

Musaddiq's Spectre: On the Recent Declassification of US Documents

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[Tanks in the streets of Tehran in 1953. Image via Wikipedia]

Following the 1989 release of the first Iran-related volume of the State Department's Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series, a plethora of books and articles have been written detailing the MI6-CIA *coup d'état* in Iran on 19 August 1953. The coup resulted in the ouster of the much-celebrated Prime Minister Muhammad Musaddiq, who—to the profound chagrin of United Kingdom—nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (today known as British Petroleum) in March 1951. One might therefore be forgiven for asking why the June 2017 release of a new FRUS volume series, *Iran, 1951-1954*, should spark so much public and scholarly interest.

The main social networks used by Iranians, such as Telegram and Twitter, have been awash with commentary from amateur historians, political pundits, politicians, and casual observers alike. They have also carried the translation of the initial in-depth articles in response to the publication of this latest FRUS volume and produced by seasoned scholars of the period and topic. These include those of Ervand Abrahamian, Mark Gasiorowski, and Malcolm Byrne, published by Lobelog and the Wilson Center. A number of print publications in Tehran are readying extensive dossiers, and discussions are being held to produce a translation of most, if not all, of the documents contained in this new volume. What could this latest set of documents possibly add to what many both within the scholarly community and general public consider a cut-and-dried matter?

Prior to the 15 June 2017 release, there was no paucity of sources attesting to the nature of the coup in the public domain. There is of course the leaking (in 2000 via the *New York Times*) of one of the CIA's earliest (1954) internal histories of the coup by agency consultant and Iran historian, Donald Wilber.^[1] In addition, senior US government figures, such as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, President Barack Obama, made formal admissions of the decisive US role in Musaddiq's downfall.^[2] Prior to these utterances and leaks, scholars drew upon the UK National Archives,^[3] interviews with and memoirs of former intelligence operatives such as the

CIA's Kermit Roosevelt and MI6's Monty Woodhouse, and an earlier FRUS publication covering Iran, 1951-1954 released in 1989. The latter volume sparked controversy and a formal complaint by the American Historical Association. While the FRUS is supposed to include material from across US government bodies and agencies, the 1989 Iran volume was bereft of documents pertaining to CIA operational activities related to Iran surrounding 1953. This latest FRUS volume should thus be read in conjunction with the previously released one, while being cautiously compared with the many available Persian language newspapers, memoirs, and documents.^[4]

From a preliminary examination, it is apparent that the new FRUS volume will add further nuance and important details to our understanding of the coup. Yet it does not appear to effect the consensus understanding within the academic scholarship of the key role therein of the UK and US governments. Based on the aforementioned sources, the dominant English- and Persian-language historiographic trends have demonstrated the indispensable role foreign intervention played in the overthrow of the Musaddiq government. This literature ranges from the widely read popular history *All the Shah's Men*, by former *New York Times* journalist Stephen Kinzer, to the important scholarly contributions of Homa Katouzian, Mark J. Gasiorowski and Fakhreddin Azimi.^[5]

The new volume does contain hitherto unpublished documentation germane to on-the-ground CIA activities and their role in the formulation of US policy in Iran, some of which will be discussed further below. But despite years of anticipation, wrangling, and FOIA requests by scholars, it remains incomplete and still fails to include many documents, which relate to CIA operations in the days and weeks preceding the coup (as attested to in the volume itself on page vi). According to one internal CIA account much of the correspondence revolving around the operation was destroyed in 1962, and thus might never be recovered.^[6] A considerable portion of the material contained in this new FRUS volume was purportedly transcribed by hand from microfilm reels. Despite microfilm's reputation for being an important medium to the end of long-term preservation, the reels, and the originals before it, have been destroyed, leaving researchers with little more than sheer faith in the transcribing capabilities of the FRUS archivists.

