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Short Commentary

The Domino Effect of Operation Ajax

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ABSTRACT

An interesting aspect of studying history is when you look back at some of the choices and decisions that have been made, you also get to peer in the various expectations the decision makers had, what they had hoped to achieve or thought would ensure from their actions. You get to compare the reality vs the expectations and see how drastically different they often end up being. US had overthrown Mosaddeq because they were hoping to create a Soviet free, stable and prosperous Iran sympathetic to American's interests in the region. Meanwhile the Iranian people had embraced democracy, because they had hoped it would pull them out of poverty.

Keywords: Domino, Ajax, Povety

INTRODUCTION

The US simply wanted a strong reliable ally with a pro-western government willing to do its bidding. Something that could explain why American administration had been overzealously selling arms to the Shah. However, nothing turned out the way anyone had hoped and Tehran to this day continues to use the 1953 coup d'état as justification for its fraught relationship with the West. Under the Obama administration, American policymakers embarked on a path to achieve better relationship with Iran as part of a broader policy of rapprochement the Muslim World. In his "New Beginning" speech in Cairo, President Obama acknowledged the role that America had played in the 1953 coup and directly addressing the Iranians youth promised to not intervene in Iran's internal affairs and provided assurances that his government had neither intention nor any desire to make any decisions for the Iranians. Similarly, Obama's CIA director John Brennan once wrote: "The next president has the opportunity to set a new course for relations between the two countries through (1) toning down rhetoric, (2) establishing dialogue, and (3) greater assimilation of [Iran's proxy] Hezbollah into Lebanon's political system." Brennan [1]. That approach by President

Obama was a stark departure from the stated policy of previous American administrations, and viewed by many as a vain and naive attempt by a young over-optimistic President to repair decades of tensions and bad blood that have only seem to worsen throughout generations. Many were left wondering if Americans were ready to forgive the numerous deadly mass attacks Iranians have carried out against American troops and the storming of the US embassy by militant followers of Khomeini in November 1979. Former President Georges W. Bush once included Iran in the axis of evil (along with Iraq and North Korea). Considering all of this, it is very difficult to fathom that once upon a time, in this here galaxy, Washington and Tehran were once very close allies. All of that seems to have changed after the Revolution.

DISCUSSION

There's strong enough evidence to make the claim that the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79 was in part the continuation of the various errors made by the two shahs. There are many internal political, economic and social factors that undeniably played a significant role, among them the exclusive control of Iran's oil industry by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), the power wielded by Western foreigners in Iran's internal affairs,

the widespread perception that the Shah was a British and American puppet, the nationalization of Iran's oil industry by Mosaddeq, and the subsequent US-sponsored coup which reversed the nationalization and replaced the AIOC with American oil companies, but the reforms attempt by the shah were without a doubt the straw that broke the camel's back. In the aftermath of Mosaddeq's overthrow, the Shah began to initiate various measures aimed at re-establishing and reinforcing his power and control over Iran. Political opposition was crushed by censorship, tortures and assassinations carried out by the shah's secret police (established with help from the CIA and Mossad) the SAVAK, which over the years acquired a much-deserved reputation as the most hated and feared institution in Iran. Inspired by a visit to Turkey, the shah set out to transform Iran into a secular, modern, and westernized state. Bankrolled by rising oil prices, and renegotiation of more lucrative terms with the western companies extracting Iranian oil, the shah went on outlandish arms shopping sprees, becoming the single largest purchaser of some of the most sophisticated American-made weapons. All the while, the country's economy was in complete tatters, saddled by inflation, ravaged by shortages, and an ever-growing gap between the poor and the rich, inequality and corruption flourished. Among some of the most controversial political decisions made by the shah were: the creation of a second legislative chamber, the senate, to supplement the Majlis; the stipulation that the shah should get to appoint half of the senators; convincing the Majlis to vote in favor of a bill that would give him the power to dissolve both chambers and call for new elections at will; and the most controversial of them all was perhaps his attempt to change the method by which a prime minister is chosen. According to the Iranian constitution, the Majlis vote to choose a prime minister who is then ratified by the Shah. However, the Shah altered the method of choosing prime minister so that he would be the one who gets to nominate a Prime Minister who would then be confirmed or rejected by the Majlis. No discussion of the Iranian Revolution is complete without mention of its leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the religious leader who somehow managed to control the course of the revolution while in exile in Paris, only to return triumphantly two weeks after the departure of the shah ("on vacation") to a welcoming crowd of millions of exuberant Iranians. Khomeini, an ardent prominent religious leader in the Shia community had his own ideological reasons for

opposing the Shah and his reforms. Khomeini was an ardent opponent of the shah's westernization and secularization endeavors, which he viewed it as an attack on Islam. When Khomeini was a young mullah, he was intensely opposed to Mosaddeq's secularism, even though he led an Islamic Revolution that was in many ways possible because of Mosaddeq. Khomeini accused the Shah of having violated the Iranian constitution, trampling democratic principles by overextending his power and using the SAVAK to repress political dissent through tortures, extrajudicial executions. Khomeini was appalled by the Shah's submissiveness to the United States and Israel and publicly denounced the spread of moral depravity under the Shah's reign. In establishing the Islamic Republic, Khomeini promised his supporters a system of government where popularly elected officials representing the Iranian people would not face intervention by the religious clergy. He promised economic development, eradication of homelessness, free heating, electricity, oil and telephone for every Iranian. However, some would argue that the very same oppressive and repressive tactics used by the Shah to maintain his iron-fist rule, continue to be called upon except on a much larger scale, and spread internationally through the powerful Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and proxies such as Hezbollah.

CONCLUSION

Khomeini introduced sharia law into the constitution of the Islamic republic and enforced ban on alcoholic drinks, western movies, and the broadcasting of any non-religious music. The Iranian educational system has been Islamized at all levels and the Shah's secret police (SAVAK) was substituted with the much larger and powerful Ministry of Intelligence (formerly known as SAVAMA) and extrajudicial executions and assassinations have gone up on a logarithmic scale, carried out on a much more systematic approach, targeting everyone who opposes the Islamic Republic, politically, religiously or ideologically. At the very least, the modern Iran no longer can be accused of being too westernized or secular and its leader won't be called out for their submissiveness.

REFERENCES

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