restraints on the SOF operational tempo increased from Afghanistan and Iraq and advisor needs had grown. This monograph studies an example using a historical case study of the US mutual security programs in Iran from 1953 to 1959. This study begins during the Truman Administration as Cold War containment strategies had become the foundation of US foreign policy after earlier failures against Communist expansion. Transitioning to the Eisenhower Administration and the New Look, and a fused strategy of containment and deterrence against worldwide communist aggression, the US military assistance effort in Iran during the 1950s was the period of greatest assistance.

The Nagle – Gentile debate continues as to whether a separate combatant command for unconventional warfare is essential for the future roles and missions of the US Army. The question to establish a similar Military Assistance Program (MAP) Corps was also raised in 1959. The President’s Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program recommended that, “Its implementation would result in reducing the flexibility of the services’ personnel policy, inhibiting cross-fertilization which is indispensable within an officer corps, and setting an undesirable precedent for the establishment of other special services, such as intelligence or logistics. More importantly, in dealing with officers of recipient countries, MAP officers would not have the prestige that the combat officer naturally possesses.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Office of the White House, *The President’s Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 162.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the White House, *The President’s Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 87.

Organizational structures and capabilities are already changing in the US Army. Previously established institutions to train professional advisors resided within the SOF community. In 2009, the US Army established a military transition training facility at Fort Polk, Louisiana, because the US Army lacked the institutions to grow advisors, much less train transition team members. The understanding of the advisory organization, the kind of military professionals selected to be advisors, and determining whether the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) model in Iran is worth duplicating can assist today's US Army in planning for advisory operations in the future. Furthermore, learning from the highs and the lows in balancing many actors involved in the military security programs is invaluable. There were many more actors than just individual advisors and the trained Iranian soldiers that they advised. The context of this study, deals with strategic level leaders in both countries, competing institutions within the USG, and strong personalities of these actors. Advising the Imperial Armed Forces of Iran was a balancing act that did not follow a blueprint or roadmap.

Economic assistance programs and other periods of continued military assistance will not be analyzed. Authors like Kinzer, Pollack, and Bill have written about the causes and consequences of the Islamic Revolution and Iranian behavior in the world today. Therefore, this monograph will strictly study lessons for contemporary advisory efforts by the US military. Excluded from this study are the Islamic Revolution, allegations of human rights violations, and advisory efforts elsewhere, other than the limited reference of the Korean Military Assistance Advisory Group of the 1950s for comparison.

Historians, political scientists, and journalists have studied the United States efforts in Iran from 1953 – 1959 because of the eventual strained relations existing between both countries since 1979. Iranian clerics have shamed the US for supporting the widely unpopular Shah of

Iran. Since the Shah left Iran in 1979, Iranians have seized the US Embassy and held American hostages, financed terrorist organizations abroad that have murdered hundreds of Americans, and circumvented international efforts to prevent Iranian proliferation of nuclear weapons. Due to the last 30 years of US-Iran tension, literature has centered on the bilateral relationship that existed between the United States and the Shah of Iran following the forced retirement, or counter-coup, of the anti-Western Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadeq in August 1953. During the years of this study, 1953 -1959, Iran had a large advisory effort from the US military and received hundreds of millions of dollars of American equipment, technical training, and direct aid.

Through this period the United States provided almost \$500 million in military assistance that enabled the Iranian military to grow from 120k to 200k members from 1953-59. Furthermore, an additional \$200 million in financial assistance to the Shah for non-military means reignited Iran's economy.<sup>5</sup> Diminishment of US-Iran relations began during the Oil Embargo of the early 1970s and was shattered following the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978-1979 once the US was viewed as a co-conspirator with the Shah by Islamic Clerics. Continued state-sponsored terrorism and the weapons proliferation of today has strained the historical relationship solidified more than fifty years ago between two governments mutually interested in keeping international communism out of the Middle East.

This monograph describes Iran's geopolitical environment during the early 1950s, and how the nationalization of the petroleum industry provided the opportunity for the Shah to monopolize power, and for the United States to contain Soviet expansion. Once the ouster of Prime Minister Mossadeq occurred in 1953, the Shah's leverage over the United States in the Cold War grew, and the MSP assistance expanded. The United States wanted to build a

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<sup>5</sup> Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle* (New York: Random House, 2004), 75-76.

collective security alliance that could protect US interests from Soviet influence. Both economically and politically, the Shah of Iran emerged as the most important, pro-American ally in the Third World.<sup>6</sup> The Shah used MSP assistance to build security and intelligence organizations and viewed Iranian military strength as a guarantee against foreign aggression. After his removal from power, he wrote in his memoirs, “When we were strong, our nation was saved from foreign invasion.”<sup>7</sup> Tragically, though, the Shah was toppled. The US trained and equipped Iranian military was unable to prevent the radical Islamic Extremists led by Ayatollah Khomeini from seizing power in 1979. Also, the Iranian military lost the lengthy Iran-Iraq War against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq in the 1980s.

Claiming that the US failed to show their appreciation of the strategic importance of Iran in the 1950s, the Shah demanded more aid, military advisors, and hardware.<sup>8</sup> The Shah found American assistance insufficient upon comparison to the aid provided to other states on the front line of the Cold War such as Turkey, Greece, and Taiwan.<sup>9</sup> Because of his outspoken support for the West, the Shah believed that it was the obligation of the United States to pay any difference in Iran’s annual budget shortfalls.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the 1950s, President Eisenhower’s administration continuously defended the towering levels of MSP assistance to the Shah. The administration asserted that the United States Government (USG) had more than adequately ensured Iranian security and provided Iran with financial opportunities to grow their economy. Evidence supports the administration’s assertion, despite repeated complaints from the Shah.

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<sup>6</sup> John Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945 – 1992* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 42.

<sup>7</sup> Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Answer to History* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), 140.

<sup>8</sup> Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 312.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle* (New York: Random House, 2004), 77.

<sup>10</sup> Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 101.



Success or failure at advisory efforts has strategic consequences. The United States conducted advisory operations with the Imperial Armed Forces of Iran in the 1950s and it worked. Strategically, the USSR had to look elsewhere to expand international communism into the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. At considerable financial cost, but still at less than five percent of the federal budget and less than one percent of the gross domestic product, the United States trained the Iranian military into an effective deterrent against conventional threats from the USSR, and later from Iraq.<sup>11</sup> Mutual security programs at the strategic level combined with foreign internal defense and other military advisory efforts at the operational level, as parts of a dedicated interagency effort, can achieve national effects. In the case study of Iran, Eisenhower's New Look Strategy afforded the political umbrella for these efforts to transform into assistance levels never seen again between the Shah and succeeding Presidents.

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<sup>11</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 13.

## IRAN AND THE COLD WAR

Iran, formerly Persia, was a traditional rival of all the Great Empires throughout history. The Greeks, Romans, Ottoman Empire, and the Arabs bordered Iran on the West, the Russians to the North. However short it is compared to other Western civilizations, the United States enjoyed a positive history in Iran. Early American missionaries in the 1830s, set in motion feelings of general trust and goodwill between the people of Iran and the US.<sup>12</sup> The Iranian people hoped the United States would help them achieve true independence from external powers that had taken advantage of the Iranian people, resources, and territorial integrity. The Middle Eastern competition between the United Kingdom, or Great Britain, and Russia had led to centuries of abuse and exploitation. The US proved too slow to assist the Iranian people and counteract those rivals.

In 1908, oil was discovered in commercial quantities in the Zagros Mountains in Iran. The discovery was not beneficial to Iran, as the British rapidly secured the ownership to the oil rights and expanded their influence in the internal domestic politics of Iran.<sup>13</sup> British control, and the competing interests of Russia, forced dependent Iranian monarchs to sign agreements that apportioned Iran economically and politically. Consolidated national resistance against the British and Russians never materialized. Of the two great powers, Great Britain received the most vicious of the accumulating public backlash from Iranians. For more than a century, until the resolution of the Oil Nationalization Crises in the 1950s, the “hidden hand of England” was commonly blamed for everything bad that happened to Iran.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> James Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 15.

<sup>13</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 13-14.

<sup>14</sup> James Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988) 65.

Six times in the last three centuries Russia had invaded Iran over territory. Since the beginning of the 1800s, large portions of what was once the Persian Empire had been swallowed up under Moscow's control.<sup>15</sup> Even after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or the Soviet Union, still hungered for Iran. A Lenin colleague and Bolshevik writer, K.M. Troyanovsky, wrote that, "Persia is the Suez Canal of the Revolution...Persia is the first nation that must be conquered by the Soviets...Persia must be ours; Persia must belong to the Revolution."<sup>16</sup> The centerpiece of the Soviet dominated relationship with Iran was the 1921, Treaty of Friendship. Article VI of that treaty stated that, "The Soviet Government shall have the right to send its army into Persia in order to take the necessary military steps in its own defense."<sup>17</sup>

Reza Khan established himself as monarch in 1925, and became known as Reza Shah. Under his rule, Iran's desperate need for a third power continued for two reasons: to counter the UK and the USSR; and to aid in the reconstruction of the national economy. Either the United States or Germany could have filled that role, but the isolationist policies of the US excluded them from Iranian courtship.<sup>18</sup> In the 1930s, as war clouds grew in Europe, Reza Shah finally found an emerging Nazi Germany willing to counterbalance the British and Soviet influence. Adolf Hitler extended economic and technical assistance to Iran, and more than six hundred German experts were working in Iran by 1939. Growing uneasy about German ties to Iran, Great Britain demanded exclusive use of Iranian ports and railroads that extended deep into the Soviet Union in order to supply the Soviets with war materials against Germany. When Reza

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<sup>15</sup> Ralph Cossa, *Iran: Soviet Interests, US Concerns* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1990), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Ralph Cossa, *Iran: Soviet Interests, US Concerns* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1990), 19.

<sup>17</sup> Ralph Cossa, *Iran: Soviet Interests, US Concerns* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1990), 5.

<sup>18</sup> Roxana Khalatbary, "The Iranian Crises of 1945-1946 and its Role in Initiating the Cold War." (Masters thesis, California State University – Fresno, 1991), 25.

Shah refused, claiming neutrality, the UK and the Soviet Union conducted a joint invasion of Iran and forced Reza Shah to abdicate his crown in favor of his twenty year old son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.<sup>19</sup> Forty years later, Pahlavi, or the Shah, would flee the country as the last Shah of Iran.

The invasion began on 25 August 1941, and consisted of an invasion force of forty thousand Soviets in the North and nineteen thousand British troops in the South. There were three occupation zones: the British in the South, the Soviets in the North, and the Iranian Government ruled the Center.<sup>20</sup> Still not officially at war against Germany at the time of the invasion, the United States merely endorsed the invasion. In 1942, the United States launched an advisory program to the Iranian Gendarmerie, the police, after the British convinced the US to advise local Iranian security forces. More than thirty thousand American troops and advisors were in Iran by the end of the year, training the security forces and operating the Iranian transportation system.<sup>21</sup> Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf, father of the Commander of the United States Central Command during Operation Desert Storm, commanded the US advisors in Iran from 1942-1948.<sup>22</sup> By the end of the war, Iran was humiliated by the occupation, had sunk into social disorder, and had suffered economic hardship under the Allied occupation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 24-25.