The Revisionist Challenge

In recent years, a revisionist historiography on the coup has emerged. On its surface, this literature appears to be based on solid ground and articulating quite legitimate demands. Rather than focusing solely on exogenous and extraneous forces, namely the UK and US governments and the covert ops of their secret services, it contends that an adequate historical explanation requires greater attention to internal factors and social forces. This literature thus argues for the incorporation of the latter's "agency" into historical accounts of what transpired in mid-August 1953. This is surely a reasonable request? Such soft revisionism, however, more often than not, has slipped into a narrative which endeavours to exclusively privilege the role of domestic causes for the coup. In doing so, this literature effectively denies that UK and US intelligence services and its web of agents ultimately had any impact on the momentous ouster of Musaddiq whatsoever.

The revisionists argue that it was not the UK and US governments and their intelligence networks who are responsible for Musaddiq's overthrow. Rather they

contend, it was a range of indigenous forces ranging across the Iranian military, the bazaar, the clergy, patriotic royalists and nationalists who took it upon themselves to topple an increasingly dictatorial and senile prime minister who had brought the country to the brink of ruin, dissolved the Majles and, most ominously, paved the way for communist takeover. These attempts are epitomised by the work, among others, of Darioush Bayandor, a Pahlavi and early Islamic Republic-era diplomat turned amateur historian,^[7] Ray Takeyh, a hawkish commentator based at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Ardeshir Zahedi (son of Musaddiq's anointed successor, General Fazlollah Zahedi), a former minister of foreign affairs in the royal regime, ambassador to Washington, and an actual participant in the coup. Abbas Milani, the Stanford scholar who has produced eloquent and detailed portraits of Pahlavi statesmen and political life, has also tilted towards this explanation in his latest book, *The Shah*.^[8]

In their contributions to the debate on August 1953, Bayandor and Takeyh have sought to elevate the clergy's role out of all reasonable proportion. This might be understood as a retrospective exercise in unqualified anti-clericalism in the shadow of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Their unmitigated antipathy toward the current regime in Tehran has led them to ascribe a trans-historical essence to the Shi'i clergy, or the "clerical estate" in the words of Takeyh.^[9] For Bayandor and Takeyh, the clergy is a monolith, one that has invariably sought to thwart democratic aspirations of the people in Iran. They prefer to overlook the regular discord that has afflicted clerical opinion during critical junctures in the country's tumultuous twentieth century history, from the Constitutional Revolution (1906-11) to the post-revolutionary reform movement in the present.

The reality of manifold clerical positions (in the plural) regarding Musaddiq proves to be a far more intricate matter than Bayandor and Takeyh seem prepared to concede. Some clerics backed the Musaddiq government (including Abolfazl Zanjani, Mehdi Ha'eri-Yazdi (son of Grand Ayatollah Abdolkarim Ha'eri Yazdi), and Mahmud Taleqani). Others initially supported him only to subsequently break ranks (including Abolqasem Kashani, Mohammad Taqi Falsafi, and Shams Qanatabadi). Kashani, specifically, who has become the subject of much interest and speculation amongst the general public since the release of the more recent FRUS volume, comes across as an ambitious and forceful politician. He bitterly fell out with Musaddiq in early 1953, conspired with agents of the United States for his downfall through the Majles, but never established a working relationship with his successor, General Fazlollah Zahedi, despite publicly expressing satisfaction at the fall of the Musaddiq administration during late August and onward. Kashani also left lingering suspicion, within the CIA analyst corps, regarding his possible tilt towards the Soviet Union.

Contrary to many reactions on social media, including those of former members of the reformist Khatami administration,^[10] the FRUS volume does not reveal any new details on Kashani's activities in the fateful days of 16-19 August 1953. They neither confirm nor deny the claims expressed by CIA operatives to historian Mark J. Gasiorowski regarding the final destination of funds transferred to Kashani associates.^[11] The modern day researcher's quest to ascertain the exact nature of Kashani's activities during the 1951-54 period is further complicated by the recalcitrant attitude of the quasi-statal research institutes in Tehran, such as the Center of Historical Documents Survey or the Political Studies and Research Institute. These

repositories manage, amongst others, the large trove of Pahlavi-era state documents, which survived the 1979 Revolution and from which the latter selectively extract and publish. For example, a two-volume set of military intelligence and police files related to Kashani published in Tehran in 2000 by the Center abruptly interrupts its coverage a fortnight before the coup, only to resume over a month later.

