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SPECTRUM OF VIOLENCE SHORT OF LIMITED
WAR--IRAN 1945-TO 1953

James F. Miley

Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

8 March 1971

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SPECTRUM OF VIOLENCE SHORT OF LIMITED WAR--
IRAN 1945 TO 1953

AN IAS INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT REPORT

by

Lieutenant Colonel James F. Miley
Corps of Engineers

US Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
8 March 1971

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: James F. Miley, LTC, CE

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The turbulence in Iran from the end of World War II until the downfall of Premier Mossadegh in August 1953 has been examined to identify distinct stages of violence. The steps taken by various factions which contributed to the increase or decrease in the violence are examined. The thesis is that a study of periods of low intensity conflict will generate a pattern of similarity with the studies of other conflict situations from which guidelines for counterinsurgency and stability operations can be developed. This project is a continuation of work done by USACPCIAS in a preconflict case study and is a part of the ARMLIC Study which will examine a total of seven conflict situations. Data were gathered using a literature search. The patterns of violence in Iran, 1945 to 1955, consist of mob actions and assassinations. There are no distinct stages in the violence; the patterns key on significant political and emotional events and are repeated from event to event. The intensity and duration of the periods of violence do vary. Mob violence and assassination were the common political weapons in Iran when non-violent political means were ineffective. Police work and strong riot control measures are the only effective means of limiting violence under these conditions; long-range political reform and economic gains may solve the problem in time.

PREFACE

This IAS Individual Study Project Report was produced under the aegis of the USACDC Institute of Advanced Studies at Carlisle Barracks. The scope and general methodology were outlined by the IAS. This research report is designed to support a larger study effort, Army Roles, Missions, and Doctrine in Low Intensity Conflict (ARMLIC). The author elected to prepare this report and to thereby contribute to the ARMLIC Study effort on the basis of an IAS invitation to so participate and some earlier experience with similar study efforts. The assistance of Colonel Ralph T. Tierno, Jr., USACDC IAS Research Adviser, is acknowledged; his insight and basic understanding of the subject under examination were of great value throughout the project.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This individual research project was undertaken to fulfill the requirements of the Student Research Program of the US Army War College and in support of the US Army Combat Developments Command Institute of Advanced Studies (USACDCIAS) Study entitled Army Roles, Missions, and Doctrine in Low Intensity Conflict (ARMLIC).

ARMLIC involves the study of seven specific countries which have been selected on the basis of post World War II involvement in various forms of low-intensity conflict. The countries are the Philippines, Colombia, Iran, Greece, Kenya, Malaya, and Vietnam. The conflict situation in each of these countries is being examined in depth through a series of phased supporting studies. Research conducted in an earlier ARMLIC phase has resulted in individual case studies on the seven countries of interest.

This research project examines the spectrum of violence in Iran during the period from 1945 through 1953 and constitutes a continuation of the work done in Preconflict Case Study 3,¹ the Phase I element of ARMLIC that considered Iran. The preconflict study developed the political, economic, social, psychological, public-health, scientific-technological and military factors conducive to low

¹US Army, Combat Developments Command, Institute of Advanced Studies, Army Roles, Missions, and Doctrine in Low Intensity Conflict (ARMLIC), Preconflict Case Study 3, Iran (U), (Coordination Draft) (2 February 1970), (hereinafter referred to as Preconflict Case Study--Iran).

intensity conflict and change of indigenous governmental control in Iran. Using the earlier work as a basis, the violent aspects of the conflict during the 1945-1953 period have been examined in this phase to identify and classify distinct stages of the violence. Having identified the stages, the steps taken by the various factions in Iran that contributed to the increase or decrease in violence are examined. The steps that might have been taken to influence the levels of violence in the various stages are examined and a pattern of violence and effective responses to violence in Iran is evolved. The thesis here is that a dynamic assessment based upon a study of distinct periods of low intensity conflict rather than an overall assessment of the final outcome will generate a pattern of similarity in the studies of the seven ARMLIC countries from which guidelines for counterinsurgency and stability operations can be developed.

It should be clearly understood that no assumptions are made, either in this study or in ARMLIC as a whole, as to whether military, paramilitary, or police actions and particularly US actions are desirable or necessary in connection with any given conflict. Rather, it is recognized that these capabilities, both military and for civilian assistance, are among the many means that may be used or withheld in furtherance of the policy or national interest of the United States or any other government. The military, paramilitary, and police capabilities of the United States and other countries should be maintained to best serve the purposes of the national authorities and to serve them with the greatest effectiveness. It is therefore the purpose of this study to evaluate and evolve patterns of effectiveness and not to set patterns of involvement.

The basic assumptions and methodology, common to all aspects of the ARMLIC Study as well as the records of the other supporting research work, are on file in USACDCIAS.

BACKGROUND

The earlier USACDCIAS case study on Iran considered the preconflict period in Iran, 1921-1951. The method used was designed to determine the points of tension conducive to low intensity conflict.

The preconflict study provided a very fine background and basis for the understanding of Iran and the Iranian. While the conclusions drawn placed emphasis on the violence-inducing factors, a number of counterbalancing and stability producing factors were also derived.²

INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES

While the earlier case study established the groundwork and basis for this project, it contained little definitive treatment of the specifics of any violence involved in the Iranian conflict. The violent aspects of the situation, having been left by design, for the follow-on work.

In this project a source of data rich in the specifics of violence was necessary and practical considerations limited the search to the USAWC Library. During the early investigation a wide variety of material on Iran was scanned. The available books and publications

²Ibid., p. 10.

of various governmental agencies were reviewed, but yielded little specific information beyond the material presented in the earlier USAWC/CIAS case study. Avery and Lenczowski offered additional background on the conflict situation and the interplay of Iranian politics. The classified intelligence reports of the period were unproductive in detail and continuity. Ultimately, the most valuable source of specific information proved to be the extensive file of American periodical publications held by the USAWC Library. Here the quality of the data improved during the period being investigated as the press became increasingly conscious of the growing importance of the Middle East and as the quality of the press coverage improved with time and experience.

After a rather thorough examination of the periodical material available, the New York Times was selected as the basic source of data because of the high frequency of publication, the more or less factual manner of presenting the data, the availability of a complete set of these newspapers on microfilm, and the rather descriptive index which permitted an effective prescreening of the vast number of articles for items of value to this project. An increasing amount of valuable material appeared in the later years.

Most of the material presented in area-oriented periodicals such as the Middle East Journal and Middle East Affairs was of little value to this work because it was political, social, and economic in nature and was repetitive of the material contained in the Preconflict Study. Middle East Affairs, which was first published in 1950, does include

a chronology of important events in each issue which proved to be very valuable both as a source of data and as a means to cross-check and catalog material derived from other sources.

The validity of the specific data derived from the New York Times and other sources used herein might well be questioned, particularly where the sources implicitly or explicitly qualify their own information; however, the nature of this work did not require that each data element be irrefutable. Indeed, these data were aggregated and subjectively categorized to reveal trends and patterns rather than to examine specific instances in detail. It is doubtful that the continuity of the data available would in any case support a detailed examination of a specific incident. The high degree of correlation between the news reported in the newspaper and the chronology presented in Middle East Affairs lends considerable weight to the author's acceptance of this data base.