<sup>20</sup> Roxana Khalatbary, "The Iranian Crises of 1945-1946 and its Role in Initiating the Cold War." (Masters thesis, California State University – Fresno, 1991), 29-30.

<sup>21</sup> Roxana Khalatbary, "The Iranian Crises of 1945-1946 and its Role in Initiating the Cold War." (Masters thesis, California State University – Fresno, 1991), 40-41.

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle* (New York: Random House, 2004), 42.

<sup>23</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 26.

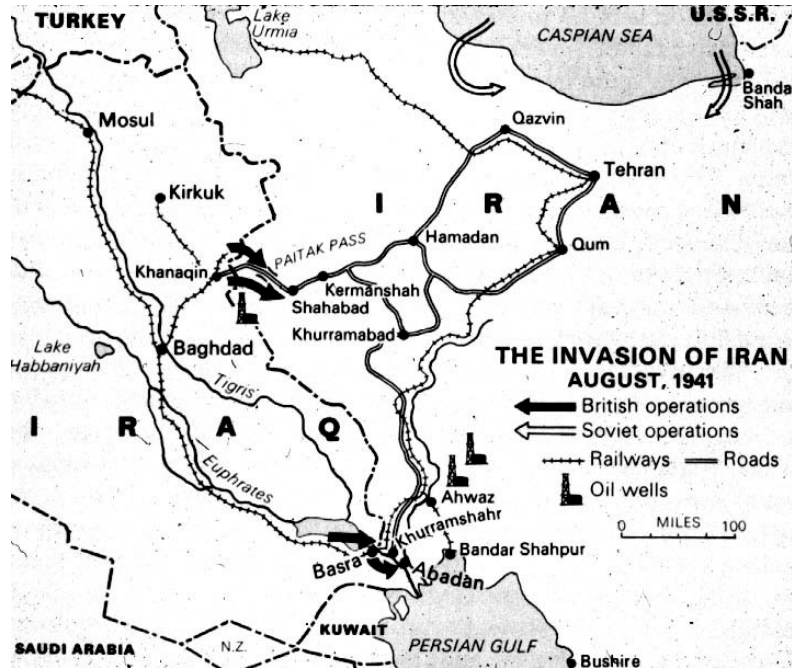


Figure 1. UK-USSR Invasion of Iran, 1941<sup>24</sup>

The access to Iran allowed the US and the UK to resupply the Eastern Front through a vital land bridge connecting the Persian Gulf to the USSR that proved critical, especially after an effective German submarine campaign against Allied shipping in the Atlantic in the Spring of 1942. The US and British were forced to reroute Soviet aid through the Persian Gulf.<sup>25</sup> The US sought to reestablish Iranian independence following Germany's defeat; and the Tehran Declaration in 1943, signed by Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, affirmed Iranian sovereignty and territorial integrity and set a deadline following the end of the war for the withdrawal of occupation forces.<sup>26</sup>

Post-World War II global competition between the US and the USSR, along with the abundance of oil, confirmed the strategic location of Iran. The US wanted to contain Soviet

<sup>24</sup> University of San Diego College of Arts and Sciences, History Department, "Iran in World War II," University of San Diego, <http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/sepics/58764.jpg> (accessed March 22, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Roxana Khalatbary, "The Iranian Crises of 1945-1946 and its Role in Initiating the Cold War." (Masters thesis, California State University – Fresno, 1991), 39.

<sup>26</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969), 197.

expansion away from the Persian Gulf and needed to protect strategic allies such as Saudi Arabia, the key American oil trading partner needed to rebuild Western Europe. For this reason, the US committed tremendous amounts of financial and military resources to Iran. Initially, limited MDAP aid was given to Iran prior to the oil nationalization crises. But, hundreds of millions of dollars in MSP assistance began after Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the Shah, was freed of political challengers by the ouster of Mossadeq. During the 1950s, the US poured MSP into Iran. For twenty years after that, military assistance fluctuated according to different approaches by the US for forcing reform on the Shah's regime.

The contemporary Department of Defense (DOD) definition for a military assistance advisory group is defined as, "a joint service group, normally under the military command of a commander of a unified command and representing the Secretary of Defense, which primarily administers the US military assistance planning and programming in the host country."<sup>27</sup> An example of a MAAG over the last sixty years was in Korea in the late 1940s. Korean MAAG advisors trained the Korean Army down to the battalion level in order to "correct faulty methods before they become ingrained."<sup>28</sup> As liaisons, military advisors in Vietnam in the 1960s grew to understand that integration of advisory teams with their host nation's military fostered bilateral communication and correspondence.<sup>29</sup>

Three types of military advisors operated in Iran during the period of 1953-1959. The staff of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) assisted the Iranian military in procurement of military equipment for the Iranian Armed Forces. The American Mission to the

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<sup>27</sup> Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 12 April 2001 (As Amended Through 31 October 2009)* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2009), 338.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1962), 42.

<sup>29</sup> John Cook, *The Advisor* (Philadelphia, PA: Dorrance and Company, 1973), 24.

Iranian Army (ARMISH) aided the Iranian General Staff in organization and planning. The ARMISH furnished military assistance to internal Iranian security and reinforced Iran's strategic importance to US economic interests. The American Military Mission with the Imperial Gendarmerie (GENMISH), advised the twenty-three thousand manned interior ministry security organization dedicated to rural policing. Concurrently during this era, but independent of the military advisors, the CIA assisted in the formation of the Iranian State Intelligence and Security Organization (SAVAK). SAVAK became a highly scrutinized state security organization during the remaining history of Imperial Iran, cracking down on opposition groups and being charged with human rights violations.<sup>30</sup>

American advisory operations began in World War II and lasted until the Islamic Revolution in 1979. MAAG was the higher headquarters for both the ARMISH and GENMISH. The US Ambassador in Tehran had statutory authority over the Chief of the MAAG, while the Department of Defense (DOD) assigned personnel and equipment to the MAAG. The United States Operations Mission (USOM), a Department of State (DOS) organization, directed all nonmilitary aspects of US assistance within Iran. The US Ambassador headed the country team consisting of: USOM, the MAAG, and additional US government agencies.<sup>31</sup> Congress appropriated the funding for each group.

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<sup>30</sup> John Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 43.

<sup>31</sup> United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Report of the Staff Survey Team of the Subcommittee for Review of the Military Security Programs on Military Assistance to Korea, Thailand, and Iran* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 22.

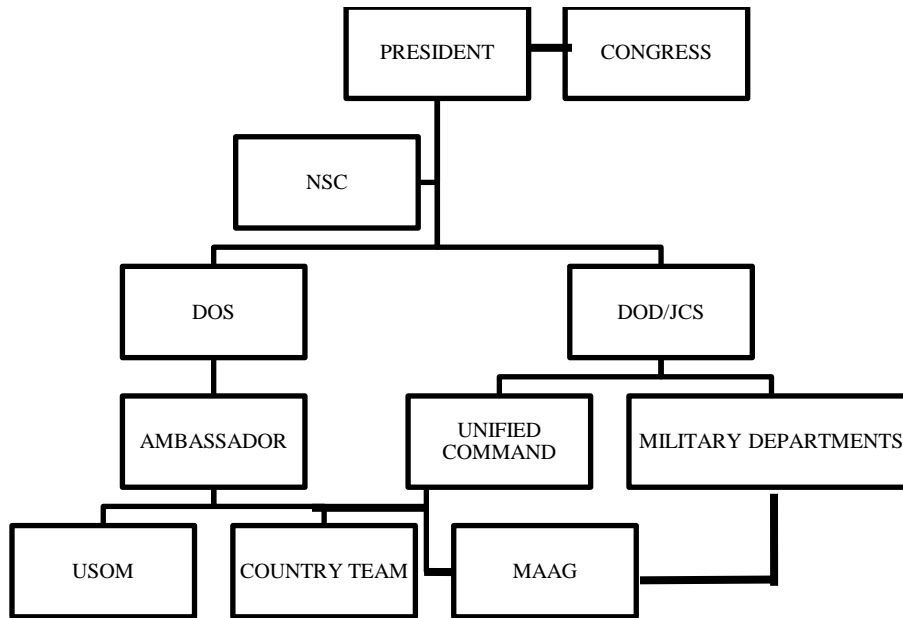


Figure 2. Organization Chart for MAAG

The DOD established the Military Assistance Institute in Arlington, Virginia, to train advisors. The four week program briefly introduced students to US foreign policy, regional tensions, Communist Cold War strategies, country briefings, legal-diplomatic status of MAAG officers, and local culture. Experienced officers and academics from local universities taught the curriculum. The optional course had an average size of one hundred students. Through 1959, only five classes had graduated.<sup>32</sup>

The DOD struggled to find qualified volunteers to fill advisor positions during the 1950s. The viewpoint of many military officers was that a MAAG assignment was not a path to career advancement. In most cases the assignment was also a hardship tour away from their families. Language proficiency was not required for advisors, thus fueling the criticism that advisors spent the first half of their short tour gaining familiarity of the culture and area. Additionally, the failure to require officers to attend the Military Assistance Institute led to only fifty percent of

<sup>32</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 87.



advisors graduating from the course by 1959. The deficient training was paramount in completing their task, judging from what was expected of the advisors. They were expected to understand the pulse of the population, the motivations of the leadership, the local's interest in government, the political opposition, and the culture. Finally, the general guidance given that the military advisor, "demonstrate, by his own conduct, the very ideals and traits he seeks to encourage in others," was confusing to the advisors, the MAAG, and the recipient forces.<sup>33</sup>

A key US government leader during the infancy of Mutual Security Program assistance was Dean Acheson, Secretary of State from 1949 till 1953. Acheson wanted to expand the military capabilities of Iran to prevent Soviet expansion. But, after participating in a meeting with the Shah and President Truman, he became convinced that the Shah's plans were "too ambitious". The Shah spoke of Iran as the "safeguard of the West", while Acheson realistically viewed Iran as a member of a US-led coalition of regional countries that could bond together and contain the Soviets and their satellite states.<sup>34</sup>

Iran received the fifth largest amount of cumulative foreign military assistance during 1953-1959 from the United States. By comparison, Taiwan, Turkey, Yugoslavia, and Spain, respectively all received the greater amounts of assistance.<sup>35</sup> The US viewed Iran as a key component of the greater containment strategy against the Soviet Union. The Shah used Iran's critical position to build the internal security that allowed him to rule as an absolute monarch and remain in power until the 1978-1979 Islamic Revolution.

Since the US conventional military advised Iran, today's contemporary military could use the application of the lessons learned from the US MAAG in Iran in the 1950s.

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<sup>33</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 87, 154-155.

<sup>34</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969) 502.

<sup>35</sup> Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for my Country* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 314.

Why was Iran important enough for the United States to support the Shah with assistance? What were the US objectives of the assistance? What did the Shah want? How effective was that assistance? How did the military train those advisors? After reviewing the MAAG, the ARMISH, and the GENMISH, the author will identify applications that could assist the US in advising nations most similar to Iran in the 1950s.

