



Cabinet of Iran (1951)

MUNUC 33
ONLINE



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CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Iran, 1951! My name is Isaac Kamber, and I will be the chair of this committee. I'm incredibly excited to run an exciting, fun-filled committee for all of you come February.

A little bit about myself: I'm currently a fourth year at the University of Chicago majoring in Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations and Geographical Sciences (because one obscure major wasn't enough...). I am the Chief Operating Officer of MUNUC XXIII. Last year, I served as Under-Secretary-General for Continuous Crisis Committees and was the Chair of the Cabinet of Uzbekistan, 1991 the year prior to that. I also staff UChicago's collegiate Model UN conference, ChoMUN, and travel on our competitive team. Outside of the MUNiverse, I do research on air quality and public health in Chicago with the Center for Spatial Data Science. I grew up in New Jersey, but my family moved out to Colorado a couple years ago, so when I want to sound original, I tell people I'm from Colorado.

This committee offers you the chance to engage firsthand with one of the most interesting and consequential periods in modern Middle Eastern history. Iran during the early 1950s was in a state of flux. Long subjugated by foreign powers like the UK, US, and USSR, Iran finally began to assert its sovereignty. In real life, this culminated in the overthrow of the popular Iranian government in favor of the absolutist rule of Muhammad Reza Shah. In this committee, however, we are not bound by the confines of what really happened. As delegates, it will be up to you to ensure that Iran travels down the path of your choosing.

This committee structure will likely be unfamiliar to many of you. As in a crisis committee, you will work to draft and pass directives in response to fast-paced crisis updates. However, there will not be a backroom component; delegates will not be writing notes in character. This will allow you to craft more in-depth solutions to the problems facing Iran and try to work towards building consensus.

As with any committee at MUNUC, delegates are expected to remain civil and refrain from doing anything (either in character or out of character) that could be conceived as targeting someone

based on their race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Iran is a majority Muslim country, and discussions about the role of religion in government are likely to arise. Islamophobia of any sort will not be tolerated. If you have any questions about whether an idea risks crossing the line, please do not hesitate to ask. You will never be penalized for asking.

On a far lighter note, please have fun with the topic. As a chair, I really value creative solutions and believe that committees are most fun when everyone is engaged with the material. If you have any questions before conference, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at coo@munuc.org. See you in February!

Best,

Isaac Kamber

HISTORY OF IRAN

Ancient Iran

The country now known Iran, historically Persia, has been home to great civilizations stretching back to between 3000 and 4000 BCE.¹ Through many empires, conquests, and defeats, its culture and people have changed, but the importance of Iran in the geopolitical sphere has not. As a truly comprehensive account of all these political and cultural shifts would take up many thousands of pages, this background guide will instead focus on several key empires that proved most important to shaping Iran at the time of committee.

The first truly Persian Empire, under the Achaemenid Dynasty, was founded by Cyrus I in 559 BCE.² This empire would grow to cover an unimaginably large swathe of land stretching from modern-day Greece and Libya in the West to India in the East.³ Throughout their two centuries of existence, they clashed with the Greek City States, most notably Sparta during the famed Battle of Thermopylae, until meeting their eventual downfall at the hands of Alexander the Great. While relatively short-lived, the Achaemenids left an indelible mark on the culture of Iran. They instituted and spread Zoroastrianism, the dualistic faith of good and evil, to all reaches of the Empire, whilst preserving a general doctrine of religious toleration.⁴ They established an effective governing regime for such a large area of land, and they defined an entirely new style of architecture. Names of powerful Achaemenid kings like Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and Cambyses are synonymous with Persian culture and contribute to the rich national identity.

Following the conquests and death of Alexander the Great, Persia was left to the General Seleucus Nicator, and it would, for the next three centuries, form the heart of his Seleucid Empire.⁵ Unlike under the Achaemenids, Persia under the Seleucids was not truly Persian. Rather, it was heavily

¹ Percy Sykes, A History of Persia, Volume 1 (London: Macmillan, 1963).

² Bivar, Dresden, Ghirshman, and Young. "Ancient Iran" Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/ancient-Iran>.

³ Fabienkhan. "Achaemenid Empire Map." Ancient History Encyclopedia. April 26, 2012. <https://www.ancient.eu/image/148/>.

⁴ Percy Sykes, A History of Persia, Volume 1 (London: Macmillan, 1963).

⁵ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Seleucid Empire" Encyclopedia Britannica. April 01, 2019.

influenced by Hellenistic (Greek-style) culture. Greek customs and administration ruled over the region, and the period in turn saw little development of indigenous Persian influences.⁶ In their later years, the Seleucids found themselves in constant conflict with the more powerful Roman Empire. Over the course of the second and early first centuries BCE, they gradually lost land until their eventual conquest in 64 BCE.⁷

The Parthian Empire arose out of the declining Seleucid Empire and represented something of a resurgence for Persian culture.⁸ While still somewhat Hellenistic, the Parthians did begin to reinstitute many of the Persian cultural and religious practices of the Achaemenids. The Parthians ruled until the 3rd century CE, and they too were constantly in conflict with the mighty Roman legions. Divisions in the royal family and regional rebellions led to the eventual collapse of the Parthian Empire in 226 CE at the hands of King Ardashir, founder of the Sasanian Empire.⁹



⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Lendering, Jona, "Parthian Empire" Iran Chamber Society. 2001, <http://www.iranchamber.com/history/parthians/parthians.php>.

⁹ Ibid.

The Sasanian Empire was the last great pre-Islamic Iranian polity. Ruling for over 400 years, the Sasanians redefined Iranian culture in the wake of centuries of foreign-influenced rule.¹⁰ They conquered a large area of land across the Middle East and Central Asia, and instituted Zoroastrianism as a state religion once again. In many ways, they saw themselves as the successors to the Achaemenid Empire far more than the Seleucids or Parthians. Sasanian rule saw the development of the Iranian national epic, the *Shah-nameh* (Book of Kings), and it also realized countless artistic and architectural achievements.¹¹ As with earlier Persian dynasties, the Sasanians found themselves in constant military conflict with Rome and later the Byzantines. It was only with the rise of Islam and the Islamic conquest of Persia in the mid-7th century, however, that the Sasanian Empire would fall.

Islam

Note: Islam, like every other major world religion, is extremely complex. This section provides an overview of the basic history and tenets of the faith, but it does not presume to be a comprehensive discussion of the matter. If delegates are interested in learning more about Islam, I highly encourage everyone to do additional research. I have many readings from different classes that I'm happy to share if you reach out!

The Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, was born around 570 CE to the Hashemite clan of the Quraysh tribe in the Arabian commercial city of Mecca.¹² Orphaned at a young age, he entered the caravan trade under the guardianship of his uncle, Abu Talib. He began working with Khadija, a wealthy merchant and eventually married her. During his first 40 years, he garnered a reputation as an intelligent, trustworthy, and diplomatic man.¹³ Around 610 CE, Muhammad began to have religious experiences while meditating in a cave near Mecca. He started to preach what he was taught to a small number of early followers. However, his preaching of monotheistic ideals sparked anger from the powerful leaders of Mecca. Faced with increasing hostility, Muhammad and his followers fled to the town of Yathrib, later renamed Medina, in 622 during an event known as the

¹⁰ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Sassanian Dynasty" Encyclopedia Britannica. April 3, 2020.