ASSUMPTIONS

The significant assumption and the associated rationale used in preparing this report are as follows:

- a. The levels and styles of violence exhibited in Iran run through a wide spectrum and defy precise definition. The lower levels of violence are very subtle and among very sensitive and emotional people, the threshold of perceived violence may be very low. The initiation of violence will therefore be assumed to be associated with the written and spoken bellicose word, threats, and

protest demonstrations, and will not be withheld until the subsequent incidence of dead, wounded, and damage.

b. Russian and other foreign interference is always present in Iran. Elements directed by the Soviet Union and frequently by Great Britain, and in later years, American-advised military and paramilitary forces are a permanent part of the conflict situation in that country. The presence of these foreign elements, short of the overt use of foreign armed forces, will therefore be considered to be a regular part of the Iranian domestic scene.

c. The data derived from the newspapers and other sources will be assumed to be valid and factual. The qualifications on the credibility of these data are as stated above.

CHAPTER II

VIOLENCE IN IRAN

Violence is and has been an integral part of Iranian life throughout recorded history. The Preconflict Study outlined Iranian history and developed the factors, both foreign and domestic, that fostered the high incidence of violence. It is not the intent here to repeat the material presented in the earlier study; however, a minimum framework of the political and emotional happenings of the 1945-1953 era will be used as a background for the associated violence.

The Preconflict Study subdivided the years 1945 through 1953 in Iran into three periods: the First Conflict Period, 1945-1946; the Inter-Conflict Period, 1946-1941; and the Second Conflict Period, 1951-1953. It has been convenient and logical to continue to use these three subdivisions in this project.

FIRST CRISIS PERIOD

After an attempt soon after the Russian Revolution, the Soviet Union made no further overt effort to establish a Communist government in Iran until 1941. There was some Tudeh (Communist) party activity during the 1921-1941 period, but Reza Shah was a strong and sometimes repressive leader, and his security forces prevented the emergence of any real threat. The occupation of northern Iran by Soviet troops in 1941 provided the opportunity for the Soviets to

advance communism in that area. The Soviet military took over the administration of Azerbaijan and northern Iran by 1943, sealed these areas off from the rest of the country, and removed the area from the control of the central government. At the same time, the abdication of Reza Shah left a political vacuum that permitted the reemergence of Tudeh leaders throughout Iran.¹

At the end of World War II, in spite of an agreement to the contrary, the Russian troops remained in Iran. In August 1945 the Tudeh, having been groomed since 1941 by the Soviets, staged a revolt in Azerbaijan. A Tudeh government was established in Tabriz under the leadership of Jaafar Pishevari, a former official of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Gilan. Pishevari, with Soviet assistance, quickly began to organize security forces and to use every means, including terror tactics, to bring Azerbaijan under control.²

During the same time, the Soviets inspired and backed a revolt by the Kurdish tribes.³ This led to the establishment of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad.

The Soviets supported the Azerbaijan revolt and the associated violence to a marked degree. They transported peasants to Tabriz for demonstrations, enforced Tudeh executive decisions against landlords, led demonstrations in Tabriz, provided forces from Soviet

¹Preconflict Case Study--Iran, p. 31.

²George Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948 (1949), p. 289.

³Ibid., p. 18.

Azerbaijan to pose as Iranian insurgent forces, supported "Democratic" forces in attacks on government forces, and committed other acts of indirect involvement.⁴ The Soviets also distributed arms to subversive elements and carried on a very strong and active political campaign in Teheran.

The specifics of the Soviet support of the Kurds are not so well known, but it is understood that Kurdish leaders were trained in Russia and that arms and other supplies were provided.⁵

American troops evacuated Iran in 1945; the last British troops left early in 1946. The Iranian Government was left to deal with the Soviet occupation in any way that it could.

Ahmad Qavam as-Saltaneh became Prime Minister of Iran at about the time the British troops left. Qavam was known for his friendly relations with the Tudeh and the USSR. After some negotiations he was able to get the USSR to agree to withdraw the Soviet troops. In return for the troop withdrawal, Qavam agreed to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the Azerbaijan rebels, to favor an oil agreement with the Soviet Union, and to otherwise accommodate his government to the Soviet Union and the Tudeh Party. The Soviet troops moved out, and the Communists in both Azerbaijan and Teheran seemed to be gaining power rapidly. However, other forces were at work.

In the south of Iran several tribes, including the Qashqai revolted against the central government in protest against the

⁴Ibid., p. 288.

⁵Peter Avery, Modern Iran (1965), p. 389.

increasing influence of the Tudeh and the USSR in Tehran and in Azerbaijan. In Azerbaijan, the Pishavari government had never gained the voluntary support of the populace and local uprisings against the Communist regime were common.⁶ All Iranian factions, except the Tudeh, were unified at this time by their opposition to the oil concession proposed by the Soviet Union.

In October 1946 the Shah directed that a new cabinet be formed. Qavam dismissed the Tudeh members of the old cabinet and announced that he intended to occupy Azerbaijan with Iranian troops before holding elections. In December, Iranian troops moved into Azerbaijan, forcing Pishavari to flee to the Soviet Union, and putting an end to the Tudeh government there and in the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad. The Soviet Government did nothing to prevent the overthrow of their protege, probably because of its fear of the Americans and the British and partly because of its overwhelming interest in seeing the oil concession ratified.⁷

This essentially ended the First Crisis Period. There is little detail available concerning the specifics of the violence in this period, but the overwhelming influence of the Soviet Union and the international pressures applied by Great Britain and United States probably muted or at least concealed any distinct pattern of Iranian participation in the violence. The political dealings of Qavam

⁶Preconflict Case Study--Iran, p. 147.

⁷Special Operations Research Office, The American University, US Army Area Handbook for Iran (1963), p. 42 (hereafter referred to as "Area Handbook for Iran--1963").

constituted a classic doublecross of the Soviet Union which probably saved Iran from Soviet-Tudeh domination.⁸ The tendency of the Iranian, both Communist and anti-Communist, to demonstrate and riot is evident, and the use of terror and assassination was also present. The fact that the Iranian Army had been reconstituted by Mohammad Reza Shah since its humiliation in 1941 and was able to reoccupy the rebel territories in northwestern Iran is significant. This force, encouraged by its success in this campaign, was to become an increasingly important element in the political and power pattern of the country.

INTER-CONFLICT PERIOD

In July 1947 the Majlis met and took up the issue of ratification of the Soviet-Iranian oil concession. The Communist representation had been reduced to two, and a strong nationalist group, led by Mohammed Mossadegh, urged the Majlis to reject the concession. The United States Government had recently taken a more active interest in Middle Eastern affairs and the American Ambassador indicated that he would support the Iranians if they chose to reject the concession. Early in October 1947, an agreement between the United States and Iran for American military aid for Iran went into effect. Encouraged by this new attitude of the United States, the Majlis refused to ratify the concession. After the rejection of the oil proposal, Qavam's popularity faded; he resigned his premiership in December

⁸Blue Book, p. 398.

