



The SAVAK and the Cold War: Counter-Intelligence and Foreign Intelligence (1957-1968)

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**THE SAVAK AND THE COLD WAR:
COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE (1957-1968)**

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Humanities

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KAVEH MORAVEJ

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES, LINGUISTICS AND CULTURES/Middle Eastern Studies

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates Iran's geopolitical importance in the context of the Cold War in the years 1957-1968 that made it a key target for Soviet intelligence and a crucial intelligence battleground with all states that held an interest in Iran. For Iran and the non-Soviet Bloc powers, Iran's newly established intelligence and national security organisation (SAVAK) had become an entity whose counter-intelligence capabilities were crucial in curtailing the activities of Soviet and Soviet-aligned intelligence officers within Iran. The intelligence agencies of the Soviet Union, the KGB and GRU, were highly active within Iran in both seeking to gather intelligence and to undermine the Pahlavi regime and it was left to the SAVAK's counter-intelligence directorate to pursue the difficult task of combating these efforts.

This Cold War battle extended to Iraq where Iraqi governments were viewed by the SAVAK as being proxies for Soviet interests. As a result of such concerns the SAVAK's foreign intelligence structure sought not only to gather intelligence but also to directly influence events within Iraq. Iran's counter-intelligence and foreign-intelligence structures therefore played a critical national security role during the Cold War years 1957-1968.

This research will firstly explore how the SAVAK's foreign intelligence activities ultimately led to the establishment and expansion of Iranian intelligence collection and analysis capabilities in its regional sphere of interest. Intelligence theory is also used to examine the SAVAK's counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence structures and operations during the stated period of investigation, together with the influence of Cold War thinking on its activities.

The main strands of inquiry in this research will at the outset involve the question of why Iran felt it necessary to establish professional foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities. The structure and operational methods of these capabilities will then be examined along with the reasons for why the USSR and Iraq were targeted by Iranian foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence. The important relationship between intelligence and policy formulation and execution will also be analysed in this specific period of the Cold War.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Within the broader field of Intelligence Studies, the historical focus on intelligence is one that is still very much in its infancy and confined mainly to works published in the English language.¹ Therefore it is perhaps not too surprising that an intelligence service like Iran's SAVAK (Intelligence and Security Organisation) has been very much overlooked so far.

This is particularly true of the SAVAK's counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence activities: While there are at least some writings dealing with the role of the SAVAK as an organ of domestic repression,² with the exception of one single journal article focusing on the SAVAK's non-Cold War related activities in the Lebanon,³ the SAVAK's counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence activities have never been discussed and certainly there are no in-depth studies of these, be it within the fields of Intelligence Studies, Political Science, International Relations or History.

This thesis seeks to fill this void by examining and analysing the SAVAK's counter-intelligence and foreign-intelligence activities in the context of the Cold War, thereby making an original and significant contribution to the available literature and knowledge on the SAVAK. Publicly available material will be used to provide the most comprehensive account yet available of the SAVAK's foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence organisation and activities. In light of the current accessibility of primary sources, this study focuses on the period between 1958 and 1969 looking at the SAVAK's counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence activities against the USSR and Iraq as two feasible (in terms of source availability) and significant (Cold War relevance) case studies.

1.1 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis upon which this thesis will be based is that the SAVAK's foreign intelligence in Iraq and counter-intelligence against Soviet capabilities was driven by Cold War thinking

¹ Loch K. Johnson and James J. Wirtz (eds), *Strategic Intelligence* (Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury, [2004]), p. 56.

² Most notably there is William Abbas Samii, 'The Role of SAVAK in the 1978-1979 Iranian Revolution' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1994).

³ W. A. Samii, "The Shah's Lebanon Policy: The Role of SAVAK," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1 (1997), 66-91.

that put much emphasis on the military dimension of security. A further characteristic of this type of Cold War thinking is the embrace of realism.⁴ John Garnett expresses the realist position as follows:

*Realists tend to be conservative in their views ... [they] tend to accept a world subdivided into independent sovereign states as being the normal, if not permanent, condition of international society, and they consider realpolitik an inescapable feature of the international environment.... The realists also emphasise the ubiquity of the power struggle, and their literature is dominated by the concepts of national power and interest. Conflict is regarded as an inescapable condition of international life. This simple assumption is the starting point of realism.*⁵

Cold War security thinking privileged the state as the primary referent and agent, and emphasised the role of military instruments in maintaining stability. The military focus of realism manifested itself in a search for militarised solutions to problems that could have been addressed through non-military means. In this sense, military factors were paid more and more attention in threat assessments and policy calculations of states as the East-West conflict intensified during the 1960s. Indeed, there came a time when it was simply common sense to think that 'deterrence was foreign policy'.⁶

It is also expected here that Cold War thinking by foreign states and organisations engaged in any training of the SAVAK would also certainly have played a role in influencing its interpretation of events. It has been argued that the image of the Soviet Union advanced by Kennan in his 'long telegram' to explain the sources of Soviet conduct was itself in part reflective of growing Cold War thinking in Washington, and, ironically, contributed to the Soviet image of an intensifying hostility from the West.⁷ In short, the world was viewed in zero-sum terms: what one side won, the other side necessarily lost. Such an outlook almost

⁴ Pinar Bilgin, *Regional Security in the Middle East: A Critical Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 5.

⁵ Bilgin, p. 17.

⁶ Bilgin, p. 18.

⁷ Roger S. Whitcomb, *The Cold War in Retrospect: The Formative Years* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), p. 206.

guaranteed permanent conflict by recognising no virtue in conciliation or cooperation with an ideological foe.⁸

A further aspect of Cold War thinking particularly relevant to the world of counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence were conspiracies. This allowed analysts and decision-makers to see patterns in communist behavior through the prism of reasoning by analogy. Post-war developments in particular came to be viewed within the context of a global pattern of aggression through the use of internal subversion. The notion of conspiracy also provided a crude but serviceable strategic framework for such individuals to employ in situations characterized by a high degree of ambiguity. As it was difficult to determine ahead of time the strategic value or the relative vulnerability to communist subversion of individual countries, the conspiracy theory resolved this psychological and political problem by making all regions and, by extension, each state within a region, strategically important. Lastly, the notion of conspiracy provided decision-makers, together with military and security organisations, the necessary arguments for cultivating support for the resource allocation necessary to counter perceived threats.⁹

Cold War thinking continued to be prevalent in the 1950s and well into the 1960s, despite other approaches to Cold War security becoming more recognised.¹⁰

Exploring the validity of this hypothesis and in order to provide a better understanding of the SAVAK, my examination of its counter-intelligence and foreign-intelligence activities during the Cold War will also seek to answer the following important questions:

1. What reasons led to the establishment of Iranian foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities?
2. How were these capabilities structured and which operational methods were used?
3. Why were the USSR and Iraq targeted by Iranian foreign and counter-intelligence?
4. What was the relationship between intelligence and policy formulation and execution, especially foreign policy-making?

⁸ Whitcomb, p. 210.

⁹ Whitcomb, p. 210-211.

¹⁰ Bilgin, pp. 18-19.

Each of these questions and their relevance in relation to the hypothesis will now be discussed in greater detail.

1.1.1 REASONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AND COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES

Why did Iran feel it necessary to establish a professional foreign and counter-intelligence capability? As will be shown, Iran had previously maintained what can be described as general intelligence capabilities in a more or less basic form, but it can be argued that it would not have been capable of dealing with more formidable and developing threats. The question of why such capabilities were established in the first place is an important one, as it deals with the very essence of why a nation state like Iran believed it necessary in an international context to defend itself from external agents and powers and to acquire intelligence on entities beyond its borders. Here we will also deal with the question of where the decisions to establish such capabilities were made, as this also provides us with a clearer vision of the agents and structures that lay behind the Iranian state's conception of security. Any attempt to attribute the establishment of such a major organisation to one single agent or structure would be to oversimplify the multitude of complex developments that were taking place at the time under scrutiny. One can already appreciate from scholarly studies that in the period leading up to the establishment of the SAVAK, external powers were heavily involved in influencing Iranian political decision making. Whilst this lead up period will be studied, caution will be exercised in detailing how far back in history Iranian foreign and counter-intelligence is rooted, so as to appropriately maintain the focus of this work.

1.1.2 ESTABLISHED STRUCTURES AND OPERATIONAL METHODS

After having analysed the origins and reasons behind Iran developing foreign and counter-intelligence capabilities, the focus will move on to the specific structures that were subsequently established for this purpose. This is critical, as knowledge of the structure of the organisation provides a better understanding for the way in which operational and administrative tasks were carried out. Whilst touching upon all of the departments involved within the SAVAK, the main focus will remain on the structure of the counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence directorates. This will provide an appropriate foundation upon which to draw subsequently in order to analyse the operational methods of each relevant directorate.

Although information on operational methods can at times be gleaned from details of operations provided in later chapters, a section dedicated to these methods will undoubtedly be of greater use prior to observing the SAVAK's activities in various contexts. This is particularly important in instances where full details of intelligence operations are not always made clear by available primary sources. Whilst operational methods may often vary amongst intelligence organisations, it can be said that barring technological developments, methods successfully used in the past within a particular organisation will often be recycled. It must also be said that in acquiring details of operational methods, the memoirs of former SAVAK intelligence officers have been of greater value than available published documents. Intelligence documents seldom provide in depth information on the methods used in carrying out an operation, as filing such details is rarely of use any use for an intelligence analyst who is more concerned with the information acquired rather than the methods used in order to obtain it. Thus, it is often left to those involved with intelligence operations at a given time to provide specific details.

1.1.3 CHOICE OF TARGETS

Why did the SAVAK choose to maintain counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence capabilities against certain states and not others? Scholarly works on Iran's foreign relations have already made clear that neighbouring Iraq was a major source of concern for the SAVAK during the Cold War, particularly at times when it was more closely aligned with the Soviet Union. The few studies that have been carried out on Iran-Soviet relations also make clear that relations between Iran and the Soviet Union were for the most part unfriendly during the first decade and a half of the Cold War and gradually improved thereafter.¹¹ As has been mentioned, such secondary sources from the field of international relations history provide a guide for the researcher in terms of expectation but they can by no means always be considered as being fully applicable to the field of intelligence. Indeed in the field of intelligence there exist examples in which nation-states that maintain outwardly friendly diplomatic relations engage in intelligence activities against one another.¹² This can often be

¹¹ See Section C of Bibliography 'USSR-Iran'.

¹² Arthur S. Hulnick, *Keeping Us Safe: Secret Intelligence and Homeland Security* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004) p. 58.

further amplified if a powerful intelligence apparatus exists within a non-democratic structure, as was the case with the SAVAK.

1.1.4 THE SAVAK AND POLICY-MAKING

This in turn aptly leads us to the relationship between intelligence and politics. Secondary sources on the SAVAK provide us with some evidence that few effective controls existed on the SAVAK's domestic activities but would this also be the case for counter-intelligence and foreign policy? Non-democratic nation-states can at times be more sensitive in their dealings with foreign nation-states than with their own populace. Therefore one has to take into consideration that foreign and counter-intelligence activities could reflect this possibility. In observing the relationship between intelligence and state policy, one has to search for primary and secondary source indicators of these links, if any. If these do not exist, then one has to separately compare the actions of the intelligence organisation and that of the government to consider the proximity of their alignment.

Of course it would be a clear misjudgement if one were to see an alignment of intelligence activities with official policy as being automatically indicative of a close relationship between intelligence and policy. There are a wide variety of factors that may lead to such a congruence, whilst the intelligence organisation and the policy making machinery remain at odds with one another. It must be stated that secondary sources on the SAVAK provide scant information on the interactions between intelligence and policy making. Whether this is indicative of the overall disconnect between intelligence and policy, lack of evidence or record keeping will also be taken into consideration.

One also has to consider the individuals that maintained access to the SAVAK's intelligence product. This is an important issue when attempting to establish the relationship between Iranian intelligence and policy, as it provides us with an understanding of which specific individuals were provided with the SAVAK's intelligence and in what form. By identifying these individuals one is also able to better understand the real centres of power in the Iranian state. Individuals provided with the SAVAK's intelligence product will clearly have been considered important enough to be presented with its findings. This issue will be of further importance if no bureaucratic requirement were to exist for the SAVAK to present its intelligence to specific individuals. This would effectively mean that the SAVAK was choosing by itself the persons fit to be presented with its intelligence product.

In identifying the individuals presented with this intelligence, one also has to consider the form in which it was presented. Intelligence documents provided to individuals outside of an intelligence organisation will often differ to those circulating within it. This often occurs due to intelligence being presented in a manner that would be of most use to a policymaker, but in refining intelligence in such a manner, the possibility of distortion increases. This can either occur inadvertently as a result of the refinement process or deliberately in a manner that seeks to withhold specific information. It must be said that withholding specific pieces of information may not necessarily occur as a result of malign intentions. It can be considered standard security procedure to withhold certain intelligence details that may not be considered crucial in the understanding of an analysis. An example of this can be the names of specific sources in leading to information or judgements on a certain issue. Such practices though can aid in inadvertently misleading policy makers, as the policymaker in not being able to identify the source cannot make a personal judgement on whether the source is credible or not. Although one could argue that a policymaker must defer to the intelligence organisation in such matters, in making critical decisions a policymaker would be better capable of making an appropriate action by being able to identify the source. In a similar manner, it can be argued that as more operational details are made available to a policymaker, the potential for an improved decision making capability is elevated. Due to the aforementioned constraints though, providing policy makers with complete information on intelligence activities is not always possible.

An important issue in intelligence and policy that must also be noted is that policy makers will often fail to fully understand the limitations of intelligence. This is often a result of policy makers in general not being fully cognisant of the intelligence process and its inherent weaknesses. In addition, few states if any employ any training for policy makers to better understand the subject of intelligence, therefore it may be likely that Iranian policy makers will also have been lacking a full understanding of the SAVAK's processes and capabilities. The few policy makers able to understand the intelligence process are those that have had prior experience in the field, either through a military or civilian intelligence organisation. Given that the SAVAK was Iran's first professional intelligence organisation it would be unrealistic, particularly in the SAVAK's early years, to expect Iranian policy makers to have possessed any form of significant intelligence experience.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF SOURCES

The majority of serious studies of intelligence to date have focused on US and British experiences, examples being Christopher Andrew's *For the President's Eyes only* and Philip Davies' *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying*.¹³ In general there has been a dearth in research related to most other security services (with the possible exception of the Soviet Union's KGB which is largely owed to works authored by Christopher Andrew).¹⁴ Though much of this shortfall can be explained by a general lack of available sources, some of it can also be attributed to language barriers faced by researchers.

The sole PhD thesis that has been written on the SAVAK focuses mainly on its internal non-counterintelligence activities, making use of a limited number of oral accounts as its core primary source.¹⁵ In addition, the arguably non-academic studies of the SAVAK that have been carried out to date by Taqī Nağğārī-Rād, Abdorahmān Aḥmadī and Christian Delannoy are in instances compromised by biases and severely lacking in analytical rigour with regards to the amount of material covered and the sources utilised.¹⁶ This is illustrated for instance by the lack of full referencing in these works.

The sole scholarly publication which remains at the time of writing the most comprehensive opus on the SAVAK once again focuses heavily on the organisation's internal intelligence role whilst paying comparatively little attention to its foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence role.¹⁷ Indeed, Moẓaffar Šāhedī's 885-page monograph merely dedicates one 28-page chapter to the SAVAK's foreign intelligence activities with only seven of these pages

¹³ Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1996); Philip H.J. Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003).

¹⁴ See Christopher Andrew, *The Mitrokhin Archive: the KGB in Europe and the West* (London: Allen Lane, 1999) and Christopher Andrew, *The World Was Going Our Way* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

¹⁵ See footnote 2.

¹⁶ See Taqī Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān dar Taḥavvolāt-e Dāḥelī-ye Reżīm-e Šāh* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Markaz-e Enqelāb-e Eslāmī, 1999), Idem, *SAVAK* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Markaz-e Enqelāb-e Eslāmī, 2000) and Idem, *Hamkāri-ye SAVAK va Mossad* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Markaz-e Enqelāb-e Eslāmī, 2002); see also Abdorahmān Aḥmadī, *SAVAK va Dastgāh-e Eṭṭelā'āti-ye Esrā'īl* (Tehran: Paẓūheš-hā-ye siāsī, 2002) and Christian Delannoy, *SAVAK* (Paris: Stock, 1990).

¹⁷ Moẓaffar Šāhedī, *SAVAK* (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Moṭale'āt va Paẓūhešhā-ye siāsī, 2007).

focusing on the SAVAK in Iraq.¹⁸ Similarly, only a single 18-page chapter deals with the SAVAK's counter-intelligence activities.¹⁹ As already mentioned, there is also Samii's article on the SAVAK activities in the Lebanon, which were however, not related to the Cold War and hence do not fall within the remit of this study.²⁰

It remains to conclude that there exist virtually no prior academic writings at all on the specific topic of this study and there are also relatively few works that are of peripheral or contextual importance. This thesis is therefore breaking new ground based on a sound empirical foundation, which will now be explained in a brief critical appraisal of the primary sources.

Primary Sources

After the Iranian revolution of 1979 thousands of pages of official SAVAK documents were published. Continuing to this day, a substantial amount of SAVAK documents have been printed in various volumes, primarily by a research institute based at the Iranian Intelligence Ministry (Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt). These volumes, which have been used extensively for this study can be freely purchased and most are available at the British Library.²¹ The steadily increasing flow of published SAVAK documents over the last decade, particularly in relation to foreign and counter-intelligence, has provided

¹⁸ Šāhedī, pp. 527-553.

¹⁹ Šāhedī, pp. 555-573.

²⁰ See footnote 3.

²¹ The volumes of SAVAK documents published so far include: Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī* (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003); Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK* (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003); Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Hezb-e Demokrāt-e Kordestān* (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 1999); Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Kādr-hā-ye Hezb-e Tūdeh*, 2 vols (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003); Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Sāzemān-e Ġavānān-e Hezb-e Tūdeh* (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2001); Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Hezb-e Tūdeh dar Hāreġ az Kešvar* (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003); Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Dabīrān-e Avval-e Hezb-e Tūdeh* (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003).

researchers with a fine opportunity to acquire a greater insight into Iran's much overlooked foreign and counter-intelligence activities during the Cold War. It must be stated though that the current published documents relate to specific time periods and due to public access restrictions on the original archive, it is impossible to estimate what proportion of the archive they represent. At the time of research the (anti-USSR) counter-intelligence related documentation in those published volumes begins in 1962 and lasts until 1968. On the issue of foreign-intelligence, documents relating to Iraq begin soon after the Iraqi revolution of 1958 and end in 1968, corresponding approximately to the end of Abdul Rahman Arif's presidency. This study makes particular use of the three following edited collections of SAVAK documents:

1. Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī*, Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003.
2. Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK*, Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003.
3. Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Dāḥelī-ye 'Erāq va Amnīyat-e Mellī-ye Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK*, Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2005.

It goes without saying that the reasons and circumstances of the publishing of these documents must be scrutinised in order to make a reasonable assessment of their source value. It is obvious that these volumes of documents were published by state institutions, and hence there is the possibility that documents have been chosen under the influence of certain biases or to deliberately project biases, which could possibly distort the reality of the intelligence narrative drawn from them.

The volume of documents relating to the SAVAK's counter-intelligence focuses on the organisation's actions in countering Soviet Intelligence in Iran for the period of 1962-1968. There are 325 documents in total containing a mixture of reports and analyses. Printed and legible copies of all the original documents are published. It must also be stated that the vast majority of documents contain reports and analyses and very rarely are there clear divisions making clear that a document is solely analytical in content. The preface in this volume, written by an unnamed author, includes a very basic history of Soviet-Iranian relations. This

brief overview includes mainly facts and does not seem to indicate any ideological bias in its presentation. The preface explains that the documents selected in the volume are documents deemed to be of importance to Iranian history. The individual or individuals involved in the selection of these documents are not named and it is left unclear by which criteria documents are judged important enough to be published in the volume. The preface though makes clear that four general topics are covered in the publishing of these documents, including: the beginning of improved relations between Iran and the Soviet Union, the increased isolation of left-wing groups linked to the Soviet Union, Soviet reactions to events occurring within Iran and Soviet technical, scientific and economic aid to Iran.