¹¹ Donner, Fred. "The Byzantine and Sasanian Empires." Islamic History & Society I. October 4, 2019.

¹² Muhsin S. Mahdi, "Islam," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed November 28, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam>.

¹³ Donner, Fred. "Muhammad." Islamic History & Society I. October 7, 2019.

Hijra.¹⁴ In Medina, Muhammad consolidated his own power and engaged in a series of battles with the Meccans throughout the decade, most notably at Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq. In 630 CE, Muhammad and his followers conquered Mecca and gained the submission of the vast majority of the city's formerly hostile residents. For the next two years, Muhammad brought more of Arabia under his control before his eventual death in 633.¹⁵

The dispute over Muhammad's succession as leader of the early Islamic Caliphate would eventually lead to a schism between what we now recognize as Sunni and Shia Muslims. At its most basic level, the division arose because the Sunnis believed succession should be based on the popular decision of Muslim elites whereas Shias believed that succession should instead fall to the closest descendant of the Prophet. Sunnis supported the ascendance of Abu Bakr while Shias supported Ali. This is, in fact, the source of the branch's name, with Shia being short for *Shiat Ali* or the Party of Ali.

All Muslims, Sunni and Shia, share many core doctrinal beliefs. All believe that Muhammad is the final Prophet of God or Allah, the same God of the other Abrahamic faiths. They all believe in the centrality of the Five Pillars: *Shahada*, the profession of faith; *Salat*, prayer; *Zakat*, almsgiving; *Sawm*, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan; and *Hajj*, ritual pilgrimage to Mecca.¹⁶ All Muslims hold the *Quran*, the Muslim holy book, as the infallible word of God and the *hadith* or traditions, actions, and sayings attributed to Muhammad as an additional crucial source of guidance. Sunnis and Shias do disagree over what constitutes valid *hadith*. Additionally, the two branches have significant cultural differences that have arisen over centuries of independent growth.

Seeing as Iran is 90% Shia, it is necessary to contextualize some of the central beliefs of Shiism. Shia Muslims believe in the primacy of *Ahl al-Bayt*, or the People of the House of Muhammad. In other words, they prize blood relation to the prophet as a source of divine guidance. By far the most common branch of Shiism, the Twelvers, believe that twelve *Imams* or divinely chosen leaders have passed on the teachings of the Prophet.¹⁷ The Twelfth Imam, Imam al-Mahdi, is in occultation, or a

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Muhsin S. Mahdi, "Islam," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed November 28, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam>.

¹⁷ Calvert, John. "Shiism: What Students Need to Know." Foreign Policy Research Institute, May 8, 2010. "<https://www.fpri.org/article/2010/05/shiism-what-students-need-to-know>."

temporary period of holy disappearance, and he will return to establish a period of peace in the triumph of good over evil. Shia Muslims venerate many figures often viewed as slightly less significant in Sunnism including Ali and Husayn.

Islamic Iran

The Arab conquest came to Iran in 651 with the invasion of the Rashidun Caliphate.¹⁸ Islam did not spread instantaneously; it took several centuries under the rule of the Rashidun, Umayyad, and Abbasid Caliphates for Iran to become a majority Muslim region. During the rule of these great Caliphates, Persian culture both influenced and was influenced by Islam and Arabian culture. For example, the written Persian language adopted the Arabic script while Persian styles of governance were instituted across the Caliphate. Persia was an integral part of the Caliphates, and Persian generals, artists, theologians, and scholars were among the most influential in all of the Islamic world.¹⁹



¹⁸ M. Morony, "ARAB ii. Arab conquest of Iran," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, II/2, pp. 203-210, available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/arab-ii>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The next millennium saw a series of foreign conquests and indigenous Persian dynasties rise and fall from power. The Ghaznavids, Khwarezmians, Mongols, Seljuks, Timurids, and many others each found themselves atop the Persian power ladder for a period of time. Under some, particularly the indigenous Persian dynasties, art and architecture flourished. The rich Persian cultural tradition continued to grow into something resembling its current form.²⁰ The rise of the Safavid dynasty during the sixteenth century was especially vital to shaping modern Iran. The Safavids continued to expand the size of Iranian territory, and, during the reign of the Safavid ruler Nader Shah, Iran reached its greatest territorial extent.²¹ The Safavid government enacted Twelver Shiism as the state religion, encouraging its dominance in the country that continues to this day.²² Following the fall of the Safavids in the 18th century, the Qajar dynasty rose to power.

Qajar Dynasty (1785-1906)

The Qajar Dynasty was an era of decline for Iran; foreign powers began to claim spheres of influence in the region. The founder of the Qajar Dynasty, Aqa Mohammad Khan, was interested in expanding the empire to the north, so he invaded the Russian-controlled Caucasus region in 1795.²³ Iran had been fighting with Russia over this land for hundreds of years, and both empires considered it to be their own. In the meantime, Aqa Mohammad left Southern Persia alone, allowing Western European to grow across the Persian Gulf. In fact, Aqa Mohammad not only ignored this, but explicitly encouraged it; he chose to label Russia as the enemy and sign several treaties with France and Britain in the hopes of enlisting their support.²⁴

Unfortunately, the Western European powers did not step up and help Iran in its wars with Russia. Iran asked Britain for assistance as per the treaties, but Britain refused.²⁵ Iran then signed a treaty with the French in 1806 to no avail; France used a recent peace deal between themselves and Russia

²⁰ Janet Afary. "Iran," Encyclopedia Britannica, October 10, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/place/Iran>.

²¹ Ibid.

²² The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Safavid Dynasty." May 15, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Safavid-dynasty>.

²³ Kazemzadeh, F. 2011. "Anglo-Iranian Relations II. Qajar Period." Encyclopaedia Iranica. 8–5, 2011. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/anglo-iranian-relations-ii>.

²⁴ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

²⁵ Kazemzadeh, F. 2011. "Anglo-Iranian Relations II. Qajar Period." Encyclopaedia Iranica. 8–5, 2011. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/anglo-iranian-relations-ii>.

to invalidate the treaty with Iran.²⁶ Russian advances continued with Iran fighting for control over its newly won territories on its own. Russia reclaimed Georgia in 1800, soon advancing to Yerevan, Armenia. Initially Iran was able to hold them off, but by 1813, a new Russian military offensive won the entire Caucasus. The Treaty of Gulistan signed soon afterwards also gave Russia exclusive naval rights to the Caspian Sea.²⁷ Russia did not stop there but instead continued to advance. By 1827, they had conquered Tabriz in Iranian Azerbaijan. The Treaty of Turkomanchai gave Russia not only territory but also trading privileges and immunity from Iranian laws for Russian citizens in Iran.²⁸

Though Russia was Iran's primary enemy, even Iran's allies did little to help the struggling nation. After reneging on the prior treaty, Britain went to war with Russia in 1809 and decided to sign a new treaty with Iran. Once again, they refused to act, changing the terms in 1814 to allow for a small monetary pay-out option as an alternative to British military intervention.²⁹

Control over Iran was not the endgame for Russia and Britain; Iran was instead a small part of the larger struggle between Russia and Great Britain for control of Central Asia known as the Great Game. For nearly a century, Iran was forced to pick the lesser of two evils in a futile attempt to preserve its sovereignty. Though initially allied with the British, Iran found themselves in conflict with them over the City of Herat in 1856. The struggle for control of the city that had been underway for the two decades prior culminated in a quick victory for the British and an Iranian retreat from Afghanistan.³⁰

A famine in 1870-1871 caused further problems for Iran. In order to get foreign aid for the famine, Naser al-Din Shah ceded even greater control of the country to Britain and Russia. In 1872, he gave Julius de Reuter, a British citizen, exclusive rights for the building of railroads and the exploitation of mines.³¹ Talk of a British central bank for Iran faced strong opposition from Russia, but in 1889 the British Imperial Bank of Iran was, nonetheless, established, giving Britain the ability to issue Iranian banknotes. This led to the near-total British control of the Iranian currency. Meanwhile, Russia

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Kazemzadeh, F. 2011. "Anglo-Iranian Relations II. Qajar Period." *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. 8–5, 2011.
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/anglo-iranian-relations-ii>.