As the latest FRUS volume indicates, Grand Ayatollah Borujerdi, the leading religious authority of the Shi'i Islamic world and residing in Qom, continued to cautiously shroud himself in an ambivalent silence. This was geared toward achieving his overall objective: namely, that of strengthening the seminary system irrespective of the eventual victor in the confrontation. In a long memorandum reproduced for the first time in Document 192, which extensively outlines the preparations for Musaddiq's overthrow, Zahedi is quoted as having told the CIA that Boroujerdi, Kashani, and another ranking Tehran-based cleric (Behbahani) "were reaching an understanding on the need to bolster the Shah in resistance to Mossadeq." But he also noted that, "While it is extremely unlikely that he could be persuaded to take such a step, were Borujerdi to call for the active support of the Shah his spiritual associates could assemble a very large force of demonstrators and influence public opinion to a very high degree." Efforts to coax Borujerdi into adopting an active anti-Communist and anti-Musaddiq line continued. However, as the Iranian media of early August 1953 clearly indicates, he refused to publicly back Kashani's boycott of the referendum for the Majlis' dissolution. Document 285, a cable sent from Tehran to Washington by the CIA on 19 August, notes that "CIA and British Bagh[dad] urge Iraq mollahs cable Borujerdi requesting that he call jehad [*jihad*] against communism."^[12]

The revisionists advance this narrative of powerful, unrelenting, and coherent domestic opposition to Musaddiq, while also downplaying the broader international context and geopolitical power asymmetries. These latter dynamics featured an embattled Musaddiq government struggling to stay afloat in the face of an oil embargo (which curtailed the chief revenue stream of the Iranian government), sanctions, and international isolation enforced and underwritten by late imperial Britain.

Another significant point argued by the revisionists has to do with the alleged popularity of the shah. They argue that the MI6-CIA Operation TP-AJAX failed to achieve its objectives on 16 August, resulting in the Shah's emissary, Colonel Nassiri, being arrested and Musaddiq disregarding the Shah's decree appointing Zahedi as his replacement. Accordingly, it was the Shah's hasty escape from Iran which metastasized internal dissent and culminated in a "national uprising" (*qiyam-e melli*) demanding the popular monarch's return. Revisionists are quick to add that the likes of the CIA's then Chief of Near East Division Kermit Roosevelt, tasked with overseeing the operation, merely exaggerated their role and significance *post-facto*.

The revisionists therefore insist that the events of 19 August were a strictly domestic affair. In their curious line of argumentation, they preclude all of the preceding orchestrated sabotage and subversion in the months and years prior to 19 August 1953. They also wish to disconnect this single day from the considerable documentation, which describes an organized and systematic campaign to overthrow the Musaddiq government. They ignore that opposition to Musaddiq had come up short in their past attempts to unseat or even physically eliminate the prime minister (e.g., 9 Esfand/28 February 1953), despite their flagrant resort to violence, as well as the UK and US governments' many admissions that the former would be

unable to decisively oust Musaddiq without outside help and support.^[13] The revisionists also make negligible mention of the many agents on the ground, including the Rashidian Brothers—connected to MI6 and from whom they received a large monthly stipend—and Ali Jalali and Farrokh Kayvani—acting on behalf of the CIA, who kept up their well-funded struggle to overturn Musaddiq even after Roosevelt and his US colleagues had initially thought the plot had been foiled.

Relatedly, as Gasiorowski has contended, Bayandor and *mutatis mutandis*, Takeyh, massively overstate the importance of pro-Shah civilian crowds and their part in the seizure of important sites such as Tehran Radio and guaranteeing the ultimate success of the coup. While they underplay the CIA's pivotal role in organizing military units which took over key strategic areas and launched into decisive action against Musaddiq before these civilian crowds had even appeared on the streets.^[14] Takeyh's stilted account, however, goes even further. Not only wishing to absolve the United States of any responsibility for the coup, but also the consolidated autocracy that would develop in its aftermath, occluding not only the US government's integral role in the establishment of the Pahlavi state's repressive security apparatus, SAVAK, but the unprecedented arms sales and free-hand given to the Shah, both regionally and domestically, by future US administrations.^[15]

