

**The Mossadegh Government's Nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil
Company and the American Intervention that Followed**

Submitted by Amin Ghannadi Maragheh

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Political Economy

Thesis Advisor: Prof.Dr.Gencer Özcan

Istanbul Bilgi University

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Amin Ghannadi Maragheh

113674013

Thesis Advisor: Prof.Dr.Gencer Özcan

Signature:

Jury Member: Doç.Dr.Ahmet Salih Bıçakçı

Signature:

Jury Member: Asist.Prof.Dr. Şadan İnan Rüma

Signature:

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Abstract

This thesis examines what is perhaps the single most important event in the recent history of Iran: the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. It also deals with the somewhat delayed reaction by the government of the United States of America, in the form of what it euphemistically referred to as an intervention to overthrow the Mossadegh government. The great tragedy of this intervention has been twofold: a twenty-six year period when Iran was severely oppressed by the brutal dictatorship of Reza Shah Pahlavi and a strong feeling of Anti-American sentiment among the leaders of the Islamic Revolution that, in turn, overthrew the Shah in 1979.

This thesis analyzes both the factors regarding the nationalization decision as well as the decision by the American government to intervene. This analysis is done on a few levels, beginning with the relevant literature on the topic, such that it is, then goes into the major possible factors that led to the two decisions. The conclusions are fairly clear. The decision to nationalize was largely motivated by a strong democratic, anti-colonial bent on the part of Mossadegh, in particular, directed against Western capitalist corporate interests, specifically, those of a single corporation, the AIOC, while the intervention was motivated by a combination of virulent anti-communist red baiting, geopolitical concerns, and no small amount of propagandizing and arm-twisting on the part of the British government, particularly in advance of the goals of a single, British run Capitalist corporation, the AIOC.

Özet

Bu tez, İran'ın yakın tarihindeki belki de en önemli olayı incelemektedir: Muhammed Mosaddegh hükümetinin Anglo-İran Petrol Şirketinin mal varlıklarını kamulaştırma kararı. Aynı zamanda, Birleşik Devletler hükümetinin, Mossadegh hükümetini devirmeye yönelik müdahale olarak tasvir ettiği şekilde geciken tepkilerini de ele alıyor. Bu müdahalede büyük trajedi iki kat oldu: İran'ın Reza Shah Pahlavi'nin acımasız diktatörlüğü tarafından şiddetle ezilen yirmi altı yıllık bir dönem ve İslam Devrimi liderleri arasında oluşan güçlü bir Anti-Amerikan duygusu 1979'da Şah'ı devirdi.

Bu tez, hem millileştirme kararına hem de Amerikan hükümetinin müdahale kararına ilişkin faktörleri analiz etmektedir. Bu analiz, konuyla ilgili literatürden başlayarak, daha sonra iki karara yol açan başlıca faktörlere giderek, birkaç aşamada yapılır. Sonuçlar oldukça açıktır. Kamulaştırma kararı büyük ölçüde, Mossadegh'ı güçlü bir demokratik ve sömürgecilik karşıtı eğilimle, özellikle de tek bir şirketin, yani AIOC'nin, Batı kapitalist kurumsal çıkarlarına karşı yöneltti; müdahale, bir girişim tarafından motive edildi. Müdahale, İngiliz hükümetinin, özellikle de tek bir İngiliz işletmesi Kapitalist şirket olan AIOC'nin amaçlarının öncesinde, kötücül anti-komünist kırmızı yemle oynama, jeopolitik kaygılar ve az miktarda propaganda ve silahlanma sürecinin karışımıdır.

Keywords: Iran, Mossadegh, Mohammed, Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Central Intelligence Agency, Anti-Colonial, Regime Change

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1. Introduction

1.1: The Rationale for Choosing this particular topic: American Interventionism and the Long Term Repercussions thereof

When political pundits, most particularly those in the West, namely in the United States of America, examine the nature of their relative relationships, or, more precisely in the case of the American and Israeli governments, lack thereof, vis-à-vis Islamic Republic of Iran, often they are at a loss to explain the nature of the regime and, most specifically, its stance toward the American government.

To be sure, the Islamic Republic of Iran can be said to, in the most fundamental of ways, have been conceived, born, and educated amidst a wave of anti-Western, particularly anti-American and anti-Israeli, sentiment in what was, until the Islamic Revolution in 1979, known as the Kingdom of Persia.

Most notably, at least in the mind of the average American citizen, is the fact that the Islamic Revolution in Iran was heralded by a takeover and hostage crisis at the American Embassy in Tehran, initiated by members of the student body of Tehran University that lasted more than one year, leading directly to the cessation of formal relations that characterizes the situation between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran up to the time that the proposal for the topic of this thesis was first put forth, a situation that only in the intervening period has shown any sign whatsoever of finally cooling after over sixty years of mutual animosity.

To put the matter in as simple a set of terms as possible, the Islamic Revolution and its concurrent anti-Americanism was precipitated in large part by the enduring repercussions of an earlier American intervention into the internal affairs of what is now the Islamic Republic of Iran, an intervention that eliminated a popular, democratically-elected government, replacing it with one of the most brutal forms of absolutism in the modern world. Further, this particular intervention, at its core, was initiated for the most crass and horrible of reasons – the profit margins of a single corporation. The government of the United Kingdom, being heavily invested in both a financial and geopolitical sense in the extremely lucrative arrangement that the AIOC had with the government of the Kingdom of Persia, had, on a number of different levels, a vested interest, especially that of its most colonialist minded Members of Parliament, in, to their minds, bringing the Iranian people, or at least their government, to heel, and, barring that, to function as *agents provocateurs* in the halls of the State Department and White House in Washington to advance that agenda.

None of the aforementioned, earth-shaking, history-making events was, in any sense, inevitable, at least, if one were to look from the perspective of the *tableau* of the Kingdom of Persia at the very moment of the accession of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to power at the head of an insurmountable groundswell of public support. Indeed, one of the most particularly striking features of the ill-fated intervention by the government of the United States was how, at any number of points in the period from the time that Mohammed Mossadegh assumed power in Tehran to the coup two years later, the situation could have been resolved more constructively.

At every turn in that period, however, all attempts to control what, from the perspective of an erstwhile researcher examining the situation with the notable advantage of hindsight, could, for lack of more adequate terminology, be considered to be rather like a proverbial runaway train, were met with intransigence.

This aforementioned intransigence was to be found clearly on the part of all of the stakeholders in the situation itself, from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, through the British Government, most especially following the election of a Conservative government in Whitehall, to the government of Mohammed Mossadegh itself. The aforementioned intransigence could be rightly characterized as being attributed in the former two cases to a combination of neocolonialism and a much more than incidentally racist dismissive demeanor and tone as regards the needs, wants, and grievances of perceived subject peoples. In the case of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh, the motivation for the aforementioned intransigence is a combination of well-warranted righteous indignation of the people of the Kingdom of Persia at the manner in which they had been treated for decades by a particularly nasty imperialist corporation, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and its masters, the government of the United Kingdom as well as the passionate outrage and contempt held for the string of injustices that, to literally any outside observer, would be quite painfully obvious, in which Mohammed Mossadegh personally held the AIOC and the British Government.

Indeed, were it not for the extreme scale of suffering that was imposed upon the world, and, most especially the people of what is now the Islamic Republic of Iran by the events that are covered in the pages of this thesis, one could be forgiven for noting

the resemblance, which is, by no stretch of the imagination, a glaring one, between these aforementioned events and the form of a tragedy as it would be classically defined. Of course, the most bitter truth is that the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the later decision by certain persons in the government of the United States of America to “intervene” in the internal affairs of a sovereign state for, what, at least in the mind of many members of the public, would be the benefit of a single, imperialist and neocolonialist corporation, is, in another, and, if one may be so forthright, far more tangible, sense, a tragedy whose consequences are still very much being felt to this very day, both within what is now the Islamic Republic of Iran and the world at large.

In a both a narrow sense, in other words, the sense wherein the effects relate to the people of what is now the Islamic Republic of Iran as well as a the broader region of the Middle East, the drama that surrounded both the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the subsequent decision on the part of the government of the United States of America to intervene in the internal affairs of a sovereign state and overthrow the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh cannot possibly be overstated.

Moreover, from the perspective of the disciplines of Political Science and, of particular note for the purposes of this thesis, Political Economy, the analysis of the events of 1951-1953 in the Kingdom of Persia reveal a major, fundamental flaw in reasoning, one that has affected the quality of much of the research that has been submitted, and not merely on the subject of the Kingdom of Persia. Namely, the desire

of researchers to seek parsimonious explanations for events, especially when they lack the proper cultural or social context, has led researchers to presuppose a number of conclusions with regards to the events in the Kingdom of Persia that are, if one may be so bold as to say in these pages, simplistic in the extreme. It is precisely that level of falsely parsimonious reasoning that this thesis was, at least in part, designed to address, in however limited a fashion such a thesis, by the very nature of its exposure, will be able to impact the quality of research throughout the field as a whole, which, admittedly, would be somewhat less significant.

1.2: Research Question

If one were to word the research question for this thesis in as simplistic a manner as possible, it would be to ask first, what factors led to the decision to nationalize the AIOC on the part of the Mossadegh government, and, second, what were the factors in the decision by the American government to intervene and overthrow the Mossadegh government, replacing it with one more pliable to the interests of the AIOC. Naturally, this question, by its very nature, leads to several follow up questions, which are discussed below.

The events that were described in the previous pages lend themselves, if one may be so bold as to characterize it as such, to a number of interesting research questions, at least, that is, from the point of view of an aspirant political economist. Most specifically though, all of the lines of questioning that one could employ on this topic boil down to a single one, namely, what were the factors that led to the decisions both to nationalize the assets of the AIOC and those on the part of Western governments to engage in an intervention in retaliation.

Most particularly, the events leading up to the 1954 coup in Iran, being so central in many ways to the story of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and, indeed, it can easily be argued, to the continuing story of American, and more broadly, Western, relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, can be examined from two distinct points in time and space. It is from within the frame of these loci of analysis that the overall structure of this thesis, as one might naturally expect, logically took its shape.

The first of these loci of analysis concerns the actions of the popular and democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in Persia to nationalize the Iranian assets of what was then known as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company that were inside the territory of what is now the country that is known as the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The policy and economic considerations behind the fateful decision of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the Iranian assets Anglo-Persian Oil Company, or, at least, those assets that could be seized by Mohammed Mossadegh's regime, namely, those oil production facilities that were located on the soil of what was then known as the Kingdom of Persia, lend themselves particularly well to a rigorous analysis in terms of political economy and international relations analysis.