³⁰ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

³¹ Ibid.

gained control of Iran's military during this time through the creation of the Cossack Brigade, a major military institution for the Qajars. While the Brigade officially reported to the Shah, its actions were largely directed by a Russian envoy to Tehran and orders came from Russian commanders in the Caucasus and fulfilled by Russian officers.³²

Naser al-Din Shah was notorious for extravagance and foreign trips, and the populace started to lash out against foreign control, directing much of their anger toward the Shah. They resented the fact that their ruler lived a life of luxury abroad while his people suffered at home. A proposed tobacco monopoly for Britain was cancelled due to popular uprisings, and in 1896 the Shah was assassinated, possibly by Jamal al-Din Afghani, who wanted to liberalize Islam and stop the Shah's corruption.³³ At the turn of the 20th century, the pendulum started to swing toward control by Russia rather than Britain. In addition to the already established Cossack Brigade, Iran ceded most of its control over foreign policy and economics with an agreement that only Russia could provide loans to Iran. This gave Iran no choice but to rely on Russia alone for all assistance.³⁴ However, the biggest power struggle was yet to come.

In 1901 an Australian named William Knox D'Arcy secured a deal with the Iranian government for "special and exclusive privileges to prospect, obtain, exploit, develop, prepare for commerce and to export and sell natural gas, petroleum, asphalt and mineral wax throughout the Persian Empire for sixty years," excepting provinces in the northern Russian zone of influence: Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazandaran, Astrabad and Khorasan.³⁵ Additionally, the agreement gave D'Arcy the right to acquire any uncultivated lands owned by the Iranian government at no cost if they were to become necessary for his operations, all in exchange for cash payments upfront and 10% of the profits.³⁶ Russian officials in Tehran were officially shown the agreement before it was signed, but it was strategically given to them only in Persian and at a time when the Persian-speaking Russian official

³² Rabi, Uzi, and Nugzar Ter-Oganov. 2009. "The Russian Military Mission and the Birth of the Persian Cossack Brigade: 1879-1894." *Iranian Studies* 42 (3):445-63.

³³ Frye, Richard N. 1953. *Iran*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

³⁴ Fatemi, Nasrollah Saifpour. 1954. *Oil Diplomacy*. New York: Whittier Books, Inc.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

was away. The officials remaining did not realize the document was of any importance, and it was signed without official Russian opposition.³⁷

Constitutional Revolution, 1905

The problematic rule of Naser al-Din Shah came to light in the year of 1905 when series of protests broke out against the Shah. From the perspective of the Iranian people, the Shah had been ceding too many of Iran's resources to foreign powers, all while he made domestic Iranians pay the price. The first protests began in Tehran, where several merchants and laborers gathered to express their anger towards the Shah's raising of taxes in order to pay loans back to Russia.³⁸ Anyone who dissented against the Shah was met by physical punishment from the Cossacks in public, which further angered Iranians. Each day, the number of demonstrators grew, and eventually businesses in Tehran shut down because all of the merchants and workers were on strike.³⁹

As protests grew, so did government attempts to crack down. While demonstrations in the streets of Iran grew larger each day, Nasser al-Din Shah became frustrated and ordered his officials use Iran's military and police against them. Tensions hit their peak when the Iranian national police stormed into a mosque and arrested a group of protesters.⁴⁰ This was seen as a huge civil rights violation; mosques were viewed as havens of peace amongst the Iranian populace. The movement against the Shah became massive and impassioned. Skirmishes between protesters and Iranian military became normal. On some occasions, thousands of protesters would trespass onto the territory of foreign embassies in Iran, just to seek sanctuary from cruel punishment by the Cossacks.⁴¹ To end the state of chaos and avoid pressure from his international allies, Shah Nasser gave into protesters' demands and ordered the creation of an elected parliament of Iran, called the Majlis. The Majlis contained 156 legislative members, each elected in the year 1906.⁴²

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Abdulla, Ahmed. 1979. Iran's Revolution: Causes and Consequences. Karachi: Tanzeem Publishers.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.



Early Constitutional Monarchy, 1906-1914

In the meantime, the Constitutional Revolution did not stop the march of imperialism nor British and Russian ambitions to control Iran politically and economically. In 1907 a very important treaty was signed between Russia and Britain that declared official “zones of influence” for Russia and Britain in Iran. The treaty affirmed that the powers would not engage in political or economic activity in the other’s zone of influence. While the treaty claimed to respect the sovereignty of Iran, in practice, it partitioned Iran between the two competing powers.⁴³ While in theory Russia and Britain were supposed to refrain from political activity in Tehran, both sides regularly bribed Iranian government officials in an attempt to ensure that the newly established Majlis made decisions favorable to their interests.⁴⁴

For several years, D’Arcy, the Australian controller of Iranian oil rights, could not find lucrative oil reserves. Soon, however, it became clear that oil was an enormous resource in Iran. A refinery on the

⁴³ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁴⁴ Haas, William S. 1946. Iran. 1966th ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

island of Abadan was established, and in 1909, the D'Arcy concession was mysteriously transferred from D'Arcy himself to Great Britain, and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) was founded.⁴⁵

While Britain secured control over Southern Iran and the nation's oil, Russia asserted itself in the North and in the military. After the Constitutional Revolution, the Cossack Brigade began to report directly to the Iranian Minister of War,⁴⁶ which allowed the Shah in 1908 to order the brigade to dissolve the Majlis in an attempt to reverse the revolution. This act of tyranny and the accompanying declaration of martial law led to protests in Tabriz, where the citizens were strong supporters of the Constitutional Revolution.⁴⁷ When the Shah could not control the rebellion with the Cossack Brigade alone, the Russian army stepped in and crushed the protesters.⁴⁸ In 1909 the Shah was removed by popular revolt in Tehran after trying to take refuge in the Russian embassy, and the Majlis regained power.⁴⁹ However, this did not diminish Russian military influence. The Iranian government had invited an American advisor, W. Morgan Shuster, to help the government deal with its taxes and other financial matters. This angered Russia, who issued an ultimatum for Shuster to be expelled. When the government refused, Russian troops started to march on Tehran, and the government soon capitulated. When protests once again broke out in Tabriz, there was even a more brutal suppression by the Russian army, including the bombing of the holy shrine of Imam Reza.⁵⁰ The Russian army continued to occupy the Northern provinces through World War I. Russian and British coercion, military and economic, from the north and south was the prologue to official occupation by both powers during World War I.