These revisionist accounts also overlook the considerable outpouring of anger in favor of Musaddiq, which spilled onto the streets of Tehran following the first unsuccessful coup effort. This anger compelled several political organizations—most prominently the Tudeh and Third Force parties—to articulate separate demands for the establishment of a republic.^[16] Musaddiq's rebuffing of the same, which came in the form of a fateful prohibition on all unauthorized public demonstrations—which the FRUS volume shows to be unconnected to the infamous meeting he held with US ambassador Loy Henderson on the early evening of 18 August—despite claims to the contrary made by some scholars. This ban was published in the evening dailies of the same day, hours before this encounter. It was, regardless of timings, a critical strategic error by the prime minister, which inadvertently favored the coup plotters' initiative the following morning.

TP-AJAX: Findings and Shortcomings

Given that the FRUS 2017 volume *Iran, 1951-1954* is 1007-pages long, this brief article cannot go beyond a preliminary examination. Two documents, however, stand out as attempts by the CIA to gather internal information on the final phase of TP-AJAX following the coup. These are Documents 306 and 307 of the aforesaid volume. Document 306, dated 28 August 1953 and dispatched from Tehran, contains a running commentary on the events of the last several weeks. It focuses on perceived Musaddiq-Tudeh collaboration. The document also seems to indicate that this should be brought to the fore and exaggerated to provoke outrage and inflame Iranian public opinion:

In retrospect, our only hope to get popular and active backing in a movement to unseat Mossadeq was to point up an issue which would instill greater fear in the average Iranian than his fear of Mossadeq. For the first three weeks in August, [4 1/2 lines not declassified] were able to lay the groundwork for future action. They were assisted in this campaign [less than 1 line not declassified] who also emphasized the collaboration of Mossadeq and the Tudeh. Secretary Dulles' and President Eisenhower's comments

concerning the Tudeh were of great help and gradually the people of Tehran began to feel a greater fear than the one which previously pervaded their lives. They began to feel that Mosaddeq's retention of power could only lead to a Communist state [...] There was still a deep fear of Mossadeq, but the groundwork had been laid— given an opportunity to act against Mossadeq with some degree of success, Iranians would join together to overthrow him.

It continues: that “our agents [...] are to be highly commended for laying the groundwork for action and providing the spark which set off the demonstration on 19 August.” But it provides detail, also contained within the Wilber report, on a critical stage of the process after 16 August, namely, the CIA's publication of the *farman* dismissing Musaddiq and appointing Zahedi: “...The fact that he [Zahedi] possessed a Firman began to spread, but still there was no proof since few had actually seen fac-similes of the Firman. [...] On Tuesday, reports of the Firman were printed in several papers and Foreign Minister Fatemi denied its existence.” This account, which matches Wilber's is only partially correct. On Monday, 17 August, a staunchly pro-Musaddiq afternoon daily, *Khavar Zamin*, published the text of the Firman, before enthusiastically noting that the slogan of the crowds in the streets remains, “We Don't Want the Shah.” There is therefore evidence that the decree had been circulating since Monday morning and was adopted as ammunition by the pro-government media. The latter even took the step of printing it before the pro-coup newspapers, such as *Shahed* edited by Mozaffar Baqa'i which, as also noted in the Wilber report, first published the text on Tuesday, 18 August, and the photostatic reproduction the following day. The claim that the rapid reproduction of the Firman generated public sentiment in favour of the coup effort must therefore be subject to further scrutiny, and examined together with available Persian-language sources.