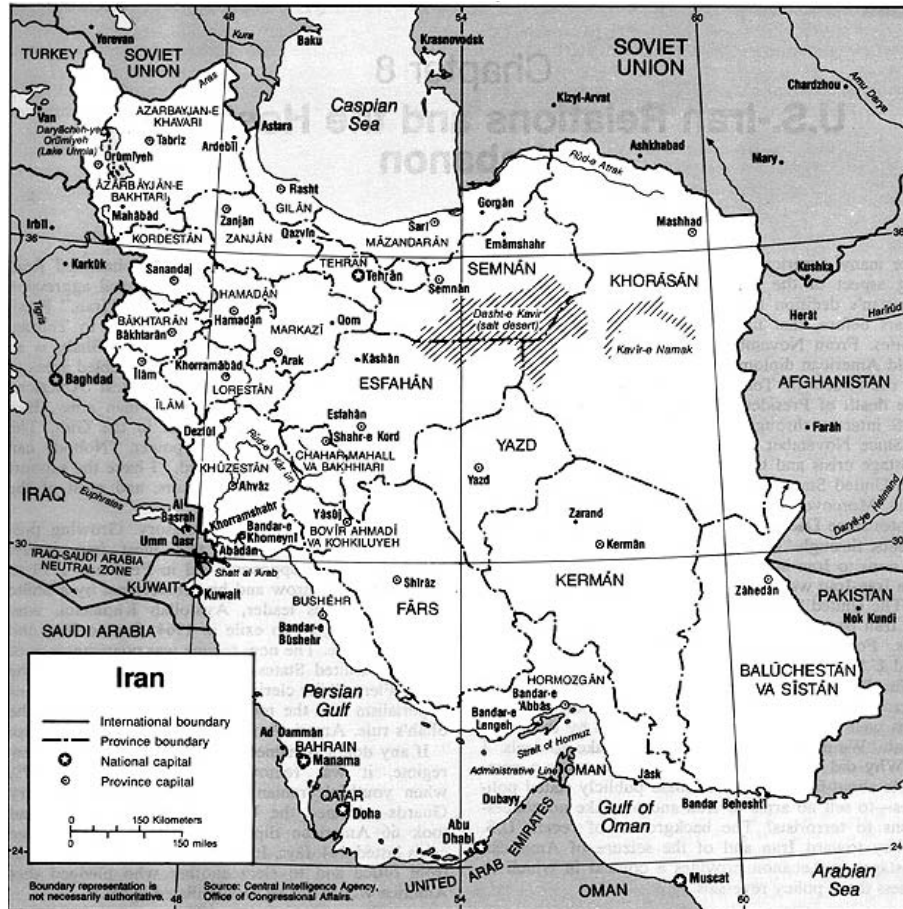


Figure 3. Map of Iran during the Cold War<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> University of San Diego College of Arts and Sciences, History Department, “Maps of the Cold War,” University of San Diego, <http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/20th/coldwarmaps.html> (accessed March 25, 2010).

## THE ADOPTION OF CONTAINMENT THEORY TO THE NEW LOOK

Containment theory, as practiced by the United States during the Cold War, can best be described as a collection of attempts to mitigate the ramifications of the World War II alliance with the USSR.<sup>37</sup> The United States' potential was realized in World War II. Seemingly, as both the arsenal of democracy and the bread basket for the world, the US was a nation of limitless resources able to tilt the balance in any international conflict to the side of her choosing. The world that resulted from the Allies victory over the Axis Powers found an open and direct competition between the US and USSR for influence over Third World governments and people. Even as European allies dealt with the economic and physical devastation that the war caused in their homeland, they were forced to respond to independence movements by their overseas colonies in India, Southeast Asia, and Africa. Widespread economic catastrophe and disparity plagued the Balkans, the Mediterranean, a divided Germany, a desolated Japan, and elsewhere. By the 1950s, one-third of the world was aligned with the USSR, one-third was aligned with the US, and one-third was underdeveloped and unaligned. The Cold War was a struggle for the one-third underdeveloped portion.<sup>38</sup>

The Soviet Union presented the new menace that resisted an international system led by American capitalism and democratic ideals. The Soviet Premier, Joseph Stalin, did not sufficiently honor agreements with the United States for the self-determination for the liberated and occupied countries resulting from the war. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's dream of super power cooperation following World War II, a primary reason he had sought the creation of the

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<sup>37</sup> John Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 4.

<sup>38</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 7.

United Nations (UN) and the permanent Security Council, never came to fruition.<sup>39</sup> The United States, slow to identify and challenge this Soviet threat, began an indiscriminate demobilization of wartime manpower immediately after the war ended. In May 1945, the US had sixty-eight divisions totaling three and a half million men in Europe. By March 1946, only 400,000 American troops remained in Europe.<sup>40</sup> However, the US did maintain a military edge in airpower, naval power, and a monopoly in nuclear power until 1949.<sup>41</sup>

The exhausted British could not protect the international status quo. For centuries, the UK had safeguarded a balance of power in the international system that benefitted a British Empire and fostered the economic, political, and military advancement of the US from a young democracy into a leading world super power. Over a span of four hundred years, the British had fought challengers to their power. Kings, emperors, and dictators alike were all defeated by the British, including: King Phillip II of Spain, Louis XIV and Napoleon of France, Kaiser Wilhelm II and Adolf Hitler of Germany. Now, the UK was fatigued, fiscally broke, and unable to fight Communist aggression from the Soviet Union. The burden to stop the Soviets fell on the United States.<sup>42</sup> Otherwise, the USSR would spread international communism all over the world. The Soviets had already succeeded in creating satellite states by gaining control wherever the Red Army was present and the America military commitment appeared weak.<sup>43</sup>

The Soviet Union was skeptical of her wartime alliance with the United States. The USSR had demanded that the US and UK open a Western Front against Germany in 1942 – 1943 to relieve the pressure on the Eastern Front. The second front finally came with the Normandy

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<sup>39</sup> John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 27.

<sup>40</sup> John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 32.

<sup>41</sup> Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 41.

<sup>42</sup> John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 39.

<sup>43</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969), 194.

invasion in June 1944. The USSR suspicion was that the delay by her allies was deliberately done for a more beneficial political situation after the war.<sup>44</sup> Irritation grew from the massive amounts of American economic assistance to nations recovering from the war which had created a group of core industrial nations opposed to the USSR. Furthermore, despite desperate need, the Soviet Union was specifically excluded from receiving assistance from the US. From the Soviet perspective, the United States was bullying the USSR in her relations with her neighbors while the Soviets were merely creating a territorial buffer after two continental wars with Germany over thirty years.<sup>45</sup>

The United States went through an evolution in dealing with Soviet aggression in the immediate aftermath of World War II before settling on containment. Secretary of State James Byrnes advocated a “policy of firmness and patience”, which stressed diplomatic negotiations based on the recent partnership that the US and USSR shared during the war. Yet Byrnes’ policy lacked punishment options for US decision-makers to use as the Soviet Union repeatedly violated agreements and imposed control over Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>46</sup>

Byrnes’ replacement as Secretary of State, General George Marshall, attempted to resolve the existing disputes, but new communist aggression hatched in Germany, Iran, Greece, Turkey, and Italy diverted his attention. Marshall championed massive economic assistance to the war-torn countries to suspend popular support for the communist uprisings while rebuilding those countries under the watchful supervision of the US.<sup>47</sup> The Marshall Plan, or the European

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<sup>44</sup> John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 23.

<sup>45</sup> Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 57.

<sup>46</sup> John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 35.

<sup>47</sup> Wilson Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 3.

Recovery Plan, was a nonmilitary method for fighting Soviet expansion. Recognizing that the United States had to take the leading role against communist expansion, Marshall said, “It no longer appears practical to continue what we once conceived as hemispheric defense as a satisfactory basis for our security. We are now concerned with the peace of the entire world.”<sup>48</sup> American leadership of the Free World was demonstrated through the announcement of the Truman Doctrine, the Berlin Airlift, creating the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Marshall Plan, MDAP programs, and the Korean War.

George Kennan, a leading state department expert on the Soviet Union, concluded that US policies of bargaining with the Soviets was not working. Kennan sent an explicit eight thousand word telegram in February 1946, known as the Long Telegram, which led to a policy revision in the Truman Administration. Kennan’s writings about changing the approach to the Soviets cannot be overemphasized in their historical significance. He wrote of containing the Soviets to areas already directly controlled and preventing the growth of their influence beyond those areas. Henry Kissinger later said, “George Kennan came as close to authoring the diplomatic doctrine of this era as any diplomat in our history.”<sup>49</sup> Truman was dealing with a series of international crises: Western Europe’s insecurity; Communist challenges in Italy, Greece, and China; the creation of the State of Israel; and continued Soviet military and eventual atomic power.<sup>50</sup> In an effort to counter these dilemmas, President Truman toughened US

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<sup>48</sup> Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 42.

<sup>49</sup> Wilson Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 348.

<sup>50</sup> Wilson Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 348.

policies through containment strategies. The Truman Doctrine was detailed in a March 1947 speech before a Joint Session of Congress.<sup>51</sup>

The Truman Doctrine articulated the revolution in the grand strategy of the United States. The new strategy had four key points. First, disagreements with the USSR would not be concealed from the world, but would be transparent. Second, a line was drawn around current USSR areas of influence; and the US would not offer any additional territorial concessions. Third, the United States military strength would be reconstituted while economic and military aid to allies would be favorably considered. Fourth, negotiations with the Soviets would only continue if they accepted current US positions.<sup>52</sup>

The President outlined containment, “I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugations by armed minorities or by outside pressure. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid and is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.”<sup>53</sup>

Did Kennan’s definition of containment translate into continuous military conflicts around the world between the US-USSR? The answer is a resounding no. Kennan and Dean Acheson prioritized the geographic areas that demanded US military responses into three groups: the Atlantic Community; the Mediterranean and Middle East (including Iran); Japan and the Philippines.<sup>54</sup> Containment would be tested in communist attempts at political subjugation in Greece, Italy, Iran, and even Korea.

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<sup>51</sup> John Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 19-22.

<sup>52</sup> John Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 21.

<sup>53</sup> John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 41.

<sup>54</sup> John Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 30.

Military enforcement of the Truman Doctrine by the United States occurred during the Civil War in Greece from 1948-1951 and following the invasion by the communist regime in the Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea (PDRK) against the US-backed government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in June 1950. Supported by the Soviet Union and Chairman Mao Tse-tung of China, PDRK aggression was resisted by a US-led coalition from the United Nations. The UN action attempted to rollback communist gains. Mao's Communist China would join the PDRK in their fight against the UN. Over the course of three years, the United States became trapped in a protracted and limited war on the Korean Peninsula, despite the fact that Korea had not previously been identified as strategically important by Acheson or Kennan.