1947, and a pro-Western cabinet took over the government. Qavam brought a bill before the Majlis shortly before he resigned; it committed the government and the Majlis to renegotiate the terms of the British oil concession.⁹ This act set the stage for the Second Conflict Period, which will be discussed later.

Although exploitable tensions existed in the rural areas of Iran during the Inter-Conflict Period, particularly between the peasants and the landlords, agents, tax collector, and gendarmarie, the traditional culture seems to have limited the tendency to revolt until about 1951.¹⁰ The Tudeh in Azerbaijan, the Kurds, and the other tribes, as outlined above, were exceptions. These, along with occasional clashes with the Russians, did provide a frequent involvement of the government in violence outside of Teheran during the Inter-Conflict Period.

Mop-up in the Northwest

The Kurdish Tribes shared an ancient animosity with the Iranian government which had flared anew with Russian encouragement during the short life of the Mahabad Republic. The government tried Ghazi Mohammed, the head of the Mahabad Republic early in 1947¹¹ and sentenced him to death. It also appears that his followers were

⁹Area Handbook for Iran--1963, p. 42.

¹⁰Preconflict Case Study--Iran, p. 8.

¹¹"Ghazi Mohammed Head of Kurdish National Republic Sentenced to Death," New York Times, 17 January 1947, p. 4.

seized and subjected to similar treatment whenever possible.¹²

The Iranian Army fought against the Kurdish tribesmen and remnants of both the Azerbaijan and Kurdish rebel republics for some time after the Azerbaijan crisis was reasonably well in hand. In the spring and summer of 1947 there were reports of major government-tribal clashes in which hundreds were killed and wounded on each side.¹³ The rebels and tribes used ambush and guerrilla tactics in these clashes, and the government used tactical aircraft, tanks, artillery, and anything else they could bring to bear on the rebels. When the Kurds and other rebels sought to reach the sanctuary of the Russian border, they were cut off by government forces.¹⁴

In the spring of 1949, there was a government attempt to incorporate the tribes into the Army as irregular forces, rather than trying to disarm them,¹⁵ but clashes between government forces and the tribes continued throughout the period.¹⁶ There was another major series of clashes with the Javanroudi, a Kurdish tribe, near the Irqui border in the fall of 1950 and in general the Kurdish problem remained unsettled although the government was able to assert its power when necessary.

¹²"11 Hanged in Kurdistan Province for Murder and Looting," New York Times, 7 February 1947, p. 4.

¹³"Chief of Staff Announces Defeat of Kurdish Bands," New York Times, 24 February 1947, p. 5; "More than 100 Government Troops Killed in Clashes," New York Times, 24 March 1947, p. 5; and "Army Wages Full Scale Warfare Against 1000 Encircled Kurdish Tribesmen," New York Times, 16 June 1947, p. 8.

¹⁴"Tribes Armed in Iran," New York Times, 14 May 1949, p. 7.

¹⁵"Barzani Bandit Tribe Reaches USSR," New York Times, 20 June 1947, p. 4.

¹⁶"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (June-July 1950), p. 207.

Clashes with the Russians

During and subsequent to the Tudeh revolt in Azerbaijan, the Russians supplied irregular troops from Soviet Azerbaijan. In the spring of 1949 the Foreign Office revealed that there had been several recent clashes with the Russians, but commented that this had been going on for 100 years!¹⁷ In September of the previous year the Shah publicly decorated a young Army captain who had led a successful defense at Qulan against a strong Soviet-Azerbaijani irregular force.¹⁸ These clashes involved small border guard and security force engagements with Soviet-sponsored forces in what were essentially guerrilla warfare-type engagements. The Iranian forces, from their own reports, appear to have stood up well against these incursions.

Continued Trouble in Azerbaijan

The people of Azerbaijan had generally rejected the Communist attempt to govern their region during the First Conflict Period, but there remained a feeling that they were discriminated against in the allocation of benefits from Teheran.¹⁹ Conditions were generally bad and at one time it appeared that the Communists would again control in Tabriz.²⁰ In this instance, the government was able to

¹⁷"5 Hurt in Azerbaijan Incident," New York Times, 5 April 1949, p. 17.

¹⁸"Shah Honors Army Captain," New York Times, 12 September 1948, p. 22.

¹⁹Preconflict Case Study--Iran, p. 6.

²⁰"New Unrest in Azerbaijan," New York Times, 15 February 1950, p. 13.

contain the threat with administrative action. The Minister of State simply made an inspection tour which resulted in the suspension of sixty top government officials in the area on charges of "corruption and cruelty" and conditions began to improve.²¹

"Peace" in Teheran

During the Inter-Conflict Period, the main political arena was Teheran. Here all the forces in the country come to bear and the full spectrum of violence was exposed to being reported in the American press.

Teheran was relatively quiet for a time following the First Crisis Period. In early 1947 there were a series of reasonably well-ordered demonstrations to protest elections. In this case unarmed members of the Imperial Guard, all more than six feet tall, simply stood three deep in front of the demonstrators to hide them from the public.²² The government response was never so humane in the events that followed!

In early 1948 a prominent newspaper editor was assassinated and only a strong military guard was able to keep a crowd of 1000 sympathizers from carrying his body into the parliament.²³

The police were continually active and reported the arrest of 506 "gangsters" on 5 April 1948. The loud approval of the action by

²¹"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (March 1950), pp. 94-95.

²²"Government Troops Guard Shah's Palace," New York Times, 14 January 1947, p. 14.

²³"Newspaper Editor Assassinated," New York Times, 14 February 1948, p. 5.

the Rightist press suggested that the "gangsters" were in fact Communists or at least Leftists.²⁴ In any case, the Tudeh was permitted a marked degree of freedom and did operate overtly during this time.

The religious leaders and religious fanatics used mobs from time to time to pursue their objectives, and many persons were injured by police gunfire during a demonstration against a new premier on 17 June 1948. The demonstration was instigated by Ayatullah Kashani, a popular religious leader who was destined to play a major part in the events to come.²⁵

Attempted Assassination of the Shah

The period and relative calm ended on 4 February 1949 with a Tudeh-inspired assassination attempt on the Shah. A photographer-reporter fired a number of bullets at Shah Mohammed Reza, hitting him twice.²⁶ The Shah was not seriously wounded and from his hospital bed immediately began to consolidate power. Martial law was declared and the government outlawed the Tudeh Party. Angry crowds wrecked Tudeh clubs and facilities throughout the country as Tudeh leaders were arrested or fled the country. Non-Communist leaders from both the right and left were also arrested as the Shah strengthened his

²⁴"Police Arrest 506 Gangsters," New York Times, 6 April 1948, p. 2.

²⁵"Many Persons Hurt When Police Open Fire," New York Times, 18 June 1948, p. 13.

²⁶"Shah Wounded by Assassin," New York Times, 5 February 1949, p. 1.

position.²⁷ The government continued to arrest, try, and sentence large numbers of Tudeh members and other leftists throughout 1949. Death was a common sentence for "anti-government activity."