The second locus, following temporally from the first, is to be found in the halls of power in Washington DC in the United States of America in the wake of the nationalization of the assets of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company that were on Iranian soil by the government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh.

The decision by the government of the United States of America to, in the most polite and innocuously bureaucratic of possible terms, intervene in Iran and overthrow the government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh, replacing his rule with the dictatorship of Reza Shah Pahlavi, which was a dictatorship of a particularly brutal and repressive sort.

It goes without saying, of course, that this intervention on the part of the government of the United States of America was done all at the behest, and, more to the point, perhaps, for the almost exclusive benefit of, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, it having been dispossessed of its assets in what was then known as the Kingdom of Persia, is another decision point that, not least on account of the enduring repercussions of that particular decision, is particularly well suited to an analysis from the point of view of an expert, or, rather, a would-be or prospective expert, in political economy and International relations.

Of the two points of decision and policy that are mentioned above, the second, that of the decision by the government of the United States of America to intervene to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh at the behest and for the sole benefit of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company seems to be somewhat better researched in the relevant literature than the first, not least because of the far reaching, indeed, the continuing, importance and reverberations of the effects and consequences of that decision.

This is not, in any sense, to put forth the claim that the research that has been conducted on the intervention by the government of the United States of America in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Persia by overthrowing the democratically elected

government of Mohammed Mossadegh is complete. Rather, even armed with the internal communication of the members of the American government who were directly and intimately involved in the event itself, the questioning and, of much more importance to the question at hand, conclusions that were drawn in this research, is somewhat lacking in its ability to truly diagnose the motivations of the actors, or how that affected the long-term manner in which the events played out.

In this particular work of research then, it follows that the first of the two questions, that of the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company that were on the soil of what was then known as the Kingdom of Persia is, in many ways, the more inviting, at least for purposes of analysis and research of any real novel value.

That being said, the research in this thesis would be admittedly quite remiss without addressing the intervention by the government of the United States of America and, more importantly, the motivations thereof. Even in this area of analysis, notwithstanding the fact that the majority of the research that has been done on the period and events that are described in this thesis has been dealing with the questions at hand from this second perspective, there remain a number of areas, even from the frankly propaganda induced view of the matter that was in vogue in American political Science circles for such a long time, that contain some striking unanswered lines of inquiry.

The most obvious of these, and, as will be seen, perhaps, it can be argued, without much in the way of exaggeration, the most enlightening with regards to the

internal motivation of the Government of the United States of America in staging the intervention in the first place, would, without a doubt, have to be the question that pertains to exactly why the Government of the United States of America decided to wait for two years to attempt to intervene in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Persia, a sovereign nation, to overthrow its democratically elected government and replace it, despite all the prevalent propaganda that was disseminated by the Government of the United States of America saying that American policy was built in an ideological sense around the advancement of the cause of democracy around the world. The causes that lie at the root of this delay in intervention, if one may call it that, as well as the fundamental contradiction between the stated goals of the United States of America as a member of the International Community both play into the tragic nature of the events that are to be studied in this thesis, to say nothing of the longer term consequences that have arisen therefrom.

There are, of course, a few other factors in the manner that the tragedy that befell the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia played out that, to put things as mildly as it is possible to do in these pages, are, in many ways, essential to understanding how the knock on effects of the government of the United States of America sending agents of its Central Intelligence Agency to intervene as it did, altered the political landscape of the Kingdom of Persia in such a way, it can be argued without much in the way of exaggeration, effectively preordained that the American friendly, pliable, at least, insofar as American policymakers viewed it, and highly autocratic regime of Reza Shah Pahlavi would be replaced, not merely by a

revolution, but by a decidedly Anti-American Islamic one. Of particular note, the tactics that the Americans used in their successful coup against the government of Mohammed Mossadegh guaranteed that the Ayatollahs of Iran, not the democratically oriented members of the urban elite, would come to rule the country, for good or ill.

1.3: Outline of the order of this Work

With the facts that are above mentioned in mind, this thesis logically consists of a number of major sections, with various topic specific subsections that are encompassed therein. The first major section to follow this introduction is a review of the relevant academic literature on the subject of the nationalization and intervention. As can be seen in even a cursory examination of accessible literature, the overwhelming majority of sources regarding the nationalization campaign are as seen from the Western perspective and are focused more strongly on the American response than to the actions in Persia that precipitated them.

In fact, it could be easily said without danger of exaggeration that, by far, the bulk of the literature on the nationalization is focused most explicitly on the intervention, with particular focus upon its more long lasting consequences, not the least of which of course was the installment of the authoritarian regime of Reza Shah Pahlavi, and, in so doing, forming an integral spark to the movements that would eventually lead to his own ouster, most specifically, the Islamist movement founded by Ayatollah Khomeini, which, of course, ushered in the formation of the current Islamic Republic of Iran, as will be seen later in this thesis. The reasoning that lies behind this particular focus on the part of much of the research, is, one can hope, obvious, albeit informed much more strongly by the events of 1979, than by those of 1951-1953.

The following section will be a broad overview of the international political and economic environment in the period leading up to the rise of the Mossadegh

government and its subsequent decisions regarding nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

As will, it is certainly hoped, become quite clear, both the geopolitical position of Iran, bordering, as it did at the time, directly on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and its economic position wherein it was a part of the Persian Gulf region, the largest source of easily accessible petroleum in the world, were major factors in the decision as well as its repercussions, both domestically and internationally. However, the aforementioned two factors were not quite sufficient to explain the timing of the intervention, though, they have been used at some length as a means of explanation as regards to the motivation that lies behind its implementation by the Central Intelligence Agency.

With that said, probably the most interesting part of this research is dealing with the internal dynamics of the Kingdom of Persia in general, and, most particularly, within the Mossadegh government itself. Therefore, the third section of this thesis shall address those particularly pertinent issues. It will, become quite apparent that the internal dynamics of the government in Tehran, and, in particular, the long shadow that was cast by the long-running neocolonialism that marked its relationship with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, were instrumental in the decision to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

This part of the thesis will also deal with the economic considerations of the decision. The arrangement forced upon the then-Kingdom of Persia by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was largely the result of pressure by the government of the United

Kingdom. In this, the motivations, as will become quite clear, were decidedly a reflection of imperialism and neocolonialism on the part of the British, the mark of much of their foreign policy around the world during the period in which the oil concession arrangement was foisted upon the government of the Kingdom of Persia.

The case can be made, upon looking at the evidence, that the oilfields of Iran were placed into the hands of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company as a means of securing cheap oil for the United Kingdom. As such, the profits from the extraction of the oil in the oilfields of the then-Kingdom of Persia were shunted, insofar as possible, to London, with only a pittance directed at Tehran.

The anti-colonial element, so called for lack of a more aptly descriptive characterization, to the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company is often one that seems, at least from the perspective of this analysis, to have been, for the most part, overlooked in academic circles. This is most especially true when examining the question from the perspective of Western political economists. Most particularly, the analysis of the Mossadegh government in general that one finds in sources from the United States of America seems to have an air that is reflective of the Chicago School and Austrian School economic bent of much of economic academia in that country.

That is to say that the analysis seems skewed quite strongly against finding a viable economic motive behind the nationalization of the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. In any case, the motivations behind the nationalization were, the opinions of American political economists notwithstanding, quite clear to the population of the Kingdom of Persia, and most especially so to the government in Tehran. The move,

while not without its inherent risks, was viewed as very rational one, and indeed, one that had a great deal of moral justification behind it. Absent the ideological blinders that the Dulles brothers and their Cold War mentality imposed upon the political and academic establishment in the United States, the decision to nationalize the assets of the AIOC would have been perfectly understandable, as clearly evidenced by the attitudes of the policymakers in Washington before the arrival of the Dulles brothers in 1953.

However, the move by the Mossadegh government to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company on the soil of what was then known as the Kingdom of Persia was seen in what was very much an ideological lens in the halls of power in the West, first at Whitehall, the beating heart of the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and later, as well as arguably more importantly for the purposes of this work of analysis, at the highest levels of the government of the United States, especially after the Truman Administration, which was sympathetic to the cause of decolonialization, was replaced by the much more hard-line Anti-Communist Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower, whose policy was formulated by the aforementioned Dulles brothers.

It is the nature of those calculations that will be covered in the next part of this work. In a form that is hopefully as short, succinct, and to the point as it is possible to be within the constraints of the space of these few lines on this page of text, it can be rather convincingly argued that the combination of the valuing of the individual economic interest of the shareholders of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and, by

extension the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as the ideological bent, prevalent at the time in both the State Department and the military and intelligence establishments of the United States of America, wherein any slight to capitalism, especially a slight at the hands of a peripheral, semi-colonial state, like the Kingdom of Persia was at the time, was seen in what could be characterized as a zero-sum game with the stakes being a loss of valuable oil and strategic positioning to the Communist Bloc.

In other words, the Americans, or rather more specifically, those members of the American government that were most responsible for its foreign policy, seemed predisposed to perceive of the nationalization of the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company as a prelude to the Kingdom of Persia becoming a satellite state of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a domino in the Cold War.

Moreover, because of its position, the hypothetical fall of Persia into the Soviet sphere of influence would inevitably lead to increased pressure by the Warsaw Pact on the other states in the Persian Gulf Region, a valuable jugular vein to the economic power of the Western World.

The sixth part of this work will then examine the course of action taken by the United States. This will be done from a few different angles.

An examination, by necessity of a rather cursory nature, of the agenda of Reza Shah Pahlavi, used by the Americans to prop up and legitimize their intervention in the country, will be employed. Further, and probably arguably more pertinently for purposes of the research question at hand, the calculations of those in the highest levels of power within the government of the United States of America shall be used to illustrate the decision making process which led to the intervention itself.

The intervention that resulted in the ouster of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh represents, in many ways, the first of a great number of such attempted actions by the United States' Central Intelligence Agency, a fact that is attested at some length both by the agents who were directly involved (Roosevelt, 1979,p. 42) and, much later, by the Central Intelligence Agency itself. As such, it is emblematic of what would, in short order during and well after the Cold War, become a long standing policy of the United States, as well as an action of choice by the Central Intelligence Agency as regards certain politically recalcitrant regimes around the world.

It will become clear that, after the nationalization initiative was put into effect, despite the impression that remains prevalent throughout the world of political analysis that there was literally nothing that the Mossadegh government could have done to mollify the Americans or to stop their violent overthrow, and the concurrent ushering into absolute power of Reza Shah Pahlavi, with devastating effect on the people of Iran, there remained several points wherein the intervention could have very well been averted. As will, it is certainly hoped, be seen, however, a key change in the government of the United States of America at its highest levels led in turn to a closing

of that proverbial door in a particularly dramatic fashion, that led to this radical turning of the foreign policy of the United States onto its head and creating a series of conflicts that, for good or, much more frequently, if one may be so candid, ill, have shaped the modern-day political map and whose consequences reverberate through the decades down to this very day.