Truman's Korean War commitment led to electoral dissent within the US capitalized on by the Presidential Campaign of Republican Dwight Eisenhower during the 1952 election. The Republican claim that the current foreign policy was self-defeating was convincing enough for voters to elect Eisenhower on the premise that there would be no more protracted wars like Korea.<sup>55</sup> John Foster Dulles, a Republican critic of the Truman strategies and the incoming Secretary of State, initiated a review toward approaching foreign policy referred to as New Look. According to Dulles, maintaining an adequate defense and an active foreign policy without going bankrupt was the great equation.<sup>56</sup> The Kennan-inspired containment strategy was bankrupting the US and, "alarming allies and eroding civil liberties."<sup>57</sup> During the tenure of the Eisenhower Administration, Dulles can be attributed with the rhetorical policies associated with brinkmanship and massive retaliation.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 101.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 32.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 49.

<sup>58</sup> Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 29.



In the words of Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), the New Look was an, “assessment of our strategic and logistic capabilities in the light of foreseeable deployments, certain technological advances, the world situation today, and with considerable estimating of future trends and developments. It is a searching review of this nation’s military requirements for security.”<sup>59</sup> Eisenhower’s New Look included containment, nuclear deterrence theory, and rollback strategies as vocalized by Dulles.<sup>60</sup> Eisenhower wanted to maximize the military advantages of the United States over the Soviet Union, specifically air and nuclear power. Dulles believed that the purpose of US foreign policy was to rollback Soviet gains. Other than the financial expense, he fundamentally opposed a foreign policy based solely on containment because Dulles envisioned a long term Soviet plan to pick off countries one by one through subversion and indirect aggression.<sup>61</sup> To preempt that, US threats of retaliation by strategic air power and nuclear weapons would cause the USSR and China to risk total war with the US if the line segregating the Communist World from the Free World was crossed. The US would not fight local ground wars, only respond with massive retaliation. The logical expectation of brinkmanship, the brink of war, was that the US would be able to deter future Korea-like situations. In this regard, Eisenhower’s New Look differed from the Truman Doctrine.<sup>62</sup>

For their part, the Soviets responded to US threats of war with continued military strength, calls for peace, and counter threats of their own. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko said, “I should like to advise Secretary Dulles not to resort to threats, because if

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<sup>59</sup> Dale Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency: Civil-Military Relations from FDR to George W. Bush* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 100.

<sup>60</sup> Wilson Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947 – 1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 338.

<sup>61</sup> John Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 140.

<sup>62</sup> John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 104-106.

anyone is frightened by these threats it is not the Soviet Union or the Soviet people.”<sup>63</sup> The Soviets continued to apply pressure to countries around the world, through their own assistance to nationalist movements, trade unions, or guerrilla forces.

Iran continued the view that the USSR was a threatening power during the post-war period into the 1950s. An alliance with the US was essential for the security of the Iranian state notwithstanding that an alliance between a great power and a smaller power, like the US and Iran, generally benefits the larger state. In addition to economic assistance, the long term alliance with the US was an opportunity for Iran to deter foreign aggression, enhance domestic stability, and elevate their status on the international stage. By comparison, the United States gained Iranian listening posts to monitor Soviet Union missile testing facilities in Central Asia and welcomed Iranian public support for South Vietnam.<sup>64</sup>

Modeled after NATO, the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), or the Baghdad Pact, was a mutual security alliance including member states Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom. The United States was not a full member but an observer to CENTO. Iran officially joined CENTO in 1955 after heated deliberations involving Iranian attempts to induce an enlarged military aid package from the US in exchange for membership.<sup>65</sup> This monograph does not address the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of CENTO; although it is worth noting that CENTO was dealt a serious setback after Iraq left the alliance following a coup in 1958.

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<sup>63</sup> Leo Grulio, ed. *Current Soviet Policies III* (New York, NY: Columbian University Press, 1960), 96.

<sup>64</sup> John Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 8, 12, 19, 45.

<sup>65</sup> Kenneth Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2004), 76.

## CONTEXT OF THE COUNTERCOUP

The United States interests in the Middle East consisted of five factors, each factor building on the previous. Primarily, the US sought to deny the USSR influence in the region. Secondly, continued access to Middle Eastern oil was important for revitalizing allied economies. Thirdly, the US wanted to stabilize the region and ensure access to oil. Fourthly, the US needed regional stability for the safety of the new State of Israel. Finally, oil revenues would return back to Western businesses through the purchase of Western equipment, services, and consumer items.<sup>66</sup> Because of the above reasons, the Shah was justified in his assertion referring to the strategic importance of Iran that, “History of the future will say that the Cold War really began in Iran.”<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union responded to and rebutted US assertions that the USSR was intent on global domination. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev said, “It has been alleged that the Soviet Union advances the principle of peaceful coexistence merely out of tactical considerations, considerations of expediency. Yet it is common knowledge that we have always, from the very first years of Soviet Power, stood with equal firmness for peaceful coexistence.”<sup>68</sup> To counter US claims that International Communism would export revolution and therefore needed containing, Khrushchev told the Twentieth Communist Party Congress that the Soviet Union would not interfere in the internal affairs of capitalist countries.<sup>69</sup> Facing a perceived threat from collective security pacts all around their borders, the Soviets remained vigilant in the disintegration of the imperialist colonial system from which the United Kingdom, France, and

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<sup>66</sup> John Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 18.

<sup>67</sup> Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for my Country* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 118.

<sup>68</sup> Leo Gruliov, ed. *Current Soviet Policies II* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1957), 36.

<sup>69</sup> Leo Gruliov, ed. *Current Soviet Policies II* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1957), 37.

the United States had functioned as beneficiaries. In the Middle East, the USSR wanted to keep countries away from alignments with the United States.

Calling the security pacts “aggressive blocs” and blaming the Cold War on the United States, Khrushchev warned wavering countries against joining them. “The new thing here is that the United States wants, by means of all kinds of blocs and pacts, to secure the dominating position in the capitalist world and to reduce its partners in the blocs to the status of obedient executors of its will.”<sup>70</sup> As an alternative to American domination, countries could turn to the Soviet Union for assistance, without political or military submission. Furthermore, Khrushchev described receiving aid from the US as a form of colonial enslavement due to the resulting dependant relationship established; and that pacts, like the Central Treaty Organization, were tools that the United States used to divide neighboring countries.<sup>71</sup>

The Soviet Union proclaimed five foreign policy tasks at the Twentieth Communist Party Congress. Three of which involved Iran and the Middle East. Khrushchev stated in the third, fourth, and fifth tasks that the USSR would respectively, “support countries which refuse to be involved in military blocs.”, “pursue a vigorous policy of further improving relationships with the United States of America...Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan.”, and “take necessary measures for further strengthening the defense potential of our socialist state.”<sup>72</sup> At least publicly, the Soviets sought their own anti-American containment strategy in the Middle East, and wanted to discourage Iran from joining the US sphere of influence. They denounced the popularly held belief in the US that local communist nationalists, supported by the USSR, would force violent revolutions in countries like Iran. The final foreign policy task reminded the US and her allies that the USSR would remain militarily strong and ready.

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<sup>70</sup> Leo Gruliow, ed. *Current Soviet Policies II* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1957), 32.

<sup>71</sup> Leo Gruliow, ed. *Current Soviet Policies II* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1957), 34.

<sup>72</sup> Leo Gruliow, ed. *Current Soviet Policies II* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1957), 38.

The Cold War rivalry was not the only contentious issue impacting Iran in the 1950s. Dean Acheson underlines the source of grievances that finally forced the United States into intervention in Iran, “The most prolific causes of conflict, controversy, and unrest were the discovery and development in the Persian Gulf area of immense oil deposits.”<sup>73</sup> Growing tensions with the United Kingdom over oil concessions negotiated between the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), owned by the UK government, and previous Iranian rulers fueled overt hostility toward the British by the late 1940s. As the greatest ally of the UK, the United States shared in the resentment from the Iranian people over the inequitable oil deal. Realizing that Iran was important enough for the US to prevent Soviet influence from growing in the region yet unwilling to intervene in the oil dispute, an Iranian was quoted, “Why should a poor nation such as ours that has gone through years of poverty be armed to defend selfish interests of the millionaires of America and England?”<sup>74</sup> The reaction against Anglo-American influence opened the door for Mohammed Mossadeq to gain popular domestic support for reform through his leadership of the Iranian nationalist movement. The Tudeh Party, the local Communist Party financially supported by the USSR, attempted to hijack Iranian nationalism as a springboard to greater political power. The coincidence between the association of Mossadeq and the Tudeh Party would doom both actors and lead to reinstatement of a more powerful Shah tied to the US.<sup>75</sup>

Mohammed Mossadeq, Prime Minister of Iran from April 1951 until August 1953, strained relations with the United States and the United Kingdom.<sup>76</sup> Mossadeq refused to give assurances for the continuation of the meager US military assistance and worried Ambassador

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<sup>73</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1969), 499.

<sup>74</sup> James Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 50.

<sup>75</sup> Kenneth Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle* (New York: Random House, 2004), 73.

<sup>76</sup> Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 83.

Loy Henderson that Mossadeq was incrementally moving Iran to alignment with the USSR. Termination of US military aid would threaten US interests in both Iran and the Persian Gulf. In a decision that finally facilitated intervention against him, Mossadeq foolishly nationalized the Iranian oil industry. The UK government was dependent on AIOC profits for financial solvency at a time when the British were still recovering from WWII. Caught in the middle between allies over the oil dispute, the United States responded to oil nationalization by cutting military aid to Iran. Concurrently, US attempts to negotiate the dispute were fruitless as Mossadeq became harder to deal with. “One day he would appear to offer arbitration or compensation; the next, to withdraw his offer,” remarked Acheson of the negotiations.<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile, the weak constitutional monarch, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, vocalized his support for military aid and cooperation with the Americans, repeal of the nationalization law, and negotiation with the AIOC.<sup>78</sup> Linking Mossadeq to the Tudeh Party, the Shah said, “(His) real objective was apparently to throw out the British but let in the Reds.”<sup>79</sup>



Figure 4. Dean Acheson with Mohammed Mossadeq, circa 1951<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969), 679.

<sup>78</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-1954 Volume X Iran 1951-1955* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1989), 306-308.

<sup>79</sup> Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 97.

<sup>80</sup> Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, “Truman Library Photographs,” Truman Library, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/photographs/search.php?access=selectbyname&nameid=1593> (accessed March 28,

Tribalism, feudalism, and religion had played critical roles in the political successes and failures of the central authorities in Iran since the sixteenth century. Iran's tribal divisions enabled foreign powers, specifically the United Kingdom and Russia, to divide the Iranian people and reward a select few tribal leaders that acquiesced to foreign domination. Three tribal groups existed in the vast countryside: pastoral, settled nomadism, and tribal confederacies. The pastoral tribes consisted of the Bakhtiaris in the West, the Qashqais in the South, and the Baluchs in the South East. Settled nomadic tribes, of which the Shahsevon tribe in Northern Azerbaijan was the largest, traditionally spent half of the year migrating and the other half of the year settled. Tribal confederacies were composed of ethnic groups that were forced to settle and restricted to those areas by the central Iranian authorities. The Kurds in Western Iran were the largest example. Beginning with the reign of Reza Shah in 1925, the tribes had been politically inconspicuous, and would remain that way through the 1950s.<sup>81</sup>

Sixty-nine percent of Iran's population lived in rural areas in the 1950s, and were subject to the harsh conditions of feudalism in Iranian society. Constitutionally, wealthy landowners leased land to peasants on an annual basis, and were free to raise prices or abruptly evict tenants at their discretion. The landowners supported the status quo that the Shah's aristocracy afforded them throughout the 1940s and 1950s. However, the Shah would enact Land Reform policies in the early 1960s that took land holdings away from one thousand of the largest landowners in Iran and redistributed it to the peasants, costing the regime the wealthy landowners support which he had in the early 1950s.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Mehran Kamrava, *The Political History of Modern Iran* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 118-119.