The volume titled *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK* contains 377 documents directly dealing with Iran-Iraq relations and is presented as being the first volume of such documents. The original document copies are also presented on the relevant pages in facsimile and the text of these are legible. As with the volume dealing with the Soviet Union, this volume first presents a brief and basic historical overview of Iran-Iraq relations. This is initially presented in a manner comprising of factual information and does not seem to indicate any biases. The final two pages of this preface though provide a brief analysis of Iran–Iraq relations and place the blame for instability in the Persian Gulf and relations between the two countries on foreign powers. It is stated that at the time of publishing, Iraq has rightfully recognised the name of “Persian Gulf” and that any disputes on such and other topics would simply be to the benefit of foreign powers. The Shatt-al-Arab is also described as Arvand Rud whilst it is claimed that Iraq seemingly understood that hostile and subversive activities in relation to its Eastern neighbour had proven to be of no benefit and that as a result of finally recognising Iran’s rights, the 1975 Algiers agreement was signed. No mention is made at this point of Iranian actions that may have antagonised Iraqi governments and forced the signing of the Algiers agreement. This is of course a highly pro-Iranian slant on this specific historical issue, as the Shah’s aid to Iraqi Kurdish fighters and the pressure that this placed on the Iraqi governments was a critical factor in the signing of the Algiers agreement.²²

²² See Īsā Pežmān, *Asrār-e Bastan-e Peymān-e 1375 Alğazīre: az Parvāndeh-ye beh kollī Serrī-ye SAVAK* (Paris: Nīmā, s.d).

On the specific point of Iran and Iraq's border disputes, foreign powers are once again blamed and it is emphasised that the Iran-Iraq war would not have been possible without the aid of foreign powers. The claim is also made that the interference of foreign powers in Iran-Iraq relations has frequently benefited Iraq whilst negatively effecting Iranian interests. It is further claimed that since its inception Iraq has sought to acquire sections of Iranian territory with the support of foreign powers.

The preface makes clear that the volume is presented having three core chapters comprised of documents relating to Iran-Iraq relations. The first chapter deals with the period of Qasim's rule, the second chapter with the Ba'ath Party following Qasim's fall, the third chapter focuses on Abdulsalam Arif's rule and the fourth and final chapter looks at the period of Abdulrahman Arif's rule.

Finally, a number of points are made clear at the end of the preface. These include the fact that the documents are from the period between 1959-1968 and arranged in chronological order. In the selection of documents for this volume it is stated that a preference was given to type-written documents rather than hand written ones. It is possible that this may be of some significance in that reports and analyses may have been typed, while minutes and memos may have been handwritten (though hand written notes on typed documents are legible and printed by the editors). It is also stated that the re-printed text of the documents are exactly as they appear on the original document copies.

The second volume of documents related to Iraq contains 421 documents and looks at the SAVAK's intelligence activities in Iraq, and seeks to tie these with Iran's national security concerns. As with the other two volumes, original document copies are once again presented on the relevant page in facsimile and the text of these are legible. The documents are presented in three separate sections beginning with Qasim as Prime Minister, followed by the Ba'ath government and finally the first Arif regime. The years covered are 1958-1966. The document selection criterion is also listed as being similar to that of the previously mentioned volume of SAVAK documents on Iraq. In presenting a historical overview of developments in Iraq, the preface also references a small number of the SAVAK documents contained within the volume. Overall, the eleven page preface can be described as a very brief analysis of Iranian national security in relation to Iraq. In contrast to the previous volume on Iraq, no clear ideological biases can be identified in the preface which has also been written by an unnamed author.

In all three volumes, notes written by intelligence officers, represented by unique three digit codes on specific documents are also re-printed on the same page. These codes prevent the reader from indentifying the names of those wrting the reports and their recipients. The reports and analyses do not indicate where these documents were originally typed, therefore it is impossible to identify whether they originate from stations or the centre. Dates and document numbers are further pieces of information that are re-printed. The secrecy classification for each document is made clear by observing the presented original document copy and its classification stamp. On occasions where events or figures of historical importance are referred to in a document, the authors provide a brief historical background for the relevant information in the left margin of each page. An analysis of these annotations shows no bias toward a specific narrative.

It must be stated that there are key primary sources, including memoirs of intelligence officers and interviews which can be used to corroborate, at least partly, the facts included in these published documentations.

For the years 1957-1962 and beyond, a number of intelligence officer memoirs exist that provide details of the SAVAK's activities in relation to counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence. Owing to the works of Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, as well as KGB defector Vladimir Kuzichkin, further access has also been available to details of the KGB presence in Iran during the 1957-1962 period, including details of a number of operations.²³

The memoirs of General Manūčehr Hāšemī, former Chief of the SAVAK's counter-intelligence directorate, General Ḥoseyn Fardūst, former Deputy Chief of the SAVAK, Colonel Īsā Pežmān, a foreign intelligence officer in Iraq, and SAVAK US Station Chief, Mansur Rafīzadeh are the main memoirs that have been used here for insight into the early period of the SAVAK's counter-intelligence directorate which are not covered by existing published documents.²⁴ Furthermore, these memoirs all aid in the understanding of Iran's counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence activities for the full period of 1957-1968.²⁵

²³ See Andrew, *The World Was Going...*, pp. 169-182 and Vladimir Kuzichkin, *Inside the KGB: My Life in Soviet Espionage* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), pp. 220-263.

²⁴ Ḥoseyn Fardūst, *Zohūr va soqūt-e salṭanatī-ye Pahlavī: Ḥāṭerāt-e Artešbod Ḥoseyn Fardūst*, 2 vols (Tehran: Eṭṭelā'āt, 2004), Manūčehr Hāšemī, *Dāvārī: Soḥanī dar kārnāmeḥ-ye SAVAK* (Los Angeles, CA: Ketab Corp.,

Each of these memoirs though must be scrutinised as a result of the circumstances in which they were published. Criticism in this regard particularly applies to the memoirs of General Fardūst and Mansur Rafizadeh. It is important to note that General Fardūst's memoirs were printed only after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and that the two volumes of his memoirs were first printed in Iran. Although Fardūst's activities in the period following the Iranian Revolution remain unclear, he appeared on Iranian television in April of 1987 in what was alleged at the time to be an interview.²⁶ Fardūst proceeded to denounce the Shah in this interview as well as the corruption of his governments.²⁷ He also claimed that the marriage and divorce of the Shah to Princess Fawzieh of Egypt had been arranged by the British; an allegation which remains unproven.²⁸ Further claims against the British were made in Fardūst's memoirs including the allegation that the British had attempted to recruit him as an agent.²⁹ The Freemasons are also represented as having held significant sway over Iranian politics.³⁰ Following Fardūst's death in May of 1987, a government-run newspaper proceeded to print what it claimed to be unpublished extracts from Fardūst's memoirs and these included further allegations against the British, Freemasons and Jews.³¹

As a result of the circumstances in which Fardūst's memoirs were published, great restraint has been exercised in reproducing pieces of information presented in them. It must be stated though that judging by corroborated evidence, the details that Fardūst provides in relation to the SAVAK's structure have been free of any biases. It must also be noted that Fardūst's

2001), Īsā Pežmān, *Asrār-e Bastan-e Peymān-e 1375 Alğazīre: az Parvandehe-ye beh kollī Serrī-ye SAVAK* (Paris: Nīmā, s.d) and Mansur Rafizadeh, *Witness: From the Shah to the Secret Arms Deal: an Insider's Account of U.S. Involvement in Iran* (New York: W. Morrow, 1987).

²⁵ See footnote 16.

²⁶ Ervand Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions : Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1999), p. 52.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism : essays on the Islamic Republic* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1999), pp. 129-130.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

memoir provides little information on the SAVAK's counter-intelligence and foreign-intelligence activities. As a result of this fact, I have hardly relied on this memoir in researching the SAVAK's concrete activities.

Mansur Rafizadeh's memoir, although published outside of Iran, can also be rightfully criticised in certain areas. The memoir of the SAVAK's foreign intelligence station chief in the US (towards the end of the period under study here) portrays the image of a well intentioned individual who has little control over the malign structure of which he is a part. The Shah in particular is a subject of great criticism and a number of unsubstantiated allegations are made in this regard, including on the subject of sexual orientation and the murder of an unnamed individual.³² Rafizadeh also quotes his conversations with officials in a manner which suggests that they are being recounted word for word. At best, it can be considered that these conversations are a rough portrayal of that which has been remembered by the author. Despite these shortcomings and like Fardust, details relating to structure and operational methods of the SAVAK can frequently be cross-referenced with other primary and secondary works and it is in such instances that details have been used.

The memoir of Major Īsā Pežmān, a former senior foreign intelligence officer, can be described as being partially nationalistic in tone, but in no way are any significant accusations or allegations made. Instead this memoir focuses on detailing the SAVAK's operations in Iraq from 1957-1975, including information related to the planning and execution of operations. The reasoning behind carrying out operations in Iraq is also provided. Major Pežmān retired to the US in later years.

The former chief of counter-intelligence, General Manūčehr Hāšemī's memoir is perhaps the most objective of these four memoirs. Despite providing details of counter-intelligence operations primarily against the Soviet Union, no obvious biases can be detected in the text. Hāšemī instead dedicates chapters either to specific topics or recounts details of counter-intelligence operations. Hāšemī's memoir also focuses specifically on intelligence issues from the period of 1957-1978, corresponding with his period of service in the SAVAK. In addition to providing details relating to counter-intelligence, Hāšemī also briefly provides

³² Rafizadeh, pp. 214-217.

information on the SAVAK's organisational lay-out including details of structures and operational methods. General Hāšemī also retired to the US following the revolution.

In addition to the aforementioned sources, the main notable primary sources outside of Iran that have been used here are from the CIA's ERR (Electronic) Archive. This archive contains selected declassified CIA documents that are 25 years or older and can be searched using keywords based on assigned metadata.³³ This archive can also be searched by title and date, or date span, of documents. The listed title is the formal title of a report or the stated subject of a memorandum. However, the title in certain instances is the best attempt by an Agency indexer to identify documents without clear formal titles such as cables, letters, written notes, and other forms of communication and correspondence. In such cases, the title includes a reference to the type of document, originator, recipient, or location. Searched dates are based on the creation date on the first page of each document. At the time of research there were 177 documents relating to Iran for the time period focused on in this thesis.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study has primarily followed the example set by similar research carried out on other intelligence and security services, particularly Philip Davies' *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying*. To date, major scholarly works on Middle Eastern intelligence and security services include those written by Ibrahim al-Marashi on the Iraqi 'Mukhaberat' as well as Ian Black and Benny Morris' study of Israeli intelligence and security services, in particular, 'Mossad', 'Shin Bet' and 'Aman'³⁴. Though both make use of secondary sources, it is archival resources that are mainly examined. These archival sources are utilised for the conduct of qualitative analyses based on available and declassified documentation. Both researchers begin by first seeking to establish the origins of these intelligence organisations, before moving on to a study of their organisational structures and their activities.

³³ CIA FOIA-25-Year Program Archive. 13 January 2008. <http://www.foia.cia.gov/search_archive.asp>.

³⁴ Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Security & Intelligence Network: A Guide & Analysis", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, vol. 6, no. 3 (2002), 1-13 and Ian Black and Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services* (Berkeley, CA: Avalon Travel Publishing, 2000).

One must note though that a disadvantage of such an approach is that one has to rely on the available documentation. Research on the topic of intelligence is made difficult by its inherent secrecy, thus there may exist documents unavailable to the researcher (classified or hidden from public view) that would provide a clearer picture of the proposed topic of research. Despite these obstacles, the aforementioned approach works well enough given that similar research on intelligence and security services are widely accepted as scholarly works within the fields of history and political science and published in scholarly journals such as the *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*.³⁵

Philip Davies' study of Britain's SIS has been a particularly valuable model to follow as it provides a dual approach to the study of an intelligence organisation. On the one hand, Davies provides a historical account of structural development. On the other hand, Davies works to draw out certain themes and demonstrates the significance of certain trends. In addition, Davies adopts an approach that is a hybrid of the American and British schools of intelligence studies. Indeed, back in the 1980s, Stuart Farson suggested that one could divide the study of intelligence into distinct national 'schools of thought', and pointed in particular to an American tradition that at the academic level tends to emphasize conceptual issues and ones of 'organizational efficacy', essentially within the bounds of political and policy studies, and a British 'school' that is primarily historical. He also hinted that, while there might be 'no single Canadian school of intelligence studies', what literature there was displayed influences of both, the British and the American traditions but went its own way, noting, for example, that 'the Canadian response to internal security was essentially to see it as an administrative problem not, as was the case in the United States, a political one'. The Canadian school of security and intelligence studies is a hybrid, partly or sometimes conceptual, and partly or sometimes historical, a combination that leads in its own direction quite distinct from either of the other two transatlantic precedents.³⁶

Davies also uses his knowledge of intelligence studies and social science training to interpret what he has found. In this way he shows that an organisation's structure casts light upon its assumptions about objectives, priorities, challenges and responses. Furthermore, he makes clear that "one cannot do intelligence and security studies without doing political science, and

³⁵ See e.g. Andrew, *The Mitrokhin Archive...* and Idem, *The World Was Going...*

³⁶ Davies, p. 9.

one cannot do (or, at least should not do) political science without doing history.”³⁷ And that is why his work is a blend of the historical and the social-scientific.

Indeed, the study of intelligence organisations, often the ‘missing dimension’ in history and international relations, can help illuminate past events, and here the SAVAK is no exception.³⁸ It must be considered for instance that by ignoring the study of intelligence organisations and their activities, many past political and military narratives would be presented in a distorted manner. Prominent examples would be the critical role that Bletchley Park played during World War II in breaking the codes and ciphers of axis countries, arguably shortening the war, and in an example relating directly to Iran, the role of British and American intelligence in the 1953 coup d’état.³⁹

This is not to discredit existing studies of historical events which do not make use of available intelligence resources, but there can be no doubt that to study the relevant intelligence organisations involved in historical events can enrich existing knowledge. It is an unfortunate reality though that many scholars outside the field of military and security studies, for various reasons, choose to ignore the role of intelligence organisations in historical events. Studying these intelligence organisations in some depth, rather than simply referring to external observations of these structures, one has to also view events as they developed from within the organisation. This internal view of the organisation places the researcher in a position that is free of external observation biases.

The SAVAK’s widely reported role as an instrument of internal repression makes such an objective approach all the more important. Presently available secondary and primary sources have already established the SAVAK’s significant and powerful role in Iran during Mohammad Reza Pahlavi’s reign as monarch. In reading existing materials on the SAVAK’s internal activities one is given the impression that like many other intelligence and security organisations in authoritarian states, it could frequently operate without restrictions from external control mechanisms and at times independent of government policies. In this sense,

³⁷ Davies, p. 13.

³⁸ Johnson, p. 53.

³⁹ See F.H. Hinsley, *Codebreakers: the Inside Story of Bletchley Park* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and amongst others Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah’s Men* (Hoboken NJ: J. Wiley & Sons, 2003).

such organisations can be described in a non-literal manner as being a state within a state, making the details of their actions all the more intriguing.

Furthermore, the often frustratingly frequent, inaccurate and belittling description of the SAVAK as a ‘secret police’⁴⁰ makes it all the more important that scholars appreciate that it was in fact a sophisticated intelligence organisation, with responsibilities beyond domestic security. For understandable reasons relating to domestic Iranian interest, it is perhaps not too surprising that much of the focus on the SAVAK has been placed on its domestic activities. Indeed, such is the focus on the SAVAK’s domestic role that one would be forgiven for mistakenly believing that it was without a counter-intelligence or foreign intelligence capability altogether.

The era in which the SAVAK existed further adds to the importance of understanding its counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence role and actions. As a key battleground in the Cold War one cannot overlook the significance of Iran’s activities. Yet, rather than simply observing the policies of the key powers towards Iran during the Cold War, this study will, through the prism of intelligence, directly observe Iran’s *own* role in this regional and global struggle. Whilst Iranian intelligence activities would often align with the interests of nations with which it maintained cordial relations, as a legally independent nation-state in the region there would also be the likelihood that it would pursue its own interests. From existing studies there is clear evidence that at times disagreements occurred between Iran and key friendly powers, therefore one is to expect that this would also translate to the intelligence level.⁴¹

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to prevent any possible misinterpretations, it is also important that prior to observing and analysing the SAVAK’s foreign and counter-intelligence activities, that a definition of

⁴⁰ See e.g. Darius M. Rejali, *Torture and Modernity: Self, Society, and State in Modern Iran* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), p. 57, Stephanie Cronin, *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran: New Perspectives on the Iranian Left* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 161 and Kinzer, p. 194.

⁴¹ See e.g. Ali M. Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921: The Pahlavis and After* (London: Pearson Education, 2003), p.147.

what is considered intelligence for the purpose of this study be set out, as intelligence theory will form the basis upon which conclusions will be reached.

1.4.1 WHAT IS 'INTELLIGENCE'?

There are currently a great number of intelligence definitions, originating from military, government and academic works with no unanimous agreement on specific descriptions, therefore personal discretion will have to be applied in obtaining such a definition. Most definitions of intelligence refer to some or all three of the following practices:

1. *Process* of requesting, collecting and analysing specific types of information important to national security, which will then be provided to policy makers.
2. *Counter-Intelligence* to protect the aforesaid processes and activities.
3. *Covert Operations* authorised by lawful authorities.⁴²

Counter-intelligence is perhaps the least well defined of these elements in intelligence theory. Counter-intelligence has been broadly defined as defending a state and the state's own intelligence capabilities from the actions of hostile intelligence services.⁴³ This entails the denial of information to adversaries through the maintenance of security programmes in order to keep information away from those not authorised to access it. A further sub category of counterintelligence can be described as counterespionage which targets human intelligence operations. Counterespionage deals with apprehending and preventing agents of adversarial intelligence agencies from being able to communicate information classified as secret.

It can be argued that intelligence analysis is perhaps the most complex element of the intelligence process, as it is at this point that human judgement is involved based upon collected information. Although intelligence analysis is fundamentally a mental process, it is often hindered by the lack of conscious awareness in the methods of thought that lead to its end product. Few analysts, if any, are consciously aware of their own weaknesses and biases which may skew their analyses in particular directions. It can be said that the perceptions of

⁴² See Arthur S. Hulnick, *Fixing the Spy Machine: Preparing American Intelligence for the Twenty-First Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), p. 8.

⁴³ See Abraham N. Shulsky, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2002), p. 8.

analysts and their methods of information processing are strongly influenced by past experiences, education, cultural values, role requirement, organisational norms and the specifics of received information.⁴⁴

Furthermore, analysts may also be required to curtail deception measures taken by adversarial intelligence organisations, but it is often the case that the possibility of deception is rejected by such individuals due to there being no observable evidence of it. Well planned and properly executed deception though is seldom identified in a straightforward manner. By rejecting a plausible hypothesis too early, subsequent analyses may be biased, as the analyst will not be looking for evidence that supports it.⁴⁵ In addition, analysts may consider themselves too sophisticated to be manipulated, whilst failing to recognise that exposure to deception may interfere with accurate perception even after more and better information has become available.⁴⁶ This is of course a critical issue when one considers that deception measures were regularly used by the KGB's First Chief Directorate with the use of disinformation through various means such as the media, double agents and falsified documents.⁴⁷ Iran was also a target of such strategic deception operations.⁴⁸ Of course, fearing deception in an overzealous and unstructured manner may also hamper activities within an intelligence organisation, as key information and agents may be discounted and considered untrustworthy. Furthermore, spending a great deal of time searching for evidence of deception will further drain limited intelligence resources.

Herbert Simon, psychologist and social scientist, first advanced the concept of 'bounded' or limited rationality.⁴⁹ Simon argued that because of human limits in mental capacity, the mind cannot cope directly with the complexity of the world. Instead, an individual constructs a simplified mental model of reality and operates within it confines, which is not always well adapted to the real world. Ideally, an intelligence analyst, in attempting to understand

⁴⁴ See Richard J. Heuer Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* (s.l.: Nova Science, 2005), p. 4.

⁴⁵ See Heuer Jr., p. 23.

⁴⁶ See Heuer Jr., p. 13.

⁴⁷ See Andrew, *The World Was Going...*, p. 171.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ See Heuer Jr., p. 2.

international interactions, must be able to understand a situation as it appears to each of the opposing forces. By shifting between various perspectives an analyst is better placed in interpreting events as they would be interpreted by the relevant agencies and structures.⁵⁰ If events are perceived one way, there will be a natural resistance to other perspectives.⁵¹

More information may not necessarily be able to curtail such inherent weaknesses in judgement, but there can be little doubt that training, peer review and increased exposure to the analytical process can reduce these shortcomings and allow alternative interpretations of information.⁵² Whilst information on the analytical development and training of intelligence organisations may not always be available to researchers, one can still make conclusions relating to the mental models, mind-sets biases and analytical assumptions of analysts based upon the information gleaned from the numerous analyses of the observed intelligence body.