On 4 November 1949 an assassin struck again. This time a former premier, Abdul Foussein Hajir, was shot;²⁸ he died the next day. His assassin was arrested on 5 November and the next day was convicted. On 9 November the assassin was hung.²⁹ Justice was swift in this case, but this was not always the rule.

Under much pressure since the February 1949 assassination attempt, the Tudeh still found the strength to launch a large propaganda campaign against the Shah upon his return from the United States in January 1950. The government countered the Tudeh campaign by accusing the Tudeh of setting fire to schools, hospitals, and public buildings. The public was then asked to help in apprehending the guilty.³⁰ The illegal and underground Communists seem to have been very active and must have been somewhat visible during this period. The visibility was to increase greatly.

Premier Ali Razmara

In June 1950, Mohammed Reza Shah requested that Lieutenant General Ali Razmara, Chief of the General Staff, form a new

²⁷"Government Outlaws Tudeh Party," New York Times, 6 February 1949, p. 1.

²⁸"Martial Law after Former Premier Wounded by Assassin," New York Times, 5 November 1949, p. 2.

²⁹"Assassin Hanged," New York Times, 10 November 1949, p. 12.

³⁰"Tudeh Accused of Setting Fire to Schools," New York Times, 23 February 1950, p. 3.

cabinet.³¹ Razmara was an outstanding officer and he quickly took control. Large and violent demonstrations against him were organized by the Mossadegh-led National Front,³² but Razmara was a strong and rational premier. A period of relative quiet ensued. The quiet was not to last very long; the docile peasant from the provinces was moving to Teheran and other cities in greater numbers each year. The seven-year development plan (Plan Organization) adopted in 1945 had only succeeded in raising unfulfilled public expectations and exacerbating nationalist feelings.³³ In the absence of economic improvements, these urban laborers were increasingly discontented, rootless, and without hope. They constituted the raw material for the expanded mob violence which would follow.³⁴ Razmara moved to establish reforms and improve conditions, but time was running out.

On 7 March 1951, Premier Ali Razmara was shot to death by a religious fanatic of the Fedayan Islam while attending a funeral at a Teheran mosque.³⁵ With him died the hope for reform in Iran. We will see much more of Fedayan Islam assassins in the next few months.

The Emergence of Mossadegh and the National Front

Following the assassination of Razmara, violence increased to a marked degree. The Fedayan Islam announced that the government must

³¹"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (August-September 1950), p. 262.

³²"Police Dispense Mob Attacking Premier Razmara," New York Times, 3 July 1950, p. 3.

³³Preconflict Case Study--Iran, p. 37.

³⁴Ibid., p. 44.

³⁵"Premier Razmara Assassinated by Moslem Fanatic," New York Times, 8 March 1951, p. 1.

free the assassin of Razmara or they would kill the Shah and other government officials.³⁶ Razmara had opposed nationalization of the oil industry and now, only two days after his death, over 8000 demonstrated in favor of nationalization. The demonstration was joined by a large force of Communists, now called "Peace Partisans." Mobs, generally supporting Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh and the NF, ruled the streets. Razmara's cabinet resigned and the Shah appointed a new premier on 10 March, only to have him rejected by the Majlis on 11 March.

On 19 March 1951 a Fedayan Islam assassin struck again. This time the victim was a politically active friend of the already dead Premier Razmara.

On 20 March martial law was proclaimed in Teheran and tanks and troops controlled the streets. That same day the Senate voted to nationalize the oil industry and the stage was set for the Second Conflict.³⁷ Within the next few days the police, on the basis of an informer's report, were able to arrest a number of Fedayan Islam gunmen and to turn up a Fedayan plot to kill the Shah and a number of other officials.³⁸

On 26 March the new premier, Hussein Ala, proclaimed martial law in three towns in the oil-producing region after a general strike

³⁶"Fedayain Threatens to Kill Shah," New York Times, 10 March 1951, p. 3.

³⁷"Tanks and Troops Patrol Teheran," New York Times, 21 March 1951, p. 18.

³⁸"Plot to Slay Shah Uncovered," New York Times, 28 March 1951, p. 6.

had been called by the Communists.³⁹ The strikes in the oil-producing regions continued under Communist leadership and at least eight British workers were killed and three more injured by the strikers.⁴⁰ The strikes and violence continued outside of Teheran, but little additional detail was reported. The government sent at least one Army division to the region and violence continued to increase.

The Communists had by now completely identified with fanatical nationalism and a wave of violence was well underway. On 13 April 1951, the Communists led 7000 sympathizers in demonstrations in Teheran and soldiers and sailors patrolled the streets. On 22 April there was a large student clash in Teheran with about 3000 Communist and anti-British students fighting about 1000 National Front and Fedayan supporters. Both factions were antigovernment.⁴¹

Under continuing political and mob pressures, Premier Hussein Ala resigned on 27 April.⁴² On 28 April the Majlis called on Shah to appoint Dr. Mossadeq as Premier.⁴³

SECOND CRISIS PERIOD

General

Like the First Crisis Period, the Second Crisis Period had its roots in World War II and in foreign involvement in Iran, both before

³⁹"Communists Call General Strike, Abadan Area," New York Times, 27 March 1951, p. 1.

⁴⁰"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (May 1951), p. 196.

⁴¹"Student Demonstrations Clash, Teheran," New York Times, 23 April 1951, p. 14.

⁴²"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (June-July 1951), p. 258.

⁴³Ibid., p. 259.

and after that time. In this instance, Great Britain was the primary foreign power. The British quasi-autonomous enclaves around the Iranian oil wells and refineries had long drawn nationalist ire.⁴⁴ The occupation by British and Russian forces during World War II had humiliated the Iranians and had further aggravated the situation.⁴⁵ There was also a strong reaction to British shrewdness and heavy-handed dealings in control of oil revenues.⁴⁶ Most politically conscious Iranians were aware that the British Government derived more revenue from taxing the profits of the AIOC than the Iranian Government did through royalties.⁴⁷

Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, the founder and leader of the National Front, became premier on 28 April. The oil industry had been nationalized, but was still under British control. Violent Communist-led strikes dominated the oil properties and mobs ruled the streets of Teheran.

Mossadegh's Rule

Throughout Mossadegh's rule, the emotional nationalist maintained a fever pitch of excitement in the capital, and to a lesser extent throughout Iran. His major political weapons were the mobs which appeared in the streets to cheer hysterical tirades against the British imperialists. At this time, the outlawed Tudeh, which had

⁴⁴Preconflict Case Study--Iran, p. 5.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁷Area Handbook for Iran--1963, p. 43.

gone underground in 1949, resumed its activities. Although Mossadegh could hardly be called a Communist sympathizer, he did not suppress the Tudeh mobs, for, like the religious leader Mullah Kashani, they supported him in his anti-British policies.

Violence in the Provinces

While Teheran remained the main political arena in Iran during this period, there was a marked increase in political activity in the provinces. All of the nationalist, religious, and Communist factions present in Teheran were reflected in the cities and towns of the provinces. These factions, generally functioning as mobs, alternately supported the Shah, Mossadegh, their religious leaders, and various causes and calls to action. Their activities generally paralleled events in Teheran and fewer details were reported.