<sup>82</sup> Mehran Kamrava, *The Political History of Modern Iran* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 124-126.

Religion has been the most important cultural factor in modern Iran. The formal title given to the monarch, the Shah, literally translates to “Sultan of the Shiites”<sup>83</sup> and the name of the Shahsevon tribe translates to “lovers of the Shah.”<sup>84</sup> Religion led to development of political autocracy and revolutionary movements. It served as either the central theme in the political establishment or, if a religious vacuum existed, as the main tenant of the opposition. In Iran in 1953, the eminent cleric, Hussein Burujedi, did not advocate opposition to an Iranian state dominated by the Shah. During the period from 1953 until the early 1960s, Shiites practiced “quietism”, in which they did not speak out against the Shah monarchy. Rouhollah Khomeini, a radical cleric that would serve the leading role in the Islamic Revolution in the 1970s, reversed this policy.<sup>85</sup> Thus, as the Shah looked at the oil nationalization crises in 1953, his political opposition came from two sources: the Tudeh Party and Mossadeq.

Iranians had a long struggle through the centuries rejecting imperialists and colonizers. Mossadeq fueled the growing opposition to autocracy, following foreign intervention in 1941, through claims for true national independence and progress. The Tudeh Party organized workers in the oil fields and rallied support around class politics and anti-imperialism. The Tudeh Party allied with Azeri and Kurdish separatists at the ballot box and together the communists began flavoring their rhetoric similar to Mossadeq’s calls for Iranian freedom from foreign dependence. Mossadeq’s tenure as Prime Minister resulted in challenges and contests over the roles and relationships of the Iranian monarchy, the Iranian legislative body, or the Majiles, and the ministers.<sup>86</sup> The Shah, with outside help, would remove his opposition, restore a stronger

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<sup>83</sup> Joanna de Groot, *Religion, Culture and Politics in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris and Company, 2007), 169.

<sup>84</sup> Mehran Kamrava, *The Political History of Modern Iran* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 119.

<sup>85</sup> Mehran Kamrava, *The Political History of Modern Iran* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 129, 133.

<sup>86</sup> Joanna de Groot, *Religion, Culture and Politics in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris and Company, 2007), 161-163, 216.



position for himself, and place Iran in the middle of the geopolitical Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.

## CASE STUDY OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO IRAN FROM 1953-1959

The decision by the US and UK to assist in the removal of Mossadeq came down to an analysis of the immediate objectives for both the allies. The extraction and marketing of Iranian oil by the AIOC was vital to the highly in debt UK government. The American's worst fear was that Communist opportunists would take over Iran and allow Soviet expansion into the Middle East. Acheson said, "Mossadeq's fall was imminent."<sup>87</sup> Decisively, the Eisenhower Administration approved the operation to remove Mossadeq, in cooperation with the UK and support of the Shah of Iran.

The political strength of the Shah was amplified following the US and UK planned counter coup, or forced retirement, against Mossadeq. "I owe my throne to God, my people, my army – and to you (the US)!" a grateful Shah told the CIA on 23 August 1953.<sup>88</sup> The Shah later imprisoned Mossadeq for three years and instituted martial law until 1957 under the direction of loyal senior Army officers.<sup>89</sup> The Shah did not order violent retributions against former Mossadeq followers. Only one die hard Mossadeq supporter was executed, Foreign Minister Hussein Fatemi. The Tudeh Party was outlawed, which resulted in a purge of hundreds of officers from the army. The Shah also began cracking down on Islamic Fundamentalists.<sup>90</sup>

After the counter coup, an oil agreement was reached, although the settlement was not entirely cheered by the UK. AIOC was forced to share oil contracts with US and Dutch oil companies.<sup>91</sup> On a greater scale, the counter coup had the indirect effect of replacing the historic

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<sup>87</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1969), 662.

<sup>88</sup> Kermit Roosevelt, *Counter coup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 199.

<sup>89</sup> Kenneth Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2004), 78.

<sup>90</sup> Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 92-93.

<sup>91</sup> Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New-Look National Security Policy, 1953-1961* (New York, NY: Saint Martin's Press, 1996), 125.

UK-USSR competition in Iran with a new US-USSR rivalry. Due to the circumstances that strengthened his position, the Shah had a dependency relationship with the US for his own political survival. He suppressed internal opposition groups, rising Arab nationalists, and the Soviet Union.<sup>92</sup> The relationship with the US benefited the Shah through validating his absolute rule over Iran. In fact, despite the establishment of a two party system in 1957, the Shah controlled both political parties and not a single branch of the government could act independent of his desires.<sup>93</sup> The Majiles existed as a shadow of its former self. The Iranian Prime Minister effectively became the “Shah’s Executive Assistant”.<sup>94</sup> But rewinding to August 1953, Iran was in dire economic straits. The oil industry had deteriorated due to the British boycott following nationalization. The national economy was in shambles, and the military was weak and ineffective. If the Shah was to consolidate his power and turn the oil industry into a profitable venture, significant amounts of MSP from President Eisenhower and the USG was necessary.

The restoration of the Iranian economy was equally as important to Eisenhower as improving the Iranian Armed Forces. Originally, the intent was for the United States to provide financial aid to Iran for the first two years following Mossadeq’s removal until oil and tax revenue could return.<sup>95</sup> President Eisenhower stated, “It will not be easy for the Iranian economy to be restored, even if her refineries again began to operate...However, this is a problem that we should be able to help.” He reaffirmed this commitment to Iran in 1953 by donating \$23.5 million in technical assistance and granting \$45 million in emergency aid.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 45-47.

<sup>93</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 58-63.

<sup>94</sup> Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 93.

<sup>95</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 777.

<sup>96</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 47, 51.

The United States government (USG) categorized countries receiving Mutual Security Program (MSP) assistance based on the nature of the problems and the level of contributions each specific country could share in a worldwide conflict with the Sino-Soviet bloc. Category I countries were highly industrial nations like NATO members, Japan, and Australia. Category II countries were not highly industrial nations, but with assistance could contribute significant military forces like Greece, Turkey, and the Republic of Korea. Category III countries were in the Middle East and Southeast Asia and could only provide marginal military forces, but their denial to the USSR was critical. Finally, Category IV countries had sufficient military forces but primarily needed economic assistance, such as Latin American countries, the Philippines, and India.<sup>97</sup> The MSP aid sought to address both deterrence and defensive capabilities should a shooting war, or hot war, commence. Iran was a Category III nation.

In October 1953, the Shah used the Iranian Army as a police-type force that would maintain internal order. The US determined that a strengthened and trained Gendarmerie could shift and expand the Iranian Army to capabilities of delaying foreign invasion. The organization of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) into two advisory groups, the ARMISH and the GENMISH, structured the advisory effort to build capacity against both external and internal threats. The United States also promoted membership in the regional alliance, CENTO, as a collective approach for Middle East defense.<sup>98</sup>

Senior USG policy-makers did not want MSP aid to create an Iranian military establishment that would overburden the delicate Iranian economy still on life support.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 17-18.

<sup>98</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952 – 1954, Volume X Iran 1951-1954* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1989), 831,884, 928-929.

<sup>99</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 677.

President Eisenhower sought solutions to the dilemma that a country like Iran presented to MSP. Modernizing foreign militaries was a component of US domestic cost-cutting strategies that acknowledged indigenous forces were cheaper to maintain than a large, mobilized US military. However, the dilemma that Eisenhower faced was that the passing of the cost to these fragile allies could bankrupt them. Therefore, he created the Prochnow Committee to consider the problems of under developed countries in maintaining large forces that were currently reliant on US military aid. Citing failures to obtain information from USG agencies reference to the basis that assistance was calculated, the reality of the need, and the actual US war plans that supported MSP countries are reasons the committee failed to offer solutions to the President.<sup>100</sup>



Figure 5. The Shah of Iran and President Eisenhower, circa 1954<sup>101</sup>

The National Security Council (NSC) framed the expectations of United States military assistance in 1955, in NSC 5402/1, by declaring that the objectives of US aid was to create, “Iranian Armed Forces capable of maintain(ing) internal security and having defensive delaying capabilities which would make a useful contribution to Middle East defense.”<sup>102</sup> Patching Iran

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<sup>100</sup> Office of the White House, *The President’s Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 264.

<sup>101</sup> Voltaire International, “The 1991 Gulf Massacre,” by Nafeez Mossadeq Ahmed, <http://www.voltairenet.org/article162465.html> (accessed March 28, 2010).

<sup>102</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 678.

together with alliance partners Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, the UK, and the United States warned the USSR that military aggression into the Northern Tier of the Middle East would initiate the broader war that Dulles repeatedly threatened.

Positive Nationalism was the Shah's term for Iran's foreign policy strategy from 1953 until the early 1960s, which was based on Iran making agreements based on Iranian interests regardless of wishes of the others states. He had close relations with Israel and Kurdish rebels in Iraq as a balance against perceived threats from rising Arab nationalism.<sup>103</sup> The Shah continued the historical tradition of the monarch using the military as an instrument of manipulation over the people. Economically, the Shah did reform the Iranian oil industry. Iran's annual oil income grew from \$22.5 million in 1954 to \$285 million by 1960. Although, the increased revenue still was not enough to defray the military expenses that the Shah wanted.<sup>104</sup>

The composition and organization of the Iranian security forces enabled the Shah to target opposition groups around the country. The Iranian Army consisted of eight divisions organized into three field armies. Many Army officers were assigned to the Gendarmerie, which sub-divided Iran into twelve districts. The Gendarmerie stationed a brigade size element in four districts, and a regimental size force in the remaining eight districts.<sup>105</sup> GENMISH, flourished during this decade and continued through the reign of the Shah. Of note, the Tehran Police Department drove jeeps marked with the GENMISH insignia during the Islamic Revolution.<sup>106</sup>

The NSC defined a strategic course with four goals of US military aid to Iran. First, the US would develop Iranian defensive delaying capabilities to contribute to the collective Middle East defense. Second, military assistance would improve the Iranian military to maintain internal

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<sup>103</sup> George Lenczowski, *Iran under the Pahlavis* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 374.

<sup>104</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980) 51, 53.

<sup>105</sup> Ministry of Information, *Iran* (Tehran, Iran: Offset Press, 1971), 102-106.