In such a manner, an important piece of information that can be gleaned from studying the SAVAK's analyses is whether the service adopted a specific theoretical view. This is not to suggest that the SAVAK knowingly approached its analyses with a specific theory in mind, but it is possible that over time a collective group will begin to think alike and effectively approach their analyses with specific theories. This is particularly likely when analysis is restricted to a single department within an organisation, as is frequently the case with many intelligence and security organisations.

It has been argued that given the position of intelligence organisations in a state's national security apparatus, these entities often adopt realist world views or variations of this theory.⁵³ These organisations can thus believe the international environment to be one of anarchy consisting of states with offensive capabilities and power that can be viewed as a potential threat. Furthermore, states will be viewed as never being sure about the intentions of other states, with survival and maintenance of sovereignty being the basic motive driving their actions. Lastly, the realist perspective believes states to be instrumentally rational and capable

⁵⁰ See Heuer Jr., p. 13.

⁵¹ See Heuer Jr., p. 13.

⁵² See Heuer Jr., p. 5.

⁵³ Peter Gill and Mark Phythian, *Intelligence in an Insecure World* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2006), pp.154-155.

of thinking strategically about how to survive. It can often remain unclear though whether this realist worldview is a product of actually occurring events, the biases of specific personnel or a combination of these two. Of course, as has been previously stated, one can never fully understand the method by which the theoretical worldview of an analyst has been formulated, but by observing events occurring at a specific moment in history when an analysis has been carried out, one can at the very least recognise any major events that may have swayed the theoretical approaches.

An important issue that must also of course be dealt with is why intelligence organisations specifically maintain a tendency to lean towards realist theories. In being tasked with maintaining national security it can be said that the fear of intelligence failure is critical in shaping the perceptions of intelligence personnel. Pessimistic cautiousness in relation to international events is clearly viewed as carrying less risk than unfounded optimism. Although an excessive level of the former can negatively impact the functioning of an intelligence organisation, there is far less potential for an intelligence failure in comparison to the latter. It can also be said that intelligence organisations adopt a rather pessimistic world view as a result of being involved in a field where deception and counter-deception occur on a regular basis. Furthermore, nation-states which overtly maintain friendly relations can often covertly end up using their respective intelligence organisations against one another. In such a global environment it is therefore perhaps none too surprising for optimism to be a rare commodity.

There is also of course the importance of the collected sources that lead to an analyst being able to make a judgement. There are numerous sources that an intelligence organisation can use to acquire information, and the SAVAK will have had access to a great number of these resources in its foreign and counter-intelligence activities. Intelligence organisations commonly have access to human, technical, and open source intelligence.⁵⁴ Human intelligence refers to intelligence acquired either from agents recruited by intelligence officers or from ‘walk-ins’ (individuals volunteering to assist the intelligence service of a foreign country). Technical intelligence involves a wide number of collection means, such as photographic, imagery and signals intelligence.⁵⁵ Open source intelligence involves

⁵⁴ See Shulsky, pp. 11-43.

⁵⁵ See Shulsky, pp. 22-34.

intelligence acquired from media sources and normal diplomatic contacts. Of these three collection means, technical intelligence can often be considered as the most expensive to develop, requiring access to certain technologies and scientific knowledge. In the absence of such native capabilities, an intelligence organisation can with the aid of a foreign country purchase or develop these resources. Neither technical intelligence nor any other single collection method though can be considered as the best method of intelligence gathering.

Of the three collection methods, open source intelligence is often the most frequently used due to its easy access and the large volume of available sources. Indeed the large number of sources can often pose difficulties for an intelligence organisation that is forced to prioritise as a result of scarce resources. A further difficulty in the collection of open source materials is that in the case of foreign media, translations of sources will be required. This can either be carried out by an analyst proficient in the relevant language or by dedicated translators. The need for translations in such instances can often slow down this method of collection, further adding to the difficulty of finding personnel proficient in the relevant languages. In a field where the timely acquirement of intelligence can be critical, any delays can negatively impact the intelligence process and lead to a backlog of work. A further important note is that policy makers will often view intelligence acquired from open sources with a certain level of disdain, as a result of it being less exclusive than other forms of intelligence collection. Such a view may lead an analyst to unnecessarily place a greater deal of focus on other collected sources, leading to a distorted intelligence analysis. It must also be stated that a potential impact of policy makers' negative views of open source intelligence is that intelligence resources may be unreasonably allocated away from open sources, leading to important information not being collected.

In the gathering of open source intelligence, diplomatic reports can also be of great value. Diplomats who have good access to major political figures in a country or a sophisticated appreciation of a country's history and political makeup can provide insights of the internal political situation that cannot be found in the media. This of course would be dependent upon a reasonable relationship between the intelligence organisation and the ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A further and potentially valuable source of intelligence can be individuals travelling to and from a country that is a target of interest. Although related to human intelligence activities, such individuals would not necessarily be described as recruited agents. It must be taken into

consideration that particularly in the case of Iraq, there were a great number of Iranians travelling to this country and returning to Iran. The large majority of such travelling was related to religious pilgrimages but the significant number of Iraqis of Iranian origin present in Iraq can also be viewed as a contributing factor. Although such individuals may often not have access to sensitive information, they are able to provide information relating to the political and economic climate of a country that can be of use in analytical assessments.

The above discussed intelligence collection methods must also be taken into consideration in the practice of counter-intelligence, as each being practised by a hostile agency against one's own state presents a challenge for an intelligence organisation seeking to counteract the objectives of an adversary. Open sources such as radio broadcasts and media can be used by intelligence organisations as a source of propaganda. The volume and ease in which such propaganda can be distributed makes it highly difficult for any intelligence organisation to prevent outright. Furthermore, particularly in the case of radio broadcasts a wide audience can be reached without physically crossing any state boundaries. In such instances a counter-intelligence organisation must evaluate which population sectors are being targeted by outside propaganda and determine how the influence of such media can be lessened. There can be little doubt that by the time the SAVAK had been established, the use of radios was widespread in Iran and thus a large potential audience for foreign propaganda was available.⁵⁶ A further issue of importance in relation to radio propaganda is the factor of literacy levels. Although print media can have a greater influence on urban areas where literacy levels are higher, it is not as successful in targeting rural areas. Rural areas often have higher levels of illiteracy where audio propaganda can be of greater use. Poverty can also lead to higher levels of illiteracy, whilst being a potential contributing factor in discontent against the state. Any form of discontent within a population though can clearly be of use for a hostile foreign intelligence organisation.

In seeking to counter the human intelligence activities of a foreign adversary, operations can be carried out in its most basic form with the use of surveillance operations. Such surveillance measures attempt to determine the locations a foreign intelligence officer visits and the individuals that are contacted.⁵⁷ In seeking to gain knowledge of a hostile intelligence

⁵⁶ See Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, p. 80.

⁵⁷ See Shulsky, p. 122.

organisation, a counter-intelligence division will also frequently make use of double agents and defectors targeting the intelligence organisation of concern.⁵⁸

Similar to the collection of technical intelligence, thwarting technical intelligence gathering by hostile foreign intelligence organisations requires a certain degree of technical and scientific knowledge. This field involves methods such as the encryption of communications and reducing the likelihood of interception.⁵⁹

In countering the intelligence analysis of a foreign state, an intelligence organisation may also choose offensive measures aimed at deceiving the adversary.⁶⁰ Counter-intelligence also requires that defensive measures be taken against any possible deception measures being carried out by an adversary.⁶¹

1.4.2 COVERT ACTION: A DEFINITION

Covert action can be described as the most controversial of intelligence practices. Covert action covers a broad range of diverse activities, from propaganda and subversion to the training and funding of foreign intelligence and security services. The activities themselves are not necessarily secret or clandestine, but the role of the nation-state engaged in such activities must be disguised so as to provide for plausible deniability. This separates covert action from diplomacy and the use of conventional military force, as covert action is employed when a state seeks to accomplish a national security goal without its involvement being recognised. Covert actions also inevitably raise moral and ethical issues for nation-states in their conduct of foreign and domestic policy.⁶²

We know about covert actions in the same way that we learn about other intelligence activities, through authorised and unauthorised disclosure: memoirs, journalism, defectors, archives, whistle-blowers and judicial investigation. The veracity and integrity of these sources may differ, though there are generic questions to be posed about the agendas and

⁵⁸ See Shulsky, pp. 123-129.

⁵⁹ See Shulsky, pp. 129-130.

⁶⁰ See Shulsky, p. 132.

⁶¹ See Shulsky, p. 137.

⁶² See Shulsky, pp. 83-84.

intentions of those who provide us with information about covert action. One question is whether we know more about covert action than intelligence gathering and analysis. A second is whether we know more about certain kinds of covert action than others, especially the more dramatic. Some covert operations have been easier to discover because they failed. For many governments the concept of plausible deniability has been integral to the activity, therefore one must consider the possibility that we may be learning more about unsuccessful operations than successful ones, and that when we are learning of secret interventions from unreliable sources, we may in fact be the target of disinformation or propaganda. A lack of transparency in these types of operations makes accountability difficult, and correspondingly affects the level of public support and consent for such ventures.

It can be argued that covert action by its very nature is a most valuable tool in the exercise of intelligence warfare. The multitude of weapons available, varying within various thresholds of risk, if wisely used in an integrated manner, can greatly increase the likelihood of success in meeting intelligence and policy objectives. It is this for this reason that the most sophisticated of global intelligence and security organisations have used and continue to use its potential powers within the context of a nation-state's foreign policy. Whilst covert action has always remained a controversial practice within the realm of international affairs, it has been used with great frequency.⁶³ In an international legal sense the lines of demarcation between acceptable and unacceptable intervention can be hazy, as texts approved by the United Nations on the use of covert action have represented compromise formulations open to multiple interpretations.⁶⁴ Crucially, the lines of demarcation between legal and illegal covert actions are often required to be as clear as possible within intelligence and security apparatuses, so as to prevent confusion or disarray in determining the planning or authorisation of such activities. Many of the tools of covert action (psychological warfare, information warfare, political covert action, economic covert action and paramilitary activities) have been used from the dawn of warfare, although in a less sophisticated manner than was attainable in recent history. Indeed Sun Tzu's 'Art of War' dedicates an entire section to 'The Use of Spies', expounding their value in deception and assassination

⁶³ See Dan Reiter, *Democracies at War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 162.

⁶⁴ See Loch K Johnson, "On Drawing a Bright Line for Covert Operations", *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 86, no. 2, (1992), pp. 284-309 (p. 287).

operations. However, to measurably increase its likelihood of success the tools of covert action must be used in a coordinated manner.⁶⁵

Secondary sources have suggested that the Iran was involved in covert actions, the main focus of this being its foreign intelligence activities in Iraq.⁶⁶ The covert actions that are specifically referred to in these texts occurred in the context of Iran's aid to Iraqi Kurds engaged in fighting against the Iraqi government.⁶⁷

Given that Iran was engaged in at least one form of covert action it also possible that other methods within this field will have been used to advance perceived Iranian interests. Due to the sensitive nature of these operations one must also observe who the key decision makers were in the arrangement of these actions.

1.4.3 TWO KEY ANALYTICAL FEATURES: CLASSIFICATION AND ORGANISATIONAL SECURITY

A final important element of intelligence and specifically counter-intelligence is the practice of classification. A classification system categorises information according to its sensitivity, which relates to the likely damage that its disclosure to unauthorised personnel would cause to national security. Most often these fears relate to the discovery of critical intelligence by hostile foreign powers. As the majority of SAVAK documents provide a level of classification, one can identify the organisation's procedure for such classification and acquire an understanding of what specific forms of intelligence were considered to be of a higher security grade. A further issue that can be addressed through observation is the question of whether any clear changes were made to the classification procedure in the period of focus. It must also be mentioned that documents with higher security grades are often restricted to a fewer number of officials within the organisation and less likely to be openly shared, if at all, with outside individuals or government bodies.⁶⁸ This fact helps us to

⁶⁵ Sun-Tzu, and Sun Pin, *The Complete Art of War*, trans. Ralph D. Sawyer (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996) p. 117.

⁶⁶ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), p. 198.

⁶⁷ Marr, p.199.

⁶⁸ Shulsky, p. 113.

understand whether key intelligence was compartmented, thereby limiting the likely number of individuals that will have been able to respond to specific pieces of intelligence.

It must be noted though that no amount of extensive security and stringent assessment checks will guarantee that an employee will observe the rules. It would also be logical to assume that if a person has access to any piece of information then it can in all likelihood be compromised. In holding the responsibility of protecting their knowledge, intelligence organisations are faced with two dilemmas in relation to their employees. Firstly, the instruments of psychological and behavioural measurement hold accuracy rates that are below one hundred percent, allowing individuals who may pose a security threat to be cleared for employment and to continue working within the organisation.⁶⁹ Secondly, attempting to create a profiling system that identifies future betrayers would be an imperfect process leading the allocation of resources towards the wrongfully suspected rather than those well trained in evading detection.⁷⁰ Drawing upon psychological models is often the most rational method of detecting betrayers, as it provides the chance to identify psychological abnormalities.⁷¹ Whilst physical actions may identify a betrayer and prevent the continuing compromise of knowledge, it is the prevention of such an intelligence failure in the first place that is of primary concern for an intelligence organisation.

The psychological paradigm essentially makes the assumption that those who are actively compromising information or liable to betray secrets, are likely to differ in a measurable, reliable, and distinct way from those people who are not likely.⁷² Moreover, there exists the assumption that an underlying characteristic, not yet identified, is related to the likelihood of an actor to engage in betrayal. If this characteristic can be identified and measured reliably, those who score below a scientifically established threshold can be denied access to the most critical and sensitive positions of an intelligence organisation.⁷³ Until such a system comes to

⁶⁹ Theodore R. Sarbin, Ralph M. Carney, and Carson Eoyang (eds), *Citizen Espionage: Studies in Trust and Betrayal* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994), p. 70.

⁷⁰ Sarbin, p. 70.

⁷¹ Sarbin, p. 71.

⁷² Sarbin, p. 71.

⁷³ Sarbin, p. 72.

fruition though, intelligence failures in this field will be a likely occurrence. The most common occurrences of betrayal have been linked to money, ideology, coercion and ego, all of which are extremely problematic to measure scientifically.⁷⁴ Other psychological factors in bringing out betrayal can be disaffection, vindictiveness and whimsy, all of which are again impossible to accurately measure with scientific and psychological capabilities.

⁷⁴ Sarbin, p. 71.

2 BACKGROUND: THE COLD WAR CONTEXT IN IRAN'S RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND IRAQ

2.1 SOVIET – IRANIAN RELATIONS

In general, Iran's relations with the Soviet bloc through the 1950s had been unfriendly and tainted with suspicion.⁷⁵ Soviet pressures on Iran during World War II and its aftermath had not been forgotten, and the support of separatism in Azerbaijan and the role of the Tudeh Party were still vivid incidents.⁷⁶ Relations between Iran and the Soviet Union during this period were strained further by Soviet broadcasts that regularly and vigorously attacked the Shah.⁷⁷ Despite these facts, which had led successive Iranian governments to hold negative views of the Soviet Union, Iranian political leaders persisted in the belief that the only effective defence against Western pressures were to improve political relations with the Soviet Union.⁷⁸ Moreover, the Iranian government feared that the Soviet Union could drive domestic Iranian opposition to dangerous revolutionary activities. The Soviet Union though had hinted that it would be willing to compromise its supporters in Azerbaijan, hence it was believed by the Iranian government that the best defence against subversion would be good relations with the Soviet Union.⁷⁹ These considerations were further strengthened by economic reasons for good relations as much of the agricultural produce of Iran's north could be exported to the Soviet Union.⁸⁰ In addition, the US at this time steadfastly refused to join

⁷⁵ Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 48.

⁷⁶ Firuz Kazemzadeh, 'Soviet-Iranian Relations: A Quarter-Century of Freeze and Thaw', in *The Soviet Union and the Middle East: The post-World War II Era* by Ivo J. Lederer and Wayne Vucinich (eds) (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974), pp. 55-77, (p. 55).

⁷⁷ Dan Kurzman, *Subversion of the Innocents: Patterns of Communist Penetration in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia* (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 262.

⁷⁸ Shahram Chubin, 'Iran', in *The Cold War and the Middle East* by Yezid Sayigh and Avi Shlaim (eds) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 216-249 (p. 218).

⁷⁹ Chubin, p. 226.

⁸⁰ Wladyslaw W. Kulski, *Peaceful Co-Existence: An Analysis of Soviet Foreign Policy* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1959), p. 180.

the Central Treaty Organization despite Iranian demands.⁸¹ Whilst the United States had signed individual agreements with each of the nations in the Pact, it had never formally joined and instead participated as an observer and took part in committee meetings.⁸² Short of it becoming a full member of CENTO, there seemed to be no way to effectively reduce Iranian distrust of the US. Such doubt of American motives and intentions eventually led to increased demands for weapons, investment funds and loans.⁸³ It is important to note though that CENTO's establishment as the Baghdad Pact of 1955 had been driven not by the US but by British determination to create an effective instrument for cooperation with Middle Eastern states, and to get US commitment to consolidating it.⁸⁴ The British view on developing the Baghdad Pact, as well as British policy towards associating other states in regional defence arrangements, reflected Britain's overall political and economic interests in the area, as well as military concern over the Soviet threat. Britain was primarily concerned with protecting as much as possible of its political and economic interests and influence in the area.⁸⁵

Although Soviet citizens were rarely seen in Tehran, the Soviet presence was still strongly felt.⁸⁶ Iran-Soviet relations had been particularly strained since the abrupt dismissal in 1958 of the Soviet delegation which had arrived at Iran's invitation to discuss the signing of a nonaggression pact.⁸⁷ Since that time the full force of Soviet propaganda had been turned against Iran.⁸⁸ These radio broadcasts were supplemented by Tass reprints which were distributed in Tehran's streets by Iranian employees of the Soviet Embassy.⁸⁹ Two of these

⁸¹ Kazemzadeh, p. 76.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 32.

⁸⁴ Behcet Kemal Yesilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American Defence Policies in the Middle East, 1950-1959* (London: Frank Cass, 2005) p, 121.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Kazemzadeh, p. 76.

⁸⁷ Chubin, p. 232.

⁸⁸ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 19.

⁸⁹ Kurzman, p. 259.

men at the time were arrested, and the Soviet chargé d'affaires had promptly demanded their release, threatening dire consequences.⁹⁰ This sort of behaviour was viewed by Iran as reminiscent of Russian interferences in Iran during Morgan Shuster's mission as financial advisor to Persia (expelled against the Persian parliament's will in December 1911 under Russian and British pressure) and the period following the dissolution of the second Majles (dissolved under Russian pressure), even to the point of the West's nearly total lack of response to Soviet pressures.⁹¹

Also of note was that in July 1958 the Iraqi revolution had been followed by a renewal of activity by the Tudeh party and by calls to the Iranian people, broadcast from Leipzig, to rise against the Shah and his government.⁹² The USSR had not immediately adopted a similar tone, but in the autumn of 1958, Soviet propaganda elements began to warn the Iranian government against signing any treaty that would permit the United States to set up military bases on Iranian territory.⁹³ In an effort to prevent the Shah from any possible leaning toward the United States, the KGB had also arranged for the Iranian government to receive a fabricated copy of a letter allegedly sent by John Foster Dulles to the American ambassador in Teheran.⁹⁴ This letter had contained insulting references to the Shah.⁹⁵

By late 1958 the Soviet Union was proposing a nonaggression pact with Iran and offered it extensive economic assistance if Iran would promise not to sign any treaty with the United States.⁹⁶ In February of 1959 though, during negotiations for this Soviet-Iranian nonaggression pact, a dispute had arisen when the Iranians had asked that the treaty define 'military bases'.⁹⁷ The real purpose of this demand was rooted in articles 5 and 6 of the Soviet-Iran treaty of 1921, which gave Russia the right to send troops into Iran if it was ever

⁹⁰ Chubin, p. 230.

⁹¹ Chubin, p. 219.

⁹² Kazemzadeh, p. 61.

⁹³ Kurzman, p. 261

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Kurzman, p. 262.

⁹⁶ Chubin, p. 223.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

used by a third power as a base for operations against Russia.⁹⁸ These articles had long been considered dead and as early as 1921 Russia had declared in a note to Iran that these articles would be invoked only in the event of aggression by White Russian émigrés.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, in 1941 the USSR had used these articles to justify sending troops into Iran.¹⁰⁰ Iran's demand now for a clear definition of 'military bases' arose from its desire to see Articles 5 and 6 eliminated once and for all but no clear definition was formulated.¹⁰¹ In the course of the negotiations, the Soviets suggested that Iran withdraw from the Baghdad Pact.¹⁰² This made it clear that the Soviet Union wanted to prevent not only American influence in the form of financial and technical assistance, but also Iran's collaboration with the powers composing the Central Treaty Organization, the successor to the Baghdad Pact.