The final major part of this work will deal with the longer term repercussions of the intervention by the United States of America on the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Persia.

The regime that was put into place after the removal of the Mossadegh government by the military forces of the Western powers and the actions of the agents of the government of the United States of America soon became so repressive and dismissive of its own population that discontent simmered and built up until it exploded onto the scene in the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

All the while, it should be noted, from the end of the coup against the government of Mohammed Mossadegh up until the advent of the Islamic Revolution itself, the country, then known as the Kingdom of Persia, was heavily financed and armed by the United States, it should be noted here, as a political and ideological bulwark of sorts against the spread of communism in the Middle East, a threat that in reality never really existed except, it can be easily argued, in the minds of analysts at the Central Intelligence Agency itself.

In fact, it can be argued that, without the intervention by the United States of America and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Islamic Revolution might never have happened, as the Islamic Revolution in 1979 was a reaction to the regime put into place in the wake of the 1953 coup. Indeed, later statements by Ayatollah Khomeini, as well as Steven Kinzer's (2003) research for *All the Shah's Men*, bear this out. The motivation that lies behind what would become the Islamic Revolution had its genesis, in many ways, in the long-running consequences of the intervention, in particular, the placing into unchecked power of an increasingly megalomaniacal Reza Shah Pahlavi, a tyrant, who proved only too willing to take the military and financial aid that was subsequently used by the government of the United States to prop up his regime and create a security apparatus that he was also only too willing to turn onto his own people with devastating effect. It does not realistically need to be said here at any length that the depth of harshness and cruelty of the regime that was imposed by the Central Intelligence Agency and further enhanced over the ensuing quarter century by Reza Shah Pahlavi in the Kingdom of Persia was, to put the matter in as mild and innocuous a manner as would be possible in these pages, was, by and large, kept from the people of the United States of America, though, of course, the government in Washington turned several proverbial blind eyes toward the actions of the regime of Reza Shah Pahlavi in the name of advancing the extreme short-term policy goals about which they seemed to be far more acutely concerned. This level of shortsightedness, even if it were to be viewed in the context of extremely short-term Realist and Neo-Realist schools of International Relations theory, to be, moral concerns aside, as to be expected, if one may be so forward, with Neo-Realist

International Relations theory, at the risk of being trite and pithy in statements, to borrow from a somewhat fitting English aphorism, penny wise but pound foolish in the sense that the gains made for the cause of Western hegemony by intervening in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Persia turned out to be quite short-lived, barely lasting a generation, and, moreover, in the ensuing period, has created at least two generations of instability, animosity, and, more to the point for the policymakers in Washington, Anti-American sentiment both within the Islamic Republic of Iran and, in a much broader and, certainly in terms of the current situation of the United States of America vis-a-vis its stated policy goals, the broader region as a whole. Needless to say, this fact plays quite handily into the tragic nature of the events of 1953 with the coup to overthrow the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh.

Indeed, from an American perspective, it can be said with remarkable ease that the actions that were taken by elements of the government of the United States of America in 1954 in Iran to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh actually created a much more serious series of long term problems for the United States and the advancement of its ideology and policies throughout the broader region of the Middle East, a set of problems that have reverberated through American policy ever since the intervention took place.

Throughout all of the above work in this thesis, a multi-level tragedy will be seen to have taken shape. Naturally, the tragedy that befell the cause of democratic development in the Kingdom of Persia was dealt a fatal blow, one from which it would never recover. Moreover, the tragedy that befell international foreign policy following

the short-lived success of the Central Intelligence Agency's intervention in the Kingdom of Persia, where the events in Tehran in 1953 were but the first of a long-running series of similar interventions around the world, most of which imposed governments that were at least as autocratic and authoritarian as that of the Shah, and many of which, it should be noted, eventually ended with either Anti-American revolution or state failure, was, to put the matter as mildly as it is possible to do in these pages, both severe and far-reaching.

2: Literature Review

A Review of the Relevant Literature Surrounding the Nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and Subsequent Overthrow of the Government of Mohammed Mossadegh

It is at this point in this particular work that it seems to be *de rigueur*, or, at the very least, well within what would be considered within the discipline to be the accepted practice and standard procedure for such an undertaking, for there to be a literature review, an overview of sorts of the academic work that has been done that is related to the research question of the work.

Here then, should be a rundown of a sort of the academic literature that is related to the nationalization of the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh and the subsequent overthrow of his government that was democratically elected by elements of the government of the United States. It is hoped, by so doing, that the uniqueness of this particular work, as opposed to the vast body of research on this particular question that existed in the field prior to its writing. This is because, in part, as will be seen, there is a certain limitation of focus on the part of most of the academic work that has been done on the government of Mohammed Mossadegh, its decision to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and the subsequent overthrow of his government.

In examining the literature that is relevant to the questions that are very much at the center of the topic for which this thesis is being written, a certain set of patterns that are particularly illuminating as to the reasons why the research that has been done on the events in the Kingdom of Persia between 1951 and the intervention in 1953 have led to such a limited understanding of the actual situation in Iran and local political culture, a limitation that, it need not be elaborated upon in these pages, continues to affect the international relationship between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

2.1: A Pattern in the Literature

Upon examining the academic literature that is related to the research question at hand, a striking pattern emerges. Actually, one can say that more than one recurrent pattern emerges. In any case, the feature of the literature that is most particularly notable is, what can only be described in terms of the American-centricity of most of it.

This particular feature that underlies much of the academic literature on this particular topic is of course, not without good reason. The ouster of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh is one of the very few operations to, to use the rather sanitized wording of bureaucracy, "change a regime" to which the Central Intelligence Agency has ever openly admitted. It was also, as the first such action that is publically known, a template of sorts for other similar "regime change" actions that the Central Intelligence Agency has undertaken in the years since the overthrow of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia.

As such, the vast majority of the academic literature on the research question at hand deals with the intervention by the Central Intelligence Agency and, moreover, views it from the perspective of the United States in the Cold War. It should be noted, that the ideological blinders that this imposed upon the academic world was also felt, with tragic effect, in the realms of policymaking, and, moreover continue to be felt in terms of American policy towards both the Islamic Republic of Iran and, in perhaps a more pertinent sense, the region as a whole. This is most particularly striking when looking at the earliest academic literature on the research question.

With the aforementioned fact notwithstanding, the ideological blinders that were imposed by seeking out the neat, parsimonious explanation for events, during the nationalization, the ill-fated intervention, and the longer period thereafter, speak to a fundamental need in the academic community itself, one which shall be discussed later in this thesis.

2.2: Literature from the Period before the Islamic Revolution that pertained to the events that are analyzed in this thesis

For example, in the earliest works consulted that concern the nationalization by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh and the subsequent intervention on behalf of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by the government of the United States of America and, particularly, its Central Intelligence Agency, the focus is most clearly on the impact of the intervention for the Americans and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

It should be particularly noted that the nature of the government of the Shah of the Kingdom of Persia was quite noticeably absent from any sort of discussion. This is somewhat striking because, at the time, as will be mentioned in some more detail later in this work, in the period between the overthrow of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh and the subsequent Islamic Revolution in 1979, the regime that was put in place by the Central Intelligence Agency in the wake of their intervention was heavily armed and financed by the government of the United States of America as a bulwark against the spread of Communist or Socialist ideology in the broader region of the Middle East.

There was, to put the matter into terms that are, for the sake of an academic discussion, as polite and sanitized as possible, what could be, and in some cases has been, argued by some, especially those who were outside the West at the time, a certain level of academic blindness as regards issues that were outside of the purview

of the direct economic and geopolitical interests of the United States of America, as evidenced by Heimerl (1982). It should be noted that, as evidenced by the dates of Heimerl's research, the limitations that were imposed by the pre-existing Cold War mentality of Western academia were, to put the matter in as mild a set of terms as possible in these pages, both long lasting and particularly difficult notions of which to be disabused.

The very limitation that made such analysis to be not particularly useful in analysis of the actual political situation in the broader region of the Middle East and, in a more narrow sense, the Kingdom of Persia, and, later, Islamic Republic of Iran, was precisely the element that made it difficult to abandon, even in the wake of a failure to foresee the rise of the Islamic Revolution, a rise that, to the modern-day analyst, armed as it were with the distinctly useful advantage of hindsight. Here one would arrive at a great contradiction that is inherent in the discipline of Political Science itself. The one element that erstwhile Political analysts and students of International Relations and Political Economy seek above all others in their study is usually parsimony. By having a simple explanation that seemed to fit any questioning that would conceivably arise in the academic world, there seemed to be little point in delving deeper into the situation that surrounded the rise and fall of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia.

With all of the above having been said, as the Kingdom of Persia was viewed by those in power in the West to be firmly under the control of the government of the Shah, and therefore, even more firmly in the camp of the Capitalist Countries, the

amount of unique research that was done on the actions of 1954 by agents of the government of the United States of America, was, to be as blunt and succinct as it is possible to be in the space that is allotted herein for purposes of discussing the relevant literature, paltry at best.

Of course, the fact that the nationalization decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh and his government in 1951 were completely, or almost completely absent from research of any real kind, if one may be so bold, goes without saying.

In many ways, it is this peculiar deficiency in research in the earlier period after the events of 1951-1954 that brought about the subsequent conditions within the Kingdom of Persia that eventually led to its dramatic downfall in the Islamic Revolution. It also, it may be noted, led in no small part to the coldness of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the West for much of the period since the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. There was a notable change in tone and focus of a kind that occurred in the literature after 1991. The reasons behind the change in tone are, it is hoped, quite obvious.

2.3: Post-Pahlavi Literature

Following the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, it was supposed, perhaps, it can be argued, with no small degree of justification, that there was, it can be said, without a great deal in the way of exaggeration, a major reexamination of the intervention by elements of the government of the United States of America that overthrew the government of Mohammed Mossadegh a quarter of a century earlier.

That is to say that, effectively all of the examinations of the period after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 with the subsequent hostage crisis at the Embassy of the United States in Tehran followed by the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran were used as a lens by which academics, most particularly, it should not be especially surprising, those who were based in the West, judged, for lack of a more appropriate term for the description of it, efficacy of the intervention as regards the longer term implications of the policies of the government of the United States of America toward the broader region of the Middle East.

For example, Tarar (2013) focuses almost in entirety on the intervention, particularly in light of the fact that the conditions that were imposed as a consequence of it, namely the repressive regime of the pro-American Reza Shah Pahlavi, led directly to creating a breeding ground for the later, and particularly strongly Anti-American, Islamic Revolution.