The second document (307), also dispatched on 28 August, compliments Donald Wilber's well-trodden account. It consists of Kermit Roosevelt's debrief in a meeting at the CIA in Washington and recounts his cardinal task as keeping track of the CIA's prized asset, General Zahedi, until the afternoon of 19 August. Determining when it would be deemed safe for him to emerge from the basement of a CIA safe-house to make his way to the prime minister's office. Roosevelt's astonishment at the purportedly “spontaneous” nature of the pro-Shah crowds of that date, a notion echoed in several other CIA documents in this volume, is best explained by Ali Rahnema who notes Roosevelt's broad oversight over the covert activities undertaken by the Jalali-Kayvani duo and the Rashidians, Asadollah Rashidian chief amongst them, who were placed at the CIA's disposal. These capable agents and their vast networks cutting across the royal court, military, bazaar and slums of south Tehran, were greased with ample funds and resources. They were also driven and determined for their own financial and political reasons, but would never have been able to mount such a sustained campaign without outside patronage and support.^[17] These dynamics would be explained in more detail by Wilber, in his *post-mortem* examination. Document 307 also completely undercuts Ardeshir Zahedi's fantastical account, “Five Fateful Days”, which was widely circulated in Persian and English during the 1950s, one of the original seeds of the “national uprising” thesis, and confirms Gasiorowski's 1987 analysis which argued the two Zahedis had been handled by the CIA throughout this period.^[18]

Oil or Communism?

Within the fold of the historiographical consensus that foreign interference and intervention was key, during the past three decades, scholarly explanations for the US government's decision to commit itself to the overthrow of the Musaddiq administration have revolved around two determining causes. The **first** being the US administration's conviction that a Communist takeover of Iran was imminent, and the **second** being the desire to restore Western control over the Iranian oil industry. While Ervand Abrahamian's *The Coup* has advocated the latter as the main driver of the US decision to bring down Musaddiq,[19] others, particularly Gasiorowski, have preferred the former explanation.[20] The new FRUS volume arguably tilts the argument toward Gasiorowski and the hypothesis that it was the often hyperbolic fear of Iran "going communist" and the strategic value of Iran's oil grounded firmly within the Cold War context, that predominantly shaped the Eisenhower administration's decision. As Frank G. Wisner, the CIA's Deputy Director of Plans, would pointedly ask Roosevelt, in the aftermath of the coup, "what measures are being taken to further smash the apparatus and the machinery of the Tudeh Party?"

The perception of growing Tudeh Party influence and support—despite being formally banned in 1949, it continued to be active through a web of front organisations—reached near-hysterical proportions after the July 1952 protests following Musaddiq's unexpected resignation, known in the literature simply as "30 Tir." It was these protests which rapidly returned Musaddiq to power and brought the political career of the influential patrician Qavam al-Saltaneh to an ignominious end. Several accounts of this still underexplored event indicate a spontaneous popular uprising backed by senior National Front figures,[21] such as Ayatollah Kashani, Mozaffar Baqa'i (prior to their break with the PM) and Musaddiq himself, and with marginal Communist involvement [in fact the Tudeh had proven largely hostile to the allegedly pro-US Musaddiq, who was mostly ignored in the party press' celebrations of the downfall of Qavam]. [22] Nevertheless, the CIA noted that "as a result of the July riots, the position of the Shah and the morale of the Army have been considerably weakened. The National Front under Prime Minister Mossadegh, because of its acceptance of Tudeh support in the riots, is now plagued by a series of splits in its leadership which provides the Tudeh with opportunities to infiltrate certain factions and increase its influence in government affairs." [23] After noting that the current CIA capabilities to prevent a Tudeh takeover were "insufficient", the scenario of arming societal elements which would take up uncompromising resistance to a hypothetical communist power grab is mooted, before settling on the Qashqa'i tribe as a dependable and reliable ally, receptive to US support. In the same vein, on 6 April 1953 the CIA's Directorate of Plans drew up a contingency plan involving political and psychological warfare and paramilitary operations in the event of a Tudeh coup (Document 186). [24]

In the documents covering the latter part of 1952 and the beginning of 1953, we observe a steady drift toward sustained advocacy for the removal of a National Front government, seen as increasingly fragile and as paving the way for a Tudeh takeover. In documents such as 22 and 48, which date back to the second half of 1951, we observe US "black" propaganda such as the production of fake Tudeh books disparaging the clergy in a bid to stoke anti-Communist fervour amongst the populace and the Shi'i ulama. By summer 1953, the main concern was keeping tabs on the activities of Iranian Communists and preventing a scenario aired by the Shah from Baghdad as late as 17 August (Document 271): "[he] believes Mosadeq thinks he can form a partnership with the Tudeh Party and then outwit it, but in so doing Mosadeq