Immediately after the negotiations were broken off, the Soviet Union began a propaganda campaign directed against the military agreement between Iran and the United States ratified by the Majles on 8 March 1959.¹⁰³ The Soviets called Iran a semi colony and a military hangar of the United States, accused the Shah of breaking his word to the Soviet Union, and vilified him in a number of statements.¹⁰⁴ This campaign was intensified in May 1960, when, in Turkey, the government of Adnan Menderes fell. Moscow began to hope that a revolution would now break out in Iran, too.¹⁰⁵ On June 1, a *Pravda* headline declared, 'After South Korea and Turkey...Iran!'¹⁰⁶

By early 1961 Khrushchev had also prophesied in a Moscow interview with the American columnist Walter Lippmann that the Iranian people would soon revolt against the Shah.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁸ Kazemzadeh, p. 62.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 22.

¹⁰¹ Chubin, p. 230.

¹⁰² Kazemzadeh, p. 70.

¹⁰³ Kazemzadeh, p. 71.

¹⁰⁴ Chubin, p. 231.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Kurzman, p. 259.

¹⁰⁷ Kazemzadeh, p. 74.

“You will assert,” he said, “that the Shah has been overthrown by the communists, and we shall be very glad to have it thought in the world that all the progressive people in Iran recognise that we are the leaders of the progress of mankind.”¹⁰⁸ This prediction it can be said was based on far more than wishful thinking.

To objectively judge from conditions in Iran at the time it may have seemed rather surprising that a communist uprising had not yet occurred. The USSR and its sympathisers were faced with a situation highly suited to their ends due to geographical, political, economic, and social realities at the time.¹⁰⁹ With Iran sharing more than a thousand miles of its northeast frontier with the Soviet Union it could easily be infiltrated by Soviet intelligence and its agents. Also, as a land bridge to the Middle East and to the warm waters of the Persian Gulf, it remained as one of the USSR’s most coveted targets in the world, as evidenced by the massive radio propaganda campaign funded by the Soviet Union which was at the time seen as probably the most intensive in the world.¹¹⁰ Another important factor was the disparity in living standards between the few that were rich and the impoverished masses, with 1,000 landholding families possessing more than half of the arable land and wielding quasi feudal power over eighty percent of the population.¹¹¹ The ruling class at this time were also widely considered to be one of the most corrupt in the world.¹¹² The negative conditions of the masses were made all the more unbearable by the knowledge that Iran had vast oil wealth and received significant additional funds from the United States that somehow never seemed to reach them.¹¹³

Although the USSR had chosen to take a hard line against Iran, it still remained open to the prospect of improved relations.¹¹⁴ In contrast to Stalin, Khrushchev had recognised that the policies and actions of many national liberation movements were complementary to the

¹⁰⁸ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 22.

¹⁰⁹ Kazemzadeh, p. 74.

¹¹⁰ Chubin, p. 228.

¹¹¹ Kurzman, p. 266.

¹¹² Chubin, p. 229.

¹¹³ Kazemzadeh, p. 70.

¹¹⁴ Chubin, p. 240.

objectives which the Soviet government was pursuing beyond its own borders.¹¹⁵ Specifically, the ‘national bourgeoisie’ of the ‘colonial and dependent’ Third World countries that were determined on securing the political and economic independence of their states.¹¹⁶ Khrushchev argued that “those who are not against us, are with us”. In line with this approach, he extended the US-Soviet rivalry to the Third World and offered military, economic, and technical support to any anti-Western developing country that asked for Soviet assistance.¹¹⁷

The results of the change in Soviet policy were seemingly effective: a number of important Third World countries, among them India, Indonesia, Burma, Egypt, Syria, Ghana, and, subsequently, Iraq, declared their friendship for and improved relations with the USSR and sided with it on a number of international problems in which the USSR was directly involved.¹¹⁸

In some cases, the Soviet Union also sought to increase trade relations as a stepping stone to improved political ties, as happened with Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines.¹¹⁹ In Iran’s case the sequence was reversed, as a political rapprochement preceded extensive trade and aid agreements. Soviet efforts to eliminate Western economic influence from the Third World led to a situation in which Soviet and Western policies were often indistinguishable. Yet it was still suggested that Third World states could reduce their dependence on the West by securing loans, credits, technical assistance, and machinery from the USSR.¹²⁰

Soon after the Iran-Soviet rapprochement, in its policy towards the Middle East the Soviet Union was willing to let Iran play a major role in the Persian Gulf, even though it was a member of the much despised CENTO, because it perceived the country as providing some measure of stability and preferable to a large American presence.¹²¹ The Soviet Union

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Kazemzadeh, p. 71.

¹¹⁷ Kurzman, p. 263.

¹¹⁸ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 54.

¹¹⁹ Chubin, p. 238.

¹²⁰ Chubin, p. 239.

¹²¹ Kurzman, p. 265.

considered that a peaceful and safe Iran on its southern frontier could resist imperialist pressures.¹²² It was also viewed as likely that such an Iran would only have a favourable influence on its neighbours in the region. The Soviet Union consistently maintained that Persian Gulf states should be left to handle their own regional problems without outside interference, and such a position eventually acknowledged Iran's leading role among Persian Gulf states.¹²³ The Soviet Union also essentially sought to reduce American influence in Iran and weaken CENTO and therefore sought to establish and further economic and even military contacts with Iran.¹²⁴

From the Iranian perspective, economic ties with the USSR were seen as profitable and Iran wished to display some independence toward the United States.¹²⁵ However, an important motivating factor for Iran was the desire to foster a moderate Soviet policy in the Persian Gulf so that the USSR would not take a pro-Arab position and it was at least willing to accept the expansion of Iranian naval power.¹²⁶ For Iran it seemed clear that it could neither meet the Soviet threat by itself nor reliably count on its traditional policy of neutrality.¹²⁷ Soviet behaviour in Iran during and after World War II suggested that a country geopolitically situated like Iran could not expect to be neutral or non-aligned.¹²⁸

As far Iran's relations with the US were concerned, the Shah at this time had strongly opposed US efforts to pressure him into reforms, calling them "as more or less an American coup" and later referring to these years as "the worst period" of American interference.¹²⁹ He would also later denounce what he called the "great American 'liberals' wanting to impose their way of 'democracy' on others, thinking their way is wonderful."¹³⁰

¹²² Kazemzadeh, p. 76.

¹²³ Chubin, p. 240.

¹²⁴ Kurzman, p. 265.

¹²⁵ Kazemzadeh, p. 75.

¹²⁶ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 63.

¹²⁷ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 65.

¹²⁸ Kurzman, p. 269.

¹²⁹ Kazemzadeh, p. 76.

¹³⁰ Kazemzadeh, p. 77.

If the US desired reforms to succeed, the vehicles for change were to be the new Iranian prime minister, Ali Amini, and the very enterprising and active agriculture minister, Hassan Arsanjani. The US was optimistic in that Ali Amini, and the agriculture minister, both appeared to be reformists that could lead Iran in a liberal democratic direction.¹³¹ Even by 1962 when the Shah had removed these ministers from power, the US let itself be reassured, in part due to officials in the State Department hostile to these reforms, that viable reform was still under way because the Shah would reassert his continued commitment to social and economic reform.¹³² Despite the Shah's autocratic tendencies, it remained conceivable for the US that the Shah would undertake the changes necessary to introduce parliamentary government. It was widely believed by key US officials that the Shah had been reluctant to back the coup against Mossadegh in 1953, and that the responsibility for making oil concessions to the British and Americans was due to the actions of General Zahedi. Iranian nationalism and the Shah were not yet hostile enough to prevent the country's advancement.¹³³ The reality remained though that in the years following his restoration, the Shah had made great efforts to strengthen his authority and had given no indication that he would introduce a broader sharing of governmental responsibilities through parliament and by establishing a truly constitutional monarchy.¹³⁴ Large-scale American assistance at this time including many technical advisers, initially accounted for some sixty percent of Iran's budget.¹³⁵

As the Shah would later mention in an interview on October 1973: "If I've been able to do something, or rather a lot, for Iran, it's due to the small detail that I happen to be king. To get things done you need power, and to keep power you shouldn't have to ask permission or advice from anybody.... I wouldn't know what to do with democracy! It's all yours, you can

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 255.

¹³³ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 69.

¹³⁴ Smith, p. 258.

¹³⁵ Smith, p. 259.

have it! Your wonderful democracy! You'll see, in a few years, where your wonderful democracy leads."¹³⁶

Also, asked in 1961, why he was not preparing to become a constitutional monarch, the Shah replied, "When the Iranians learn to behave like Swedes, I will behave like the King of Sweden."¹³⁷ As the number of challengers to the Shah increased, his determination to maintain his monopoly on power grew ever stronger. Traditionally powerful groups such as landowners and the religious authorities had also come to feel more and more threatened by the developments unleashed by the Shah's modernisation plans.¹³⁸ Society as a whole was also ill prepared for such rapid modernisation.

The Shah though remained determined that his power was key to pushing through the necessary reforms for Iran.¹³⁹ He therefore refused to delegate responsibilities to able ministers or to devolve powers to parties and a parliamentary government.¹⁴⁰ He was also fearful of challengers to his power, which in some cases was understandable, due to popular politicians and powerful military leaders that had at certain points in his rule threatened to reduce his authority.¹⁴¹ Fearing that this once might again occur, he would eventually force the resignation of capable leaders or as he was very skilled at doing, divide any potential opponents so as to avoid a joint challenge to his power.¹⁴²

It can be said that the US was particularly concerned about the stability of Iran. In late May of 1961 according to CIA intelligence on the short term outlook for Iran there was concern about rising unrest which indicated that that the pressures against the Shah's regime were reaching a pivotal point.¹⁴³ This political unrest was driven mostly by deteriorating economic

¹³⁶ Chubin, p. 244.

¹³⁷ Smith, p. 255.

¹³⁸ Smith, p. 257

¹³⁹ Smith, p. 257

¹⁴⁰ Smith, p. 258

¹⁴¹ Kazemzadeh, p. 74.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ United States. Central Intelligence Agency, *Short Term Outlook for Iran*, Special National Intelligence Estimate Number 34-2-61. Created 28/5/1961, p. 2.

conditions which ultimately resulted in the fall of the Sharif-Emami government in May of 1961. Giving in both to domestic demands for change and to pressure for reform from President John F. Kennedy's administration, the Shah had named Ali Amini, a wealthy landlord and senior civil servant, as prime minister. The newly appointed Prime Minister Dr Amini was considered to be a strong advocate of reform and received a mandate from the Shah to dissolve parliament and rule for six months by cabinet decree. The CIA observed that 'the Shah was apparently frightened by the recent chaos into delegating considerable authority to Amini'. Although the CIA considered Amini's task of dealing with Iran's many political and economic problems a difficult one, they still considered him to be 'an effective administrator' with 'a wide range of contacts among political and military leaders'. The CIA was further optimistic of Amini's abilities, suggesting that he would 'make a more serious effort than his predecessors to avoid subservience'. Despite this acknowledgement the CIA still recognised that even with the delegation of power, Iran's stability still lay in the Shah's hands. The CIA observed that the Shah strongly believed in 'concentrating power in his own hands' and that he was 'extremely skilful at manipulating factions and leaders' with no Prime Minister having been able to stand up to him since Mossadegh. The Shah, as observed by the CIA, was only ever willing to delegate authority during moments of great instability only to step back in once the situation had been stabilised. Rather than permanently reduce his own powers the CIA concluded that 'he might abdicate and leave the country rather than become a mere figurehead'. Barring a military coup which would oust the Shah, Amini or both, a struggle for power between the Shah and Amini was seen as a further source of instability within Iran which the Soviet Union could take advantage of.¹⁴⁴

As shown by other CIA documents, another important factor for stability within Iran was considered to be the military.¹⁴⁵ It was observed that the Iranian military would be 'a crucial factor in future developments'. They also recognised that competing factions and ideologies existed within the Iranian military. Those sympathetic to Amini's reforms were thought to be many of the junior and middle level officers as well as a number from the top ranks. In

¹⁴⁴ United States. Central Intelligence Agency. Short Term Outlook for Iran, Special National Intelligence Estimate Number 34-2-61. Created 28/5/1961, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

contrast, the more senior elements of the officer corps were seen as favouring the status quo as their vested interests were threatened by Amini's reforms.

As far as political parties were concerned, the nationalists were viewed by the CIA as a key factor in determining the success of the Amini government.¹⁴⁶ They were observed as having become increasingly active politically, with its radical wing likely to oppose Amini from the very beginning. The moderates were viewed as more likely to work with him but only if Amini was able and willing to fulfil some of their objectives. A major problem for Amini was seen as his ability to acquire enough support from urban nationalists so as to dampen their capability to pressure the regime.

The Tudeh party had long been a source of concern for the US but by May of 1961 the CIA could conclude with confidence that the Tudeh were no longer a major political factor, with almost all of its leaders in jail or in exile, mostly as a result of the SAVAK's efforts. Instead the CIA was concerned that the Tudeh party would now seek to 'penetrate nationalist groups'. If political instability were to increase the Tudeh party was also seen as likely to be able to 'reconstitute itself' and 'emerge as a major force'.

The SAVAK at this time was also adjusting to its recently appointed director, Hassan Pakravan, who had been appointed in May 1961 as the replacement for Teymour Bakhtiar, the first director of the SAVAK, who had quickly fallen from favour with the Shah over his secretive contacts with the US.¹⁴⁷ Pakravan's intelligence background included a two year stint as chief of army intelligence from 1951 to 1953 and since the establishment of the SAVAK had served as the organisation's deputy chief in charge of operations.¹⁴⁸ Despite this background Pakravan remained unenthusiastic about his new role.¹⁴⁹ The Shah at this time had also been involved in clearing all Bakhtiar sympathisers out of the SAVAK with the desired end result of acquiring an intelligence and security organisation that was completely loyal to him and best organised to defend his rule.¹⁵⁰ At the same time a small number of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Fardüst, vol. 1, p. 408.

¹⁴⁸ Fardüst, vol. 1, p. 410.

¹⁴⁹ Fardüst, vol. 1, p. 423.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

American advisers from the CIA were also asked to leave and were replaced with advisers from the Israeli intelligence community.¹⁵¹

Similarly, in the Soviet Union Khrushchev had sought to exert his control over Soviet intelligence.¹⁵² Since the beginning of 1959 Khrushchev had been able to direct the activities of Soviet intelligence organisations with a great deal of control.¹⁵³ Khrushchev's manoeuvring inside Soviet Intelligence had included the replacement of KGB head General Ivan Serov on December 25, 1958 with the young Aleksey N. Shelepin, then only forty-one years old.¹⁵⁴ Shelepin's predecessor, General Serov, was put in charge of the GRU.¹⁵⁵ Shelepin's choice assured Khrushchev of a loyal ally in a post absolutely vital to his security, a person who could be trusted not to create any opposing factions of his own.¹⁵⁶ Shelepin's background was in youth activities and he had been the First Secretary of the Komsomol until his KGB assignment.¹⁵⁷ During the year following Shelepin's appointment, extensive changes were made in the upper echelons of the KGB and there was a steady revival in the Soviet press of laudatory references to the KGB and its 'Chekists.' "It is our task," Shelepin stressed, "to strengthen the state security organs, even more actively to catch the imperialist spies and scouts, and expose in time all the designs and political intrigue of the enemy."¹⁵⁸

Only a year earlier on December 20, 1957, the KGB had also celebrated its fortieth anniversary (its predecessor the "Cheka" having been established in 1917), with much fanfare.¹⁵⁹ Khrushchev and the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Peter Deriabin and Frank Gibney, *The Secret World* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), p. 210.

¹⁵³ Deriabin and Gibney, p. 268.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Peter H. Juviler and Henry W. Morton, *Soviet Policy-Making; Studies of Communism in Transition* (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 195.

¹⁵⁶ Deriabin and Gibney, p. 269.

¹⁵⁷ Deriabin and Gibney, p. 270.

¹⁵⁸ Juviler and Morton, p. 196.

¹⁵⁹ Deriabin and Gibney, p. 272.

and the Council of Ministers of the USSR at this time joined in ‘warm’ congratulations to the Chekists on their ‘glorious jubilee.’¹⁶⁰

Following the announcement of the Shah’s ‘White Revolution’ modernisation programme in 1963, it remained uncertain whether these reforms would proceed relatively peacefully or whether violence and revolution were on the horizon.¹⁶¹ This state of affairs existed despite the fact that one of the core goals of the White Revolution had been to prevent what many considered at the time to be the danger of a bloody revolution from below.¹⁶² The reform efforts driven by the Shah and formulated between 1958 and 1963 though had already helped in one way or another to bring basic changes to Iranian society.¹⁶³ These modernisation efforts had sought to address the expectations of an increasingly politically aware general public as well as an ambitious and growing professional socio-economic group.¹⁶⁴ In carrying out these reforms the strength of the landlord class had been impaired and elements of the working class and a new and growing managerial class had increasingly acquired responsibilities.¹⁶⁵ In many instances though the utopian vision of reforms bore little semblance to reality as a result of unequal imposition of laws and technical difficulties in implementation.¹⁶⁶

Economically Iran was slowly emerging from a recession which had begun in 1961 as the result of badly implemented anti-inflationary measures and the consequent loss of business confidence.¹⁶⁷ Further exacerbating the latter were the reform efforts which had created much uncertainty in the Iranian business community.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the country’s resources, particularly its oil revenues, were seen as adequate in rapidly developing the national

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, p. 160.

¹⁶² Ali M. Ansari, 'The Myth of the White Revolution: Mohammad Reza Shah, 'Modernization' and the Consolidation of Power', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 37 (2001), 1-24 (p. 2).

¹⁶³ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, p. 158.

¹⁶⁴ Ansari, 'The Myth of the White Revolution...', p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, pp. 158 - 159.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Chubin, p. 220.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

economy.¹⁶⁹ The normalisation of relations with the Soviet Union had also led to greater confidence for the economic future of the country, both for security reasons and also that Iran had become less reliant on US economic aid.¹⁷⁰

Although there had been a very slow improvement in ties since 1962, by 1964 there had been few further significant developments in Iran-Soviet relations that would have suggested a further advancement in the rapprochement.¹⁷¹ This less hostile approach by both countries was considered normal and it seemed that both sides were satisfied with the state of affairs which had developed over the last year and a half.¹⁷² This was in keeping with the Shah's general strategy to maintain Iran's strongly pro-Western orientation and this was supported both by the bureaucratic and military establishments.¹⁷³ Iran's intellectuals though still hoped for a far more neutral approach in Iran's relations with the Soviet Union and the West, which was an approach also supported by the National Front.¹⁷⁴ The Soviet Union's willingness to maintain a path of normalised relations with Iran was partly an indication that its all out subversive efforts had not been as beneficial as had been hoped.¹⁷⁵

It remained clear though that even with the normalisation of relations and reduction in overt propaganda, the silent war between Iranian and Soviet intelligence was alive and well, with one indication of this being that Soviet backed clandestine radio stations broadcasting into Iran were still strongly criticising the Shah's regime.¹⁷⁶ Indeed the Iranian government had intervened to reduce the volume and emphasis of pro-Soviet publicity in the Iranian press.¹⁷⁷ Improved Soviet-Iranian ties also allowed the Shah a reasonable amount of room to claim a

¹⁶⁹ Chubin, p. 225.

¹⁷⁰ Kazemzadeh, p. 113.

¹⁷¹ Kazemzadeh, p. 118.

¹⁷² Kazemzadeh, p. 119.

¹⁷³ Kuniholm, p. 74.

¹⁷⁴ Chubin, p. 223.

¹⁷⁵ Kuniholm, p. 74.

¹⁷⁶ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 39.

¹⁷⁷ Chubin, p. 226.

status of nonalignment for Iran and to appease the sentiments of many Iranians who had long considered Iran to be too friendly towards the West.¹⁷⁸ US-Soviet tensions were also very slowly beginning to ease and Iran's improved relations with the USSR countered the Shah's concerns that the US could possibly lose interest in supporting and defending Iran against any future hostile Soviet actions.¹⁷⁹ It was clear though that the prevailing view within Iran was that even with the normalisation of relations, the Soviet Union had not abandoned its original designs on Iran.¹⁸⁰ It is also important to note that despite their proposals for large scale economic projects, the Soviet Union had not yet acted upon these promises, but it had provided a \$38.8 million 10-year credit for Iran and delivered much needed agricultural equipment.¹⁸¹ A further point of concern for Iran was that eight combat-strength army divisions remained stationed in the southern USSR facing Iran.¹⁸²

As far as relations with the US were concerned Iran's friendly stance towards the US remained the cornerstone of Iran's foreign policy, but gradual changes were being made in Iran's ties with the US, driven in part by the Shah who for reasons relating to domestic politics and international prestige, saw a need to appear more independent.¹⁸³ In addition, rising oil revenues and an improvement in agricultural output were also important economic factors that allowed Iran to acquire further financial credits from other countries, leading it to reduce its dependence upon US economic assistance.¹⁸⁴ Although Iran had begun to show a certain level of economic independence from the US, security-wise Iran remained very much

¹⁷⁸ Kuniholm, p. 77.