Edges (2011) also focuses exclusively on the intervention with almost no mention of the decision on the part of the government of Mossadegh to nationalize the oil concession that led to the intervention in the first place. Again, the focus seems to be more strongly on the consequences of the intervention than the causes of it, with the nationalization decision largely ignored.

This pattern is continued with Lee (2013) and his focus on the media in the Anglophone West and its role in pushing aggressively for the intervention. Again, the chain of events which led up to the coup against the government of Mohammed Mossadegh is largely ignored.

It should be noted of course, that this trend has, if anything, greatly accelerated as regards academic research on the question at hand. This is most especially noticeable when one looks at the nature of the research on the period surrounding the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company on the sovereign soil of the Kingdom of Persia and the subsequent decision by the government of the United States of America to use its Central Intelligence Agency to intervene and overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh that has been undertaken since 2003.

The reasons behind the sudden increase in critical research on this issue after 2003 should, if one may be so bold as to say so in this context, also be obvious.

At the risk of being trite, the invasion and overthrow of the government of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003, and the major knock on effects of that overthrow on

the foreign policy of many states, not least the United States of America itself, that reverberate, even to the very day that these words are being written

2.4: Another pattern in the literature that is perhaps, it can be argued, more illuminating for purposes of this paper

It should be noted here, perhaps, for purposes of discussion, that there is an even more glaring absence in the literature on at least one side of the situation regarding the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign soil of the Kingdom of Persia and the subsequent decision by the governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and, especially, the United States of America to intervene to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh.

The pattern that is being mentioned in these lines should be recognizable at this point in the review of the literature on the subject. The nature of the literature on the subject is skewed very heavily, indeed, almost exclusively toward a single side of the issue. Indeed, it can be argued, without much of anything in the way of exaggeration of any sort, that the literature is skewed toward, frankly, a rather monolithic approach to the issue that this work of academic literature is intended to address.

In fact, if one may be so bold in the space that is contained in these lines of text for the purposes of this thesis, one may notice a particularly striking feature of all of the analysis that has heretofore been attempted is its very parsimonious nature in seeking out the most monolithic, simplistic, and, ultimately, not particularly enlightening of

explanations for both the decision of the duly and democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh nationalization of the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the soil of the Kingdom of Persia and the subsequent decision on the part of the government of the United States of America to overthrow the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh for making the aforementioned decision. Indeed, if the matter were to be examined in as broad and holistic a context as possible, the only difference that one could characterize as discernible between the literature on the subjects at hand from the period before the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the period since would be a matter of focus regarding the parsimonious explanations for the actions that are the focus of this thesis would have to be that the Pahlavi era literature all dealt with an American-centric *a priori* view of the situation while the Post-Pahlavi literature that has been written on the subject since the Islamic Revolution has been more *a posteriori* in focus. Both of these views, it should be noted in these lines at this point in this thesis, have, at their core, something of a self-serving secondary objective in mind, tacit though it may be in terms of the research itself.

If one were to operate on the assumption that the nature of this limitation of focus, one might dare say short sightedness on the part of much of the literature could possibly at this point in the discussion have escaped notice, one need only look, even in a cursory sense, at the list of questions upon which this research is based.

The literature, by and large, at the definite risk of over generalization, the literature seems to be heavily skewed towards analysis of the intervention that was initiated by the government of the United States of America and, in particular, its CIA

that overthrew the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh. Most specifically, the focus of the literature seems to be most tightly focused on the intervention as it is viewed from a perspective that can be characterized, and, it would seem, with good reason, as being quite a bit more than distinctly Anglo-American in nature.

Further, again at the risk of overgeneralization on a rather large scale, the analysis in the academic literature on the question of the intervention seems to be most heavily focused upon its knock on effects. Most specifically, a great deal of proverbial ink has been equally proverbially spilled in the discipline regarding one knock on effect of the intervention in particular, the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Even more narrowly than what has already been alluded to and outright said in the pages above, the focus of the literature tends to view the Islamic Revolution from the perspective of the foreign policy decisions of the government of the United States of America, or, rather more specifically, when comparing the effects of other, later interventions that were modeled after the intervention that led to the ouster of the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia.

The relationship between the intervention that overthrew the government of Mohammed Mossadegh and the later Islamic Revolution that, in turn, overthrew the government with which it was replaced in the Kingdom of Persia indeed composes by far the largest proportion of sources from the literature on the subject.

Notably lacking, or, at the very least, it can be argued, certainly at this point in the discussion, is much in the way of a discussion of the factors leading to the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the Persian assets of the AIOC.

This particular limitation in the literature was indeed, one of the many reasons behind the rationale for choosing the line of research for which this paper was originally intended. Clearly, the deficiency that has been expounded upon in the previous pages and has been illustrated by reviewing the relevant literature earlier in this work is a major limitation for truly understanding the situation regarding that pivotal period in the 1950s in the Kingdom of Persia.

Moreover, this limitation also, rather paradoxically, has the additional effect of limiting and constraining the analysis of even the sections of the research question at hand that have been examined in the first place. It is precisely this paradox that makes the, if one may put the matter in as polite a manner as possible, limitations of the research on the subject so problematic.

As previously mentioned, the parsimonious nature of the arguments regarding the rationale behind both the nationalization of the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh and the subsequent intervention by the United States of America to overthrow that government, both before and after the Islamic Revolution overturned the state that the Central Intelligence Agency installed in the place of the democratically elected regime of Mossadegh leads to a willing institutional blindness with regards to the holistic nature of the situation on

the ground in the country at the time. The issue here is that the parsimonious nature of the arguments both before and after the Islamic Revolution, though they differ somewhat in focus, are, in academic terms, two sides of the same proverbial coin. In seeking parsimonious explanations for these events, instead of illuminating the true nature of the situation, instead, by finding a false parsimony, the true nature of what happened in those fateful days in 1953 is obscured under many layers of institutional prejudice. This false parsimonious mentality extends far beyond the study of what is now the Islamic Republic of Iran and needs to be addressed for both academic and policymaking reasons.

To examine the initial decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize it would probably be necessary to set the decision in its historical, geopolitical, and comparative contexts. Therefore, the next section of this work sets the historical background that underlies the relationship between the Kingdom of Persia and the AIOC

3: The Pre-Existing Historical Background that lays Behind the Nationalization Decision

In order to understand the decision by Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize, it is surely understood that it is quite necessary to preface any discourse on the actions of the Mossadegh Government with an overview of the political and economic conditions that were predominant in the period prior to the decision to nationalize.

The rationale for beginning with such a discussion should be, it is believed, rather obvious. The sociological, political, and economic environment surrounding the decision contains within it a crucible of sorts, with which the truth, not least regarding the motivations of those empowered to make such decisions within the government of Mohammed Mossadegh, can be determined.

It can be said, without, it is believed, a great deal of exaggeration, that it would be, in most likelihoods, impossible to arrive at a complete understanding in any sense of the word vis-a-vis the nature of this decision without prefacing it with such an examination of the historical milieu surrounding the relationship between the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the government of the Kingdom of Persia. As a bit of a foretaste in the way of a preview with regards to the conclusions that one probably should draw from this information, the relationship between the Kingdom of Persia and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was decidedly an example of the sort of neocolonialism

of which the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was historically, especially in the Victorian Period, particularly fond.

In order to properly understand the historical background that underlies the momentous events of 1953, it is quite necessary to examine much further back than it would be reasonable for one to expect for purposes of this particular work.

Indeed, the argument could be quite easily put forth, as it is of course in these pages, that the seeds of the nationalization decision on the part of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh are to be found directly in the conditions surrounding the formation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in the first place.

Of most particular interest, especially in light of the primary focus of this particular piece of work, would most probably be determined to be the treaties between the government of what was then known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Kingdom of Persia.

In these treaties, dating to the end of the Nineteenth Century, much of the true motivation behind the actions of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Tehran can be found. Moreover, the nature of those agreements also presaged to a not insignificant degree, the nature of the response of both the United Kingdom and the United States.

Indeed, as, it is most certainly hoped, will be quite clear for all to see, the agreements that bound the fate of the Kingdom of Persia to that of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company were marked by a combination of extreme inequality, whose benefit would

naturally devolve to the government of the United Kingdom, dismissive attitudes to the aspirations of the people of the Kingdom of Persia, and, a sense of entitlement that, to a more modern-day ear, seems both perversely unfair and patently absurd on its face. Moreover, the story of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, with its more than vaguely racist, Rudyard Kipling-esque, "white man's burden" mentality, presaged in many ways, many more in fact than can be fit into this thesis, the tone that would come to be taken in the confrontation by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the government of the United Kingdom, and, conversely, and, more than a little unexpectedly on the part of both the *a priori* **and** *a postiriori* Western armchair researchers who have written about the issue since 1953, that of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh, including, most notably, Mossadegh himself.

3.1: Beginning at the Beginning: The Formation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Co.

Therefore, in the interests of actually addressing the political economy behind the decision of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the soil of the Kingdom of Persia, and, perhaps more pertinently, the political economy of the decision-makers in the United Kingdom and United States, it would be well advised to begin the search in the initial formation of the unique international relationship that characterized the very existence of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

The initial conditions at the formation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company were presaged upon two historically unique conditions, both of which had, it can perhaps be argued with a not insignificant amount of compelling evidentiary support, strong echoes of particular note in the fateful events surrounding the nationalization of the assets of the company and the later forceful removal of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh. It is possible to argue that it would behoove the analysis upon which this work is based to say that both of the conditions to which this paragraph has previously alluded, as they are, it can be admitted, rather unique to their historical context, require no small amount of explanation.

This is, indeed, the one area where, if one might be so bold as to state in these lines, the least attention has been given in the course of analysing the decision-makers on both sides of the decision of the democratically elected government of Mohammed

Mossadegh for the nationalization of the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the subsequent decision to overthrow his government for carrying out that particular decision. As, it is firmly hoped, will become all too clear in the next several pages, this oversight on the part of academic research on the topic at hand has done something of a disservice to the actual analysis of the questions at hand.

3.2: The Great Game and the Kingdom of Persia: The First Recurrent Theme

The first of the two aforementioned undercurrents that should be examined lies within the context of what was referred to at the time by the British Foreign Service as “The Great Game”. The Great Game was an analogue of sorts to the more contemporary Cold War between the United Kingdom and what was then known as the Russian Empire. In the Nineteenth Century, both the United Kingdom and the Russian Empire were actively trying to expand their imperial spheres of influence around the world.