The Tribes

Trouble with the tribes in southwestern Iran was reported in early 1952, when a local governor was beheaded along with three other officials; heavy reinforcements and martial law were required to restore order. About 50 were killed and 200 wounded in this incident.⁴⁸

Early in 1953, Iranian troops clashed with Bakhtiari tribesmen in the oil fields of southern Iran. This action probably resulted from government efforts to disarm the tribes. Again, heavy casualties

⁴⁸"Tribesmen Behead Local Governor, 3 Other Officials," New York Times, 11 February 1952, p. 1.

were reported; reinforcements, including tactical aircraft, were required before order was restored.⁴⁹

Action in the Capital

Action in the capital during the Second Conflict Period can be focused on the two attempts by the Shah to depose Mossadegh and the concurrent effort by Mossadegh to depose the Shah or at least to remove the Shah as an influence in Iranian politics.

The First Attempt to Depose Mossadegh

Mossadegh assumed power in Iran on 28 April 1951 with the support of the mobs in Teheran and other parts of Iran. Demonstrations and mob violence continued. Tudeh "Peace Partisans" turned out 10,000 early in May to honor Stalin and denounce the United States and Great Britain.⁵⁰ By late May, Mullah Kashani was threatening Holy War against Great Britain and threatening all "traitors" with the treatment that was afforded Premier Razmara.⁵¹ In early June the Fedayan Islam was in the streets demonstrating against the arrest of their 27-year-old leader who was accused of plotting to assassinate Mossadegh and Kashani. In late June the Communists again turned out more than 10,000 demonstrators against the United States and Great Britain⁵² and in early July over 100 were injured when Communists and nationalist

⁴⁹"Iran's Troops Clash with Tribal Rebels," New York Times, 16 February 1953, p. 8.

⁵⁰"10,000 Tudeh Party Members March," New York Times, 12 May 1951, p. 4.

⁵¹"Acheson Denies Intent to Intervene in Iran," New York Times, 24 May 1951, p. 13.

⁵²"Communists Demonstrate in Teheran," New York Times, 30 June 1951, p. 5.

supporters of Mossadegh clashed. The Nationalist-Communist honeymoon was ended!

When the Communists demonstrated against the arrival of Averell Harriman, the US envoy on 15 July 1951, at least nine persons were killed and scores were injured.⁵³ Mossadegh declared martial law, but clashes between the police and the Communists continued. During early November, after a short period of calm in Teheran, and during the absence from Iran of Mossadegh, the Tudeh and Leftist students from Teheran University began a series of demonstrations that led to riots and the closing of the university.⁵⁴ Mossadegh responded with a series of police raids against the Tudeh,⁵⁵ including the Tudeh press. Both the Tudeh mobs and the nationalist supporters of Mossadegh then moved to the streets. The police fought the students and the Tudeh mobs, but permitted National Front rioters to destroy a Communist theater and nine newspaper offices. National Front newspapers went unharmed. The Tudeh-nationalist riots continued throughout December 1951 and into 1952; mobs again ruled the streets.⁵⁶

On 15 February 1952, Hossein Fatemi, a close aide to Mossadegh, was wounded by a Fedayan Islam assassin.⁵⁷ The Fedayan had been threatening to kill Mossadegh and the assassin admitted that he had been looking for Mossadegh when he shot the aide.

⁵³"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (August-September 1951), p. 302.

⁵⁴"Communists Demonstrate, Teheran," New York Times, 3 November 1951, p. 3.

⁵⁵"Police Drive Against Tudeh, Raid Theater," New York Times, 18 November 1951, p. 3.

⁵⁶"Communists and Nationalists Clash," New York Times, 9 January 1952, p. 6.

⁵⁷"Aide to Mossadegh Shot and Seriously Wounded," New York Times, 16 February 1952, p. 1.

On 28 February 1952, a government spokesman announced that a Tudeh network had been found in the Armed Forces.⁵⁸ Subsequently it was disclosed that the arrest of a Communist agent had led to the discovery of the ring. A large number of officers of the Army, Air Force, Gendarmerie, and police were arrested; many of these officers were later tried and executed.

Demonstrations, riots, and clashes between the various factions continued in Teheran until mid July. At that time, Mossadegh asked for complete control over the government, the equivalent of dictatorial powers. The Shah refused and appointed a new premier, Ahamad Ghavam.

Mossadegh supporters immediately began four days of mass riots under the direction of Mullah Kashani to challenge the new premier.⁵⁹ Troops were called out and clashes with the rioters were frequent and bloody. At this point the Communists again supported Mossadegh. On 21 July 1952, Premier Ghavam was forced to resign when the Majlis refused his request for full powers to use the police and Army to quell the disorders involving Mossadegh supporters.⁶⁰

The Shah had lost his bid for power; on 22 July Mossadegh was back as premier with renewed and increased power.⁶¹ Mossadegh's control of the mobs had been decisive.

⁵⁸"Tudeh Network Found in Iranian Army," New York Times, 24 February 1952, p. 3.

⁵⁹"Mossadegh Backers Riot, Teheran," New York Times, 20 July 1952, p. 1.

⁶⁰"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (August-September 1952, p. 258.

⁶¹"Mossadegh Renamed Premier; Parliament Backs Him," New York Times, 23 July 1952, p. 1.

The Second Attempt to Depose Mossadegh

Mobs continued to control the streets of Teheran immediately after Mossadegh resumed power and mass demonstrations were held demanding the death of Ghavam. The Tudeh were also able to organize massive anti-US demonstrations.⁶² Two days after Mossadegh returned to power, the police regained control of the streets.⁶³ On 3 August the Majlis gave full dictatorial powers to Premier Mossadegh for a period of six months.⁶⁴ Mullah Kashani, who had been a key element in the organization of the mobs that returned Mossadegh to office, was then elected President of the Chamber of Deputies, the second most powerful post in the nation.⁶⁵

By mid August the nationalists and the Communists were again fighting each other and rioting in the streets.⁶⁶ The Communist-Nationalist alliance had again collapsed and on 20 August, martial law was again proclaimed. It was clear that without the Army, order could not be maintained. Mossadegh proceeded to seek control of the Army.⁶⁷

The Tudeh was back on the streets in late October and there were several serious clashes with security forces.⁶⁸

⁶²"Mossadegh and National Front, with Communists, Have Full Control," New York Times, 24 July 1952, p. 1.

⁶³"Police Chief Warns Against Tudeh," New York Times, 25 July 1952, p. 1.

⁶⁴"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (August-September 1952), p. 259.

⁶⁵"Kashani Elected Deputies President," New York Times, 8 August 1952, p. 1.

⁶⁶"Communists and Nationalists Clash, Teheran," New York Times, 20 August 1952, p. 1.

⁶⁷"Martial Law Reimposed in Teheran," New York Times, 21 August 1952, p. 8.

⁶⁸"Iranian Reds Riot, Cry 'Death to Shah,'" New York Times, 27 October 1952, p. 1.