¹⁷⁹ Kazemzadeh, p. 121.

¹⁸⁰ Chubin, p. 227.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² United States. Central Intelligence Agency, *Iran*, National Intelligence Estimate Number 34-54. Created 20/5/1964, p. 12.

¹⁸³ Kail Ellis, "Superpower Relations with Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan," in *Soviet-American Relations with Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan* by Hafeez Malik (ed.) (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), pp. 395-420 (pp.401-402).

¹⁸⁴ Ellis, p. 401.

dependant on the US for assistance.¹⁸⁵ The Shah it seemed was not too disturbed by this reality as he had been pleased with the sizable number of American troops that had entered Iran in order to take part in joint US-Iranian military exercises.¹⁸⁶ The Shah had also allowed the US to operate special US military facilities on Iranian soil and the US government understood that the Shah would be unlikely to curtail the numbers of US military personnel or activities in the following years.¹⁸⁷ In addition, the Shah had been somewhat pleased with the US's five year military aid plan (1963-1967) which had partly reduced any pre-existing concerns over the US's security commitment towards Iran.¹⁸⁸

The CENTO alliance remained important to Iran as a formal defence link to the West and because it provided an additional source for aid.¹⁸⁹ The Shah and the Iranian government though were not fully satisfied with the alliance.¹⁹⁰ They had been irritated by the refusal of the US and the British to consider alleged threats from non-Communist regional states as part of the alliance agreements and did not consider the US to be fully committed to the pact.¹⁹¹ Regionally the Shah during this time period had been primarily concerned with the possibility of Gamal Abdel Nasser actively plotting to overthrow his regime, by way of Iraq and other small Persian Gulf states.¹⁹² Though Nasser had made some overtures to improve relations, the Shah remained distrustful of his motives.¹⁹³ Iran also remained dissatisfied with CENTO's economic development.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁵ V. T. Lewis and R. Frye, *The United States and Turkey and Iran* (Hamden, CT: The Shoe String Press Archon Books, 1971), p.271.

¹⁸⁶ Ellis, p. 405.

¹⁸⁷ Ellis, p. 406.

¹⁸⁸ Mark J Gasiorowski, "Security Relations between the United States and Iran, 1953-1978," in *Neither East nor West: Iran, The Soviet Union, and the United States* by Nikki R. Keddie and Mark J. Gasiorowski (eds) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 145-165, here p. 153.

¹⁸⁹ Gasiorowski, p. 155.

¹⁹⁰ Lewis and Frye, p. 273.

¹⁹¹ Gasiorowski, p. 156.

¹⁹² Hooshang Amirahmadi and Nader Entessar, *Iran and the Arab World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 75.

¹⁹³ Amirahmadi and Entessar, p. 76.

2.2 IRAN-IRAQ RELATIONS

The Iraqi monarchy headed by King Faisal II was overthrown on July 14, 1958, in a military coup led by Abd-al-Karim Qasim, who despite maintaining a neutral policy towards Britain and the West, including in the military field, sought a reduction in Iraq's heavy foreign dependence.¹⁹⁵ In seeking to accomplish this goal Qasim accepted Soviet aid and immediately restored diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union and soon started to purchase Soviet arms.¹⁹⁶ Much to the Soviet Union's delight, Iraq's membership in the Baghdad Pact which had existed since 1955 was officially terminated by Qasim in March 1959 (the Baghdad Pact was soon renamed the Central Treaty Organisation).¹⁹⁷ The Soviet Union also welcomed the revolution in Iraq as a tremendous blow to British and US interests in the region and extended huge economic and military assistance to Iraq, modelled upon the aid it had been giving to Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt since the middle of the decade.¹⁹⁸ The Soviet Union continued to express a great deal of interest in the newly created republic and this was not surprising as Iraq had by then emerged as an important Arab state whose population base and economic potential (above all its huge oil reserves) had moved it into a position of regional importance.¹⁹⁹

In contrast to Stalin, Khrushchev recognised that the policies and actions of many national liberation movements were complementary to the objectives of the Soviet government.²⁰⁰ Countries such as Iraq, viewed by the Soviet Union as being bent on securing its political and

¹⁹⁴ Lewis and Frye, p. 278.

¹⁹⁵ Manūčehr Pārsādūst, *Rīšehā-ye Tārīhī-ye Ehtelāfāt-e Irān va 'Erāq* (Tehrān: Šerkat-e Sahāmī-ye Enteshār, 1992), p. 57.

¹⁹⁶ Oles M. Smolansky and Bettie M. Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 15.

¹⁹⁷ Smolansky, p. 16.

¹⁹⁸ Adeed Dawisha, "Egypt," in *The Cold War and the Middle East*, by Yezid Sayigh and Avi Shlaim (eds) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 27-47, (p. 32).

¹⁹⁹ Abbas Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq Oil, Wars, Destruction of Development and Prospects, 1950-2010* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 35

²⁰⁰ Smolansky, pp. 13-14.

economic independence from the West, were viewed as undermining the entire “capitalist” system.²⁰¹ Conversely, Qasim’s rise to power and his actions were viewed with alarm in the West and by April 1959, Allen Dulles, the director of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, described the situation in Iraq “as the most dangerous in the world”.²⁰²

For Iran, the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy sent shockwaves through the Iranian government to the point that upon receiving news of the coup d’état, the Iranian military and the Imperial Guard had been placed on high alert.²⁰³ The Imperial Guard in particular maintained this level of alert for a protracted period of time as fears remained that opposition elements, inspired by events in Iraq, would attempt their own coup d’état.²⁰⁴ The Shah’s fears for his throne were coupled with concerns that the Soviet Union would gain further inroads into the Arab World and that a joint Soviet-Arab effort from the north and west could act as a destabilisation force.²⁰⁵ In addition, in December 1959, Iraqi-Iranian relations rapidly deteriorated when Qasim, reacting to Iran’s reopening of the Shatt al Arab dispute, nullified a previous border agreement made in 1937 and claimed sovereignty over the anchorage area near Abadan.²⁰⁶

The freedoms given to Iraqi communists by Qasim along with the long border that was shared with Iraq further contributed to Iran’s concerns.²⁰⁷ The SAVAK, still in its infancy and dependent upon other intelligence services, received information in November of 1958 from a Western intelligence source indicating that a number of young Iranian officers were making preparations for a coup d’état against the Pahlavi monarchy.²⁰⁸ It seemed that the aid for such

²⁰¹ Smolansky, p. 14.

²⁰² Stephen M. Wait, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p.74.

²⁰³ Pārsādūst, p. 63.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Lederer and Vucinich, p. 73.

²⁰⁶ Pārsādūst, p. 65.

²⁰⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā’āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 6 (document no. 2549-3-2).

²⁰⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā’āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 7 (document no. 1409).

planning had come from the newly established Iraqi government.²⁰⁹ As the SAVAK were informed, the young Iranian officers had not deemed the moment to be right for a coup d'état and were instead seeking to create unrest in Iran's northern Kurdish regions as a distraction before proceeding with their plans in Tehran.²¹⁰ Approximately a month after this report the SAVAK's foreign intelligence section stated that in Iraqi military circles discussions were raised which indicated that the Soviet Union was active in using Iraq as a base of operations for a coup d'état in Iran.²¹¹ This intelligence suggested that on 24 August of that year several thousand communist Iraqi Kurds together with a hundred Iranian communists had entered Iran and were awaiting Soviet instructions to begin disruptive operations in Iran.²¹² In addition to these developments, the SAVAK's foreign intelligence section learned that the Qasim government was beginning to display an interest in Iran's Khuzestan region by increasing cross-border operations that were aimed at creating unrest.²¹³ Further concerning Iran's security was Iraq's claim to sovereignty over the newly independent state of Kuwait in June of 1961.²¹⁴ However, when the Arab League unanimously accepted Kuwait's membership, Iraq broke off diplomatic relations with its Arab neighbours and thus Qasim was left isolated.²¹⁵

A fierce propaganda war erupted between Iran and Iraq and the SAVAK's foreign intelligence section was undoubtedly to play an important role. The revolution in Iraq had left in the minds of the Iranian public a realisation that Mohammad Reza Shah could suffer a fate similar to that of the deposed King Faisal II of Iraq and as a result propaganda from Iraq at that moment in time was viewed with greater concern than the daily propaganda emanating

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 8 (document no. 14014).

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 14 (document no. 1468).

²¹⁴ Pārsādūst, p. 75.

²¹⁵ Pārsādūst, p. 76.

from the Soviet Union. Yet Soviet support for communist activities in Iraq was also deemed crucial in potentially undermining the Pahlavi monarchy.²¹⁶

In late February 1959, a SAVAK foreign intelligence report stated that a number of well trained Iraqi Communist Party and National Democratic Party members were being dispatched to Iran to spread subversive propaganda.²¹⁷ In this same report the SAVAK also received news in June of 1959 that the Iraqi Communist Party had sent two hundred of its armed members carrying propaganda material to Iran and were to also carry out any opportunistic subversive activities that would undermine the Iranian monarchy. The SAVAK's foreign intelligence directorate also discovered that communists from across the region, including Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan were now heading to Iraq and making it their primary base of operations.

Iraq it seemed had in a brief period of time become a headquarters for communists in the Middle East with Abd al-Karim Qasim opening a conference for Middle Eastern communist parties. The Iranian communist party, the Tudeh, had also established a strong presence in Iraq and were aiding in the training of the Iraqi Communist Party. Soon after the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy a number of senior Tudeh party members had moved to Iraq.²¹⁸ Despite their presence on foreign soil they were to remain the responsibility of the SAVAK's internal security directorate.²¹⁹ The presence of the Tudeh Party in Iraq was to further strain Iran's relations with Iraq.²²⁰ Despite Qasim's strong early support for the region's communist organisations, upon removing the threat to his regime posed by pan-Arab and pro-Nasserite forces, Qasim would later initiate efforts aimed at weakening the Iraqi Communist Party through the harassment and sporadic assassinations of Communists.²²¹

²¹⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 14 (document no. 1468).

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 7 (document no. 14014).

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Marr, pp. 165-166.

Developments in Iraq had created enough concern within Iran that in response to subversive Iraqi activities the SAVAK had attempted to restore the Iraqi monarchy and create further problems for Qasim by fuelling in September of 1961 a Kurdish insurgency in Iraq.²²² Earlier, the Shah had visited Jordan in November of 1959 and along with King Hussein condemned Qasim's rule. Both leaders had agreed on plans to remove Qasim from power.²²³ Although attempts at restoring the monarchy inevitably failed due to the lack of a support base, support for a Kurdish insurgency succeeded in draining a great deal of Iraq's military resources.²²⁴ Qasim had refused to grant Iraq's Kurds administrative self-rule and in return for their support to create an insurgency and collect intelligence on the Iraqi government, Iran offered the Kurds greater autonomy in Iran and more attention to their welfare.²²⁵ Its support of Iraq's Kurds, driven by self-interest would last until the signing of the 1975 Algiers Agreement.²²⁶

The Soviet Union too had begun to slowly turn against Qasim due to its disapproval of Qasim's efforts against the Iraqi Communist Party and were now displaying sympathy for the Kurdish rebels.²²⁷ Since the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958 the Soviet Union had consistently backed what it described as legitimate Kurdish demands for national autonomy within the confines of the Iraqi republic.²²⁸ In the early stages this Soviet attitude was reflected, among other things, in the position adopted by the Iraqi Communist Party.²²⁹ A report on the subject, published by the organisation's Central Committee in March 1962, argued that 'democracy will be meaningless, mere nonsense for the Kurdish people, unless they are guaranteed the real possibility of enjoying their national rights and managing their

²²² Pārsādūst, p. 72.

²²³ Pārsādūst, p. 75.

²²⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 7 (document no. 14014).

²²⁵ Īsā, pp. 63-65.

²²⁶ Īsā, p. 193.

²²⁷ Smolansky, p. 65.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

own affairs and this can be achieved only through autonomy'.²³⁰ The term was explained to include 'an administrative territory whose affairs should be in the hands of an elective legislative body which, in turn, would elect an executive body responsible to the people'.

The Soviet Union and the Iraqi Communist Party denied Iraqi allegations that past Kurdish revolts against the central government of Iraq were a result of 'foreign intrigues'. They were, rather, the outcome of 'national oppression being intensified to the extreme'. For this reason, Kurdish aspirations were deemed worthy of Soviet and Iraqi Communist support. Moreover, 'national autonomy for Iraqi Kurdistan would reinforce militant Arab-Kurdish fraternity against imperialism and [domestic] reactionaries, would further democracy, safeguard national independence and contribute to social progress'. Conversely, any attempts to subdue the Kurds by means of brute force would merely 'facilitate the intrigues of imperialism and reaction aimed at disrupting the unity of the two peoples'. Furthermore, the Soviet Union's (re-)improved relations with Egypt in 1962 had in its eyes reduced the strategic importance of close relations with Iraq.²³¹ Qasim's failure to quell the Kurdish insurgency and the reduction in support from the Soviet Union had substantially weakened his position, leaving his rule open to collapse.²³²

Events in Iraq were presenting a great number of challenges for Iranian foreign policy and further instability was created by Qasim's overthrow on February 8, 1963 as a result of a Ba'athist coup. The pan-Arabist Ba'athists, led by Abdul Salam Arif were now aligned with Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser who had made no secret of his opposition to the Shah and Iran's aims in the region.²³³ Nasser had accused the Shah of being a tool of imperialism and had all but invited the Shah's subjects to assassinate their King.²³⁴ Egypt's Ministry of Religious Affairs had also directed imams to preach sermons against the Shah as a 'traitor to Islam' and

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ P.J. Vatikiotis, 'The Soviet Union and Egypt: The Nasser Years', in *The Soviet Union and the Middle East: The post-World War II Era* by Ivo J. Lederer and Wayne Vucinich (eds) (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974), pp. 121-133, (p. 128).

²³² Marr, p. 179.

²³³ Pārsādūst, p. 85.

²³⁴ Pārsādūst, p. 75.

Nasser had urged other Arab governments to withdraw their ambassadors from Tehran.²³⁵ Nasser had been particularly enraged by Iran's policy towards Israel.²³⁶ The Shah had claimed that although Iran did not formally recognise Israel, it did recognise the Israeli government *de facto*.²³⁷ Nasser considered such recognition traitorous for an Islamic nation particularly as he had become aware that Iranian oil had been secretly sold to Israel, in defiance of an Arab League boycott.²³⁸ Although the SAVAK had initially feared that relations with Iraq could be further strained as a result of its alignment with Nasser, the Ba'athist opposition to the communists in time proved to be beneficial to Iran-Iraq relations.²³⁹ This animosity towards Iraqi communists by the Ba'athists had arisen primarily from their earlier persecution by Iraqi Communists at the end of the 1950s for Ba'athist support of a union with the Nasserist United Arab Republic.²⁴⁰ In addition, the Iraqi Communists were perceived by the Ba'athists as being ideological competitors and therefore a threat to Ba'athist rule.²⁴¹

The SAVAK's foreign intelligence section were receiving reports that a number of Iraqi communists were now fleeing Iraq and taking refuge in Kurdish regions and Iran.²⁴² A contingent of these Iraqi communists in Tehran had been sentenced to death in Iraq and on the orders of the SAVAK were arrested and later deported to Iraq.²⁴³ In the years 1962 to 1963 further reports of an Iraqi crackdown on communist organisations, led by the Ba'athist National Guard militia, were being received, including the executions of senior Iraqi Communist Party members in March 1963 which had led to demonstrations in Baghdad that

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Chubin, p. 223

²³⁷ Chubin, p. 224

²³⁸ Pārsādūst, p. 75.

²³⁹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 7 (document no. 14014).

²⁴⁰ Marr, p. 165.

²⁴¹ Marr, p. 186.

²⁴² Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 7 (document no. 14014).

²⁴³ Ibid.

were subsequently broken up by Iraqi authorities.²⁴⁴ The executions had included the killing of the general secretary of the Iraqi Communist Party, Husayn al-Radi.²⁴⁵ The purging of Iraqi communists and their sympathisers from public positions also led to Iranian communists being arrested, imprisoned and eventually deported to Iran.²⁴⁶

Although the new Ba'athist regime had sought to maintain friendly relations with the Soviet Union, the persecution of Iraqi communists had resulted in a rapid deterioration of Iraq–USSR relations.²⁴⁷ Only two weeks following the overthrow of Qasim, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued a statement condemning the ‘bloody terror’ against the Marxists in Iraq and further protested in March at the killing of Husayn al-Radi.²⁴⁸ Protest gatherings were also staged in the Soviet Union including a demonstration outside the Iraqi embassy in Moscow.²⁴⁹ There was no mistaking the animosity of the Soviet Union towards the new Ba'athist regime as the Soviet media described it as fascist whilst an East German radio station broadcast appeals for the Iraqi Communist Party to overthrow the Iraqi regime.²⁵⁰ Relations further deteriorated in late 1963 when fighting between the Iraqi government and Kurdish rebels flared up once again, with the Soviet Union describing Iraq's actions as ‘genocide’.²⁵¹ Fearing that the Kurdish insurgency would pressure Iraq into joining CENTO, the Soviet Union filed official complaints with the UN against Syria, Turkey and Iran and blamed them for fuelling the insurgency.²⁵² Iraq was also explicitly warned that its

²⁴⁴Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 14 (document no. 1468).

²⁴⁵ Smolansky, p. 99.

²⁴⁶Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 14 (document no. 1468).

²⁴⁷ Marr, p. 186.

²⁴⁸ Haim Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968-1988: In the Shadow of the Iraq-Iran Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992) p. 6.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Tripp, p. 195.

²⁵¹ Tripp, p. 196.

²⁵² Smolansky, p. 16.

security would be threatened were it to join CENTO.²⁵³ Soviet military aid to Iraq was substantially reduced and relations with Eastern bloc states such as Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic were also negatively affected.²⁵⁴

In November 1963, nine months after Qasim's overthrow there was yet more upheaval in Iraq as, much to the Soviet Union's satisfaction, the ruling Ba'ath party was overthrown in a bloodless coup.²⁵⁵ The failure of the Ba'athists to achieve a viable peace settlement with the Kurds, growing animosity towards Egypt's Nasser and discontent with its actions against its opponents had all contributed to the party's downfall.²⁵⁶ As the newly elected president, Abdul Salam Arif became Iraq's new ruler and set about to improve relations with the Soviet Union and other communist states, which included a halt to the violence against Iraqi Communist Party members.²⁵⁷ Although there was no longer any organised attempt at persecuting Iraq's communists there were occasional instances in which actions against Iraqi communists were tacitly supported, suggesting that the new government was unwilling to allow any serious challenge to its rule.²⁵⁸ Iran viewed Iraq under the new leadership of Arif with some apprehension, fearing that Arif would not last long and that his more lenient attitude towards communists did not bode well for his future position.²⁵⁹ Iran was also displeased with Arif's willingness to pursue a Nasserite model of socialism and establish friendly relations between Iraq and the UAR. Of further concern for Iran, the Soviet Union, following its rapprochement with Iraq, had by July 1964 resumed arms shipments to Iraq.²⁶⁰

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Smolansky, p. 17.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Tripp, p. 196.

²⁵⁷ Lederer and Vucinich, p. 132

²⁵⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 14 (document no. 1468).

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 14 (document no. 1468).