As part of that drive to expand their respective empires, the United Kingdom expanded more explicitly into India, into which, for the previous three centuries, the United Kingdom had been using the British East India Company, a private corporation, as a proxy to expand the area of the Indian Subcontinent under its control. At the same time, Alexander II, Tsar of All the Russias, was continuing a policy of aggressive expansion of Russian control into Central Asia, a policy that, in many ways, and for a number of historical reasons, predated the formation of the Russian Empire. Naturally, this expansion on the part of both the United Kingdom and the Russian Empire led to conflict between the two in a number of areas that lay between their two spheres of influence.

Perhaps, then, it could be said that, due in no small part to its geographical position, it was effectively inevitable that a proxy conflict between the Russian Empire and the United Kingdom would involve the Kingdom of Persia (Oberling, 1969, p 162).

The Kingdom of Persia was, essentially, by accident of its own geographic positioning, destined to become a battleground between these two mammoth empires in the late Nineteenth Century as they tried to dominate the rest of the planet.

For a number of historical reasons, the significance of which is, to put things in as mild a manner as it is possible to do, quite a significantly great deal beyond anything that could remotely be considered to be within the purview of this particular piece of research, the Russian Empire was the first of the two competing colonial powers to try to control the destiny of what would become the Islamic Republic of Iran (*ibid*), doing so through a series of indirect proxy engagements with vassal states of the Persian Shahanshah within which the Kingdom of Persia exercised what, in terminology that would be familiar to modern political analysis as a form of suzerainty, starting at the time of Catherine the Great in the Late Eighteenth Century, which later culminated in direct conflict shortly after the defeat of Napoleon in the form of the First Russo-Persian War in 1814 (Kamemzadeh, 1991, p. 331), and later, a Second Russo-Persian War wherein the Russians tried to turn Iran into a Russian client state (*ibid*).

Naturally, it would not be particularly surprising, it is believed, to assume that this expansion, coming, as one can very clearly see from even a cursory glance at a map of the period, quite dangerously close to the frontiers of India and Pakistan, both of which were then under the control of the United Kingdom indirectly through the British East India Company, created a great deal of alarm, both in Calcutta, which was then the capital of British India, and in the halls of the British Parliament in London itself. This alarm in turn required a response in kind on the part of the United Kingdom so as to

avoid having the Raj in British controlled India encircled by a hostile Russo-Persian force.

The diplomatic communities on both sides of this conflict referred to it as the "Great Game", which, it should be noted, expanded well beyond the immediate borders of the Kingdom of Persia to encompass, by and large, the vast bulk of the land area of Eurasia. Nevertheless, all of the above notwithstanding, it is, for, it is certainly hoped, obvious reasons, the focus of the discussion of the Great Game in this thesis is, of course, limited to its impact on the geopolitical landscape into which the Kingdom of Persia was, unfortunately for its people, constrained in the period of time that is being mentioned. Therefore, the focus of this discussion, interesting though it may be to diplomatic historians and, notably, Political Economists, will be, by force of the necessity of the focus of this thesis, curtailed in the extreme, only including the details that are of the most importance to the lines of questioning upon which this thesis is, of course, based. It should be sufficient at this point, however, to state that, the skullduggery of the competition between the Russian Empire and the United Kingdom for influence over the destiny of the Kingdom of Persia was particularly hard fought with both sides variously gaining, then losing the upper hand in the country.

All of this mutual brinkmanship on the part of the United Kingdom and the Russian Empire culminated with an agreement whereby what was then known as the Kingdom of Persia was divided into two distinct spheres of influence, with the Russian

Empire claiming the north of the country and the United Kingdom laying claim to the south (Voldarsky, 2006, p. 79).

As a part of their sphere of influence in the southern part of what was then known as the Kingdom of Persia, an oil concession on the southern coast of the country was negotiated with almost all of the profits from it devolving through a series of intermediaries to the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (Kinzer, 2003, p. 86). It was this treaty that created the initial formation of the Anglo-Persian, and, as it was later known, Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (Bamberg, 1994, p. 26).

From the beginning, the concession was seen as a means of exercising extra territorial control and extracting resources that could be used by the burgeoning war machine and industrial apparatus of the British Empire. Throughout the period up to the formation of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh, the British government maintained a sense of absolute dominion over the section of the soil of the Kingdom of Persia that was enumerated in the oil concession with a strong, iron fist.

The reasons for this maintenance of imperial power and coercion were both political, in the form of using the Kingdom of Persia as a buffer state of sorts to block the power of the Russian Empire, and, as will be seen in more detail with the second recurrent theme, economic in nature.

First however, the initial task at hand is to illustrate how the geopolitical position of the Kingdom of Persia at the time that the initial concession that formed what would later, by the time of the crisis and the decision to nationalize, come to be known as the

Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was directly related, or at the very least, echoed in a fashion that can be characterized without a great deal of exaggeration and, arguably, with good reason, as nearly uncanny in the much later geopolitics of the Kingdom of Persia in the wider region in yet another conflict in the 1950's, in other words, at the time of the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign territory of the Kingdom of Persia.

To be sure, the actors were rather different and, it goes without saying that, a great deal of the proverbial scene in international politics had shifted dramatically in the intervening period, however, the reflection remains. It is this reflection, what a historian might refer to as a recurring theme, that the next subsection of this work will address.

3.3: The Cold War: A more Modern Echo of the "Great Game"

By the time that Mossadegh became the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Persia, the Russian Empire had long since faded into the proverbial dust bin of history, long forgotten, and, largely, especially among the people of the Kingdom of Persia, unlamented. In its place, a new power had arisen. This country, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, had imperial ambitions of its own, to say nothing at all about its ideological bent.

In the middle of the Twentieth Century, as at the end of the Nineteenth, the competition was particularly fierce between the ideological and political camps of the Russians, now represented by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the Anglophone world, which had been led historically by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, but was now led increasingly by a new power, the United States of America.

This ideological conflict was best expressed perhaps in the mind of Western political scientists by the wording of John Foster Dulles, who was, not coincidentally, one of the architects of "Operation Ajax", the US codename for their intervention (Kinzer, 2003, p. 164) , the Secretary of State, that is, the Foreign Minister, of the United States at the time that the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was made.

Secretary of State Dulles was a major proponent of what has come to be known as the "domino theory". In this line of reasoning, the standing policy of the government of the United States of America as regards the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its allies was one of containment.

In other words, the American government intended to form what a Frenchman would refer to as a *cordon sanitaire* around the Communist Bloc. The effect of this was of course to isolate the communist world in the hopes that the ideological threat that it posed to the West and its economic interests would wither away.

Following naturally from this was the notion that, if a country on the frontier of the Communist world should prove amenable to Communism, or even a milder, more *milquetoast* form of Socialism, then it could allow other surrounding states to fall within the orbit of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Then as in the previous century, the geographic position of the Kingdom of Persia seemed, in many ways, to pre ordain that it would become a battleground or, at the very least, be seen, by the policymakers in the Anglophone West, as a bulwark against the spread of Communist ideology into the wider Middle East (Kinzer, 2003, p 88).

In such an environment, it seems only natural that an action such as the one undertaken by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company would be perceived as not

merely the act of a sovereign state trying to express its control over its own territory and resources, but also an attack on the institution of capitalism itself.

Further, as nationalization was a hallmark of socialism, the action that was undertaken by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia could, in an even more ominous way, portend, to the mind of an American and British political establishment that was mortally afraid of the spread of Communism, to be an opening of the doors of the Kingdom of Persia to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

This could, so the "domino theory" asserts, have been used as a springboard that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics could well have used to spread throughout the greater Middle East and into India and North Africa.

In short, the very location of the Kingdom of Persia, on the very edge of the Communist Bloc, made it inevitable, it could be easily argued, that there would be a confrontation involving the Kingdom of Persia and either the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and, later, the United States of America.

As will be clearly seen later, the location of the Kingdom of Persia, being as it was on the border of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, did in fact factor quite heavily into the calculations in Washington regarding the intervention against the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo Iranian Oil Company that were on the soil of the Kingdom of Persia.

At this point, it seems appropriate to point out that, if one were to look at the situation in the Kingdom of Persia that surrounded the line of questioning upon which this thesis is based in an *a priori* manner, especially, it should also be noted here, if one does so with a strong desire for absolutely parsimonious answers to the aforementioned lines of inquiry, one could easily and convincingly argue that the entire explanation for the intervention by the government of the United States of America into the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Persia by arranging the overthrow of the duly and democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh could, from beginning to end, be explained in its entirety by precisely the sorts of conclusions that would be assumed to have been drawn as a corollary to the "domino theory" and, as will be mentioned later, the policy of containment that the United States advanced towards the Soviet Bloc. If that was in fact the case, then this thesis could end at these lines and be considered, for the most part, to be a complete work of thoroughgoing analysis. Indeed, as mentioned at some length in the review of the relevant literature on the subject at hand that precedes this section of this thesis, it can be seen that a great deal of ink was spilled by a great multitude of researchers over the quarter century that followed the overthrow of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh that drew exactly the aforementioned conclusions and, further, considered those conclusions to be not merely empirically valid, but also placed a strong normative value upon the parsimonious and ideologically self-serving nature of them as well.

3.4: Petroleum Dependence: the Second Major Recurrent Theme

At the point in history when the United Kingdom and Russian Empire were busy carving up the vast bulk of the continent of Asia among themselves, another major economic change took place. The international economy began a somewhat long process in shifting from dependence on coal to dependence on petroleum for industrialization. At the end of the nineteenth century, there were only a very few known industrially viable oilfields in the world. Naturally, considering the topic of this thesis, this economic shift in paradigm was vitally important to understanding the nature of the actions that all of the actors involved in the tragedy upon which this thesis is based.

In this environment, the British wrenched from the Kingdom of Persia a large concession on the south coast of the country in which petroleum could be drilled (Voldarsky, 2006, p. 78). This concession later proved to be quite lucrative, with one of the largest oil reserves in the world.

To be sure, the initial terms of the concession were, to put the matter as mildly as it is possible to do in these pages, extremely lucrative for the shareholders of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and, hence, the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

Of course, this also means to say that the terms of the concession agreement were particularly penurious to the government and people of the Kingdom of Persia.

According to the terms of the concession agreement as they were originally promulgated, almost all of the profits from operating the oil concessions went directly into the proverbial pockets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, with a very tiny sum being sent to the Treasury of the Kingdom of Persia, which, incidentally, at the time of the promulgation of the agreement that created the oil concession itself, was under the direct control of the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in a separate, particularly humiliating agreement.