The year 1953 brought the violence in the streets of Teheran to a peak. Many of Mossadegh's earlier supporters abandoned him, but he continued to use mobs to support his diminishing political backing.⁶⁹ He became more and more repressive, controlled the press, and sought to eliminate all opposition. The Gendarmerie was reinforced with 10,000 soldiers and other steps were taken to increase security.⁷⁰ Late in February, Mossadegh tried to force the Shah to leave the country; the Shah, now supported by Mullah Kashani, employed emotional appeal to turn a mob against Mossadegh. The mob screamed loyalty to the Shah and drove Mossadegh from his home into the sanctuary of the Parliament. Mullah Kashani who had manipulated the mob to restore Mossadegh to power in 1952, had now turned significant elements of the mob against Mossadegh.⁷¹ A series of clashes between pro-Shah and pro-Mossadegh factions then began.⁷² Mossadegh fought for control but continued to rebuff Communist offers of support.⁷³ The riots continued through the early days of March and the Mossadegh government became more repressive. By early April Mossadegh was again trying to reduce the Shah to a figurehead and the mobs again clashed in the streets.⁷⁴ The showdown between Mossadegh and the Shah was approaching.⁷⁵

⁶⁹"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (February 1953), pp. 73-74.

⁷⁰"10,000 Soldiers Transferred to Gendarmerie," New York Times,

3 February 1953, p. 3.

⁷¹"Shah Says He Will Stay," New York Times, 1 March 1953, p. 1.

⁷²"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (April 1953), pp. 149-150.

⁷³"Mossadegh Fights for Control of Parliament," New York Times,

2 March 1953, p. 5.

⁷⁴"Chronology," Middle Eastern Affairs, (May 1953), p. 198.

⁷⁵"Mossadegh Demands Majlis Reduce Shah to Constitutional Monarch," New York Times, 7 April 1953, p. 1.

In mid April an anonymous group of Army officers let it be known that they would mutiny if Mossadegh did not stop his activities against the Shah. Mossadegh called for a National Front demonstration and the Tudeh joined them. Kashani-inspired nationalists and religious clashed with the Mossadegh supporters and several injuries resulted.⁷⁶

On 21 April the Chief of the Iranian Police, Brigadier General Afshartous, disappeared only to be found strangled on 26 April.⁷⁷ Retired officers were accused of the assassination and a series of arrests followed.⁷⁸ April, May, and June saw more riots, fights in the Majlis, and the development of another political crisis. Mossadegh dismissed the Majlis in mid August in a bid for stronger support. This gave the Shah a legal opportunity to replace Mossadegh. He did so, but Mossadegh refused to be deposed; the Shah fled the country on 16 August. The new Premier, appointed by the Shah before he fled, General Zahedi--a strong military and political figure, managed to rally the Army to the Shah's side. A short but intense battle, including the use of tanks was fought in the streets of Teheran, but the elements supporting Zahedi were victorious.⁷⁹ The Shah returned to Teheran four days later. His control of the government and the country was to become complete.

⁷⁶"Mossadegh Demands Majlis Vote on Control of Army," New York Times, 16 April 1953, p. 8.

⁷⁷"National Police Force Chief Brig. Gen. Afshartous Disappears," New York Times, 22 April 1953, p. 11.

⁷⁸"Afshartous Found Strangled," New York Times, 27 April 1953, p. 1.

⁷⁹"Royalist Troops and Pro-Shah Mobs Oust Mossadegh," New York Times, 20 April 1953, p. 1.

CHAPTER III

FACTIONS AND PATTERNS

Chapter II outlined the major incidence of violence in Iran from the end of World War II to the establishment of firm control over the government by Mohammad Reza Shah in the late summer of 1953. An examination of the participants in the violence and the structure of the violence is now indicated.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The Preconflict Case Study described the non-Communist Political Parties and Interest Groups, traced communism and the Tudeh Party through the period under study, and examined the Iranian military and paramilitary elements in some detail. The intention here is to identify the major groups and factions that figured in the violence and to describe some of their traits. It must be kept in mind that the makeup and specific objectives of these groups changed from time to time; however, enough continuity exists for some analysis. The major participants in the violence were the National Front, the nationalists, the fundamentalist religious groups, the Tudeh, and the government's security forces. The tribes and other factions that functioned outside Teheran, particularly the strikers in the oil region, were significant, but their actions generally reinforced the forces already at work in Teheran.

National Front

Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh was a staunch nationalist and a member of the Qajar family. He had been one of the five Majlis deputies who disapproved of deposing the Qajar dynasty in 1925 and had remained in political retirement throughout Reza Shah's rule.

After Mohammed Reza became Shah, Mossadegh worked for social and economic reforms and reduction of foreign influences in Iran. During the war it was he who proposed the resolution which prevented foreigners from obtaining oil concessions. At the end of the war he organized the National Front, a coalition of Majlis deputies, which worked to prevent the ratification of the Irano-Soviet oil concession in 1947.¹

The Front was never well organized; however, it worked on the streets and in the Majlis until Mossadegh was made Prime Minister. At one time or another the National Front included most of the nationalist groups in Iran, was supported by Mullah Kashani and the clergy, and was supported by the Tudeh; however, there were many defections from the far left, far right, and religious as time passed. In the final analysis it was Mossadegh's personality, rather than the working of a party system, that brought him to power and kept him there. His appeal to the mo' of Teheran was decisive in many crises.

¹Area Handbook for Iran--1963, p. 43.

The Nationalists

The nationalists probably included the bulk of the population other than the tribes and the Communists. A broad spectrum of groups were represented here including Fascist and religious groups, all National Front members, and the non-Communist left. During the period under discussion, the nationalists fought among themselves, against the Communists, and both with and against the government security forces. They supported the Shah or Mossadegh and the leaders of their own factions, sometimes switching sides. Generally the nationalists hated the British and shared a distrust for the Communists because of the international nature of communism and the continual threat that the Soviet Union posed to Iranian independence. The real power in Iran rested with this fragmented group that shared a common goal of maintaining Iran free from foreign domination; they frequently had little else to bind them together. The Nationalists were capable of any kind of violence. Mob violence and riots were their chief weapons, but assassination was also used late in the conflict.

Religious Factions

The fundamental religious faction was primarily composed of two parties, the Fedayan Islam and the Majahadin Islam. Here the effort was to return the country to the Islamic pattern, to reject secular trends, and to oppose Western ways. The fanaticism of the religious factions is apparent in their use of violence, and the Fedayan Islam was singularly noted for assassinations and assassination attempts.

While the membership in the religious parties was small, their influence in the Islamic-religious country was strong. The influence of the clergy, particularly Mullah Kashani, extended far beyond the fanatical parties. As we have seen, Kashani and his influence over the mobs of Teheran were the decisive elements in several crisis situations.

The Tudeh

The Tudeh or Communist party in Iran was always active, either overtly or underground. In fact, the Tudeh was probably the only political party worthy of the name during a good part of the period under discussion. The Tudeh had the single-minded objective of taking over Iran and forming a Soviet style and Soviet aligned state. Any and all forms of violence were practiced and alliance with any other faction was acceptable as long as it served the ultimate goal. They frequently courted Mossadegh and even carried on as fervent religious when it was expedient!