<sup>106</sup> Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 103.

security. Third, the increase in aid, equipment, and training would improve the prestige of the Shah. Finally, US military assistance would boost Iranian confidence in, and the morale of, the military.<sup>107</sup>

Encouraging Iran to participate in a Middle East defense pact in 1955, was difficult. Iran wanted a bilateral relationship with the United States, while remaining noncommittal in foreign policy entanglements involving their historic rivals, Iraq and Turkey. Additionally, the Turkish and Pakistani militaries confided their low overall opinion in the competence of the Iranian Armed Forces to Admiral Radford.<sup>108</sup> The long standing ties that the UK had in the region, and the most likely inclusion of the British in a Middle East defense pact, frustrated the negotiations with Iran. John Dulles actually tried discouraging Iran from joining CENTO.<sup>109</sup> Repeatedly, the Shah was willing to participate in the collective security pact, but only if the US would build the military capacity of Iran.<sup>110</sup> Not lost on the Eisenhower Administration was that building Iranian military capacity would be enormously expensive to the United States at a time when balancing federal budgets was a priority.

The United States programmed more than \$124 million in military aid to Iran from 1950 to January 1955. However, some of that assistance was unfunded.<sup>111</sup> In fact, Defense Secretary Wilson released a memo in 1955, detailing that Military Defense Assistance Programs worldwide from 1950-1955 were \$500 million unfunded.<sup>112</sup> Combined with other economic and

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<sup>107</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 678.

<sup>108</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 687.

<sup>109</sup> Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 97.

<sup>110</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 746.

<sup>111</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 676.

<sup>112</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991),762.

non-military aid from the United States, total aid had showered into Iran at a rate of \$5 million a month since September 1953.<sup>113</sup> Before backfilling previously unfunded money or committing more military assistance, the NSC asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to evaluate the Iranian Armed Forces and to detail force objectives, missions, specified military objectives, and personnel strength goals. Furthermore, the DOS told senior Iranian leaders that the US would not increase military assistance exclusively because Iran joined CENTO.<sup>114</sup> In hindsight, 1956 was the most critical year for US military assistance to Iran. Either aid would be dramatically reduced to a level that provided minimal assistance, or the forthcoming report would justify claims that Iran was central to strategies against the USSR in the Middle East and funding priorities would adjust to widen Iranian capabilities.

The JCS report, released in July 1956, spotlighted that the US had given \$75 million in direct military assistance and an additional \$18 million for military construction through the time of the report.<sup>115</sup> The report reinforced that Iran must be capable of fighting a defensive delaying operation. The force objectives for the Iranian Armed Forces identified the desired size of each service. Iran's Army would require six full infantry divisions, six reduced infantry divisions, and five brigades. The Iranian Navy requirement to patrol the Iranian Coast along the Persian Gulf demanded eleven combatant vessels consisting of three gunboats, four patrol craft, and four minesweepers. The Air Force required five squadrons composed of three fighter squadrons, one reconnaissance squadron, and one transport squadron.<sup>116</sup> Once the optimal force structure for the

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<sup>113</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 691.

<sup>114</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991),773.

<sup>115</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 829.

<sup>116</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 830.



Iranian military was laid out, the report identified specific missions and military objectives for the Iranian military to execute as a member of CENTO.

The JCS expected the Iranian Armed Forces to assist in maintaining internal security, resist external aggression, and participate in regional defense. The JCS report emphasized the long term benefits of modernization versus the expansion of the Iranian military. Three military objectives for the military assistance were identified. First, deny Western Iran to the Soviet bloc. The second objective was to develop Iranian internal security and defensive delay capacity. The last objective was for full Iranian participation in CENTO. The recommended end strength for the military to accomplish these objectives was 170,000 military personnel and a 22,000 manned Gendarmerie police force.<sup>117</sup> Expanding Gendarmerie would enable the transfer of Army units to better defensive positions.<sup>118</sup> Finally, the JCS report forecasted that Iranian forces must curb between fifteen to twenty Soviet Divisions at the Zagros Mountains.<sup>119</sup>

On 5 January 1957, President Eisenhower introduced the Middle East Resolution, later known as the Eisenhower Doctrine, before a joint session of Congress. Determined to prevent communist expansion into the Middle East, the doctrine allowed the Shah to use official American foreign policy positions to substantiate claims for additional US aid and military equipment. Eisenhower wanted Congressional authorization to, “Assist any nation or group of nations in the general area of the Middle East in the development of economic strength....to include the employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the

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<sup>117</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 830-831.

<sup>118</sup>Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 737.

<sup>119</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955 – 1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq*(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991),831.

territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism.”<sup>120</sup>

The National Security Council released long range policy guidance for the Middle East in January 1958. Through that guidance, the assertion continued that the United States still held “the major responsibility toward the area.”<sup>121</sup> Increasingly, Iran was feeling abandoned by the US in relation to national security. The State Department recognized that CENTO was not expressive enough in reassuring the Shah about the US commitment. Other CENTO allies had additional collective security alliances with the US. Turkey was in NATO while Pakistan was a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Iran was solely a member of CENTO and did not yet share a Bilateral Defense Treaty with the US.<sup>122</sup> French President Charles DeGaulle proposed expanding NATO to include Iran, to the delight of the Shah, without serious support from the NATO allies.<sup>123</sup>

While some leaders in Iran proposed balancing budgets, the Shah wanted a military buildup similar to Turkey and Pakistan.<sup>124</sup> President Eisenhower weighed in and told the Shah that if he wanted a larger military, then Iran’s fiscal affairs must be reformed in order to support the larger force. Eisenhower made it clear that the US would not pay for the maintenance of a larger Iranian military. In response, the Shah dismissed American promises of strategic retaliation for aggression against Iran and demanded a more visible military with modern weapons. The Shah, aware of Eisenhower’s interest in reducing defense spending, highlighted

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<sup>120</sup> Department of State, *American Foreign Policy Current Documents 1957* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), 788.

<sup>121</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 17-24.

<sup>122</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 227.

<sup>123</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 105.

<sup>124</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 37.

that the maintenance of a mission-ready Iranian Army Division was five percent the cost of a similar US Army Division.<sup>125</sup>

Assurances from senior leaders including Eisenhower, Dulles, and UN Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge did not publicly impress the Shah. Privately, in 1958, he admitted to the US Ambassador to Iran, Selden Chapin, that current Iranian forces are “more than ample for internal security”.<sup>126</sup> The differences with the US were not just on the size or capability of the Iranian military, but the Shah also resented the JCS defensive strategies for Iran.

In the event of Soviet invasion, the US plan was for the US-Iranian coalition to defend Azerbaijan and the Elburs Mountains north of Tehran, at the expense of Eastern Iran. Iran placed considerable importance on the defense of the Northeastern corner of the country. While the JCS report only cited one “token” division in Eastern Iran, the Shah wanted at least five full army divisions stationed there. The impasse was resolved during a personal meeting between Eisenhower and the Shah at a State Visit in July 1958. The compromise traded US construction of temporary facilities in the northeast and cyclic rotation of Iranian units into those areas, but permanent basing for the Army units would follow the JCS plans. Additionally, kept secret from the Shah, the US allocated but never designated specific forces for the defense of Iran.<sup>127</sup>

As the decade ended, the Shah still had mounting fears of Iran’s enemies and requests for the Eisenhower Administration. An explosion in coups and revolutions that marked Arab politics at the time, naturally made the Shah nervous. He was preoccupied with an invasion by Iraq or by radical Arab groups arming Iranian opposition groups against the Shah. Additionally,

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<sup>125</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 531, 533, 536.

<sup>126</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 533, 549.

<sup>127</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 555-556.

the Shah pursued a full US commitment to CENTO through full membership status. Eisenhower was reluctant to do that. Instead, he issued the Eisenhower Doctrine.<sup>128</sup>

By 1959, the perception that the Shah was spending too much money and time on his overly ambitious plans for the military was obvious to the new Secretary of State, Christian Herter. Herter proposed reducing military and economic aid to force Iran into reassessing their spending priorities and to decrease expenses. Although Herter's proposal was not enacted during the Eisenhower Administration, the following administration of President John Kennedy pursued this recommendation. In the early 1960s, the US government and the International Monetary Fund were successful in getting Iran to slow down their escalating expenditures.<sup>129</sup>

Total military assistance to Iran under MSP programs over the last three years of the decade remained high. Direct military MSP was \$42.8 million in 1957, \$57.5 million in 1958, and \$56.9 million in 1959. Combined with economic assistance to Iran under MSP through 1958, the US had provided over \$700 million. That money equipped twelve infantry divisions, five independent brigades, four air squadrons, and six naval vessels; supplied a thirty day stockpile of war ammunition, spare parts, and miscellaneous equipment. The money funded the construction of Dizful Air Base, improved Mehrabad Air Base, and constructed army barracks that supported the redeployment to battle positions in the Elburz Mountains. Major end items delivered through 1958 included: sixty F84G aircraft, eight C47 aircraft, eleven T33A aircraft, an additional sixty-eight assorted training aircraft, two patrol boats, two landing ships, one hundred and fifteen tanks, ninety-nine 90mm guns, fifty-five 76mm guns, over seven thousand trucks, seventy-four 155mm howitzers, seventy-two 105mm howitzers, eighty-five 106mm rifles, over six hundred 57mm guns, and over six hundred SCR radios. During discussions

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<sup>128</sup> Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 98-99.

<sup>129</sup> Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 102-103.

between Eisenhower and the Shah in 1958, the Shah accepted additional military hardware including: two hundred seventy-two M47 tanks at a cost of \$11.8 million, four coastal minesweepers at a cost of \$10 million, fourteen RT-33 tactical reconnaissance aircraft at a cost of \$3.1 million, and fifty-two F86F fighter bombers at a cost of \$18.5 million.<sup>130</sup>

US aid to the Iranian Navy increased from \$166 million from 1949-1953 to \$387 million during 1953-1960.<sup>131</sup> The numbers of military advisors and military technicians in Iran grew exponentially over the years following the initial period of 1953-1959. The Nixon Doctrine, which allowed for sales of all military hardware in the United States inventory, short of nuclear weapons, led to thirty-six hundred technicians in 1973 and ten thousand technicians in 1978. Had the Islamic Revolution not have stopped the technical exchange, fifty thousand advisors would have been required by 1980.<sup>132</sup>

The outpouring of military equipment that the United States provided Iran in the 1950s demonstrated the US commitment to a regional partner. But, although the list of military hardware shared with Iran is extensive, the US left the Shah ill-equipped to wage offensive operations against her neighbors. Iran advanced and modernized the weapons programs to meet the US strategic desire of containing Soviet expansion; however the US was not interested in arming a state like Iran for them to simply invade Iraq and dominate the region. The US wanted a Soviet-free Middle East, that continued to export oil to the West, and was stable enough for the new State of Israel.

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<sup>130</sup> Department of the State., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 557-559.

<sup>131</sup> John Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 44.

<sup>132</sup> John Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 69.