To be sure, the terms of the concession were later renegotiated by the government of the Kingdom of Persia to the slight benefit of the Treasury of the Kingdom (Bamberg, 1994, p. 460), but even that renegotiation, borne as it was in the depths of the Great Depression, was, to put the matter as mildly as it is possible to express in these pages, a particularly bitter pill for the business community of the Anglophone world, as, of course, represented by the directors and shareholders of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, to proverbially swallow. Of course, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was, to put the matter as mildly as it is possible to do in these pages, extremely reluctant to relinquish even the tiniest shred of their power in the Kingdom of Persia, to say nothing of the extremely lucrative profits from the revenues from the oil that was extracted from the concession in the Kingdom of Persia. Moreover, the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as majority shareholders in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, considered the oil concession itself to be a particularly lucrative source of revenue, as well as a matter of supreme national importance, supplying as it did the fuel needs of the Royal Navy and a source of

national, or, one might say rather more appropriately, imperial, pride (Kinzer, 2003, p. 63).

The circumstances surrounding the previous renegotiation of the terms of the concession left the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company strongly disinclined to renegotiate again with the government of Mohammed Mossadegh for more equitable distribution of the revenues from the, as mentioned above, extremely lucrative oil fields of Southern Iran. This reluctance, it should be noted, a sticking point in AIOC operations for many years, one that US Secretary of State Dean Acheson brought up numerous times in communication in the years leading up to the election of the Mossadegh government, both with AIOC directors and, pertinently, with Whitehall and 10 Downing St (Kinzer, 2003, p. 84)

It is the emergent dependence upon petroleum and its derivative products for the industrialized Western economy that became one of the defining features of the relationship between the Kingdom of Persia and the West and, moreover, created the backdrop in which the West had a vested interest in intervention in the, in retrospect, inevitable, event that a confrontation were to occur in the Kingdom of Persia regarding the petroleum concession that was used by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

Moreover, the stake that was held in the continued functioning of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by the government of the United Kingdom in an economic, strategic, and, in a particularly perverse way, moral imperative that, in many ways, effectively dictated the nature of its response to the decision by the government of

Mohammed Mossadegh toward nationalization of the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil company that were on the soil of the Kingdom of Persia in those fateful days in 1951.

By far and away then, the most important follow up question in regards to the role that the economics of oil played in the tragedy that played itself out on the streets of Tehran at the insistence and with the prodding of the elements of government of the United States of America, functioning under the direct orders of the government of the United States of America to arrange the circumstances that would lead to the overthrowing of the duly and democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh, replacing his rule with that of the more autocratic, and, moreover, and certainly of more importance to the policymakers in London and Washington, more controllable and pliable, figure of Reza Shah Pahlavi would, without a doubt be, to what extent the politics of petroleum factored into the process of decision-makers in Washington DC as they were formulating their response to the actions of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh.

3.5: Conclusion to be Drawn from the Recurrent Themes

It could be a reasonable statement, then, that these two aforementioned factors: the geopolitical implications of the Cold War and the economic primacy of petroleum, would be vitally important factors for understanding the research questions at hand. The next section of this thesis will address whether and to what extent these factored into the decision-makers minds on all sides of the issue at hand.

4: The Variables for Analysis

As has been shown above, there are two factors that a historian might refer to as “recurrent themes” with regard to the circumstances surrounding the nationalization of the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign soil of the Kingdom of Persia. The competition between the capitalist, Anglophone world, which was represented at the time of the initial formation of the concession as what English politicians referred to as “The Great Game”, and, later by the United States of America and its allies in the so-called “Free World”, and the autocratic Russians, and later, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics guided by its Communist, and hence, anticapitalistic ideological bent.

Additionally, the shift in the global economy from dependence on coal to that of petroleum brought what is now popularly referred to, at least, in academic circles, as The Politics of Oil, to the forefront of the relationship between the Kingdom of Persia and the Western World, as it remains to this day with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The drive to secure cheap oil to run the economies of the so-called “Free World”, it can be argued without a great deal of effort, made the situation in the Kingdom of Persia with regard to the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company have a particularly strong focus that, it can be easily said, veritably demanded the attention of the Western Allies, particularly the United States of America, in a way that no other nationalization campaign in the region could ever realistically have done.

Put together, the Politics of Oil and the Politics of Containment as expressed in the “Domino Theory” made the situation in the Kingdom of Persia far more delicate as a whole than any other similar actions, as will be seen later in the pages of this particular piece of academic work. Indeed, the synergy between the two factors that are enumerated above had a strong echo in the drama surrounding the nationalization of the oilfields by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh.

Moreover, it can be argued with an amount of ease that could not be characterized in any way as insignificant, and, not even remotely coincidentally, the drama surrounding the subsequent ouster of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh from the Kingdom of Persia by the government of the United States and its elements of government of the United States of America was guided in many ways by both of the factors that have been enumerated above.

All of the above mentioned factors can seem, without very much at all in the way of exaggeration, to beg a certain follow up line of questioning. It would seem that, this follow up line of questioning would lend itself to offering a more complete understanding of the situation in the Kingdom of Persia at the time that the government of Mohammed Mossadegh decided to nationalize the domestic assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the subsequent decision by the governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in their ultimately ill-fated intervention in the Kingdom of Persia.

4.1: Towards the Formulation of a Theory

The question, then, is, to what extent neocolonialism, geopolitics, and the Politics of Oil played into the series of events that are being studied in this thesis. Put more bluntly, the question should, more appropriately, be subdivided into whether and to what extent each of the three factors that have been aforementioned affected the decision-makers in each of the main stakeholders in the conflict, namely, the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia, the government of the United Kingdom, led at first by the Liberal government of Clement Atlee and, later, by the Conservative one of Winston Churchill, and, finally, the government of the United States of America, led first by Democratic Party President Harry S. Truman, and then, at the time of the intervention, by Republican Party President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Now, of course, such a question, especially for purposes of this thesis, requires some form of experimentation.

For purposes of the analysis that has been brought forth by this line of reasoning, a parallel case would have to control for as few variables as possible, while having as much in common with the case that is being addressed in the main part of this work as possible. It would seem that a side by side comparison would need to be found that hold the factors as constant as possible.

Of course, the case that is to be studied in the succeeding pages and, considerably more to the point for purposes of the discussion of which this paper is based is that this case isolates the variables that have been proposed as the main causal elements that lay behind both the decision by the government of Mohammed

Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign territory of the Kingdom of Persia and the subsequent effort on the part of the governments of both the UK and the United States, to intervene and overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh, specifically, anti-colonialism, geopolitics, and the Politics of Oil for analysis. It would seem that there is just such a case that exists that is particularly well suited to such a comparative analysis. The relatively contemporaneous events in Egypt surrounding Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal controls for the variables of geopolitics and communism quite well

4.2: The Historical Context in Closer Focus: The Counter-Point that is the nationalization by the Government of Egypt of the Suez Canal and its Associated Consequences

In terms of isolating the two key variables insofar as that is possible to actually do, the case of the nationalization of the Suez Canal by the government of Nasser in the United Arab Republic of Egypt in 1958 poses the best chances of good analysis. There are, of course, a number of reasons for using Nasser's actions with regard to the Suez Canal as a point of comparison, not least of which being that, aside from the comparative geopolitical positioning of the Kingdom of Persia and that of the United Arab Republic of Egypt, the two share a number of similarities in terms of time, place, and belligerents that were involved in the subsequent actions that followed the decision to nationalize.

Of course, in order to properly establish the milieu of the situation, and, more to the point of this particular discussion, to illustrate how closely the case of the nationalization of the Suez Canal and the subsequent response to that decision on the part of the West, most particularly the United States of America parallels that of the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia as regards the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and its assets, a necessarily brief overview of the historical context is in order.

As will become clear in the succeeding pages, the story of the decision in Egypt, and, indeed, of its entire relationship with the West, stems almost in its entirety from the story of the Suez Canal itself. There are, it should be noted, distinct parallels between this fact and the fact that the momentous events in the Kingdom of Persia upon which this thesis is predicated in the fact that neocolonialism tied very tightly into the fabric of the later actions of all participants that were involved. Thus, the story of its nationalization is of particular importance.

The Suez Canal was built very near the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century by French engineers. At the time, Egypt was a suzerain province of the Ottoman Empire, though, by the time of the construction of the canal, that suzerainty was in name only. Indeed, the effective government of Egypt had long ago been taken over by semi-colonial partisans led by Mohammed Ali, who, in turn, then effectively lost their control over Egypt to the British, who, as should be clear by this point in this thesis, were only too happy to spread their imperialism far and wide and have outposts of their Empire scattered basically anywhere they could pull a profit from the locals to whom they were particularly dismissive.

The Suez Canal represented a major savings in terms of shipping time for goods running from Europe to India and China. As such, the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland went to a great deal of effort to place Egypt under a "protectorate" and, thereby, get Egypt, and thence, the Suez Canal under its control, where it largely remained until the middle of the Twentieth Century (Louis, 2006, p. 15).

The Egyptian state remained effectively a colony of the United Kingdom until the last king of Egypt, a man installed, like so many before him, by the whim of a British governor, who was the real power in the country, was overthrown in a coup and replaced eventually by a charismatic army colonel by the name of Kemal Abdul Nasser. Nasser went almost immediately to work dismantling the institutions that were put in place by the British to cement their hold on Egyptian power.

However, even after removing the government that was put in place by the British, the Egyptians still did not have control of the Canal, which remained dominated by a joint Anglo-French company that took all of the profits from running the canal for itself. Even in the wake of an anti colonialist government taking power in Cairo, the canal remained a sign of continuing neocolonialism stabbing at the heart of the country.

Therefore, the government of Kemal Abdul Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. In response, the governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of France sent troops to invade Egypt and secure the canal for themselves. They were stopped by a joint declaration by both the United States and the Soviet Union denouncing the intervention. In this regard, it is most certainly hoped that certain parallels can be seen with the case of the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the AIOC.

In both cases, the Suez Canal in the United Arab Republic of Egypt and the concession for the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in the Kingdom of Persia, there was a coercive and colonialist element that, it can be argued with a relatively high degree of ease, existed in parallel, thereby making a particularly strong point of comparison.

Both countries had a concession running through their heart that was controlled by a colonial power, indeed, the same colonial power, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Both concessions were forced upon governments that were either very weak, or essentially under the control of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at the time of their promulgation. In the case of the Kingdom of Persia, it was the Shahanshah while in the case of Egypt it was the Khedive of Egypt, both of whose finances were under Western, and, most particularly, British, control at the time. Both the Canal and the oil concession of the AIOC were used to maintain the war machine and economic might of the British Empire and both were, as such, considered very important in terms of the national interest of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

As such, another parallel to the case of the drama that surrounded the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign territory of the Kingdom of Persia can be, with a relatively high degree of ease, be seen to have emerged.