In February 1964 Arif succeeded in reaching a peace settlement with the Kurds but this would prove to be short-lived as by April 1965, the two sides were once again engaged in hostilities.²⁶¹ Military support provided by Iran helped the Kurds win important victories over the Iraqi army.²⁶² These defeats forced the Iraqi government to propose a more far-reaching settlement to the Kurdish problem, including amnesty, use of the Kurdish language in Kurdish areas, Kurdish administration of educational, health, and municipal institutions in Kurdish areas, and the promise of early elections by which the Kurds would gain proportional representation in national as well as in provincial assemblies.²⁶³

By the spring of 1964, Arif had managed to completely outmanoeuvre the military Ba'athists and had filled the top leadership posts with civilian Nasserites. Arif and the Nasserite officers took steps to integrate the military, economic, and political policies of Iraq with those of Egypt and this was expected to lead to the union of the two countries by 1966. (The United Arab Republic [UAR], which Iraq expected to join, existed from 1958 to 1961 and consisted of Egypt and Syria. Arif proposed that Iraq join, partly as an anticommunist measure, but this union never occurred. In May 1964, the Joint Presidency Council was formed, and in December the Unified Political Command was established to advance the ultimate constitutional union of the two countries. In July 1964, Arif announced that in future all political parties would combine to form the Iraqi Arab Socialist Union. Most important for the future, Arif adopted Nasser's socialist program, calling for the nationalisation of insurance companies, banks, and such essential industries as steel, cement, and construction, along with the tobacco industry, tanneries, and flour mills. Arif's nationalisation programme proved to be one of the few legacies of the proposed Egypt-Iraq union. However, by 1965, Arif had lost his enthusiasm for the proposed union, which had received only lukewarm support from Nasser. Arif began ousting Nasserite officers from the government. As a result, the newly appointed prime minister, Brigadier Arif Abd ar Razzaq, who was also a leading Nasserite, made an unsuccessful coup attempt on September 12, 1965.

²⁶¹ Pārsādūst, p. 75.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

Despite remaining border disputes, Arif also later sought to improve relations with Iran.²⁶⁴ This rapprochement was significant because it denied the Kurds access to their traditional place of asylum, which allowed recovery from Iraqi attacks.²⁶⁵ General Abdul Rahman Arif who had upon Abdul Salam Arif's death become president on 13 April 1966, visited Tehran in the spring of 1967 and at the conclusion of his visit, it was announced that the countries would hold more meetings aimed at joint oil exploration in the Naft-e Shah and Naft Khaneh border regions.²⁶⁶ They also agreed to continue negotiations on toll collection and navigation rights on the Shatt al Arab and on the demarcation of the Persian Gulf's continental shelf.²⁶⁷ Iran's relations with the second Arif government until the end of the decade remained troubled though due to his government's support for closer ties with Nasser.²⁶⁸ This was particularly worrisome for Iran as the Egyptian government had been active at this time in seeking to influence Iran's Arab minority and there were fears that Iraq and Egypt were jointly attempting to create unrest in Khuzestan.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Tripp, p. 198.

²⁶⁶ Pārsādūst, p. 75.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 14 (document no. 1468).

3 BACKGROUND AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CREATION OF AN IRANIAN FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AND COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY

To understand why Iran felt it necessary to establish foreign intelligence (FI) and counter-intelligence (CI) capabilities, one must first understand the conditions which lead a state to acquire such resources. However, before shedding some light on these conditions and their outcome, a brief overview of the historical development of Iran's intelligence institutions will be provided.

3.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the years following the constitutional revolution of 1906, Iran had become a country ravaged by political turmoil.²⁷⁰ To restore security the Iranian government had requested the help of the Swedish government.²⁷¹ With the aid of the Swedes, the Iranian authorities were able to establish an orderly police force within the capital and some provinces. In time, the government encouraged greater changes within the police force, and for the very first time in Iran's contemporary history, an independent directorate was created for a secret political security force. Both men and women were initially utilised within this directorate to collect intelligence on political dissent.²⁷² This intelligence was then passed on to the government, and this practice continued until the 1921 coup which led to Reza Khan being appointed Army Commander and subsequently Minister of War.

In the years following the coup, security forces had been strengthened and reinforced.²⁷³ With no further need for their training role, the Swedes were dismissed from their duties by the Iranians, giving the Shah total control and command over the security forces.²⁷⁴ As monarch, Reza Shah and his government's direct approach to social engineering led to an intolerance for dissent and thus the path was paved for the security forces to be used for internal political

²⁷⁰ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, pp. 21-24.

²⁷¹ Delannoy, p. 30.

²⁷² Delannoy, p. 31.

²⁷³ Ansari, pp. 43-44.

²⁷⁴ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, pp. 20- 21.

reasons, rather than for defence from external forces.²⁷⁵ Reza Shah's first chief of police, Colonel Moḥammad Dargāhī, used his position to suppress any dissent against the Shah and his government but was eventually replaced in late 1929.²⁷⁶ Similar to his predecessor, General Moḥammad-Ḥoseyn Ayrom continued to use the security forces against political opposition, as well as strengthening the political directorate of the police.²⁷⁷ The use of the police as a political tool of suppression had grown to such an extent that for the national populace, the political directorate had developed into a formidable instrument of fear.²⁷⁸ The police's political directorate expanded over time and incorporated the duties of collecting intelligence, running agents and establishing general domestic security into its activities.²⁷⁹ The targets of its interest were political parties, labour unions, the press and prominent political figures.²⁸⁰ Ayrom was eventually to fall out with the Shah though, and escaped to Europe by feigning illness.²⁸¹ His deputy, brigadier-general Roknoddīn Moḥtārī became the next chief of police in 1936, and under his command the police forces were once again further expanded.²⁸²

Reza Shah's reign had also been marked by an ever strengthening communist movement. In response to a partially successful communist-led textile strike in May 1931, Reza Shah sought to crush the communist movement. In June 1931 a law was passed that forbade participation in any group or association 'whose aim and conduct is opposition to the Iranian constitutional monarchy, or contains communistic ideology'.²⁸³ In April 1937, Reza Shah's police succeeded in capturing Dr Taghi Arani, a founder of the first cell of the new Iranian

²⁷⁵ Ansari, p. 45.

²⁷⁶ Naḡḡārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p. 22.

²⁷⁷ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, p.58.

²⁷⁸ Naḡḡārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p. 22.

²⁷⁹ Naḡḡārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p. 22.

²⁸⁰ Naḡḡārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p.21.

²⁸¹ Naḡḡārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p. 22.

²⁸² Naḡḡārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p.34.

²⁸³ M. Reza Ghods, 'Iranian Communist Movement under Reza Shah', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 26 (1990), 507-513 (p. 508).

Communist Party, and a faction of his associates, known as the 'Fifty-Three'. An attempt to organise Party activities in Khuzestan had aroused the authorities' suspicions against Arani's entire organisation which had led to the arrests.²⁸⁴ The arrests had been carried out by the police's political directorate and those detained were later imprisoned. These men were to remain in prison for a further four years until the abdication of Reza Shah, although Dr Arani would be eventually killed whilst in detention.²⁸⁵ Of the men that were released from this group, twenty seven would go on to establish in September of 1941 the 'Tūdeh' party.²⁸⁶ With Reza Shah no longer in power, Mohtārī, his last Chief of Police, was arrested, sentenced, and imprisoned.²⁸⁷ Mohtārī's sentencing and the negative publicity surrounding the police, led the organisation to lose much of its standing amongst the public.²⁸⁸ As a result of this, its strength was also whittled down.²⁸⁹

From 1941 (Reza Shah's abdication) until the 1953 coup, the police force had been stripped of its earlier powers and no longer had the necessary structure, organisation or authority in place to monitor or curtail the intelligence activities of foreign states.²⁹⁰ The Public Security law passed by Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in October 1952 had also failed to alter this reality.²⁹¹ During his premiership, Mossadegh had accrued numerous powers without the consent of the Majlis.²⁹² With these powers and with the aim of establishing national security he had passed the aforementioned law. The first element of this bill was that decisions by judicial trials could not be appealed.²⁹³ Secondly, strikes in factories, workplaces and government offices were all outlawed and perpetrators were to be arrested and

²⁸⁴ Ghods, p. 509.

²⁸⁵ Ghods, p. 510.

²⁸⁶ Ghods, p. 511.

²⁸⁷ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p. 22.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p. 23.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, pp. 24-25.

²⁹² Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, p. 114.

²⁹³ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p. 25.

imprisoned.²⁹⁴ Lastly, all announcements made by government establishments and leaders as well as judicial authorities and military officials were to be accepted as valid.²⁹⁵ To no avail, the proposed law had been met with protests by several lawmakers.²⁹⁶

In 1953, the post World War II successor to Reza Shah, his son Mohammad-Reza Shah, had come to the realisation that Prime Minister Mossadegh was becoming increasingly powerful, and thus threatening to the young king's position of authority.²⁹⁷ The Shah's opposition to Mossadegh as Prime Minister, disputes with the British over oil nationalisation and US fears of a Soviet takeover of Iran, eventually led to a CIA and SIS backed coup in 1953 that toppled Mossadegh.²⁹⁸ The Shah was thus able to rule without any viable opposition, as with the aid of his Prime Minister General Zahedi, as well as the military under the command of General Teymour Bakhtiar, the majority of dissenting voices had been silenced.²⁹⁹ Despite his *de facto* absolute power the Shah remained in fear of losing power once again and thus sought to gather greater resources in the military and security field to obtain information on any present and future threats to his reign.³⁰⁰

3.2 THE COLD WAR CONTEXT

Much as the Second World War became the spur for the Americans to establish a professional foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence capability, for Iran it was the onset of the Cold War that led it to seek an organisation that could appropriately deal with foreign threats. It was also of critical importance that in both circumstances an outside power with an already established intelligence capability was willing to pass on its knowledge of foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence affairs. It was the British that first encouraged and trained the Americans in the practice of professional intelligence, encompassing the fields of

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, p. 118.

²⁹⁸ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, pp. 117-121.

²⁹⁹ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, p. 130.

³⁰⁰ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921...*, pp. 135-137.

foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence.³⁰¹ This was due to Great Britain's awareness that the US, without such a capability, would have been at a great disadvantage against its enemies at the time (World War II), and thus a weaker ally.³⁰²

In the case of Iran, it would be the Americans that would primarily pass on their newfound and developed knowledge of intelligence affairs to the Iranians.³⁰³ Much as the British recognised the importance of aiding an ally against sophisticated foreign threats, the Americans, emerging out of the Second World War, were well aware of the threat of Soviet expansionism and the need to jointly counter this perceived threat. The extreme fragility of Iranian national security due to a weak security and defence structure together with an unstable political establishment, merely exacerbated the perceived threat from the Soviet Union and thus left the country highly vulnerable to its powerful neighbour in the north. Whilst this would explain the necessity of an Iranian counter-intelligence capability, it does not answer the need for a foreign intelligence capability. Indeed much of the American training of intelligence officers related to counter-intelligence, which left Iran with a counter-intelligence capability that outperformed its foreign intelligence activities.³⁰⁴

It is critical to note that the practices of counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence are vastly different to regular internal intelligence, which can often be interpreted as a field in which police forces could also operate. Authoritarian states in particular, much like Iran during the Cold War, make use of internal intelligence in counteracting political opposition. To neutralise such threats, crude intelligence practices may often suffice. On the other hand, foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence are altogether different fields, as they will often pit professional intelligence agencies against one another. The more advanced the respective intelligence agencies are in their practice, the more complex and sophisticated the silent war becomes. Further complicating matters is the fact that to be effective, foreign intelligence, and to a more limited extent, counter-intelligence, require intelligence agencies to operate outside of their national borders. As has been demonstrated throughout its contemporary

³⁰¹ Nelson MacPherson, *American Intelligence in War-Time London: The Story of the Oss* (London: Frank Cass, 2003) p. 17.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Šāhedī, p. 171.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

history, intelligence operatives and agents active on foreign soil are placed at an elevated risk of either being discovered and expelled, imprisoned, or in a worst case scenario, killed. It is for these reasons that one must understand the realities that led both to an Iranian need for an intelligence capability and the American support for it.

Whilst the powers of World War II had been engaged in regular warfare, the USSR had long been busy in developing and expanding its intelligence capabilities beyond Soviet borders.³⁰⁵ Iran was ill-placed in countering such a sophisticated threat, particularly with its Swedish trained special branch of police forces, assigned to dealing with agents and foreign intelligence officers active within Iranian borders. For the Soviet Union, Iran had been a state of interest ever since its occupation of Iran's northern territories after the Second World War.³⁰⁶ The geopolitical importance of Iran in particular was of great interest to the USSR.³⁰⁷ Its vast energy reserves and access to warm water ports left little doubt that the Soviets would maintain Iran as a target of interest.³⁰⁸ The Iranian communist party had also been recognised as being one of the more organised communist parties in the world, thereby providing further hope for the Soviets that Iran would one day fall under the USSR's sphere of influence.³⁰⁹

In the post-World War II years, Soviet pressure on Iran had continued even as British and American troops evacuated, in keeping with their treaty undertakings. Soviet troops remained in the country, but as a result of United States, British, and UN pressure, Soviet troops eventually withdrew from Iranian territory.³¹⁰ Iran's crisis with the Soviet Union had been occasioned by Soviet behavior in the Iranian province of Azerbaijan. Soviet troops remained in the region after the war was over, a violation of the treaty signed in 1941. In November 1945 the provincial government of Azerbaijan, with Moscow's support, declared its

³⁰⁵ Andrew, *The Mitrokhin Archive...*p. 113.

³⁰⁶ Behrooz, p. 38.

³⁰⁷ Amin Saikal, 'Soviet Policy toward Southwest Asia', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 481 (1985), 104-116 (p. 109).

³⁰⁸ Alan R. Taylor, *The Superpowers and the Middle East, 1st ed.* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991), p. 91.

³⁰⁹ Habib Ladjevardi, 'Origins of U.S. Support for an Autocratic Iran', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 15 (1983), 225-239. (p. 231).

³¹⁰ Taylor, p. 57.

autonomy. A month later, Kurdish patriots followed suit and proclaimed the autonomous Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in the southwestern region of Azerbaijan. The Iranian government, with strong backing from the United States, lodged a complaint with the UN Security Council, and in spring 1946 the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw its forces from Iranian territory. Immediately after the Soviet evacuation, the shah sent Iranian troops into Azerbaijan to crush the local supporters of the autonomy movements.³¹¹

Soviet influence in Iran diminished further in 1947, when Iran and the United States signed an agreement providing for military aid and for a United States military advisory mission to help train the Iranian army.³¹² Even with such setbacks for the Soviet Union, The Central Intelligence Group (a precursor to the CIA) at this time had still come to the firm conclusion that the USSR ‘will not abandon its ultimate objective of controlling Azerbaijan (northern Iranian territory), and eventually all of Iran’.³¹³ In February 1949, the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh) was blamed for an abortive attempt on the Shah’s life, and its leaders both fled abroad or were arrested.³¹⁴ The party was banned, yet the threat of communism was urgent enough for the US to help Iran in developing an intelligence capability that would counteract the threat.³¹⁵

3.3 THE SOVIET UNION AND THE TUDEH PARTY

The Soviet Union had undoubtedly played an important role in influencing the founding of the Tudeh in line with its own global policies and giving it direction.³¹⁶ It must also be stressed that by 1953 the Tudeh party had become a mass party and a major political force in

³¹¹ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000) p. 268.

³¹² Mark Hamilton Lytle, *The Origins of the Iranian-American Alliance, 1941-1953* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1987) p. 118.

³¹³ Ofira Seliktar, *Failing the Crystal Ball Test: The Carter Administration and the Fundamentalist Revolution in Iran* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000), p. 77.

³¹⁴ Gholam R. Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), p.116.

³¹⁵ Delannoy, p. 59.

³¹⁶ Behrooz, p. 4.

Iran.³¹⁷ The party's support was particularly strong among the working class, and it had gained significant experience in underground and semi-legal activity, as well as developing an extensive military organisation that had infiltrated army intelligence and could mobilise tens of thousands of people for mass demonstrations in the capital.³¹⁸ Its intelligence network had been sophisticated enough to provide advance warning of the military coup against Mossadegh.³¹⁹ Although the Tudeh had sought to portray itself as political entity acting in complete independence from Moscow, its strong and overt support for Soviet oil exploration in Iran's northern oil fields from 1944-1946 had led to it being criticised as an agent of Soviet interests.³²⁰ It must be noted though that whilst the Tudeh supported Soviet oil exploration in Iran with Soviet interests in mind, their policies did not mirror that of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had made clear its support for Iranian oil nationalisation efforts and had provided positive coverage of Mossadegh and the National Front.³²¹

By 1955 the Tudeh as well as its military intelligence network had been significantly weakened by the discovery and arrests of its members as well as internal squabbles amongst its members.³²² Although little remained of the Tudeh's once formidable power in the period after the 1953 coup, there can be little doubt that fears remained of similar threats arising that would threaten the status quo in Iran. Despite the Tudeh Party's weakened position in Iran, communist activity remained widespread in Tehran, which, with its million inhabitants, offered the most favourable conditions for undercover work.³²³ Evidence of this was that communist propaganda material had continued to appear even after seizure of Tudeh presses.³²⁴ It must also be stated that despite fleeing persecution in Iran, the Tudeh party had

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Behrooz, p. 5.

³¹⁹ Behrooz, p. 10.

³²⁰ Behrooz, p. 6.

³²¹ Behrooz, pp. 9-10.

³²² Behrooz, p. 11.

³²³ Günther Nollau and Hans Jürgen Wiehe, *Russia's South Flank: Soviet Operations in Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan*, trans. Victor Andersen (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 51.

³²⁴ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 51.

also remained active abroad.³²⁵ The members that had fled to the Soviet Union were regarded by the Soviets as incompetent and unreliable, represented by the fact that at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, no Tudeh members were allowed to speak a word of greeting to the Soviet Party.³²⁶ The key turning point for the party appeared when in order to strengthen its economic position the Iranian Government began to send large numbers of students to Western Europe.³²⁷

Five thousand Iranian students were sent to West Germany, two thousand to Austria, three thousand to France, and another three thousand to England. As the Tudeh party had always maintained a numbers of members and sympathisers in academic circles, a number of these individuals had also been included in those sent abroad. In addition, there were other Iranians studying in Western Europe who were opposed to the political conditions in Iran and thus Tudeh party members believed that they could also be convinced to become followers.³²⁸

By 1957 these developments had led to the Politburo of the Tudeh Central Committee being transferred to Leipzig, in the Soviet-controlled East Germany. Furthermore, the Soviets had advised the Department of International Relations of the Central Committee of the East German Communist Party (SED) to provide the Tudeh with every assistance necessary. Offices were obtained for them in Käthe-Kollwitz-Strasse, Leipzig. Apartments were also provided as well as vehicles and other amenities.³²⁹

Despite the Zahedi government's attempts at vanquishing the Tudeh and Communism in Iran, it had become clear that their efforts would not be entirely successful, and that the threat of plots or of a future resurgence would continue to loom. These circumstances were heightened by the fact that outside of Western Europe, the Tudeh party had begun to strengthen its foothold in Iraq, seeking to build upon its past links with Iraqi communists. An active Tudeh presence in neighbouring Iraq was undoubtedly a clear indication for the Iranian leadership that the perceived threat of communism remained ever present.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 47.

³²⁷ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 48.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid.

For the Shah and his regime's senior leadership the threat could be construed as originating from nationalist forces, the Left or indeed any other possible political entity that could arise in the future seeking radical political changes. For the US, in supporting the establishment of a professional intelligence and security capability, it can be argued based upon available sources that the primary driving factor was the fear of a communist or Soviet dominated Iran. This is evident when one considers that in the early 1950's the US had believed the Tudeh well capable of seizing power and that an attack on Yugoslavia, Iran, or Germany could be the first step in the event of a Soviet decision to launch World War III.³³⁰

3.4 THE SAVAK'S ESTABLISHMENT

In 1956 the US advised the Shah to establish two separate intelligence and security services in the mould of the FBI and CIA, for internal and external intelligence.³³¹ The Shah though made the decision to establish only one intelligence agency.³³² The first element of this intelligence organisation was formed within the capital's military command.³³³ In early October 1956 news of the intended establishment of the SAVAK was officially reported by state media.³³⁴ Soon afterwards the bill proposing the creation of the 'intelligence and national security organisation' (SAVAK) was sent to parliament. In parliament some MPs were vehemently opposed to the bill, with one MP describing the proposed law as potentially the most oppressive law of the government.³³⁵ The MP referred to the possibilities of abuse by military officials and labelled it as countering the freedoms and rights of citizens.³³⁶ The head of the judiciary at the time, a General, defended the bill by referring to previous "unpleasant" incidents in the country that had led to the dangerous breakdown of national security.³³⁷ He

³³⁰ Raymond Ojserkis, *Beginnings of the Cold War Arms Race: The Truman Administration and the US Arms Build-Up* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), p. 190.

³³¹ Delannoy, p. 50

³³² Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 30.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p. 75.

³³⁶ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK va Naqš-e ān...*, p. 76.