World War I, 1914-1918

Once war started in Europe, the worldwide switch from coal to oil in the early 20th century made Iran a place of strategic importance.⁵¹ Iran remained officially neutral during the war. However, considering Iran's troubled history with the main Allied Powers, Great Britain and Russia, there was

⁴⁵ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁴⁶ Rabi, Uzi, and Nugzar Ter-Oganov. 2009. "The Russian Military Mission and the Birth of the Persian Cossack Brigade: 1879-1894." *Iranian Studies* 42 (3):445-63.

⁴⁷ Fawcett, Louise L'Estrange. 1992. *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁸ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ *ibid*

⁵¹ Atabaki, Touraj. 2016. "Persia/Iran." *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin.

initial popular support for the Central Powers, particularly Germany.⁵² The Germans were even able to convince some tribes located in the southern region of Fars to fight the British.⁵³ Iran was only officially drawn into the war, however, when Russian forces refused to leave Tabriz after an ultimatum by the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire invaded, and in 1915, Russian forces marched on Tehran. The Shah and Majlis tried to flee, and the Shah ended up trapped in Tehran, while some of the Majlis escaped and formed a separate government in Kermanshah, where they officially declared support for the Central Powers.⁵⁴ In 1917, the Russian Revolution caused Russia to pull out of the war and Iran entirely. The next year, the war ended officially. World War I, however, was not the only cause of Iranian suffering during the time; typhoid and cholera epidemics in 1915 and a famine starting in 1917 paved the way for political unrest in the coming years as the people wanted a government that served them and eased their own suffering.⁵⁵

Reza Khan's Rise to Power, 1918-1925

Despite the war being over, oil remained an integral resource to countries around the world. During the war, in 1916, a Russian citizen named Khoshtaria had received an oil concession, granting oil privileges to Russia in Gilan, Mazanderan and Astrabad.⁵⁶ By the end of the war, the reestablished Majlis declared the agreement void because it was signed under the condition of occupation and coercion. However, Khoshtaria attempted to nevertheless transfer his concession to the Britain through a company affiliated with APOC, which would have given Britain oil privileges in both the north and the south. On top of this, in 1919, Britain attempted to secure what would have been its most sweeping agreement with Iran, the Anglo-Persian Treaty. The deal would have given the Britain near total control over the Iranian government and military, as well as numerous commercial advantages.⁵⁷ Even the United States decried the deal as blatant imperialism and an attempt by Britain to make Iran its puppet state.⁵⁸ While Ahmed Shah was not against the deal, the Prime Minister Zia al-Din and the general population were in fervent opposition, so much so that al-Din

⁵² Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁵³ *ibid*

⁵⁴ Fatemi, Nasrollah Saifpour. 1954. Oil Diplomacy. New York: Whittier Books, Inc.

⁵⁵ Atabaki, Touraj. 2016. "Persia/Iran." International Encyclopedia of the First World War. Berlin: Freie Universitat Berlin.

⁵⁶ Fatemi, Nasrollah Saifpour. 1954. Oil Diplomacy. New York: Whittier Books, Inc.

⁵⁷ Haas, William S. 1946. Iran. 1966th ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁵⁸ Fatemi, Nasrollah Saifpour. 1954. Oil Diplomacy. New York: Whittier Books, Inc.

requested that the Cossack Brigade help him prevent the Shah from following through, leading to the rise of a young man named Reza Khan.

Reza Khan was an officer in the Cossack Brigade, born in what was then the Russian Empire though Persian by ethnicity. He was a highly talented military man who quickly rose through the ranks. In 1921, he led the Cossack Brigade's march on Tehran at the request of the Prime Minister. Once they seized control of the city, Reza Khan took over as Commander-in-Chief. In the same year he rid the Cossack Brigade of foreign officers, creating a military force that was fully Iranian and loyal to him.⁵⁹ In 1923, Ahmed Shah abdicated the throne, ending the Qajar Dynasty, and in the same year Reza Khan became Prime Minister. He briefly considered reforming Iran to a republic and becoming its president, but the Iranian clergy was opposed after seeing how the institution of a republic led to secularization in Turkey under Mustafa Kemal.⁶⁰ Instead, Reza Khan took the throne and the name Pahlavi, beginning the Pahlavi Dynasty that continues as of the start of committee.

Reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, 1925-1941

Because Reza Shah took the throne in opposition to British imperialism, Iran was on the lookout for a new foreign ally. Relations with the newly formed Soviet Union were mixed. In the recent Russian Revolution, the Bolshevik "red army" led by Lenin had overthrown the imperial czar and his "white army" in an attempt to establish a communist government. Some members of the White Army fled into Iran, which led the Red Army to invade Iran in pursuit.⁶¹ There, they briefly tried to establish a Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran in Iranian Azerbaijan, for which the Soviet Union tried to blame Soviet Azerbaijan.⁶² However, in 1921, the Soviet Union and Iran signed the Irano-Soviet Treaty, which renounced all imperial Russian claims and concessions from Iran, with only minor new concessions, like a joint fishing company on the Caspian Sea.⁶³ Importantly, Article 6 of the treaty also gives the Soviet Union the right to send forces into Iran if they feel that there is there is anti-

⁵⁹ Rabi, Uzi, and Nugzar Ter-Oganov. 2009. "The Russian Military Mission and the Birth of the Persian Cossack Brigade: 1879-1894." *Iranian Studies* 42 (3):445-63.

⁶⁰ Haas, William S. 1946. *Iran*. 1966th ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁶¹ Frye, Richard N. 1953. *Iran*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Soviet activity.⁶⁴ The Irano-Soviet treaty was approved by the Majlis the same day that the proposed Anglo-Persian treaty was officially scrapped.⁶⁵

While the Soviet Union and Iran were now on friendly terms, the Soviet Union was still a new country embroiled in civil war and could not be a strong partner for Iran. To fulfill that role Iran looked to the United States. President Wilson's doctrine of self-determination was appealing to Iranians tired of foreign oppression.⁶⁶ Hussein Ala, an Iranian representative in Washington, officially submitted a memorandum to the US government explicitly asking for the friendship of the United States to counter the UK and USSR.⁶⁷ The Majlis considered extending an oil deal to American companies, specifically Standard Oil and Sinclair Oil. This angered the British; APOC stopped sending payments to Iran to try and coerce Iran financially, and also started a propaganda smear campaign against the American oil companies.⁶⁸ The deal drawn up with Sinclair Oil would have been the most progressive in Iran's history, giving the government power over its operations and shares in the profits, and the Majlis agreed to the deal. However, once they started to drill, an American vice-consul was assassinated by religious demonstrators opposed to any western influence and the further westernization it might bring. It is unclear if the British helped with the assassination.⁶⁹ Regardless, after this, Sinclair pulled out of the deal.