Military, Paramilitary, and Police

The military and other government security forces retained the capability to quell civil disturbances and to counter violence with violence in Iran during this period. No effort will be made here to segregate the elements of this force as they were used "as required" and appear to be most suitable for the situation in Iran. The forces were the object of a power struggle between Mossadegh and the Shah during a considerable part of the period under consideration and the

leadership was purged a number of times. In the end it was the loyalty of the Army to the traditional Commander-in-Chief, the Shah, that was decisive. Their methods of operation of the security forces will be discussed later.

THE SPECTRUM OF VIOLENCE

The research done in connection with this project reveals a series of violent activities on the part of almost every faction represented on the Iranian political scene during the 1945-1953 period, and the intensity of violence increased steadily throughout the period. The courses of violence pursued by the various factions, other than the government forces, tended to be similar.

The Mob

The classic form of violence, pursued by all factions both in Teheran and in the provinces, begins with the demonstration and develops into a riot. Mob actions, either spontaneous or incited by religious leaders, appear frequently in Iranian history, some of them accompanied by much violence and cruelty. In a country where the governmental structure has always been responsive to an absolute ruler or to a small power elite, riots and demonstrations have been the only means of mass political expression. Indeed, it was the size, fervor, destructiveness, combativeness, and composition of the mob that a faction was able to muster which controlled the politics and power play of any given period of time. Mobs could be hired for a

few rials a head in Teheran, and there appeared to be plenty of volunteer members during the latter part of Mossadegh's rule. The Tudeh, various student groups, the nationalists, the fascists, the religious, and many other factions organized "demonstrations," provided personnel, and led the fighting.

Typical Iranian mob violence is the result of an emotionally charged meeting, rally, parade, or march called by a political, student, or religious group. The more common reasons are the protest or support of a governmental action, the celebration of a religious or political event, or the support of some political figure. Public funerals were emotional events that led to violence. The mob might also develop "spontaneously" with more or less instigation from the same factions that would organize a more deliberate demonstration!

Once the demonstration is under way and emotions rise, it is very easy to direct their anger to some adversary of the organizers. The mobs can then be induced to raid opponent's headquarters, destroy opposition newspaper offices, plunder the agencies of foreign governments, intimidate the Parliament, clash directly with the opposition, or otherwise be useful. When the demonstrations of two opposing factions come in contact either by accident or by design, there is bound to be a clash; clashes almost always result in dead and wounded. Depending on the position of the incumbent government and the objectives of the demonstrators, there may or may not be interference by the police, gendarmerie, or Army.

Minor demonstrations and brawls usually involving spectators and security forces are also used in and around the parliament to disrupt and control the deliberations of the Senate or Majlis. Similar activities sometimes surround court room proceedings.

Assassination

Assassination has been a traditional method of political warfare in Iran. The classic assassin appears to be a young (and perhaps expendable) religious fanatic; however, there are many other scenarios. On one occasion during the period under discussion, tribal members beheaded a local governor and three other officials. In Teheran at least two assassinations of high officials involved gang-land style kidnap murders. The threat of assassination certainly is part of the day-to-day life of every official in the country. A number of premiers and other high officials were assassinated during the period under discussion and there was an attempt on the Shah's life. While the Fedayan Islam, a moslem terrorist organization, is infamous for its history of assassinations and assassination attempts, most of the other factions also appear to be capable of pursuing this method of political warfare.

Strikes

The industrial strike appears to be rather new to the repertoire of violence in Iran; limited industrialization limits the number of workers groups available to conduct strikes. The Tudeh had the organizations necessary and strikes were used effectively against

the British during the oil crisis. Where industry and workers existed, the strike was used, usually to support the Communists. Where the instigation of trouble was desired, the reaction of the nationalists and other conservative groups to a strike usually produced the desired results. This is to say that in many instances groups from the bazaars and towns have attacked striking workers. Strikes of shopkeepers and bazaar merchants were also used. These strikes were enforced by the threats of the street toughs of the strike sponsor, usually a nationalist or religious group.

Tribal Warfare

The tribes in Iran have resisted the power of the central government to a greater or lesser degree throughout history depending on the strength or weakness of Shah and the central government. The resistance has taken the form of guerrilla warfare and in many cases is essentially a bandit type of action. During the period under discussion there were several instances of tribal trouble as the tribes sensed that the government was weakened by internal problems and when the tribes were encouraged by foreign influence. The tribal guerrilla and bandit warfare appears to be tolerated by the government to a certain degree and then to be met and defeated by the Army with all available troops and weapons. During the period under study, the government tried alternately to disarm the tribes and on the other hand, to use them as an armed auxiliary. Most of the violence occurred when the tribes were influenced by the Russians to seek independence,

or when the government sought to disarm the tribes. While the tribes frequently caused trouble, they were never a threat to the government in Teheran. The Bakhtiari and Qashgha'i did influence national matters and the rejection of the Soviet oil agreement in 1946 and 1947, but the extent of this influence is unclear.²

Government Reaction and Action

The reaction of the government of Iran to the violence of the various factions is generally strong and straightforward. If the government favors the faction sponsoring the demonstration and the riot or violence that breeds from the demonstration is directed toward the opponents of the government, the police and other security forces will not interfere and may in fact assist in one manner or another. Premier Mossadegh frequently used mobs to support his position while he was leading the government. When the situation appears to be getting out of hand, troops are called and the mob is brought under control as quickly as the available force will permit. While a government may permit some demonstrations by the opposition, particularly on the part of a strong opponent, there is much more of a tendency to use security forces quickly in these cases. Whoever is in power needs the police and other security forces. Even Premier Mossadegh, who rose to power largely on the strength of his appeal to the mobs of Teheran, did not allow unlimited crowd abuse when he was in power.

²Avery, pp. 396-397, 402.

He also attempted throughout his time in power to gain control of the Army and to make all of the available security forces responsive to his bidding.

In addition to the ultimate power of the Army in controlling the internal security of Iran, all the time-honored elements of repression are used. Constant police and special police surveillance are coupled with arrests and prolonged imprisonment, informers and agents are placed in the various factions, the opposition newspapers are suppressed, and other controls are established over the news media; there is a liberal application of martial law, the "outlawing" of the Tudeh party, curfews, and public hangings and floggings are all used as required, with or without the use of troops.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF PATTERNS

The intensity and the sophistication of the violence in Iran increased significantly during the period under study. The pattern of the violence, to the degree that it was controlled by the Iranians, remained essentially the same.

FIRST CONFLICT PERIOD

The very active participation of the Soviet Union in Azerbaijan, as well as the small amount of information available about the violence there, limit the value of the research done on the First Conflict Period. A pattern of assassination and mob violence is, however, suggested by the information that is available. The use of terror tactics by the Pishavari forces in conjunction with their attempt to control the population is not typically Iranian and probably reflects Soviet influence. In the final analysis, the Azerbaijan revolt and the Kurdish revolt were sponsored by an all-powerful occupation force. When the occupation force withdrew, the revolts collapsed. Little credibility can be given to the indigenous revolutionaries under these circumstances. The Kurds, who had been in a state of semirevolt for years, continued to be unsuccessful after the Russian withdrawal.