³³⁷ Ibid.

had reminded others that the bill proposing the creation of the SAVAK would in future prevent the occurrence of such incidents. The Defence Minister also commented on and defended the bill, by expressing the view that the SAVAK would place and concentrate Iran's intelligence capabilities under one command. Iran's existing intelligence organisations at the time consisted of Army Intelligence and the Political Directorate of the National Police. Despite opposition from some MPs, the bill was passed into law after the first deliberation. The reality was that with the Shah backing the bill, the arguments being made in parliament were entirely ceremonial. Not seeking to be seen as opposing the Shah, the majority of MPs had little choice but to ratify the bill into law. As a result, the SAVAK's efforts officially began in the early months of 1957 under the directorship of General Teimur Bakhtiar, Tehran's military commander.³³⁸

In addition to the SAVAK, two government security organisations by the names of the Imperial Inspectorate Organisation (IIO) and the Special Information Bureau (SIB), were also created.³³⁹ The IIO was established a year after the SAVAK in 1958, soon after an attempted coup. The organisation was created to gather intelligence on the Iranian armed forces, in order to prevent the possibility of any future military coups and plots.³⁴⁰ In addition to keeping watch on the armed forces in Tehran and the provinces, IIO maintained surveillance of government organisations and reported to the Shah.³⁴¹ The SIB was established in 1959 allegedly under British instruction and General Huseyn Fardust, a long-time friend of the Shah, became SIB's first director.³⁴² The SIB was tasked with studying and observing all national organisations and elements, including the intelligence and security services. All reports from the SAVAK and other government organisations were studied and summarised by the SIB before being submitted to the Shah. The SAVAK remained in contact with both the SIB and IIO and on certain occasions would be assisted by them.³⁴³

³³⁸ M. J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1980), p. 142.

³³⁹ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 203.

³⁴⁰ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 204.

³⁴¹ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 208.

³⁴² Šāhedī, p. 39.

³⁴³ Šāhedī, p. 91.

After the SAVAK's establishment much of its training was carried out by British, American and Israeli intelligence officers, but the SAVAK maintained its closest relations with the Mossad and the CIA.³⁴⁴ The CIA's Iran station chief would on a regular basis, meet with the Shah, the SAVAK director and other SAVAK representatives.³⁴⁵ The SAVAK also maintained a liaison officer in the US with the cover of being one of Iran's UN representatives.³⁴⁶ As relations between the CIA and the SAVAK grew ever closer, the CIA eventually moved its Middle-East desk to Iran. The SAVAK's close relations with the Mossad involved the arrival of many Israeli intelligence officers for the purposes of training SAVAK intelligence officers. The Mossad also aided the SAVAK with the acquisition of intelligence-related technology, as well as the sharing of intelligence that was of mutual interest.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴ Šāhedī, pp. 161 - 237.

³⁴⁵ Šāhedī, p 171.

³⁴⁶ Rafizadeh, p. 106.

³⁴⁷ Aḥmadī, p. 40.

4 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL METHODS OF THE SAVAK'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AND COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATES

The methods in which the SAVAK's CI and FI objectives were carried out were determined in part by its macro and microstructures. This, in combination with its operational methods, developed both indigenously and through training by outside entities, would have an immense impact upon its effectiveness as an organisation in carrying out its intelligence and security objectives. Although individual directorates were largely responsible for the SAVAK's fields of counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence, supporting directorates would also play a crucial contributing role.³⁴⁸ It is therefore essential that an understanding of the SAVAK's overall organisational structure is acquired, before focusing on its counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence elements. To gain a better understanding of the structure and operational methods of the SAVAK's counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence activities, one must also place the analysis of its structure and operational methods in a comparative perspective. These critical elements of intelligence and security organisations vary both within democratic and non-democratic states, reflecting political and societal realities, as well as the unique evolutionary process that develops and creates its identity.

Though the SAVAK's structure and methods reveal similarities with other intelligence organisations of the same era, there are also clear differences. These differences are particularly evident when one compares the SAVAK to intelligence and security structures within democratic states. The most critical difference being of course, the fact that the SAVAK operated both as a foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence organisation. Though not all non-democratic states have maintained their foreign intelligence and core counter-intelligence activities within one organisation, many have done and continue to do so. Notable examples from the past include the KGB and the Stasi, with KGB operatives also acting as intelligence analysts, a role very rarely given to an active intelligence operative.

The SAVAK was divided into ten directorates, spanning the fields of domestic intelligence, foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence, in addition to bureaucratic functions. From these ten directorates, six were involved in administrative and financial functions. The other

³⁴⁸ Hāšemī, p. 43.

four, the 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 8th directorates dealt directly with the collection and analysis of intelligence. The 3rd directorate, also known as the Security Directorate, was the most important and largest of the directorates.³⁴⁹ Most of the public were only aware of this one directorate, as it was directly involved in domestic human intelligence activities, and thus came into contact with the populace.³⁵⁰ The most significant groups that this directorate kept under surveillance were communist and left-wing groups, ethnic and religious minorities, higher education establishments, the education ministry, political parties, labour and union organisations, printed media, military and police forces, as well as other targets of interest.³⁵¹ The provincial and district directorates were involved in gathering important information relating to people's concerns, including opposition groups and figures. The reports would then be prepared and forwarded to the 3rd directorate. The 3rd directorate would, in turn, pass on these reports to senior government and SAVAK officials.

4.1 THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATES

The SAVAK's 2nd directorate was primarily involved with the collection of foreign intelligence on states of concern; neighbouring and other Middle Eastern states in particular.³⁵² Collected intelligence from this directorate was passed onto the 7th directorate, where analysis would then be carried out. These two directorates formed the structure of the SAVAK's foreign intelligence capabilities. The 2nd directorate collected intelligence through both open source and covert means, and its foreign intelligence officers operated under official and non-official cover, depending upon the requirements and difficulties of a particular mission. Intelligence officers operating under official cover were usually posted overseas as members of an Iranian embassy's staff, or as employees of government related assets, such as national banks.³⁵³ SAVAK officers operating as embassy staff were officially

³⁴⁹ Fardüst, vol. 2, p. 139.

³⁵⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Kādr-hā-ye Hezb-e Tūdeh*, 2 vols (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003), vol. 1, p. 11.

³⁵¹ Ḥasan Tūfānīān, *Ḥāṭerāt-e Artešbod Hasan-e Tūfānīān* (Tehran: Zībā, 2002), p. 20.

³⁵² Fardüst, vol. 1, p. 460.

³⁵³ Hāšemī, p. 348.

assigned titles such as economic or cultural attaché.³⁵⁴ The ambassador of the relevant embassy to which the intelligence officer was due to be assigned, would usually be informed in advance of the planned presence of SAVAK officers. Though regional foreign intelligence efforts were primarily focused upon states, the targets of intelligence gathering in areas such as Europe and North America were mostly related to opposition elements. It was in this field that the 3rd (Internal Security) directorate liaised closely with the 2nd directorate. Indeed, intelligence officers from the 3rd directorate would also be posted overseas in the event that a particular mission required their expertise. Of particular concern were student opposition groups.³⁵⁵ Methods used by the SAVAK to counter such groups included the recruitment of Iranian students sympathetic to the Pahlavi monarchy, by utilising financial incentives and instilling within them a sense of moral duty.³⁵⁶ These students would then be used to infiltrate and gather intelligence on student opposition organisations.

Though there were occasions when the 2nd directorate's focus would be on opposition elements outside of Iran, the majority of its time and resources were expended upon gathering intelligence relating to foreign political, military and diplomatic issues that would have an impact upon Iranian national security and policies. All 2nd directorate intelligence officers were required to speak fluently the language of the relevant country to which they were assigned. In some cases, fluency in either English or French was also acceptable, depending upon the assignment location.³⁵⁷ In addition, all foreign intelligence officers were required to study extensively the history, social and political backgrounds of their assigned country. All 2nd directorate foreign intelligence officers were also given training on operational methods, such as the recruitment of agents, the exchange of information, and maintaining operational security at all times. The overt and covert level of each foreign station was regulated by relations on the state level.

On the territory of friendly foreign states SAVAK stations maintained cordial relations both with the relevant national security and intelligence organisations, as well on occasions

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Konfederāsyūn-e Ğahān-e Mohāšselīn va Dānešġūyān-e Īrānī (ed.), *Pāreh-ī az asnād-e SAVAK* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1979), p. 16.

³⁵⁶ Konfederāsyūn-e Ğahān-e Mohāšselīn va Dānešġūyān-e Īrānī (ed.), p. 96.

³⁵⁷ Hāšemī, p. 349.

directly passing on useful intelligence to senior political officials of the foreign state.³⁵⁸ In contrast, SAVAK stations operating on the soil of foreign states deemed to be adversarial, were forced to take great precautions in avoiding the discovery of their presence and activities. This was also due to the fact that in such states, the SAVAK's foreign stations would be, to a greater extent, engaged in high-risk covert intelligence collection activities. Under such circumstances, the primary reliance of the SAVAK's foreign stations on human intelligence activities, exposed it and its agents to a greater and more dangerous degree of risk. As a security precaution, a four year limit was also placed on all SAVAK foreign assignments, which also applied to its foreign station chiefs. The chief of stations, the superior of all foreign station chiefs, also maintained reports on each individual station chief, detailing their performance and results during the term of their office. Any excessively negative reports by the chief of stations would lay the ground for the dismissal of the relevant station chief, which would then require that the chief of stations submit the names of capable candidates to the head of SAVAK for approval, after which one would be selected as a replacement.³⁵⁹

The 2nd and 7th directorates were also tasked with ensuring the security of each Iranian embassy and consulate.³⁶⁰ As was shown on many occasions, the primary sources of threats to embassies and consulates, particularly within Europe, was student and left-wing opposition elements. Iranian embassies and consulates in Amsterdam, Brussels, East Germany and Geneva were all attacked at various times by such opposition groups. Indeed, a successful raid on the Geneva consulate proved highly embarrassing for the 2nd directorate, when documents detailing its activities were seized and published by the Confederation of Iranian Students. In the lead-up to the raid on the Geneva consulate, the actions of the SAVAK's foreign stations vis-à-vis student opposition groups on foreign soil, had undoubtedly led to a greater degree of antagonism between the two sides. As much as the student opposition groups based abroad were aware of the SAVAK's internal security activities, they did not expect the level of surveillance and pressure that was imposed upon them by the SAVAK's

³⁵⁸ Fardüst, vol. 1, p. 463.

³⁵⁹ Rafizadeh, pp. 136–137.

³⁶⁰ Hāšemī, p. 350.

foreign stations.³⁶¹ In response to the threat from these students, the SAVAK had begun to organise capabilities in countries such as France, Britain, Germany and the US to counter their activities.³⁶² Due to the laws of these countries and Iran's friendly relations with their governments, the SAVAK's foreign stations had little option but to operate covertly without informing the relevant authorities of their activities. Any action publicly exposing its activities would have undoubtedly led to an embarrassing diplomatic incident. Nevertheless, many students complained to local authorities about SAVAK activities. Reports were made to domestic intelligence organisations such as the FBI about break-ins into student headquarters and documents being stolen.³⁶³ Amongst the documents that were stolen by the SAVAK were lists of the names of various Iranian student opposition groups, as well as their membership. In addition, valuable documents, such as the funding sources and budgets of student opposition groups were also acquired by the SAVAK. Such intelligence allowed the SAVAK's internal security directorate to detain any dissenting students upon their return to Iran. The families of such students were also questioned for additional intelligence purposes. The Iranian student opposition groups had gradually become aware of the SAVAK's activities against them and had increasingly begun to take greater security precautions in protecting their premises. The SAVAK's foreign stations though were able to continue breaking into such headquarters without leaving a trace of their presence. Though the domestic intelligence organisations of Britain, France and the US had gradually become aware of such SAVAK operations, due to their close relations with Iran, little or nothing was done to curtail their activities.³⁶⁴

Outside the field of actions guarding against foreign-based opposition elements, the SAVAK's foreign intelligence establishment was also active in collecting intelligence and carrying out operations on foreign soil. The Middle East remained the focus of these activities, though intelligence was also gathered on foreign states outside of the region. Beyond the Middle East, little was done operationally in collecting intelligence on foreign

³⁶¹ Konfederāsyūn-e Ğahān-e Mohāšselīn va Dānešġūyān-e Īrānī (ed.), pp. 1-3.

³⁶² Delannoy, p. 70.

³⁶³ Konfederāsyūn-e Ğahān-e Mohāšselīn va Dānešġūyān-e Īrānī (ed.), p. 32.

³⁶⁴ Delannoy, p. 73.

states.³⁶⁵ In gathering intelligence on its allies, the SAVAK's foreign intelligence section maintained a reliance on open source intelligence, with each of its stations collecting information from the national media, in addition to diplomatic circles and submitting these in the form of reports to the directorate of foreign intelligence analysis in Tehran.³⁶⁶ Prior to 1964 these open sources were required to be translated by the same officers carrying out the original collection, but by 1964, under the Shah's orders, the SAVAK had established a special division specifically for translations thereby delegating translation duties to this body.³⁶⁷ Information collected would often relate to perceptions of Iran, as well as any significant criticism of the Shah.³⁶⁸ As no established framework existed for the collection of such information, the selection criteria would often be highly vague, and mostly dependent upon the officer's own discretion.³⁶⁹ On occasions this would often result in reports that covered less relevant or low circulation publications. Indeed, criticisms in satirical publications such as 'Private Eye' would also be included in some reports.³⁷⁰ This haphazard method of open source collection undoubtedly distorted the Shah's perceptions, as well as those of senior SAVAK and government officials, in understanding their portrayal in foreign media. The Shah, in particular, highly sensitive to all direct criticism, would often be made further paranoid by such reports, and would on occasions go to great lengths in protesting negative portrayals of his rule in foreign media.³⁷¹ Potentially further exacerbating the issue was the prospect that the Shah allegedly paid greater heed to SAVAK counsels than he did to anyone else.³⁷²

³⁶⁵ Fardūst, vol. 1, p. 321.

³⁶⁶ Tūfānīān, p. 202.

³⁶⁷ Rafizadeh, p. 106.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Rafizadeh, p.107.

³⁷⁰ Richard Helms, *A Look over My Shoulder: A Life in the Central Intelligence Agency* (New York: Random House, 2003), p. 177.

³⁷¹ Ofira Seliktar, *Failing the Crystal Ball Test: The Carter Administration and the Fundamentalist Revolution in Iran* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000), p. 215.

³⁷² Tūfānīān, p. 65.

In addition to such media reports, annual or ad-hoc intelligence estimates would also be written by the foreign intelligence analytical directorate.³⁷³ Such reports would include expected outcomes of national elections and how these events would impact Iran's relations with the governments of those countries, as well as economic developments. Any information acquired, that would enhance Iran's ability to conduct its foreign policy to its advantage would also be mentioned. Occasionally the Shah would also directly request specific information from the SAVAK, which would have to be included in such reports.³⁷⁴

The SAVAK's operations within the Middle East, particularly its covert actions, were far more extensive in comparison to its activities elsewhere. Iraq in particular, as Iran's neighbour, was considered to be an important sphere of influence, both by the Shah and the Iranian national security establishment.³⁷⁵ Faced with the challenge of growing Arab nationalism and unity, the SAVAK was tasked with maintaining surveillance of Iraqi political developments and to ensure that Iraq did not become a serious threat on Iran's western border.³⁷⁶ Utilising elements of a sympathetic Shia population in southern Iraq, the SAVAK was able to recruit agents that could provide it with intelligence on internal Iraqi developments.³⁷⁷ Kurds in the north were also very much a persecuted minority in Iraq, and so their sentiments were also utilised for intelligence purposes, both in gathering military and political intelligence, as well as on occasions engaging in guerrilla actions against Iraqi security forces.³⁷⁸ The SAVAK would provide both the financial and logistical support to such entities. Similarly the SAVAK was also highly active in Lebanon (due in part to the training being given to Iranian dissidents by Palestinian military organisations), providing

³⁷³ Tūfānīān, p. 69.

³⁷⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī* (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003), p. 207.

³⁷⁵ Fardūst, vol. 1, p. 244.

³⁷⁶ Fardūst, vol. 1, p. 245.

³⁷⁷ Tūfānīān, p. 56.

³⁷⁸ Hāšemī, p. 303.

similar support to friendly elements, driven by direct pressure from the Shah and his concerns about Arab nationalism, Communism and Soviet expansion.³⁷⁹

Though these had been the driving factors in determining the Shah's influence over the SAVAK's Middle Eastern operations in the 1950s and early 1960s, this had slowly begun to change by the late 1960s. Increasing activity by Iranian dissidents within the regional theatre drove the Shah's concerns, and thus the SAVAK's, towards the disruption of support structures for such dissidents. In cases, the use of targeted killings by the SAVAK was also considered, and acted upon, most notably against its one time chief who had fallen foul of the Shah, General Teymūr Bahtīār.³⁸⁰

Psychological warfare operations were also seen as key by the SAVAK in order to distribute information that it perceived as aiding Iranian interests. Amongst these operations was the distribution of Arabic language newspapers as well as the broadcast of Arabic language radio.³⁸¹ The distribution of such articles in foreign media was done both directly, by establishing and funding new publications, and indirectly, by the recruitment of agents in already established publications, that would then allow SAVAK-composed articles to be published.³⁸² In addition, journalists recruited as agents would be financially rewarded for their ability to publish articles favourable to the SAVAK's goals.³⁸³

By penetrating what some considered to be the second most influential country in the Arab world, the SAVAK was also able to acquire a window into the thinking of Iraq's Arab allies as well as other Arab countries that were less friendly with Iraq.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁹ W. A. Samii: "The Shah's Lebanon Policy: The Role of SAVAK", p. 78.

³⁸⁰ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 90.

³⁸¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK* (Tehran: Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt, 2003), p. 202.

³⁸² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK*..., p. 43.

³⁸³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK*..., p. 92.

³⁸⁴ Tūfāniān, p. 59.

The SAVAK's heavy focus on Iraq was also partly driven by its concerns in relation to the threat that Iraq posed in stoking Arab nationalism in Iran's Khuzestan province.³⁸⁵ A strategic province due to its oil wealth, Khuzestan's majority population of Arabs were perceived as being susceptible to outside influence.³⁸⁶ Fearing that Iraq, backed by the Soviet Union, would attempt to acquire such strategic oil wealth, operations across the border were kept at a high level.³⁸⁷ It can be said, based on available SAVAK documents and other relevant primary sources such as the memoirs of Major Pežmān Īsā, that Iraq was the most important target of foreign intelligence operations for the SAVAK.

Overall, the operational methods of the SAVAK's foreign intelligence structure can be described as being similar to that of most other intelligence organisations. The one exception to this is that unlike the foreign intelligence structures of non-democratic states which combine operational and analytical capabilities, the SAVAK had split these two, leading to a foreign intelligence approach similar to that of most democratic states. Operational foreign intelligence officers from the 2nd directorate were simply required to report on their activities and acquire information, whilst analysts in the 7th directorate would write intelligence reports to be disseminated amongst their superiors. This is in contrast to most non-democratic states, in which operational officers also act as analysts.³⁸⁸

There is also clear evidence that the SAVAK's foreign intelligence structure maintained technical intelligence capabilities that provided it with access to foreign civil and military communications.³⁸⁹ Communications intercept capabilities were developed both indigenously and with the aid of foreign technical assistance and purchases from the US and Israel.³⁹⁰ Although technology provided by the US was mostly for the purpose of counter-intelligence

³⁸⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK...*, p. 64.

³⁸⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK...*, p. 105.

³⁸⁷ Tūfānīān, p. 63.

³⁸⁸ Martin Ebon, *KGB: Death and Rebirth* (Westport, CO: Praeger, 1994), p. 32.

³⁸⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 191 (document no. 46/4973).

³⁹⁰ Šāhedī, p. 189.

it was also applied in the realm of foreign intelligence.³⁹¹ Israel on the other hand was fully aware that its intelligence aid was to strengthen the SAVAK's counter-intelligence capabilities, a fact that was of mutual benefit to the regional interests of both states.³⁹²

A further important point to note when examining the operational targets of the SAVAK's foreign intelligence directorates is that intelligence officers posted abroad were often required to keep track of the activities of Iranian diplomats, although this on occasions was made difficult due to other responsibilities.³⁹³ Senior Iranian officials were also kept under close watch. Iranian foreign ministers, prime ministers and other dignitaries were made targets of surveillance.³⁹⁴ Information required by the Shah included the dignitaries' relations with other officials, including the names of the officials that had been met and whether they had been cordial with one another.³⁹⁵ The Shah also requested that the SAVAK confirm the details of any reports submitted by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.³⁹⁶

4.2 COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

As has been previously stated, counter-intelligence can broadly be defined as information collected and analysed, as well as activities undertaken to protect a nation-state from foreign intelligence organisations. It can be considered an important function throughout the intelligence process, including analytical and operational components. Although seemingly related to human intelligence (HUMINT), counter-intelligence does not fit into this category as it is not part of the intelligence gathering process. Instead counter-intelligence can be described as an intelligence discipline that makes use of various defensive and offensive measures as well as collection methods in achieving its objectives. Collection within counter-intelligence consists of gathering information on the intelligence capabilities of other countries, whilst defensive methods in counter-intelligence are used to counter the efforts of

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Šāhedī, p.205.