Once again Iran was left with just the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, now called the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). In 1932, the Great Depression sparked falling oil prices, which meant that the Iranian government received fewer royalties from Britain.⁷⁰ Additionally, a new income tax was established, but AIOC refused to pay it, claiming that since they were exempt from other taxes, they should be exempt from the income tax.⁷¹ Reza Shah countered that because the original D'Arcy concession was agreed to before there was a representative government, it could be declared void. News started to circulate in the largest newspaper, *Ettalaat*, that AIOC would be expelled, and the

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Haas, William S. 1946. Iran. 1966th ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁶⁶ Fatemi, Nasrollah Saifpour. 1954. Oil Diplomacy. New York: Whittier Books, Inc.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁷¹ Fatemi, Nasrollah Saifpour. 1954. Oil Diplomacy. New York: Whittier Books, Inc.

population rejoiced.⁷² The United Kingdom brought the dispute to the League of Nations, which agreed to hear the case in 1933. However, in 1933, Sir John Cadman started bilateral negotiations with Reza Shah. He threatened to sever relations between the two countries, which Reza Shah thought would entail British military occupation of Khuzestan, home to the British oil wells. He feared that this might also spur the competing Soviet Union to try to take over Iranian Azerbaijan.⁷³ Therefore, the Shah agreed to negotiate, and before the case came before the UN, AIOC and Iran had already reached a new deal.⁷⁴

The new agreement reduced the area of concession and made the AIOC subject to income tax, but it also significantly reduced the royalties that Iran received. However, the biggest disadvantage to Iran was that the deal was extended for sixty more years, whereas the original D'Arcy concession was set to expire in just a couple of decades.⁷⁵ Also, the Iranian government had no right or ability to annul the agreement, even if its provisions aren't met, which allows for no system of accountability for AIOC.⁷⁶ Essentially the new agreement was even worse than the old one and remains in effect as of the start of committee.

Besides shifting foreign relations, Reza Shah enacted a vast number of internal reforms in Iran. His model was the westernization of Turkey completed by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who came to power in 1923 after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Ataturk created the Turkish Republic from scratch as a secular, westernized nation, completing massive overhauls like changing the alphabet and standardizing the Turkish language, creating a shared Turkish national sentiment across different regions and ethnic groups, enacting full equality for women and western-style education, banishing the clergy from public office, creating full independence from foreign control, and so on. However, Reza Shah had to be more cautious implementing similar changes; the average Iranian had far less exposure to the west than the average Turk, and there were a greater variety of tribes and ethnicities in Iran.⁷⁷

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Nevertheless, this did not deter the Shah. He was energetic and ruthless in achieving his goals, using the Majlis as a puppet government to enact his will.⁷⁸ He terrified his subjects, and sometimes used his power to increase his personal wealth, although he lived a life without much luxury.⁷⁹ However, he did succeed in enacting an incredible transformation of Iran, economically, socially and religiously.

Advised by an American, A. C. Millspaugh, the Shah took control of many aspects of the economy previously controlled by foreigners. In 1927 he established a National Bank to issue currency, replacing the British Imperial Bank. In order to avoid foreign loans and imports, he started many state monopolies and factories that would provide wealth to the state.⁸⁰ The Iranian government also took control of imports and exports.⁸¹ In a great feat of engineering, he built a trans-Iranian railroad over difficult mountainous and desert terrain.⁸² While the Shah was making the economy more Iranian, however, he was making the populace more western.

Reza Shah westernized the population at the expense of Islam. In 1935 the University of Tehran was founded,⁸³ which focused on secular liberal arts principles rather than the traditional Muslim education. He also sent educators to universities in Western Europe, and once a base of qualified teachers was established, primary education became both free and compulsory.⁸⁴ At the same time, he worked to strip the clergy, or *mullahs*, of their power. Specifically, he systematically removed landed nobles from the government and replaced them with officials educated in the West. He took away the *mullahs'* material wealth by nationalizing the *waqf*, a system in which people could donate to the *mullahs* money to be used for public projects.⁸⁵ He outlawed the dervishes, a religious order, and *tazziehs*, displays of religious passion on the holiday of *Ashura*.⁸⁶ He granted greater equality to women in marriage and property laws.⁸⁷ Finally, he ordered men to adopt western dress and women

⁷⁸ Haas, William S. 1946. Iran. 1966th ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁷⁹ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁸³ Haas, William S. 1946. Iran. 1966th ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

to stop wearing the veil in 1936.⁸⁸ Throughout this secularization process, he also strove to minimize the difference between the Sunni and the Shia. In 1937 he signed a nonaggression pact with Iraq and Afghanistan⁸⁹ and married his son to a Sunni Egyptian princess.⁹⁰

Occupation during World War II, 1941-1945

As they did in World War I, Iran remained officially neutral throughout the Second World War but was initially sympathetic to Nazi Germany, hosting a small number of German troops. Germany was one of Iran's largest trading partners; 41% of foreign trade at the start of the war was with Germany.⁹¹ However, British and later Russian propaganda campaigns inflated Germany's involvement in Iran. While the actual number of Germans was around 700, the Allies at various times claimed between 2,000 and 20,000.⁹²

The Shah was wary of Britain acting against Iran's interest. He made a surprise visit to Khuzestan in 1940, where he confirmed his fears: soldiers in the British army were there posing as AIOC employees, causing the Shah to order the cessation of visas to Britain and threaten martial law.⁹³ It was when the Soviet Union entered the war in 1941, however, that Iran was forcefully drawn into the conflict. The Allies needed to get supplies to Soviet Union, and with this goal issued an ultimatum to Iran: Iran could let them use the country as a supply transportation route or they would forcibly take over. Iran refused, and as promised, the Allies invaded. There was no opposition to the Soviet Red Army in the North, and little resistance to British forces in the South.⁹⁴ At first, they just occupied the South and North, leaving Tehran alone. However, Tehran refused to comply with all of their demands, calling them unreasonable, and an editorial apparently penned by the Shah was published to that effect in *Ettalaat*.⁹⁵ On September 16, the Allies marched on Tehran and Reza Shah

⁸⁸ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Haas, William S. 1946. Iran. 1966th ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁹¹ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁹² Fatemi, Nasrollah Saifpour. 1954. Oil Diplomacy. New York: Whittier Books, Inc.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Frye, Richard N. 1953. Iran. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

⁹⁵ Fatemi, Nasrollah Saifpour. 1954. Oil Diplomacy. New York: Whittier Books, Inc.

abdicated. Palace officials convinced the Allies to let his son, Mohammad Reza Shah, take the throne.⁹⁶

The Tripartite Agreement of 1942 governing the occupation officially stated that “the presence of these forces on Iranian territory does not constitute a military occupation and will disturb as little as possible the administration and security forces of Iran, the economic life of the country, the normal movements of the population and the application of Iranian laws and regulations.”⁹⁷ However, in reality, Britain and the USSR did all of these things. For example, they arrested around 500 people on suspicions of anti-Ally activity.⁹⁸ According to Churchill, there were no brewing problems in Soviet controlled territory: “There is no need to fear undue Russian encroachments, as their one supreme wish will be to get a through route for American supplies.”⁹⁹ History showed Churchill to be incorrect here.

The invasion put Iran in a bad place economically. Prices of regular goods skyrocketed 800% from 1939 to 1944,¹⁰⁰ and to make things worse, there was a lack of transportation.¹⁰¹ In order to alleviate some of the stress, the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation was established to provide supplies to Iranians and the Soviet Union.¹⁰² This was an example of the Allies seemingly appearing to treat Iran kindly, a sentiment echoed in 1943 at the Tehran Conference when they promised to withdraw militarily and provide economic aid to Iran after the war. While the agreement was signed by the UK, USSR and the US, Iranians gave most of the credit for the agreement to the US, because it seemed most in line with Roosevelt’s ideas.¹⁰³ This poised Iran to generally view the United States with favor. With the end of the war in 1945, Iran would realize that its optimism on post-war prospects had been misplaced.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Fawcett, Louise L’Estrange. 1992. *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰¹ Frye, Richard N. 1953. *Iran*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Frye, Richard N. 1953. *Iran*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.