will become the Dr. Benes of Iran.”^[25] The FRUS volume therefore lends credence to the idea that it was the US administration and the Dulles brothers’ rabid anti-Communism which propelled them to take extraordinary measures to ensure that Iran would remain in the Western-aligned camp, abandon any notion of “neutralism” in the Cold War (see Document 65), and not be “lost” to the Soviet sphere as a result of the assumption of a Tudeh-led regime to power.^[26] There are, however, also numerous indications that the CIA was to some extent conscious that the extent of communist influence had to be grossly overstated amongst the Iranian populace, and was necessary for securing the approbation of key decision makers at the highest echelons of the US government. Despite this, glimmers of a more realistic appraisal can be seen in some documents. A Draft National Intelligence Estimate of 12 August 1953, reproduced as Document 259, states the following: “Despite its growth in experience, boldness, and ability to exert mob pressure, Tudeh is still a numerically small party (with an estimated card-carrying membership of 10,000) which is thus far concentrated in Tehran and a few other urban centers and is probably incapable of standing up against firm repressive measures by the security forces.” This stands in strong contrast with the reporting of the *New York Times* reporter Kennett Love, who claimed, only twenty days earlier, on the front page of the *Gray Lady* that “100,000 Reds” had marched in the Tudeh rally to commemorate the July 1952 uprising. Through such media coverage and many of the documents in this volume, Musaddiq was to be depicted as unwilling or unable to stem the Communist tide and a rationale for subversion was thus forged.

Concluding Remarks

In summation, while it does not appear that the FRUS release transforms our overall understanding of the coup and where the lion’s share of culpability resides, it certainly adds further details and enriches our understanding of the events leading up to the event, which a great many Iranians feel till this day and to their great detriment altered the course of their country’s political destiny.

This pivotal moment in Iranian modern history was achieved, according to a table presented in Document 363, for a total cost of \$5.33 million, a sum which ushered in twenty-six years of close relations between the Shah’s regime and Washington. The anti-communist sentiment which permeated the CIA’s attitude towards Iran from the outset of the Musaddiq premiership, and which turned into executive planning for his removal once the Eisenhower administration was in office, made Operation TP-AJAX a precedent for the later overthrow of popular governments during the global Cold War from Guatemala to the Congo and Chile; the consequences of which are as clear today as they ever were.

[1] James Risen, “SECRETS OF HISTORY: The C.I.A. in Iran -- A special report.; How a Plot Convulsed Iran in '53 (and in '79),” *New York Times*, 16 April 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/16/world/secrets-history-cia-iran-special-report-plot-convulsed-iran-53-79.html>.

[2] It is often emphasized that Albright did not “apologize” for the U.S. role in the coup, but merely acknowledged its involvement in Musaddiq’s overthrow. David Sanger, U.S. ENDING A FEW OF THE SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON IRAN, *New York Times*, 18 March 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/18/world/us-ending-a-few-of-the>

[sanctions-imposed-on-iran.html](#). “U.S. Comes Clean About The Coup In Iran,” *CNN*, 19 April 2000, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0004/19/i.ins.00.html>. “Text: Obama's Speech in Cairo,” *New York Times*, 4 June 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/04/us/politics/04obama.text.html>.

[3] These archives were not necessarily more transparent about the actual coup than the US National Archives. However, it contains plenty of information about British subversive activities with the Rashidiyans, including Operation Boot (a plan to occupy southern Iran and more). There is also material pertaining to August 1953, but generally it's used to provide context for the intervention operation rather than the operation itself.

[4] See Ali Rahnema, *Behind the 1953 Coup in Iran: Thugs, Turncoats, Soldiers, and Spooks* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015) or Siavush Randjbar-Daemi, “Down with the Monarchy”: Iran's Republican Moment of August 1953, *Iranian Studies*, 50:2, 2017, pp. 293-313, for recent accounts which focus on domestic developments through extensive use of Iranian sources.

[5] Mark J. Gasiorowski, “The 1953 Coup D'Etat in Iran” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19(3). Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003). *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, ed. Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004). Fakhreddin Azimi, “Unseating Mosaddeq” in Gasiorowski and Byrne.