Because of the national interest that was perceived by the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in maintaining the Suez Canal as a major outpost of the colonialism of the far flung British Empire, it was decided that there would be an intervention to seize the canal by force on the part of the militaries of France and the United Kingdom. It is a bit beyond the scope of this thesis, but, intervention seemed to be a recurrent theme of its own to the colonialist British of the period.

All of the aforementioned facts of course still beg a question on the part of the erstwhile researcher in political economy. While the actions in Egypt certainly convinced the British, conscious as ever of their then-dwindling imperial holdings, to intervene, the United States, every bit as dependent upon the economic lifeline that is the Suez Canal as the United Kingdom, did not do so. This then leads to a more thoroughgoing analysis of the differences that lie between the situations in the Kingdom of Persia and the United Arab Republic of Egypt in order to glean the motivations behind the actions of all of the relevant stakeholders in the tragedy that unfolded on the streets of Tehran in 1953, a tragedy whose consequences are still very much being felt to this very day by people all over the world.

4.3: Parallels in the Variables

In this regard, there can be said to be a recurrent parallel with the case of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia. The response, at least insofar as it was interventionist in nature, bore a strong resemblance to the intervention that was initiated in Persia. Thus far, several parallels in case have been seen between the decision on the part of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize and that of the government of Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal in the United Arab Republic of Egypt. Specifically, there can be said to be strong mirroring of colonialism in the establishment of both the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in the Kingdom of Persia and the building and maintenance of the Suez Canal in the United Arab Republic of Egypt. They both were administered and established to arm and maintain the Empire of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and both were considered vital to the national interest of that country.

These parallels would seem to suggest that the case of the decision by the government of Kemal Abdul Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal in the United Arab Republic of Egypt is a particularly good point of comparison with the case of the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign territory of the Kingdom of Persia. Clearly, several variables are in common between the two cases that are aforementioned. For example, both cases are roughly contemporaneous, with the respective interventions happening in the years 1958 and 1953. Additionally, both

cases involve a popular nationalistic government taking over the assets of a neocolonialistic corporation that was functioning as a thinly veiled proxy for the government of the UK.

4.4: Differences in the Cases of Egypt with the Suez Canal and the Kingdom of Persia with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company

However, as it is in many things in the world, it is in the differences perhaps, it can be argued, with some efficacy, that the real strength of the hypothesis upon which this thesis is based can be found. Most obviously, the geopolitical position of Egypt, though the Suez Canal was, and indeed is, vitally important for international trade, was still sufficiently far from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Communist Bloc that containment may not have been viewed with such urgency in the halls of power in Washington. Moreover, the United Arab Republic already had a standing relationship with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with the Soviets providing aid for the construction of the Aswan High Dam and arming the Egyptian military.

Additionally, again, though, admittedly, the Suez Canal was, and remains, a vital channel for the transshipment of oil to Europe, there were no actual oil or gas fields that were directly involved in the actions that were taken by the government of Kemal Abdul Nasser in the United Arab Republic of Egypt.

All of the above leaves the analysis with two variables that have been found to be significant: geopolitical position and the politics of oil. It remains to be seen if these are in fact the main factors in the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to

nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign territory of the Kingdom of Persia and the subsequent decisions that were made by the governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and, most notably, the United States of America in response to that nationalization decision to stage an intervention led by the elements of government of the United States of America to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh.

4.5: Conclusions that Could be Drawn from the Case of the Suez Canal as Regards the actions upon which this thesis is based

In reading the comparative case that is mentioned above, one could be forgiven for reaching the conclusion that the entire arc of this tragedy of international proportion, from beginning to end, was built around and predicated upon the economics of oil and geopolitical implications thereof. In fact, that very conclusion is, as can be seen in the review of the relevant literature on the subject that is to be found earlier in this thesis, the fact that many, if not most, of the research that has been done on the subject since 1979 has actually come to that very conclusion.

5: The Decision Making in Tehran in the Government of Mohammed Mossadegh Regarding the Decision to Nationalize the Assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company

Therefore, it is now necessary at this point to examine the decision making that was occurring in the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the period that led up to the decision to nationalize.

As previously mentioned, the concession that was negotiated originally in a particularly humiliating manner by the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was renegotiated in the midst of the Great Depression. In the terms of the revised agreement, twenty-five percent of the revenues from the oil that was extracted was due to go to the government of the Kingdom of Persia (Bamberg, 1994, p. 310).

The situation, even in the context of the 1933 arrangement, proved quite beneficial to the shareholders of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the largest of whom was the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland itself. The truly exploitative nature of the agreements between the Shah and the AIOC were most apparent in the conditions that were to be found at the main refinery city of Abadan itself.

To put the matter in as short a form as possible in these pages, the AIOC ran the concession in Abadan in a manner that was all too much like the manner in which the

British government and its affiliated corporate interests had run colonies throughout the British Empire.

The Administrators of the company were in fact, as one might expect, almost entirely imported to the Kingdom of Persia from the United Kingdom. For them, the AIOC set up a self-contained town that was, in many ways, a little Britain. There were all of the amenities that the “better sort of Englishman” would have expected in 1940s and 1950s London, complete with air-conditioned cinemas, pools, and clubs.

The situation in which the Iranian workers at Abadan found themselves could not possibly have been more different. For them, the AIOC “built” a shantytown outside the refinery called, in Farsi, Kaghazabad, or Paper City, a name which should reveal quite a lot about the state of the buildings contained therein. The level of squalor that was readily visible across Kaghazabad was remarked upon by international officials from the United Nations as well as, interestingly for purposes of one of the research questions of this particular thesis, the Administration of United States President Harry S. Truman (Farmanfarmaian, 1979, p. 184). This is particularly pertinent to the argument in this thesis, not in the least because the information to which the Truman Administration was privy led in many ways to its decision not to help the British government or the AIOC when the nationalization was first implemented in 1951.

Of course, such a horrid situation could only persist with massive corruption within the Kingdom of Persia, much of it tied to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. In the face of this colonialist exploitation, a coalition of parties that were nationalistic, socialist and islamist took control of the Majlis, or Parliament of Iran in 1951 (Qaimaqqami, 1995, p. 28).

Mossadegh made a major speech announcing the nationalization, rationalizing it by claiming that the money gained from it would be useful to develop the rest of the economy of the Kingdom of Persia. In particular, the Tudeh party was intent on building an enlarged social welfare system in the Kingdom.

According to Mohdaved (2001) in his biography of the Mossadegh period in the government of the Kingdom of Persia, the exploitative and colonialist bent that lay behind the oil concession was itself the largest motivator of the decision to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (p. 247).

This opinion seems to be borne out by Diba's (1988) political biography of Mossadegh, wherein his motivations and actions regarding the situation in 1951-1953 are made quite clear (p. 69).

The way in which the situation escalated after the oilfields were nationalized created an even greater impetus to hyper nationalistic tendencies on the part of the government of Mohammad Mossadegh. After he was temporarily removed from power and restored in the face of massive public protests that left hundreds dead on the

streets of Tehran, he ramped up his anti colonial rhetoric very strongly. This was seen most especially after Mossadegh met with American officials in 1951 (Lear-Nickum, 2013, p. 88).

To be sure though, the government of Mohammed Mossadegh was sent into power in the wake of massive protests against the Bretton Woods economic system that maintained the oil concession of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (Ghasmi, 2011, p. 450).

Clearly, there was a very strong nationalist, or at least, anti colonialist bent that lay behind the decision of the government of Mohammad Mossadegh to nationalize the oil concession of the Anglo-Iranian Oil company.

5.1: Concerning the Mossadegh Government

In 1951, Mohammed Mossadegh became the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Persia and soon set about nationalizing the assets of the Anglo Iranian Oil Company. At the time, he was riding a huge wave of popularity, even returning after an attempted coup in early 1952.

However, that was to change. By the end of 1953, his government was brought down and he was placed under house arrest, a state in which he was to remain for the rest of his life.

It can be said, without a great deal of exaggeration, that an examination of the makeup of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh and his sources of support and legitimacy would behoove the line of enquiry upon which this work is based.

It can be quite easily argued here that the makeup of the coalition government that was used by Mohammed Mossadegh to such effect was also, rather paradoxically, the key to his downfall.

The National Front which was founded by Mohammed Mossadegh two years before they assumed the proverbial reigns of government in the Kingdom of Persia suffered from two glaring weaknesses from a purely politically tactical standpoint.

The first weakness lies in the basis of the electoral support of both Mossadegh's own Tudeh Party in particular, as well as, rather more broadly, the other constituent parts of the National Front as a whole.

By and large, the base of support for the parties of the National Front, and, particularly, the Tudeh Party, was overwhelmingly educated and urban. This posed a major problem in a country like the Kingdom of Persia which, at the time, had relatively low rates of both literacy and urbanization

As will become clear, this fact gives a particularly cogent explanation for the manner in which the intervention that was aided by the governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the internal politics of the Kingdom of Persia unfolded.

5.2: The Dark Horse in the National Front Coalition

The second, and, when looked upon from the perspective of the modern-day Islamic Republic of Iran, more illuminating feature of the coalition that thrust Mohammed Mossadegh into power is that, although three of the four parties of which the National Front was composed were socialist or nationalist in political affiliation, the fourth party was very decidedly different.

Indeed, this fourth member of the coalition that comprised the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh made the strangest of proverbial bedfellows with the other three parties of which it was composed. The fourth member of the National Front was the *Mojehdine-Eslam*. As the name implies, this party was an Islamist party that was strongly backed by a faction of the Ayatollahs within the country (Milani, 2008, p. 348).

This fact is particularly enlightening as regards the internal politics of the Kingdom of Persia at the time. In something of a preview of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, it became clear to Mossadegh, among others in the Tudeh Party, that their basis of support had to include at least the tacit seal of approval from the vast, and, especially in the Persian countryside, vastly powerful, community of Ayatollahs and Mujtahids of the Kingdom of Persia. Indeed, it was only when nationalists, socialists, and mujtahids worked together that the power of the pro-capitalist, pro-Pahlavi forces in the Kingdom of Persia could be defeated.

6.: Kenan, Dulles, the Cold War, and Intervention

As previously mentioned, the government in the United States of America at the time of the decision that was made by the government of Mohammad Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign soil of the Kingdom of Persia tended to see the world through a particularly narrow lens.

In fact, soon after the oil concessions were nationalized in the Kingdom of Persia, the Secretary of State of the United States, John Foster Dulles, instructed the elements of government of the United States of America to devise a means of removing the government of Mohammad Mossadegh, earmarking \$1million in funds for the purpose (Byrne, 2000).