The Iran Crisis of 1946

Following the end of World War Two, Iran was left wondering whether the allies would follow through on their promise to pull out and support their economic development. By late 1945, they would have an answer. In September, the northwestern region of Iranian Azerbaijan declared itself independent under the Azerbaijan People's Government, a Communist group with the overt backing of the Red Army.¹⁰⁴ Soviet forces supported the newfound government, preventing Tehran from

¹⁰⁴ Hess, Gary R. "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-46 and the Cold War." *Political Science Quarterly* 89, no. 1 (1974): 117-46.

reestablishing control over the region. That same year, Kurdish forces under the leadership of Qazi Muhammad in the neighboring region of Mahabad also declared independence. In the wake of the fleeing Iranian forces, Kurdish locals, long dreaming of self-rule, took the initiative and formed the Republic of Mahabad.¹⁰⁵

After a period of uncertainty, foreign powers stepped in, with the case being presented to the United Nations Security Council in early 1946. In just the second matter ever discussed by the body, the Security Council called for the parties to reach some solution, and within a few months, the Soviets pledged to withdraw.¹⁰⁶ Actual withdrawal, however, would not come so quickly. In fact, it was not until the end of 1946 that the conflict had truly resolved itself, with the Soviets pulling back and the two breakaway states falling back under Tehran's control. In the meantime, hundreds if not thousands of lives had been lost on both sides, with skirmishes between the Iranian army and Kurdish and Azeri forces commonplace. Despite the challenges, Iran emerged from the crisis intact and Soviet aggression appeared, for the time being, to be decreasing. As retribution for the military action, the Iranians distanced themselves from the Soviets, refusing treaties and limiting future trade.¹⁰⁷

Iran Since 1946

Compared to the decades previously, the past five years of Iranian history have been relatively quiet. In 1949, the Shah called for a Constitutional Assembly to ratify certain amendments to the 1906 document. These changes, though relatively small, did give the Shah the power to dissolve parliament.¹⁰⁸ That same year, a man named Mohammad Mosaddegh formed a new political party, the National Front, that would grow to become one of the largest in the country at the time of the committee.¹⁰⁹ The National Front was a liberal, nationalist party with an interest in ensuring Iranian sovereignty. Tired of decades of concessions, the National Front sought to limit foreign influence

¹⁰⁵ Archie Roosevelt, Jr. "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad." *Middle East Journal* 1, no. 3 (1947): 247-69. Accessed January 2, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4321887>.

¹⁰⁶ Security Council resolution 0/2, The Iranian Question, A/RES/02 (1946), available from <https://documents-ddsny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/036/65/PDF/NR003665.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹⁰⁷ Hess, Gary R. "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-46 and the Cold War." *Political Science Quarterly* 89, no. 1 (1974): 117-46.

¹⁰⁸ Farmanfarma, A. "Constitutional Law of Iran." *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 3, no. 2 (1954): 241-47. Accessed January 2, 2021. doi:10.2307/837742.

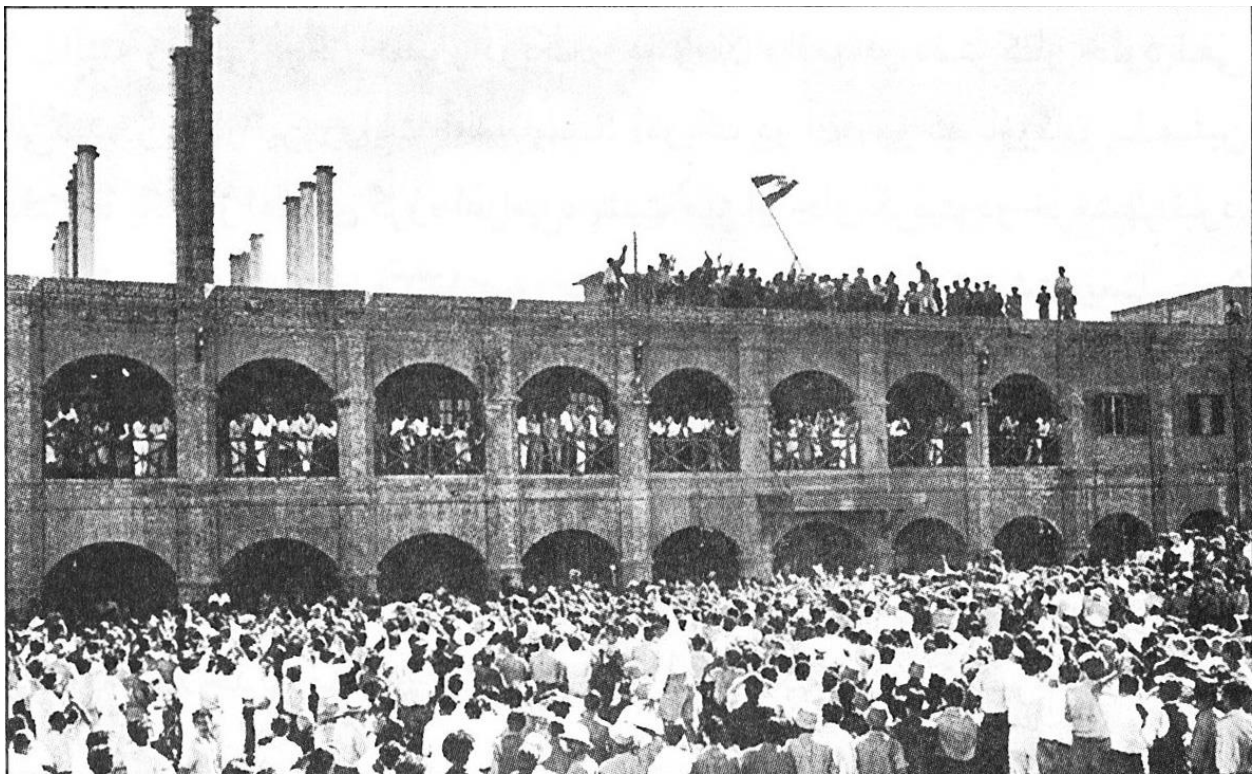
¹⁰⁹ Pike, John "National Front; Iran Freedom Movement" *GlobalSecurity.org*. December 15, 2015 <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/nf.htm>.

and promote democracy at home. For a more in-depth description of the national front, please see the “Bloc Positions” section.

CURRENT SITUATION

Iran has enjoyed a few years of relative stability. Unfortunately for you, that is about to change. Here are a few main areas of potential future conflict. This list is not exhaustive, and, depending on what actions committee takes, issues are likely to come up that are not mentioned here.

Oil Nationalization



Oil has been one of the defining features of the 20th century for Iran and it's not going away any time soon. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company is operating by the agreement set in 1933, which is set to last until 1993. According to the terms of the agreement, the Iranian government has no right to withdraw. While Iran does not have the legal right to renegotiate the treaty, they can still attempt to do so, especially if they can gain leverage by offering something new to the United Kingdom or, on the other hand, threatening something unfavorable, like closer relations with the Soviet Union. Iran can also (illegally) pull out of the treaty and deal with the ensuing foreign relations crisis, something that would be possible if Iran develops a stronger military or powerful allies abroad.

