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REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ASSESSMENT POLITICAL SITUATION IRAN 5 October 1951

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND.

- A. Xenophobia. Generally speaking Iran at this time is anti-West but is violent only in the manifestations against the British because British presence in Iran up to this time was more substantial than presence any other power (shades of the oil company; British Bank; British business firms backed by long history British interests Iran). MOSSADEGH came to power on a wave of Xenophobia. The forerunner of which was an anti-RAZMARA and anti-court movement (RAZMARA and the SHAH described as servants of the British). Should U.S. continue side spectacularly with British (Harriman refusal pass on to British Mossadegh "ultimatum"; postponement 25 million dollar Exim Bank loan on "technical" grounds) brunt of anti-West feeling could easily be made to switch to cover U.S. as well as G.B.
- B. Dictatorship of the Street. The Mossadegh Government is a prisoner of the "Street". The "Street" is composed of 2 main groups: the followers of AYATOLLAH KASHANI and the TUDEH Party with its satellite PEACE FRONTIS. While KASHANI'S following is possibly more numerous than the TUDEH, the former has neither the organization, nor the discipline, nor the revolutionary or conspiratorial training and experience of the latter. Accordingly of the two "Street" groups the most powerful is undoubtedly the TUDEH.
- C. Traditional Iranian Policy of Balance of Power *between Russia and G.B.⊙* The Iranian political pendulum is now swinging dangerously toward Russia but given opportunities Iranian Public Opinion should react and turn again toward the West for support and protection (providing the West is not represented by Great Britain alone).

2. THE MOSSADEGH GOVERNMENT HAS POWERFUL POPULAR SUPPORT

- A. Majlis opposition collapsed on 30 September. FARAMARZI announced opposition would cease attack Government so long oil dispute under consideration Security Council. We believe however opposition collapse is final. Security Council debate is a face saving excuse. Opposition had gotten off on a limb banking on British power and on court backing. Both failed come through with support and opposition deputies fear for their very lives.
- B. Moslem Religious groups who might have diverged at one time from KASHANI and from his pre-Mossadegh stand have now rallied the National Front banner. Letter of NAVAB SAFAVI leader of the Fedayan Islam dated September 51 in which SAFAVI makes his peace with KASHANI; letter addressed by BURUJURDI of QUM (outstanding spiritual leader in Iran) to SHAH on 29 September urging him support MOSSADEGH.

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- C. KASHANI'S enormous influence in support MOSSADEGH demonstrated last Sunday 30 September by general closing down Bazaars throughout nation at his (Kashani's) request and by orderliness KASHANI sponsored parades in favor Government same day.
- D. SHAH has taken stand favor MOSSADEGH and at least since 17 September has even refused listen British entreaties rally opposition in favor SEYED ZIA. At MOSSADEGH request has ordered his sister Princess Ashraf out of country (she left in late Sept '51) thereby showing he would no longer (i.e. for time being) condone Court intrigues in political matters.
- E. TUDEH and PEACE FRONTS are backing MOSSADEGH albeit only on specific issues. So long as MOSSADEGH policy remains intransigent against Britain the Tudeh is behind Mossadegh. The Tudeh does not appear in a mood at this time to make life difficult for the Government as may be evidenced by Tudeh apparent acceptance Police order not celebrate 10th Anniversary Foundation Party (3-7 October which coincides with "Mehraghan" festival: old Zoroastrian Labor festival) with demonstrations.

3. BRITISH POLICY HAS FAILED. ITS POSITION IN IRAN HAS COLLAPSED

- A. At the origin of British failure is the apparent inability of British Embassy to properly appraise local situation. In July '51 Embassy Counselor Wheeler (an old India hand - entire career in India, Iran and Turkey - speaking local languages fluently) was still denying the existence in Iran of a "Public Opinion". He referred only to "Public Feelings" described the anti-British feelings expressed by the populace as "neither wide spread nor deeply rooted", believed that this feeling could be changed over night, claimed that if we Americans had not been active in Iran they the British would still be in control and MOSSADEGH would never have been allowed to come near to the Premiership. In September 1951 such old Persia Hands of the British Embassy as Counselor Pyman, Secretaries Jackson and Zaehner were still talking in terms of "changing the Cabinet", still believing that if the SHAH gave the signal the opposition in the Majlis could rally enough votes to overthrow MOSSADEGH.
- B. British Embassy influence over the SHAH and his courtiers has practically ceased to exist, mainly because the SHAH has become increasingly aware of the strength of "The Street", fears it, now more than he fears the British. When MOSSADEGH talks to the SHAH he talks in the name of the people. No other P.M. before him ever could claim such a sponsorship. The SHAH dares not talk back or step out of line. He is fully aware now that the political wave that brought MOSSADEGH into power was in great part an anti-Court wave.
- C. The Campaign of Intimidation supported by certain elements of the National Front condoned by KASHANI (and not condemned by MOSSADEGH) has contributed toward current elimination British sponsored opposition (see also para 2A above).

RUSSIA IS IN A RELATIVELY STRONG POSITION TO REAP GREAT ADVANTAGES IN THE POLITICAL CLIMATE NOW OBTAINING HERE.

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A. The TUDEH has great potential. ^{Inside} information inadequate however following clues are important:
- (1) As early as 1946 TUDEH had organized workers Abadan to point where it staged successfully a general strike.
 - (2) In 1950 it organized Peace Front groups.
 - (3) In December 1950 it was in a position stage escape 10 of its leaders from Tehran jail.
 - (4) Since RAZMARA Cabinet Tudeh has enjoyed greater freedom of action with corresponding increased efficiency.
 - (5) In April 1951 it quickly took advantage ineptitude British Labor Relations Abadan to stage another successful general strike.
 - (6) In July 1951 it was able mass 10,000 demonstrators in streets Tehran and organize them in semi-military order.
 - (7) In the past year it has been signally successful in conducting large scale propaganda and in organizing its Peace Front groups.
 - (8) Estimate of TUDEH and Front groups for Tehran area in September 1951 was 35,000^(maximum) which appears to be considerable increase over year ago.
 - (9) Economic situation stands to deteriorate further and this deterioration paves the way to further increase in TUDEH power.
- B. The policy of the National Front (which has nation wide support) at this time ~~and in the oil dispute~~ plays directly into Russian hands:
- (1) It has caused misunderstandings to appear between London and Washington. The breach could be made to widen further.
 - (2) It calls for physical expulsion British out of Iran.
 - (3) It has undermined the prestige of the Anglo Saxon powers in the Near East.
 - (4) It lays the ground work for a common front of Nationalists in the Near East against Anglo Saxon "imperialists." This policy, favorable to Russia, can be carried out much more smoothly by a Mossadegh Government (a Bourgeois) than by a Tudeh government.
 - (5) Soviet siding with Iran at SC in early October 1951 has engendered increased sympathy for S.U. even in the ranks of the National Front.
- C. It should be noted however that Russian influence in Iran has to contend with:
- (1) Security Forces, including the Army, the Police, the Gendarmerie representing in hands SHAH and Government a comparatively well organized, centralized and massive repressive force (with noteworthy shortcomings, however, such as penetration in certain quarters, corruption, etc.)