Relations between the United States and Iran remained generally strong through the end of the Shah's reign, although the Shah exerted more and more independence from the desires and wishes of US Presidents after Eisenhower. He admired the actions of French President Charles De Gaulle in rebuking the NATO alliance in the late 1960s and claimed to have modeled his international policies along a similar path. To ease Soviet fears, the Shah eventually guaranteed Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev that he would not allow the United States to base missiles in Iran, and tensions between the two countries decreased over time.<sup>133</sup> The Shah praised Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev and Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu, and he purchased military equipment from Czechoslovakia.<sup>134</sup> Although he possessed a streak of independence, the Shah did lead the "Safari Club", an informal block of Middle East and Africa countries dedicated to stopping the spread of communism into the Third World. On the US side, President Kennedy reduced military aid to Iran by fifty percent, focusing more on economic aid.<sup>135</sup> Later, President Nixon announced that American allies would receive help from the US, but that each country was ultimately responsible for their own defense.<sup>136</sup>

Hard-line actions by the Shah against opposition groups that began during the Eisenhower Administration planted the seeds for the widespread dissension that broke out and forced the Shah from power in 1979. The first student protests, small and isolated, against alleged human rights abuses by the SAVAK occurred in the United States in 1959.<sup>137</sup> On 7 January 1978, Iranian students agitated by Islamic Clerics began rioting, calling for nation-wide strikes, and street protests lasted for thirteen months. The Shah left Iran forever after he lost both

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<sup>133</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 69.

<sup>134</sup> Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Answer to History* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), 132, 138.

<sup>135</sup> John Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 20, 46.

<sup>136</sup> John Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945 – 1992* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 56.

<sup>137</sup> Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Answer to History* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), 22.

domestic control and the confidence from the administration of President Carter.<sup>138</sup> Today, the US continues to receive considerable criticism by Islamic Clerics for her role in ousting Mossadeq; funding, equipping, and training the Iranian military and security forces; and for the false perception that the US ignored human right violations by the Shah. The charge that the United States did not try to change the Shah's domestic policies ignores the fact that the US did propose change, yet was resented by the Shah for interference in his sovereign affairs.<sup>139</sup>

The MAAG in Iran faced a difficult task in modernizing and training the Iranian Armed Forces in the 1950s. Iranians lacked the combat experience from WWII and Korean War of the American advisors. Iran lacked adequate equipment and training to face the devastating potential of the Soviet Red Army. The MAAG tried to retrain the Iranian Army away from police-type tasks, field new equipment, and introduce the joint land and air warfare capabilities for a forecasted defensive fight against the Soviets. Four hundred forty-four total advisors were tasked with these responsibilities by 1958.<sup>140</sup>

ARMISH advisors first recognized that the Iranian Army was disjointed in its array of forces around major population centers like Tehran and border areas with the USSR, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In concert with the JCS objectives for a defensive campaign against a Soviet invasion, the ARMISH identified that redeployment and consolidation of Iranian Army units around the mountain ranges north of Tehran and in staging areas in the south would best fill gaps along the defensive sector. The relocation led to the Chief of the MAAG, Brigadier General McClure, to ask for \$360 million for airfield construction, ammunition storage, military

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<sup>138</sup> Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Answer to History* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), 153-156.

<sup>139</sup> Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 190), 103.

<sup>140</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 346.

relocation costs, construction for new housing, and the construction of a strategic transportation network.<sup>141</sup>

The ARMISH, which included both the US Army and US Air Force advisors, identified Iranian military leaders with the potential for loyal and long lasting service to the Shah and sent them to the US for advanced military education to improve the institutional training knowledge and experiences. As a result, over half of Iran's Division Commanders and key staff were trained at either, the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth or at the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base. All pilots in the Iranian Air Force were US trained.<sup>142</sup> More than two thousand Iranian officers were trained in the US in the 1950s.<sup>143</sup> Worldwide, the US military brought more than sixteen thousand officers to military schools in the continental United States by 1959.<sup>144</sup>

Weapons modernization programs were difficult for the MAAG to manage because of the direct political injections by the Shah and Senior USG leaders. The types, capabilities, and numbers of weapons needed by Iranian military were changed at levels above the local MAAG in Iran. Until long range plans were formulated, advisors felt that the necessary modernization programs that they recommended were deliberately parceled out piecemeal. Diplomats and politicians used modernization programs as bargaining chips over the Shah, without full consideration for the rapid modernization of the Iranian military that the MAAG was tasked to accomplish.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-1954 Volume X, Iran 1951-1955* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1989), 1052.

<sup>142</sup> United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Report of the Staff Survey Team of the Subcommittee for Review of the Military Security Programs on Military Assistance to Korea, Thailand, and Iran* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 14.

<sup>143</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 54.

<sup>144</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 168.

<sup>145</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance*



The ARMISH focused the training of the local military unit at the tactical, or battalion, level. The first task advisors tackled was to increase the local literacy rate of each unit. Iran's military lacked technical or doctrinal manuals. Therefore, rather than expect the Iranian military to produce manuals, a literate military organization could eventually read manuals produced by the US Army. All training was designed around basic soldier technical skills. Next, ARMISH advisors stressed the important role that the Iranian Armed Forces could serve in unifying the country, modeled after the motto at the United States Military Academy of "Duty, Honor, Country". Finally, advisors encouraged the use of English as a second language.<sup>146</sup>

Interagency cooperation for advisory efforts was essential. The International Cooperation Administration, a DOS agency, ran mutual security programs after July 1955.<sup>147</sup> President Eisenhower believed that a major weapon in the United States arsenal to win the Cold War was maximum use of mutual security programs.<sup>148</sup> Therefore, he committed tremendous amounts of economic, military, and technical assistance to countries all over the world. He called on investigations, reviews, and studies to improve MSP assistance and to propose increased efficiencies in the delivery of military hardware. The whole of government approach by the Eisenhower Administration included: deploying military advisors, increasing State Department personnel in Embassies, opening up attendance to American educational institutions to foreign allies, and contracting thousands of technical experts to help developing countries

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*Program Volume II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960),82.

<sup>146</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 55.

<sup>147</sup> Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New Look National Security Policy, 1953-1961* (New York, NY: Saint Martin's Press, 1996), 169.

<sup>148</sup> Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New Look National Security Policy, 1953-1961* (New York, NY: Saint Martin's Press, 1996), 224.

modernize their military, economy, and infrastructure. During the 1950s, more than ten thousand American economic, technical, and military advisors served in Iran.<sup>149</sup>

Were the MAAG advisors effective at training an Iranian military that was lightly regarded by her neighbors in 1953 into a better fighting force? Fast forwarding to the 1960s, Iran was spending approximately six percent of its Gross National Product on the armed forces numbering more than two hundred thousand personnel. The Army's one hundred seventy thousand troops had light infantry, motorized, and armored capabilities. The Navy's almost forty ships provided coastal patrolling, customs enforcement, port security, and monitored sea traffic in and out of the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz. The Air Force, the favorite service of the Shah, had about two hundred and twenty aircraft consisting of reconnaissance, transport, training, and fighter aircraft. The Gendarmerie provided internal security with twenty-three thousand personnel. Iraq, the neighbor that the Shah feared invasion from other than the USSR, spent thirty percent less on defense and had a smaller Army, Navy, Air Force, and internal security forces.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 54.

<sup>150</sup> Laurence Ewing and Robert Sellers, eds. *The Reference Handbook of the Armed Forces of the World, 1966* (Washington, D. C.: Robert Sellers and Associates, 1966), 76-78.

## FINDINGS AND SYNTHESIS

The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program, chaired by William Draper, reviewed the shortcomings and the practices of the advisory effort through 1959. The committee noted deficiencies in advisor training, the inefficiency of annual budgeting compared to long term budgeting, and the existing confusion between the role of the DOS and DOD over the administration of military assistance programs. Draper's Committee praised the successes of MSP with the declaration that, "There is indeed no precedent in all history for what our country has done under the mutual security programs."<sup>151</sup> Specific to Iran, the study said, "United States technical, military, and economical assistance has played an indispensable part in Iran's continued survival in the face of these pressures (internal and USSR)."<sup>152</sup>

The President's Committee recommended several changes to the budgeting, administration, and training of the MSP programs. First, budgeting must be planned three to five years in advance. Second, MSP appropriations would be forecasted from the DOD to center responsibility of administration. Third, the military assistance plans would require consensus of both the DOS and DOD. Fourth, DOD would be responsible for operational planning, programming, and execution. Fifth, the DOD would establish the position of Director of Military Assistance to oversee MSP. Sixth, highly qualified advisors must be selected and trained to standards comparable to the Military Attaché System. Increasing the quality of the

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<sup>151</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 3-4, 8, 23, 37.

<sup>152</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 143.

advisors included the mandatory attendance to the training course, longer tours, and a requirement for language proficiency.<sup>153</sup>

Likewise, an investigation on military assistance in 1960 by the United States Congress found several inadequacies in the military advisory effort to Iran during the 1950s. First, a lack of joint integration by the respective services in logistical support led to duplicated ordering of jeeps, trucks, and automotive repair parts. Second, echoing the President's Committee, the DOD budgetary requirement to forecast financial needs at least eighteen months in advance was challenged for the MAAG to predict the appropriate equipment, training, and skills that would be needed for the Iranians. Third, the annual rotation of unaccompanied advisors, or biennial rotation for accompanied advisors, severely handicapped efforts to establish long term residual relationships. Finally, the investigation determined that a lack of intergovernmental teamwork existed between the local MAAG and the Embassy.<sup>154</sup>

Both investigations recommended the continued legislative responsibility for the ambassador to remain as the sole party responsible for all USG activities within particular countries. In fact the President's Committee said that, "The ambassador should participate actively in the planning of military assistance and should exercise strong leadership in development of the plan, in order to relate the plan to foreign policy objectives and to assure that it and other US policies and plans are mutually supporting."<sup>155</sup> The recommendation to make the MAAG responsible for the detailed country plan, under budgetary guidelines set by the Bureau of Budget, and adjusted within the Unified Commands streamlined the efficiency of the mutual

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<sup>153</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 23.

<sup>154</sup> United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Report of the Staff Survey Team of the Subcommittee for Review of the Military Security Programs on Military Assistance to Korea, Thailand, and Iran* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 18-22.

<sup>155</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 31.

security programs.<sup>156</sup> The most surprising discovery of the investigations was that a duplication of effort in MSP planning by the Embassy and the MAAG occurred without input from the host nation. At the time of the investigations, once the money was appropriated, oversight responsibility was unclear. Therefore, the solution was to make all planning, budgeting, and administration the responsibility of the DOD pending approval from the DOS. Locally, the ambassador was to solicit input and buy-in from the host nation.

One overarching question is why did the Shah demand high levels of military assistance, despite repeatedly being denied by the US? The Shah offers an answer, “Freedom-loving peoples forget, but the communist peoples never forget, that most of the world’s economically underdeveloped countries are also militarily underdeveloped.”<sup>157</sup> Unless Iran presented a formidable foe, the Shah was fearful that his powerful neighbor to the north would eventually remove him from power. Ousting Mossadeq, then barely maintaining internal control, and finally watching the US not intervene during the 1958 coup in Iraq, frightened the Shah in the 1950s. He wanted as much military assistance and hardware from the United States as soon as it could be delivered, and he used all means available to secure that assistance. Flirtations with the USSR, personal relationships with key US leaders, or public statements that questioned the US commitments were effective strategic messages methods employed by the Shah to expand the Iranian military.