Iran has a few options when it comes to oil, all of which come with enormous foreign policy ramifications. The first choice would be to continue the status quo of British oil domination, with the AIOC continuing to face few regulations and pay no taxes to the Iranians. Though likely the easiest route for the government to follow, this is extremely unpopular among the Iranian people and may undermine the government's legitimacy. Alternatively, Iran could turn to other major powers such as the Americans or Soviets in an effort to reestablish something of a power balance for foreign control of the oil industry. While possibly affording the Iranian people greater influence and the ability to play major powers off of one another, this route is complicated. It would likely prove unpopular and could risk sparking British backlash.

Though technically not permitted by the terms of the 1933 agreement, Iran could work to renegotiate the treaty. They could move against existing British infrastructure and attempt to leverage that into a more favorable deal or simply try their luck in the world of diplomacy. The Iranian people would seemingly favor any deal that leaves Iran better off than it is now, though this path could backfire. A British refusal to renegotiate would no doubt prove embarrassing to the Iranian government and be a major blow to their legitimacy.

The final option is for Iran to nationalize the oil industry, going back on prior oil agreements and transferring the rights and equipment of oil extraction to either the Iranian government, private Iranian companies (which as of now do not exist), or a combination of both. This certainly would cause a diplomatic crisis. While the Iranian people are almost certainly on board with this path, the consequences at the moment appear to be too dire. It would seem most prudent for Iran to build up its own army or ally itself with a foreign power if they seek to follow this path. To fail to do so risks a British invasion.

Foreign Relations

Iran is in a precarious place when it comes to foreign policy. Just five years ago, it found itself in the middle of the fledgling Cold War, a mere pawn between the Great Powers of the United States and the Soviet Union. In such times, it is dangerous for a country to continue with no real allies and no military strength. It is up to you to decide who, if anyone, Iran should ally with.

Despite the complicated recent history, the Soviets are one potential ally for Iran. They have a powerful military and could help counterbalance the deep economic control exerted by the British. Additionally, the Soviets may be more likely to abide by the terms of an agreement in the wake of the international condemnation sparked by their actions in 1946. However, many in the government remain rightfully wary of the Communist power. Their government system is antithetical to what most in Iran believe, advocating a rigid regime of secularism. They have also, as with the other powers, proven untrustworthy in the past.

The British are another option for the Iranians going forward. They already have an entrenched economic interest, so the addition of a military agreement could only diminish Iran's sovereignty so much. However, the British have been quite overt in their desire to control Iran as a puppet. Any further alliance with them would likely help them on this path. Additionally, the British are increasingly unpopular among the Iranian people. Inviting the British Army onto Iranian soil risks pushing Iran one step too far in the British realm of control.

Unlike the British and Soviets, the Americans have not made explicit power grabs against Iran in the past. However, they appear to show the same desire for economic domination expressed by the British. They have a powerful military and deep pockets, but despite professing good intentions, there is little evidence that they will prove any better a partner than the other two powers. In the wake of World War Two, America is attempting to assert itself as the world power, and Iran could see fit to leverage this into assistance. However, be warned: the Americans are a risky ally, and their CIA could prove a dangerous enemy should relations sour.

Iran does not have to choose a single great power ally. They could continue on a path alone, bolstering their own military while avoiding any sweeping commitments that risk compromising Iranian sovereignty. Alternatively, they could form a coalition with regional actors to create something of a non-aligned movement of smaller countries banding together for protection from the incursion of great powers. The path forward on this matter is wide open. It will be up to you to weigh the consequences of each option.

Domestic Development

Prior to the twentieth century, the Iranian economy was primarily agricultural. The country's diverse landscape has made it a great home to countless wheats, fruits, and nuts. This has historically allowed Iran to be a regional leader in agricultural exports. The Iranian economy was very successful until neighboring countries in the Middle East and Europe began industrializing. As they did so, Iran found itself falling behind economically. In the mid 1920's, Reza Pahlavi took power. One of his primary goals was to modernize Iran's economy. Shah Reza Pahlavi approached Iran's economy with the mindset that they needed to modernize without falling under domination of any foreign power. He only succeeded with the first of those challenges.

The first Pahlavi Shah did well in modernizing Iran's economy. Iran is now home to several manufacturing plants but has prospered most successfully under its booming oil exports. Such development has caused a great divide within the people of Iran. At this point in time, a large majority of Iran's laborers are still employed in agriculture. While industrialization has been rapidly progressing in Iran, it has not required nearly as many workers as agriculture. Therefore, the majority of Iran's workers are still in the agricultural sector and are growing agitated at their potential loss of employment due to the country's transition to industry. Iran has more economic problems to deal with besides the growing unrest among its laborers. Shah Reza Pahlavi's efforts to restrict the presence of foreign influence in Iran included the placing of high trade tariffs on Iran's borders. As a result, prices on foreign exports into Iran skyrocketed, causing the price of several common goods and living commodities to go up. Not only have farmers found themselves out of work, but it has also become more expensive to live in Iran.

Iranian infrastructure is in dire straits, the people are angry, and there is an employment crisis. None of these elements is part of a recipe for a successful government, so it is incumbent on you to fix this situation. Iran needs investment in the future, but it simply lacks money to invest. Revenue from oil is shipped off abroad and internal corruption prevents any effective implementation of programs. Before investing in the Iranian people, you must first figure out how you will possibly do so.



Domestic Politics

While the common people of Iran are deeply religious, ever since the beginning of Reza Shah's reign, the government and the elites have become increasingly secular. Reza Shah enacted many reforms in an attempt to secularize not only the government but also the daily life of the general population and to decrease the power of the religious elite. Reza Shah also set up an Office for Direction of Public Opinion, which was a thinly veiled propaganda organ, a mechanism to westernize the public and make them less religious. The population has not responded particularly positively to the propaganda. Reza Shah also avoided talking about the Islamic portion of Iranian history, choosing to draw his own name, Pahlavi, from the word for Persian specifically in pre-Islamic times. Needless to say, this has made the Shah very unpopular with the religious elite, called the *Mullahs*, who, by the Constitution, should have veto power over the Majlis, although this has never been put into practice.

These measures have been creating a dangerous rift in Iranian society between the faithful masses together with religious leaders and the governing elite.

Iran will need to decide whether it will continue on the path of Reza Shah and continue to secularize or change course and accept the Muslim identity of most of the people as a driving force in politics. Continued secularization will require more creative strategies to convince the population that this is the right path for Iran; otherwise, Iran may be looking at a popular uprising from the religious masses. Alternatively, the new Shah could partially or completely reverse the path of his father, rolling back some of the anti-religion rhetoric, removing some of the particularly controversial new laws or even going as far as to make new laws that support the role of religion and the Mullahs in Iran's government. However, this will be at the expense of his own power and his father's legacy and will anger many of the pro-Western parts of the population, including highly educated professionals, people in Iranian Azerbaijan and Gilan and powerful members of the Majlis. Also, becoming more religious could alienate both the atheist Soviet Union and Western governments like the United Kingdom and United States that base their democracy on separation of church and state, forcing Iran to craft a new foreign policy centered around other Muslim nations.