[6] Rahnema, *Behind the 1953 Coup in Iran*, Introduction.

[7] Darioush Bayandor, *Iran and the CIA: The Fall of Mosaddeq Revisited*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Darioush Bayandor, The Fall of Mosaddeq, August 1953: Institutional Narratives, Professor Mark Gasiorowski and My Study, *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 45, 2012., pp. 679-691.

[8] Abbas Milani, *The Shah* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)., Chapter 10.

[9] Ray Takeyh, Clerics responsible for Iran's failed attempts at democracy, *The Washington Post*, 18 August 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/17/AR2010081704944.html>.

[10] See, for example, the Instagram message of Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, the Khatami-era government spokesman, calling for a change in the name of the Ayatollah Kashani expressway in Tehran in the wake of the release of the FRUS volume: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BVcVXw4AEK5>.

[11] See in this regard Mark J. Gasiorowski, “The 1953 Coup D'Etat in Iran” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (3), 274, where Ahmad Aramesh is named as the conduit between the CIA and Kashani. This account is not corroborated by the documents of the new FRUS volume.

[12] These initiatives were in conjunction with those of Qanatabadi, a close ally and enforcer of Kashani, in Tehran, who on 19 August urged Borujerdi to “break his

silence” regarding the “impeding takeover of Tehran by the Bolsheviks”. There is no evidence thus far that Borujerdi ever caved to Qanatabadi or Kashani’s demands.

[13] See for example the annex to document 192, which meticulously surveys the Iranian political scene and possible backers of a Zahedi-led coup, but cautions that the same should be “discarded” if “the U.S. representative felt that the Shah would not rise to the occasion.”

[14] Mark J. Gasiorowski, The Causes of Iran’s 1953 Coup: A Critique of Darioush Bayandor’s Iran and the CIA, *Iranian Studies* 45 (2012), 5.

[15] Ray Takeyh, “The Myth of an American Coup,” *The Weekly Standard*, 17 June 2013, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/the-myth-of-an-american-coup/article/733935>.

[16] See Randjbar-Daemi, “Republican Moment” for these initiatives.

[17] See various instances of Rahnema, *Behind the Coup*, in particular pp.80-85.

[18] Zahedi’s account has been recently brought up and expanded in his multi-volume memoirs. See Ardeshir Zahedi and Ahmad Ahrar, *The Memoirs of Ardeshir Zahedi*, Vol.1 (in English) (Maryland: Ibex Publishers, 2012).

[19] See the perceptive points made in the Introduction to Abrahamian, *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations* (The New Press: New York & London, 2013).

[20] For a description of these contending views, see Gasiorowski’s review of Abrahamian’s book, in *The Middle East Journal* 67 (2), 315-317.

[21] See for example, Mohammad-Hossein Khosrowpanah, “Qiyam-e Sih Tir”, *Negah-e Now*, No.94, 2012.

[22] See Siavush Randjbar-Daemi, “Satire under a Bright Red Star”, Wilson Center, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/satire-under-bright-red-star>, for a brief description of the attitude towards Musaddiq one of the more prominent Tudeh-inspired publications of the time, *Chelengar*.

[23] Attachment to Document 117.

[24] Though as Gasiorowski has shown, such stay-behind operations began as early as October 1951. See, Mark J. Gasiorowski, “The CIA’s TPBEDAMN Operation and the 1953 Coup in Iran,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 15, no. 4 (Fall 2013), 4-24.

[25] Edvard Benes was Czechoslovak prime minister before and after World War II. A prominent and respected liberal-nationalist figure, like Musaddiq, he was unable to prevent the rise of the local pro-Moscow Communist Party, which first worked under him in 1945 before ousting him three years later.

[26] As document 185 shows, the CIA also managed to ascertain the Tudeh’s clandestine directives to its partisans in April 1953, which show that the party was apprised of the likelihood of a royalist coup attempt and had consequently decided to throw all of its weight behind the Musaddiq government. This is most likely because it

foresaw the outcome of its fall and replacement with a military regime, namely, the party and its networks' complete destruction inside the country. This is exactly what came to pass. As this document also shows the party fully acknowledged that it was not yet in a position to seize power.