The United States mutual security programs in the 1950s contained the Soviet Union from expansion into Iran for three reasons: demonstration, flexibility, and transformation. The Eisenhower Administration physically demonstrated US commitment to Iran, at a level unlike support to other nations in the Middle East. Flexibility from the original policies after the

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<sup>156</sup> Office of the White House, *The President’s Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 30-33.

<sup>157</sup> George Lenczowski, *Iran under the Pahlavis* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 397.

countercoup that were supposed to provide interim financial support until oil and tax revenue increased, evolved into in depth studies by the National Security Council, Joint Chiefs of Staff, the White House, and Congress that justified sustained US funding for weapons modernization programs, facility construction, and advisory efforts in Iran. Finally, the transformation of the Imperial Iranian Armed Forces from a lightly regarded military force by her neighbors that was poorly equipped and ill prepared to defend against external threats, into a national instrument of power that spent more on defense than her Arab neighbors, was fielded and trained on better military hardware, and had received professional training from US advisors contributed to the realization from the Soviet Union that outright invasion against Iran was not worth the effort.

If the Soviet Union thought about overtly ousting the Shah and installing another satellite state in Iran, the overwhelming demonstration by the United States signaled that if that line was crossed, war would break out. Seven hundred million dollars in assistance, more than four hundred military advisors, and the sale of military hardware including jet aircraft and medium armored tanks sent a strong strategic message by the Eisenhower Administration. Covert operations, or subversion, would have proved difficult considering the Shah outlawed the Tudeh Party and used the internal security forces to oppress dissension.

The Soviets had to be puzzled by the flexible policy shifts in the US from the time of the counter coup through the end of the decade. Despite successes in expanding Soviet influence in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, the Eisenhower Administration drew a line in the sand at the Iran-USSR boundary and updated aid amounts, changed military equipment allocations based on desires from the Shah, and declared that the US would commit military forces in defense of Iran.<sup>158</sup> A

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<sup>158</sup> Department of State, *American Foreign Policy Current Documents 1957* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), 788.

flexible policy enabled the United States to meet strategic objectives while adjusting to changes in the operational environment around Iran and the Cold War.

The transformation of the Iranian military was not complete by the end of the Eisenhower Administration, but the progress already achieved in 1959 pointed to a situation that placed the Soviets at a disadvantage. An invasion by Communist forces into Iran would not be a repeat of the initial successes enjoyed by the PDRK into the ROK in 1950. Through advisory efforts, the repositioning of forces into defensive bases, the weapons modernization programs already underway, and the strategic appreciation of the Iranians; the Soviets or their proxies would have faced an better opponent in 1959 than they would have faced in 1953.

## CONCLUSION

The success of the US and UK planned coup that reinstated the Shah, the outpouring of tremendous US economic and military assistance to Iran in the immediate years that followed, and the twenty-five years that the United States had a close ally in the Middle East is a significant achievement in American foreign policy. The decision to remove Mossadeq was warranted. The United States partnered with an ally and, by the end of the operation, was on the same side with the Iranian military and people. Kermit Roosevelt, the CIA architect behind the August 1953 counter coup, remarked in a debriefing to Eisenhower and Dulles that, “If we, the CIA, are ever going to try something like this again, we must be absolutely sure that the people and the army want what we want.”<sup>159</sup> The mutual security program assistance that flowed into Iran in the 1950s was expensive, but it bought the Shah time to begin reconstructing the Iranian economy and strengthen his political position.

Despite predictions of his pending demise, even those beginning immediately following the counter coup, the Shah held on to power until 1979. Because there was not a viable alternative for the US to consider, the acceptance of the Shah by the USG sanctioned a strong relationship with a friendly nation in the Middle East that effectively contained the primary nemesis of a favorable international system, the Soviet Union. The loss of the Shah, and thus the greater strategic loss of a pro-US Iran on the international stage, has had continuous negative implications over the last 30 years.

The importance of military assistance to key countries and the subsequent effect to the national security of the United States is just as important now, as then. The counter argument in

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<sup>159</sup> Kermit Roosevelt, *Counter coup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 210.



the debate that the United States can accomplish all military objectives alone is unjustified. Arming, equipping, and training allies is economically efficient and provides political and diplomatic advantages. The words of William H. Draper, Chairmen of the President's Committee to Study the US Military Assistance Program, are as relevant today as they were in 1959, "The issue is whether we intend to seek survival in isolation, a state of siege, as the world continues to shrink. This would be the inevitable result if we fail to take vigorous action on mutual security. The positive course, much more in the nature of our people, would be to accept fully the great responsibilities which our generation has partly inherited and partly earned."<sup>160</sup>

The mutual security programs and advisory effort in Iran during the 1950s is absolutely applicable today. Restated another way, could we replicate the mutual security programs and advisory efforts to Iran in the Eisenhower Administration to Afghanistan, Iraq, or another nation? There are distinguishable differences that must be addressed in order for policy makers to commit to replicating this model. Iran was a pro-US, strategically located nation that wanted American money, equipment, and training.

Does the United States need a new Advisory Command to focus the advisory efforts around the world? Yes. Today, the US Army has a capability unmatched across the sister services through the training and deployment of transition team members to Iraq and Afghanistan. Expansion of this effort, combined with the US Air Force and US Navy building their own training capacities and structures to contribute to the training of host nation indigenous forces must begin; just as was done in the advisory efforts to Iran in the 1950s. The proposed Joint Advisors Command should not be a separate functional component command, similar to Special Operations Command. Rather, the Joint Advisor Command could be subordinate to

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<sup>160</sup> Office of the White House, *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 2.

Joint Forces Command. Undoubtedly, this proposal needs further study, but the requirement for a joint organization that builds and manages advisory capacity is necessary in the US military today.

Iraq in 2010 certainly fits the strategic location criteria and has similar economic potential for growth based around the oil industry, but continued assessment of the government under Nouri al-Maliki is necessary to determine Iraqi interest in US advisors and whether or not a more independent Iraq will be as pro-US as the Shah of Iran was. The Shah faced external and internal threats. Iraq faces external threats from international terrorist organizations, and regional nations like Turkey and Iran that spill over into increased domestic tensions involving Kurdish separatists, the Shiite majority, and Sunni minority. It would be in the best interests of the US to commit to training Iraqi military forces, and currently the US is heavily engaged in training and assisting Iraq's security forces.

Afghanistan in 2010 fits the criteria displayed in this case study of being pro-US, seeking US assistance, and strategically neighbors Pakistan and Iran. However, in the case study of Iran in the 1950s the Eisenhower Administration aided a pro-US leader that was able to tighten control on Iran through assistance, while the Afghan government of Hamid Karzai is still struggling to establish sovereignty over opposition forces. Unfortunately, Afghanistan lacks the potential for economic wealth that Iran in the 1950s or Iraq in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century enjoyed. The US remains committed to fighting alongside the Afghan National Army against Taliban and Al Qaeda forces while training indigenous forces as part of ongoing operations in Operation Enduring Freedom, but pouring mutual security program assistance and long term systemic advisory operations on the scale of what the Eisenhower Administration did in Iran may not be the intent for the Obama Administration.

The National Security Strategy of 2006 states, “The United States can no longer simply rely on deterrence to keep the terrorists at bay or defensive measures to thwart them at the last moment. The fight must be taken to the enemy, to keep them on the run.”<sup>161</sup> Although this policy facilitates preemptive actions by the United States, it cannot be sustained over generations, like the Cold War. The New Look Strategy by Eisenhower fused deterrence and containment strategies, backed up by US strategic air and nuclear power. This enabled a demonstration, such as mutual security programs to Iran in the 1950s, to show American resolve without deploying tens of thousands of US military personnel or planes to deter communist expansion. The combination of advisors, equipment sales, and mutual security alliances strengthened an ally while warning potential foes. In time, the United States should consider replicating components of the case of Iran after the counter coup and how the Eisenhower Administration seized the opportunity to effectively stop Soviet influence from spreading into Iran.

The argument for rededicated focus on military assistance can best be summarized in a paper by James Campbell. Campbell states, “The best means of fighting an insurgency is to persuade the local population to do it themselves...Proven in the wars during the establishment of Western empires and solidified in successful post-colonial counterinsurgencies, these dictums can continue to be ignored only at considerable risk.”<sup>162</sup> The United States must heed Campbell’s warning and focus on finding the right balance, with the right strategic partner, to achieve strategic effects.

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<sup>161</sup> Office of the White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America March 2006* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 2006), 8.

<sup>162</sup> James Campbell, “Making Riflemen from Mud: Restoring the Army’s Culture of Irregular Warfare.” (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 3.



## APPENDIX A- LIST OF KEY PEOPLE

Acheson, Dean	United States Secretary of State (January 1949 – January 1953)
Burujedi, Hussein	Leading Shiite Cleric in Iran in August 1953, supported Shah
Byrnes, James	United States Secretary of State (July 1945 – January 1947)
Chapin, Selden	United States Ambassador to Iran (1955 - 1958)
Churchill, Winston	Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1940 – 1945, 1951-1955)
Draper, William H.	Chairmen, President’s Committee to Study US Military Assistance
Dulles, Alan	Director of the CIA (February 1953 – November 1961)
Dulles, John Foster	United States Secretary of State (January 1953 – April 1959)
Eisenhower, Dwight D.	President of the United States (January 1953- January 1961)
Fatemi, Hussein	Foreign Minister of Iran during Mossadeq’s tenure as Prime Minister; only die hard follower executed by the Shah
Gromyko, Andrei	Minister of Foreign Affairs, USSR (1957 – 1985)
Henderson, Loy	United States Ambassador to Iran (1951 – 1954)
Herter, Christian	United States Secretary of State (April 1959 – January 1961)
Hitler, Adolf	German Dictator (1933-1945)
Kennan, George	Soviet expert in the US State Department during and after WWII
Khomeini, Rouhollah	Imam and Ayatollah. Vocal critic of Shah in 1960s. Founder, the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.
Khrushchev, Nikita	First Secretary of Communist Party of Soviet Union (1953 – 1964) Premier of the Soviet Union (1958 – 1964)
Lodge, Henry Cabot	United States Ambassador to the United Nations (1953 – 1960)
Marshall, George	United States Secretary of State (January 1947 – January 1949) US Secretary of Defense (September 1950 – September 1951)
Mossadeq, Mohammad	Prime Minister of Iran (April 1951 – August 1953)
Pahlavi, Mohammad Reza	Shah of Iran (September 1941 – February 1979)

Pahlavi, Reza	Shah of Iran (December 1925 – September 1941)
Radford, Arthur	US Navy Admiral, Chairman of JCS (1953 – 1957)
Roosevelt, Franklin D.	President of the United States (March 1933 – April 1945)
Roosevelt, Kermit	CIA officer and architect of plan to remove Mossadeq in 1953
Stalin, Joseph	First Secretary of Communist Party of Soviet Union (1922 – 1953) Premier of the Soviet Union (May 1941 – March 1953)
Truman, Harry S.	President of the United States (April 1945 – January 1953)
Wilson, Charles	United States Secretary of Defense (1953 - 1957)

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