BLOC POSITIONS

Roster (Name – Title – Faction)

Mohammad Mossadegh — Prime Minister – National Front

Gholam Hossein Sadighi — Minister of Post and Telegraph – National Front

Taghi Riahi — Chief of Staff of the Army – National Front

Fazlollah Zahedi — Minister of the Interior – Royalist

Mohsen Rais — Ambassador to the UK – Royalist

Reza Hekmat — Speaker of Parliament – Old Guard

Ebrahim Hakimi — President of the Senate – Old Guard

Hossein Fatemi — National Front Youth Leader – National Front

Ernst Perron — Private Secretary of the Shah – Royalist

Shaban Jafari — Criminal Strongman – Royalist

Ashraf Pahlavi — Princess of Iran – Royalist

Mohammad Ali Keshavarz Sadr — Minister of Energy – National Front

Nasrollah Entezam — Ambassador to the USA – Old Guard

Khosrow Qashqai — Ambassador to the USSR – National Front

Abol-Ghasem Kashani — Shia Marja – National Front

Nader Jahanbani — Chief of the Air Force – Old Guard

Mohammad-Taqi Bahar — Minister of Culture – Old Guard

Teymur Bakhtiar — Chief of National Police – Royalist

Hossein Navab — Minister of Foreign Affairs – National Front

Mohsen Sadr — Minister of Justice – Royalist

Ahmad Qavam — Minister of Finance – Old Guard

Mozaffar Firouz — Minister of Labor -- Royalist

Abbas Masoudi — Editor-in-Chief of Ettalaat -- Royalist

Iraj Eskandari — Leader of the Tudeh Party -- Communist

Note: While this roster does recognize the alignments of every character, do not feel restricted by your bloc. Delegates are encouraged to work across the aisle to form consensus. Instead of a sort of hard boundary, blocs are intended more as a starting point to give delegates ideas of their supporters and possible policy positions. Some blocs are clearly much larger than others. Being in a small bloc is not a disadvantage, however. While you may find it more difficult to find support for certain measures, you do enjoy the popular support of some Iranians. This can be used as leverage in trying to pass measures in directives. It is also something that must be taken into account by those members of larger blocs. Additionally, do some research into your individual character. All delegate positions are real-life Iranians alive during this time (some liberties were taken with exact positions). Make an effort to incorporate your character's beliefs into your proposals as well. While some characters may be listed as members of a given faction, you may learn that their real positions are more complex, and their loyalties might be split. If certain issues arise, delegates are welcome to jump between factions.

National Front

The National Front seeks to be the new voice for a strong Iran. They advocate liberal democratic policies and dream of an Iran where the people can truly be represented. In this area, they will find themselves in conflict with the Royalists. Their economic policies lean left and include some socialist tendencies. They wish to see Iran develop into a strong nation capable of holding its own against major powers.

The National Front does not fear antagonizing Britain or the United States. They campaigned on a platform of nationalizing oil and ending all treaties of concession and intend to do just that. This bold

attitude has sparked fear from many in other factions. However, the National Front remains undeterred. They have the people behind them, and they will stop at nothing to see Iranian resources return to Iranian control.

Some in the National Front favor an increased role of religion in government. Though most clergymen stay out of politics, those that do not largely support the National Front. There remain some in the party that are wary of mixing religion and government. The National Front has the support of many in Iran's middle class. Merchants, professionals, and even many urban laborers support the National Front and its promise of a strong future. In terms of raw numbers, the National Front has the greatest support of the population. Whether that manifests into political success remains to be seen.

Royalists

The Royalists support increasing the power of the Shah. They have seen how dangerous giving the people power can be and fear a revolutionary takeover. At an individual level, the Royalists have generally fared well economically. The governing system is notoriously corrupt, and many in the ranks of the Royalists have profited off of this. They therefore oppose radical change of any type. In some matters, they may find fast allies in the Old Guard, as both are relatively okay with the status quo. However, disagreements between the two groups remain large, with the Old Guard fearing the absolutist tendencies of the Royalists and the Royalists worried that the Old Guard will seek to undermine Iran's relationship with the United States and Britain.

The Royalists seek to ally with the British and Americans. They oppose any efforts by the National Front and others to nationalize oil reserves, fearing that this will simply lead to conflict. They remember when their monarch was deposed just one decade ago and do not wish to see this happen again. Remembering the disaster of 1946, they despise the Tudeh Party and view Communists in Iran as one of the single greatest threats to the nation's success.

The Royalists have support in many ranks of the military as well as from British and American interests. While they are not the most popular faction among the everyday people of Iran, they control many of the institutions needed to win back popular support. They have a large television,

radio, and newspaper influence and control many of the apparati of the state that could allow them to crush any possible rebellions. The police are generally thought to be loyal to the Royalists and will continue to be so as long as the Royalists remain true to their cause.

Old Guard

Despite the name, the Old Guard is not exclusively made up of aging Iranians. Rather, its members are those in Iran who best represent the old ways of governance. This group is used to Iran's tradition of concessions and have fared quite well personally. That is not to say that they are happy with the way things have traditionally gone. In fact, many among the ranks of the Old Guard are ardent nationalists, dreaming of a resurgent Iran. They are wary both of the absolutist tendencies of the Royalists and of the radical liberalism and socialism espoused by the National Front. Revolutionary change frightens members of this group.

The Old Guard is unlikely to support nationalizing Iran's oil without first accounting for how to appease Britain and the United States. They are likely to be the voice of caution, remembering the days of foreign occupation and seeking nothing more than avoiding a repeat of that. There is no uniform position among Old Guard members towards the United States, UK, and USSR individually. Rather, they share a general philosophy of wariness towards all. Different members of the Old Guard espouse different views on religion, with some believing it to be a relic of an old Iran while others see it as an integral part of the country moving forward.

The Old Guard is a likely ally to the National Front in efforts to strengthen Iran's development. They want to see investment in Iran's future, though generally in a way less likely to provoke the ire of foreign powers. They are likely to work with Royalists to combat revolutionary change, seeking to preserve the status quo. They must find a balance on this, however, as their position as something of a swing vote leaves them vulnerable on both sides. The Old Guard has the support of many military officials (those who do not support the Royalists) and the upper classes of Iran's cities.

Communists

The Tudeh Party is the Communist Party of Iran. It seeks a secular, Communist rule, and this platform has made it extremely unpopular among many in Iranian society. Too many people remember the 1946 Crisis with fear and worry that the Communists simply seek Iranian subjugation to the Soviets. Despite this, the Communists do have significant support among Iran's rural population and working class. The economic status quo has proven harmful to many in Iran, and they view Tudeh as their only hope of fixing it.

The Communists favor closer relations with the USSR and want to move away from Anglo-American influence as quickly as possible. They also support moves to nationalize Iran's oil supply, though they fear corporate domination will continue to disadvantage the people of Iran. They favor development measures that will help poor people across the country. While they dream of revolution, they recognize that this is not a viable path at the moment. In the meantime, they will work to counter the influence of the US and UK and ensure that the working people of Iran are no longer forgotten.

The Communists may seek to ally with the National Front, providing a crucial swing vote in exchange for driving certain economic measures slightly farther to the left. They despise the Royalists, and the Royalists despise them, and the two groups are unlikely to find much common ground. While some in the Old Guard may be sympathetic to the pro-Soviet positions of the Tudeh Party, they are far less likely to hear out the radical economic agenda.

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