As stated earlier, the most significant element of this conflict, other than the elimination of the rebellion, was the fact that Mohammad

Reza Shah had been able to reconstitute the Army as a major political base after the 1941 collapse. The reestablishment was demonstrated by the coup-de-grace it administered to the Azerbaijanian and Kurdish separatists in 1946. The rehabilitation of the Army was very significant in the violence that was to come.¹

INTER-CONFLICT PERIOD

The patterns of violence, short of limited war, began to emerge more clearly during this period. The violence was neither as frequent nor as intense as that which emerged in the Second Conflict Period, but the pattern is unmistakable.

Mob violence, assassination, threats of violence, and emotional appeals to a volatile populace, all with overtones of a "Holy War" against the opposition, were the weapons of all the politically active elements outside the government. The Communists added an element of organization that was not typical of the other factions and they also attempted to inject an anti-American note into the naturally antforeign bent of the people. They also displayed an alignment with the Soviet Union which cut across the antforeign pattern.

The government used police, arrests, harsh sentences (death sentences were common), and the outlawing of the Tudeh to maintain order. When demonstrations, riots, and mob violence broke out, all

¹Avery, p. 398.

available force was used to restore order; death and injuries were common in both the mob and in the security forces.

During this period, the Army repeatedly skirmished with the Kurdish tribes.² The government apparently permitted the tribes some latitude, but when the tribes stepped beyond some limit, the government would move against them. The tribes would then ambush and conduct guerrilla warfare. After martial law was declared, the Army would build up a force large enough to crush the tribesmen. Some executions then take place, peace is negotiated, and the cycle starts again.

The clashes with the Russians were probably of local origin and have little significance here.

SECOND CONFLICT PERIOD

In the second conflict period, the patterns of violence surfaced in the two earlier periods became much more distinct. The intensity of the activity and the improved reporting made the repetitive cycle of mob violence and assassination stand out in relation to the political activities that they supported. The manipulation of the mobs of Teheran by Premier Mossadegh, Mullah Kashani, and even the Shah himself, when it suited his purposes, clearly identified the normal form of violence in Iran. The government response to this mob violence, when it suited the government to

² Area Handbook for Iran--1963, p. 596.

respond, was also typical in that violence was met with superior violence. Casualties were obviously incidental to the operation. The government under Mossadeh also displayed a tendency for repressive police state tactics which were reminiscent of Reza Shah and the years before 1941. The traditional loyalty of many of the people to the concept of the Shah, if not to the person of a particular Shah, and the traditional loyalty of the Army to the Shah, and he to the Army, are strong elements in the pattern of power.

THE POLITICAL WEAPON

Violence is employed as a political weapon in Iran. Without an understanding of the political motivations the spectrum of violence is meaningless. Religious fervor and pure emotions mingle with nationalism and antiforeign sentiments in each Iranian to be played on by the major political and religious leaders whose political machinations and motivations are difficult to identify and are highly changeable.

The pattern of violence is repeated in almost every political and emotional crisis. The intensity of the violence is dependent on both the importance of the crisis and the importance that the key managers of the public emotions choose to apply to the situation.

STEPS THAT MIGHT HAVE REDUCED THE VIOLENCE

Given the situation in 1945, the only condition that could have reduced the violence outlined above was strong leadership at the

national level which was backed by some national concensus and the Army. This leadership would have had to employ a good deal of repression, at least against the Tudeh, and would also have had to deal with the foreign interests effectively.

With a young and inexperienced Shah on the throne and the political arena crowded with ambitious men of many different persuasions, the turbulence that followed seems to have been inevitable. A less ambitious premier than Mossadegh might have used his influence with the mobs differently, and have reduced the violence. A stronger Shah might have been able to rally the political backing and the Army to depose Mossadegh a little earlier, and saved some bloodshed.

The strong leadership needed to reduce the violence in Iran during this period was not present. The system there was not likely to produce this type of leadership. When an emotional, perhaps natural, leader appeared in the person of Mossadegh, his bent was more destructive than constructive. The appearance of foreign forces on the Iranian scene at this time could only have increased the violence, unless the foreign force was large enough to occupy and control the entire country.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

During the time from the end of World War II until Premier Mossadegh was deposed, there probably was never a true insurgency-counterinsurgency situation in Iran. The Communists were a powerful force, but they never mounted a sustained campaign against the government. Only under strong Soviet support did they ever threaten to take over the central government.

The Tudeh government in Azerbaijan was the puppet of an occupation force, not a true revolutionary force. The remainder of the violence in Iran represented the political activities of several factions, most of them highly nationalistic, in a country where mob violence and assassination are the normal means of political expression. The absence of this kind of expression does not indicate that there is no conflict, but only that one faction has suppressed all the others.

The emotional appeal of the political and religious leaders was a necessary part of turning the unsophisticated population into the streets where the political decision was made, much as a sophisticated Western politician would use a platform and slogans to influence the voter enroute to the polls.

During the conflict in Iran there were no phases or milestones. The violence varied in intensity from one political crisis to another, but it was the backing of the leaders of the mobs and the Army on

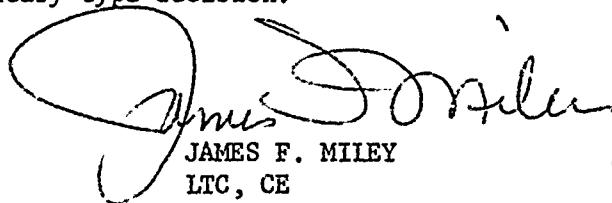
balance, which placed power in the hands of the Shah or Mossadegh, and switched the balance from time to time as it suited their whim or need.

While the research in this report does not support the definition of stages or phases of violence short of limited war, a number of specific conclusions regarding violence in Iran can be drawn:

1. The pattern of violence in Iran short of limited war is politically driven. The violence takes the form of mob action and assassination; each in several forms and variations.
2. The intermittent conflict with the tribes is the result of ancient animosity and day-to-day friction. Conflict with the tribes constitutes limited war for the government and total war for the tribe involved.
3. The border clashes with the Russians represent the necessary actions of border security forces with aggressive, sometimes hostile, and always haughty neighbors. These actions do not fit into any pattern that would be of value in the evaluation of insurgency situations.
4. The security forces in Iran had the capability of suppressing the mob at any time; however, the government was usually reluctant to use these unpopular means. The political motivation of the Army leadership, and the chiefs of the other security forces, usually led them to support the incumbent government.
5. There are no distinct phases or stages in the conflict situation examined by this project. In each instance, violence was

used as an element of power to support the political play of the various factions. The violence was not in itself used to effect political events, but only to influence them.

6. The research done here does not support the thesis that an assessment based on the study of distinct periods of low intensity conflict will generate a pattern of violence for Iran at any but the lowest levels. This is to say that the pattern of mob violence and assassination that is developed tends to repeat itself, but in no way do these repetitions lead sequentially to higher levels of violence or to a military type decision.



JAMES F. MILEY
LTC, CE

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