The ideological opposition of Dulles in particular to the policies of Mossadegh made this a particularly important issue for him, and, by extension, the government of the United States of America, was made only stronger by his fanatical fear of the spread of communism (Wallace, 2011, p. 622).

This drive allowed the elements of government of the United States of America, at the behest of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, to plan an intervention that placed the Shah in unquestioned authority in the Kingdom of Persia, a situation that continued until the Islamic Revolution of 1979 (Kinzer, 2003, p. 259).

The defenders and perpetrators of the action in the elements of government of the United States of America were particularly adamant in their defense of the interests

of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the removal of the threat of a perceived Communist revolution in the Kingdom of Persia (Roosevelt, 1979, p. 4). This is even further borne out by the publications of the Central Intelligence Agency itself (Byrne, 2000).

6.1: Strategies as a prelude to removal

When analyzing the manner in which the coup to oust the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia played out, there are a couple of facts that are both extremely enlightening with regard to the strategy that was ultimately employed by the Central Intelligence Agency and other segments of the governments of both the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as well as being almost universally overlooked in professional analyses of the coup against the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia that have been hitherto undertaken.

The first of the facts that have been aforementioned is perhaps the most overlooked detail that surrounds the drama of the decision by the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign territory of the Kingdom of Persia and the subsequent decision on the parts of the governments both of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to intervene to overthrow the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia.

Indeed, it can be argued, without too great a degree of exaggeration, that this fact, were it to be examined, would prove to be most enlightening, not merely regarding the way the intervention in the Kingdom of Persia unfolded in 1953, but also, and perhaps arguably more pertinently, how the events of the Islamic Revolution,

would play out, with its violent overthrow of the regime of the Shah that was installed as a direct result of that intervention, twenty six years later.

Little recorded, and, it would be good to observe here, little noted in the academic literature, was that, in 1953, there were not one, but two separate coups d'état against the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia. Obviously, the first coup failed in quite dramatic fashion, leading to the intervention by the Central Intelligence Agency and several other organizations of the governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to initiate the second, successful coup.

So this begs the question: what was so different internally in the Kingdom of Persia in the second coup. More to the point, what changed between the two coups d'état to make the second coup succeed where the first one failed?

Probably the largest single difference between the short-lived first coup and the much longer lasting second one is the coalition and base of support for the regime of Mohammed Mossadegh inside the Kingdom of Persia. Mossadegh and his party were brought into power in Tehran by a strong, and, it can be argued, uniquely Persian coalition. Mossadegh was himself a social democrat and his party had very strong leanings toward Socialism and nationalization, playing, of course, no small part in the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that were on the sovereign territory of the Kingdom of Persia.

With all of the above notwithstanding however, Socialists and social democrats were not by any means a sufficiently large base of support to recover from a coup. The most important other base of support for the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in the Kingdom of Persia was, extremely surprisingly to those from outside the Kingdom of Persia, the Ayatollahs of Iran.

It is at this point particularly worthy of note for purposes of future analysis that this is almost exactly the same sort of coalition, between socialists and Islamic scholars, that set off the earliest stages of what would become the Islamic Revolution. To be sure, the coalition between the socialists and Islamists in Post-Pahlavi Iran proved to be extremely short-lived, but, nevertheless, in the 1950s, the coalition was still crucial to opposing the more conservative, which in this case means royalist, supporting the Shah, and colonialist, supporting the actions of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the West.

Such a convergence of interests between socialists, who are traditionally seen as being secularist in nature, and the decidedly un-secularist Ayatollahs of Iranian Shi'ite Islam, could be said to have been unique in modern international politics. It was because the government of Mohammed Mossadegh was supported by such a wide-ranging swath of society in the Kingdom of Persia that the first attempt at a coup d'état to oust his government proved unsuccessful.

Therefore, as noted by Abrahamian (2001, p. 190), it should, it can be argued, come as little surprise that, when the government of the United States of America, and, in particular, certain agents within the government of the United States, decided to

intervene, their own protestations notwithstanding, they focused their initial efforts on driving a wedge between the Ayatollahs and Mossadegh (Kinzer, 2003, p. 164).

As such, it was a major part of the strategy behind the intervention that the Islamists be separated from the government of Mohammed Mossadegh (ibid, p. 191). Therefore, large amounts of propaganda were circulated in order to create political incompatibility between these two allied forces in the politics of the Kingdom of Persia.

7: Two Conclusions

Oil, Anti-colonialism, and geopolitics, these can be said to be the controlling factors regarding the events of 1951-1953 in the Kingdom of Persia. As they relate to the two-part question upon which this thesis is based, it can be said that the factors in the decision-makers' thought processes both within the government of Mohammed Mossadegh and in the West are fairly clear. Indeed, the evolving nature of their calculations is, in many ways more illuminating than the events themselves would otherwise have been. As regards the first part of the question, the Mossadegh government seemed to be motivated by a particularly passionate sense of anti-colonial sentiment, a sentiment that, in many ways, made the crisis intractable. Regarding the second part of the research question, that of the intervention by the West, it seems that the case was eventually made that the Kingdom of Persia would function as a domino in the theories expounded by George Kenan and practiced by John Foster Dulles, one that would spread revolution and communism throughout the wider region. The shift in understanding of the nature of the government of Mohammed Mossadegh between the Administrations of Truman and Eisenhower go a long way towards explanation regarding the timing of how the intervening eventually played out. Both conclusions, and the knock-on effects of the decisions that were made, are explained in much more detail in the following pages.

Two major conclusions can be drawn from the tragic events of 1951-1953 in the Kingdom of Persia. First, the motivations that surrounded the movement by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh seem clearly enough to be derivative of an anti-

colonial bent that was strongly informed by a passionate moral imperative, a sense of righteous indignation that permeates much of the history of Iran in a broad sense. Second, on the part of the Americans, a somewhat misplaced and more than somewhat manufactured fear of Iran becoming a Soviet satellite drove the moves, no less ideological in nature, in the halls of power in Washington in the lead up to the intervention.

Put bluntly, the decision to nationalize the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was, in large part, a decision that stemmed from a strong anti colonialist ideological bent on the part of the government of Mohammad Mossadegh. Moreover, this anti-colonial mentality led to a certain intransigence on the part of Mossadegh in later attempts at a negotiated settlement, making any deals with the British unpalatable to say the least, at least, insofar as the passionate sense of moral outrage that characterized Mossadegh throughout his professional life can be said to attest. This is not of course to say that, had Mossadegh not been so ideological in his drive to rid the Kingdom of Persia of neocolonialism in all its myriad forms, that a settlement could have been reached; the government of Winston Churchill at 10 Downing St in London, enamored as it was with holding onto as many of the vestiges of the Empire on which the Sun Never Set, was beset with an equal or perhaps greater sense of intransigence, to the point that only total capitulation would have been accepted by them.

Additionally, the intervention was done in response to the attack on capitalist corporate interests, specifically those of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, certainly as seen from the UK perspective (Kinzer, 2003, p. 165), to be sure, but, as can be seen in

comparison with the Suez Canal crisis, the presence of the oil and the geopolitical position of the Kingdom of Persia seem to have had more of a role to play in the decision, especially to the Americans (ibid).

7.1 The Knock-On effects

The entire sequence of events in the Kingdom of Persia, from the decision by the government of Mohammed Mossadegh to nationalize the assets of the AIOC through the intervention by agents of elements of the government of the United States of America, acting, as such, on direct orders from the government of the United States of America, was a great tragedy with many tragic ironies to be found. In the end, literally none of the participants in this drama got what they wanted.

For the part of the United Kingdom, even though it achieved its ostensible goal of ridding itself of what, from its perspective was, if one may wax eloquently using a bit of a distinctly British allusion, though, to be sure, one that Thomas a' Beckett would certainly not appreciate on any level or in any sense, the meddlesome government of Mohammed Mossadegh and the profit killing democratically elected government that he represented, they still did not accomplish their actual objective, the restoration of the privileges that they had, in the corporate persona of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, enjoyed in the Kingdom of Persia. Rather, the oil concession was divided up, with several countries, notably and for obvious reasons, including the United States of America, taking most of the profits from it.

On a superficial level, it may appear that the greatest tragic loser was Mossadegh himself. He was thrown from power, placed under house arrest and, for the rest of his life, it was illegal to even say his name in public in the Kingdom of Persia (Kinzer, 2003, p. 221). His entire objective was to free Persia of autocratic rule and

neocolonialism, in the end, his actions only cemented both of them into place for another quarter of a century.

The greatest tragic irony though, on a much deeper level, is reserved for the United States of America. Their ostensible aim was to eliminate a threat to the Free World, by which, they are actually rather more cynically referring to the hegemony of the Anglo-American West. For a quarter of a century, it appeared for all the world as though the Americans might well be the only ones to get any benefit from the entire episode. The comeuppance of the United States for its fateful actions occurred slowly, by degrees.

At first, as a direct consequence of the intervention, the United States lost the moral perch from which it could function outside the Western hemisphere as a champion of freedom and self-determination. After 1953, no people would genuinely believe that the Americans had anyone's wants or aspirations in mind but their own. Later, after the Islamic Revolution, the regime that replaced Reza Shah Pahlavi was violently Anti-American in nature, though, admittedly, some of the harshness of the rhetoric emanating from Tehran has softened in the past few years. Still, Iran remained, for much of the late Twentieth Century, one of America's most implacable foes in the region.

More to the point, the intervening that America did set an exceptionally bad precedent. Many more governments were toppled in the ensuing decades for no other reason than the advancement of American policy goals, or, rather, those of American corporations. The knock on result of that wave of regime changes has been to create a

string of failed states or failing states all over the world, most notably in the area surrounding the Islamic Republic of Iran itself. Indeed, it may be argued, with no small degree of efficacy, that the blame for the rise of international terrorism and violently anti-american non state actors around the broader region can, at least indirectly, be placed squarely at the feet of John Foster Dulles for advancing this policy for his own narrow minded, shortsighted ends.

In all, the greatest tragedy of this entire episode is that, all of the horrors that have been wrought on the people of Iran and the rest of the world since that fateful time in 1953 could have been avoided at several points along the way. The inertia of ideological blinders led, in ever so many ways, to the rending asunder of all of the stated goals of literally everyone that was involved among the decision-makers both in the government of Mossadegh and those of the Anglo-American West.

Perhaps in the same sense that caused Thucydides to pen his words so long ago about another similarly tragic series of confrontations, we can, hopefully, learn from these events, and, by extension, this thesis, to see past the seemingly neat and tidy parsimonious explanations for how the world system operates and actually create true and lasting good relationships around the world.

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