³⁹³ Rafizadeh, p. 111.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

hostile intelligence services that are attempting to collect information. Lastly, offensive measures are utilised to manipulate and directly impact a hostile foreign intelligence service, usually by recruiting intelligence officers from hostile nation-states and/or feeding disinformation to a hostile intelligence service. Counter-intelligence may also be required to defend the integrity of the collection and analytical process by safeguarding national intelligence organisations from the disinformation campaigns of foreign intelligence forces.³⁹⁷

The 8th directorate of the SAVAK was better known as its counter-intelligence directorate. This directorate was developed as a priority at the same time as the overall establishment of the SAVAK. As a result of the perceived communist threat, both by the Shah and his allies, a great amount of training was also provided, particularly by the US, in advancing Iranian counter-intelligence capabilities.³⁹⁸ Upon its founding, the 8th directorate's broad priorities involved defending national security against the intelligence operations of the USSR's intelligence organisations, namely the KGB and the GRU. This would involve the identification and disruption of Soviet intelligence officers acting both under diplomatic and non-diplomatic cover (such as medical, banking and industrial covers).³⁹⁹

Although the majority of the counter-intelligence focus would remain on the Soviet Union, much attention was also given to the activities of Arab intelligence agencies, particularly those that were seen as acting directly against regional Iranian interests.⁴⁰⁰ It must be mentioned that some of these Arab states maintained close relations with the Soviet Union and had received training from Soviet intelligence officers, as well as further training and materials from other Eastern bloc intelligence agencies.⁴⁰¹ Indeed, the 8th directorate viewed

³⁹⁷ Shulsky, p. 9.

³⁹⁸ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 36.

³⁹⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 23.

⁴⁰⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 10.

⁴⁰¹ Kuzichkin, p. 115.

all socialist states with suspicion and thus assumed that collaboration between such states would be likely.⁴⁰²

Although the vast amount of counter-intelligence resources were allocated towards such targets, Western intelligence officers, and intelligence officers from states allied with these countries, were also viewed with some suspicion.⁴⁰³ This continued even as intelligence of interest was shared with foreign intelligence organisations such as the CIA, the Mossad and the British SIS.⁴⁰⁴ Intelligence officials from the US, UK, West Germany, France and Israel, all maintained a presence within Iran, both official and unofficial. Although the SAVAK would often be informed of such intelligence officers operating under official cover, particularly station chiefs, instances of operatives acting under non-official cover were also common, with the 8th directorate being aware of several such cases.⁴⁰⁵ Such intelligence operatives acting under non-official cover were often found to be working within commercial organisations or as technical aid specialists, whilst collecting intelligence on events within Iran.⁴⁰⁶

In order to provide immediate operational training soon after its founding, officers from this directorate were sent to Washington where they were trained by US intelligence personnel and provided with information on the activities of Soviet Intelligence.⁴⁰⁷ Particular emphasis in such training was placed on the activities of the KGB and the GRU in the Near East and particularly in Iran. The identities of known KGB and GRU officers operating out of the Soviet embassy in Iran were also given to SAVAK intelligence officers from this directorate.⁴⁰⁸ The SAVAK itself had operations which involved the constant surveillance of Eastern bloc embassies and records of individual that were arriving and leaving the

⁴⁰² Hāšemī, p. 363.

⁴⁰³ Hāšemī, p. 364.

⁴⁰⁴ Aḥmadī, p. 17.

⁴⁰⁵ Hāšemī, p. 361.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 32.

⁴⁰⁸ Hāšemī, p. 365.

premises.⁴⁰⁹ This information was also shared with US intelligence for counterintelligence purposes.

Lax border controls were also a concern for the 8th directorate and there remained a high risk of intelligence officers or agents entering the country as immigrants or as asylum seekers. The 8th directorate was therefore tasked with verifying the background information of such flagged individuals.

Although an understanding of the 8th directorate's broader objectives was in place from the outset, the first few years following its establishment marked a period in which most of its capabilities were developed both through on the job experience and a great deal of foreign training.⁴¹⁰ With limited resources and inexperienced personnel, there remained an inadequate understanding of who precisely was likely to be an intelligence officer or agent. As a result, most foreigners were looked upon with suspicion and there were indeed instances of innocent travellers being apprehended and questioned by 8th directorate officers under cover as police.⁴¹¹

Although the Americans were heavily involved with the training of 8th directorate intelligence officers, there was a degree of concern within the directorate, particularly by its senior personnel, that its reliance upon a foreign power was in itself a national security threat.⁴¹² There was also a certain degree of resentment by the 8th directorate over the brash behaviour of the CIA's Soviet experts, as perceived by the directorate's personnel.⁴¹³ Although such resentment may have been partly a result of cultural differences and an overall lack of cultural understanding by both sides, it nevertheless drove the 8th directorate into diversifying its training sources and making eventual self-reliance (dependency upon its own training programmes) a high priority, an objective which was only achieved following its first decade of existence.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁹ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 46.

⁴¹⁰ Rafizadeh, p.128.

⁴¹¹ Hāšemī, p. 83.

⁴¹² Fardūst, vol. 1, p. 142.

⁴¹³ Hāšemī, p. 365.

⁴¹⁴ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 49.

Much like the rest of the organisation, the SAVAK's 8th directorate was initially staffed by personnel drawn from the military, though civilians were also soon hired as part of the gradual overall expansion of the directorate.⁴¹⁵ Personnel working within this directorate were assigned tasks based upon a particular geographic area of responsibility.⁴¹⁶ Four separate desk chiefs answered to the counter-intelligence chief, whose post was in turn determined by the appointment of the SAVAK director.⁴¹⁷

The four separate areas of assignment for which the 8th directorate's desk chiefs were responsible included the Soviet Union, the Eastern Bloc, the Middle East and the Western Hemisphere.⁴¹⁸ Although East Asia was dealt with by the foreign intelligence directorate, the intelligence threat from East Asian countries was not deemed significant enough by the 8th directorate for it to be assigned its own desk.⁴¹⁹

The vetting procedure of staff varied on a case by case basis, as no standardised procedure existed. Although background checks were carried out, the fact that the majority of its staff were drawn from the military meant that such individuals had already been cleared for lower levels of security clearance.⁴²⁰ Civilians that obtained work in the 8th directorate and other SAVAK directorates, had to be vouched for by a member of military staff, and on occasions this would result in nepotistic practices, and thus the hiring of individuals that there were not adequately qualified for their jobs.⁴²¹ These ill-qualified individuals would often be transferred between directorates, before ending up with low level bureaucratic assignments.⁴²²

Although the SAVAK's counter-intelligence directorate carried out various aforementioned functions, collection and defensive measures were given a greater priority due to the high level of Soviet intelligence activities on Iranian soil, particularly during the first decade of the

⁴¹⁵ Rafizadeh, p. 152.

⁴¹⁶ Hāšemī, p. 373.

⁴¹⁷ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 72.

⁴¹⁸ Aḥmadī, p. 140.

⁴¹⁹ Aḥmadī, p. 141.

⁴²⁰ Hāšemī, p. 365.

⁴²¹ Nağğārī-Rād, *SAVAK*, p. 75.

⁴²² Ibid.

SAVAK's existence. It can be said that in terms of operations the SAVAK's counter-intelligence directorate was heavily oriented towards utilising HUMINT as its core operational technique, both due to initial technical limitations and the fact that this was the best method of intelligence collection in gathering information on and disrupting the activities of foreign intelligence organisations.

From SAVAK documents detailing counter-intelligence activities in the 1960s one can gain an accurate understanding of the defensive processes involved in countering Soviet intelligence activities on Iranian soil. As far as operations against Soviet intelligence were concerned, the first major step in countering these activities was the identification of Soviet intelligence officers.⁴²³ For any Soviet national to work in Iran a visa was required and it was here that the SAVAK with the aid of the foreign ministry would first attempt to identify whether this individual was in fact a Soviet intelligence official or not.⁴²⁴ The foreign ministry were required to copy and forward any documents available on the individual concerned, detailing where and for whom he or she intended to work.⁴²⁵ Crucially they would also try and identify who this individual was replacing, as Soviet intelligence officers were often replaced in the same post used as their cover.⁴²⁶ The SAVAK would then consult their own archives and records in order to identify any background history of the individual in Iran.⁴²⁷ In the event that this person had no previous history in Iran, a new record would be created and all available details of the individual would be shared with the stations of foreign intelligence agencies like the CIA and SIS.⁴²⁸ The foreign intelligence station would then be able to consult their own records and provide any available information on the individual to the

⁴²³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 26.

⁴²⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 32.

⁴²⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 33.

⁴²⁶ Hāšemī, p. 181.

⁴²⁷ Hāšemī, p. 182.

⁴²⁸ Hāšemī, p. 182.

SAVAK.⁴²⁹ If any of these individuals were even remotely suspected of being Soviet intelligence officers, they would be targeted at ports or airports by SAVAK surveillance teams.⁴³⁰ The job of these surveillance teams was to firstly acquire a photo of the subject, as the SAVAK perhaps not surprisingly did not trust that the passport photos provided to them were an accurate reflection of the individual's appearance.⁴³¹

As the CI directorate had observed and learnt over the years, it was standard practice for Soviet officials that were being replaced, to drive to the same location where their replacement was due to arrive.⁴³² Even the car keys at this point would be handed over to the newly arrived replacement individual, therefore if the individual had already been identified as a Soviet intelligence official, it would be clear that the replacement was also linked to the KGB or GRU.⁴³³

Another method used by the SAVAK in order to identify Soviet intelligence officials, was the fact that the only embassy individuals that were allowed to leave the premises of Soviet embassies or consulates unescorted, were KGB and GRU officers.⁴³⁴ There were of course Soviet officials that had to travel frequently around Iran from their consulates or embassies, so via a process of deduction, the SAVAK would be able to identify that since these individuals were accompanied by a security official, there was no chance that they were KGB or GRU officers.⁴³⁵ The one exception to this rule was newly stationed KGB or GRU officers without any prior experience of being stationed in Iran. These individuals were restricted from leaving embassy or consulate compounds for the first 3-4 months of their posting in

⁴²⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 49.

⁴³⁰ Hāšemī, p. 183.

⁴³¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 49.

⁴³² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 92.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Hāšemī, p. 186.

⁴³⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 87.

Iran.⁴³⁶ This was a period in which the intelligence officer would be able to improve language skills and better learn the layout of the places that would be necessary for travel.⁴³⁷

In essence, what the SAVAK's CI directorate discovered was that Soviet intelligence officials were developing their own map of the country, suited to their precise needs.⁴³⁸ These customised maps would be used so that if a KGB or GRU intelligence officer suspected that he/she was being followed by an 8th directorate officer, they would immediately know what counter-surveillance measures to take.⁴³⁹ This would usually work quite effectively as the SAVAK would on occasions find it very difficult to both avoid being spotted and to continue their surveillance (conducted with two man units).⁴⁴⁰ If a Soviet intelligence officer happened to avoid aborting their mission, the individual would often move aimlessly around a town or city, thereby wasting the time of SAVAK's valuable and limited resources.⁴⁴¹

Exacerbating these surveillance measures for the SAVAK's 8th directorate, was the fact that the majority of KGB and GRU officers were both fluent in Persian and would often be selected based upon ethnic similarities, thereby allowing them to easily blend into crowds.⁴⁴² For the SAVAK's counter-intelligence directorate though this selection method also provided yet another indicator for the identification of potential Soviet intelligence officers.⁴⁴³ It is estimated that over the course of the counter-intelligence directorate's existence there were

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 143.

⁴³⁹ Hāšemi, p. 192.

⁴⁴⁰ Hāšemi, p. 193.

⁴⁴¹ Hāšemi, p. 205.

⁴⁴² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 159.

⁴⁴³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 159.

fifty Soviet intelligence officers both from the KGB and GRU operating out of the Soviet embassy at any one time.⁴⁴⁴

In targeting the Soviet embassy, stationary technical surveillance measures were utilised by the 8th directorate which involved hiring locations that would provide a line of sight into the embassy.⁴⁴⁵ In most cases Soviet counter-surveillance measures would identify such locations and diminish their usefulness.⁴⁴⁶ In addition, mobile technical surveillance units were utilised outside of the embassy premises to gather information on all individuals entering and exiting the embassy.⁴⁴⁷ Once again, effective counter-surveillance measures by Soviet intelligence resulted in the main embassy entrance only being used for casual contacts.⁴⁴⁸

Although the core of the SAVAK's defensive counter-intelligence activities took place in major towns and cities, units were also placed within provincial and district SAVAK elements. These included the Khorasan, Gorgan, Bushehr, Jolfa, Abadan and Khoramshar SAVAK directorates, which maintained counter-intelligence directorates mainly for targeting Soviet intelligence activities, although local directorates in the South and West were also used to monitor the intelligence activities of Arab states (primarily Iraq).⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁴ Fardüst, Vol. 1, p. 138.

⁴⁴⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 74.

⁴⁴⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 77.

⁴⁴⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 103.

⁴⁴⁸ Fardüst, vol. 1, p. 456.

⁴⁴⁹ Fardüst, vol. 1, p. 457.

5 CASE STUDY A: THE IRAN-SOVIET RAPPROCHEMENT

5.1 DIRECTORATE 8: UNEASE AND VIGILANCE AMIDST AN IRAN-SOVIET RAPPROCHEMENT

5.1.1 DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE

5.1.1.1 ASSESSING THE IRANIAN POPULATION'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE USSR AND A POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS

Soon after the SAVAK had been made aware of the potential for improved relations between the Soviet Union and Iran, it immediately set out to gain relevant intelligence through Tehran's bazaar and political circles. Through these sources the SAVAK learned of the likelihood that the Soviet Union was preparing to offer the Iranian government an interest free loan of two billion dollars.⁴⁵⁰ The possibility of such a loan on the psyche of the average Iranian was also important for the SAVAK, as their human intelligence sources indicated that various groups, namely government employees, intellectuals and merchants were in support of such economic aid by the Soviet Union, so long as Tudeh elements were not strengthened as a result of such aid.⁴⁵¹

The impact of Iran's close economic relations with the US was also assessed and it became clear that their sources were showing unease with close Iran-US economic ties at the time. The intelligence had made clear that people were in general concerned that the English language and Anglo-American culture was replacing certain elements of Persian language and culture.⁴⁵² In addition there was a clear feeling that those able to speak the English language were being given favourable treatment in government and society.⁴⁵³ This feeling of

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 30 (document no. 312/2067) [12/08/1962].

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 34 (document no. 312/2067) [13/08/1962].

unease had grown to such an extent that some had labelled this perceived malign influence as the single greatest danger to Iranian civilisation and culture.⁴⁵⁴ Worryingly for the SAVAK, the Soviet Union was instead viewed in favourable terms with few people indicating that such a threat to Persian civilisation and culture had existed under the Soviet occupation of Iran.⁴⁵⁵

In late September of that year the issue of Iran-Soviet relations had come up once again as an Iranian agent working within the Pakistani embassy in Tehran was able to provide the SAVAK with details gathered by Pakistani intelligence relating to a visit to the USSR by Mohammad Zahir Shah of Afghanistan.⁴⁵⁶ The SAVAK presumed that Pakistani intelligence elements had been able to recruit an agent within this Afghan delegation.⁴⁵⁷ The agent was able to provide details of what precisely was discussed between Mohammad Zahir Shah and the Soviet Premier at this time (Nikita Khrushchev).⁴⁵⁸ Of particular interest for the SAVAK was the fact that the Afghan King had raised the issue of Soviet-Iranian relations, expressing his hope that they would be improved.⁴⁵⁹ Interestingly in their analyses the SAVAK's 8th directorate speculated whether this had anything to do with the Shah's earlier visit to Afghanistan in that year, and whether in fact the Shah had requested that Mohammad Zahir Shah convey such a message to Khrushchev, suggesting that he was seeking improved relations.⁴⁶⁰ The SAVAK's agent in the Pakistani embassy was also able to inform them that the result of this meeting had led to Pakistan's intelligence services developing intelligence estimates on the impact of improved Iran-Soviet relations.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 38 (document no. 312/2845) [28/09/1962].

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 39 (document no. 312/2849) [05/09/1962].

⁴⁵⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 38 (document no. 312/2849) [04/09/1962].

⁴⁶⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 41 (document no. 312/2873) [06/09/1962].

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

SAVAK's analyses made clear that Iran's CENTO membership had also been a constant source of concern for the Soviet Union.⁴⁶² Their intelligence indicated that the USSR was aware of US communications and electronic intelligence facilities in northern Iran and were fearful that Iran's CENTO membership would serve as a vehicle for an attack against the Soviet Union from the south.⁴⁶³ This, as the SAVAK had gathered, was a crucial factor in the Soviet Union continuing and increasing its propaganda activities against Iran.⁴⁶⁴ The Shah though had used formal and private channels to convey to the Soviet Union that it considered the USSR a friend and that it would under no circumstances be involved in any cross-border attacks.⁴⁶⁵ In addition the Shah had made clear that Iran would at no point allow foreign missiles to be positioned on Iranian soil.⁴⁶⁶ Despite these reassurances it became evident for the SAVAK that the USSR held little trust in the sincerity of the Shah's words.⁴⁶⁷

As the SAVAK understood it though, expressions of closer Iran-USSR relations coming from the Shah and Iranian political circles were genuine.⁴⁶⁸ Within Iranian political circles in particular there was a belief that Iran's strength in the region and the world would only be cemented if it chose a political path that avoided confrontation, particularly with the Soviet Union.⁴⁶⁹ Despite these difficulties it was hoped that increased cultural and economic contacts would allay Soviet fears thereby leading to a reduction in anti-Iranian Soviet propaganda.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 10 [01/09/1962].

⁴⁶³ Ibid

⁴⁶⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 11 [01/09/1962].

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 12 [01/09/1962].

⁴⁶⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 15 [01/09/1962].

⁴⁶⁹ Nollau and Wiehe, p. 72

⁴⁷⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 15 [01/09/1962].

SAVAK's focus on intellectual circles within Iran also reflected their belief in the impact that their opinions could potentially have on society. For the most part what the SAVAK's human intelligence sources indicated was that there was little resentment against the Soviet Union in comparison to the British and the Americans. The Iranian intellectual class it seemed maintained its resentment against what they perceived as the long standing interference of the British and Americans in Iranian political affairs.⁴⁷¹ For these intellectuals Iran had been unwillingly dragged into a Cold War when it clearly had no interest in being involved in such a fight, and for them it was the British and the Americans that had placed Iran in such a position that went against its national interests.⁴⁷² The SAVAK was also able to acquire intelligence that this feeling was shared within the student population and academia in general, with this group being highly supportive of closer ties with a country that was at the very least a neighbour by virtue of geography, unlike the US and Britain.⁴⁷³

The SAVAK at this time paid particular attention to opinions within the business sector, and this group considered closer Iran-Soviet ties highly beneficial economically due to the perception that such ties would lead to better economic circumstances within Iran, particularly with regards to the possibility of exports to the USSR.⁴⁷⁴ It was also evident for the SAVAK that this group did not hold any particularly strong anti US or British views, which was likely to have been a result of the economic aid that had been provided over the previous years by the US.⁴⁷⁵

The attitude of the clerical classes towards Iran-Soviet relations it seemed was driven more by religious sentiments rather than political ideologies. An example of this, as the SAVAK learned was the fact that the majority of clerics disapproved of American initiatives and policies that were supportive of the Baha'i faith. For such religious reasons the clerical class

⁴⁷¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 16 [01/09/1962].

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, pp. 16-17 [01/09/1962].

⁴⁷⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 17 [01/09/1962].

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

were generally supportive of closer ties with the Soviet Union so long as atheistic ideologies did not spread within the country.⁴⁷⁶

Realising the value in understanding the opinions of Iran's major political organisations, the SAVAK maintained agents within and close to such entities that would allow them to gain a better grasp of their attitudes towards important issues.⁴⁷⁷ The Iran National Front and Tudeh party were two such groups that remained under the focus of the SAVAK.⁴⁷⁸ In relation to their attitudes towards the Soviet Union the SAVAK had learned that the National Front party held a split between its right and left wings. The right wing of the party remained concerned about the possible negative impact that closer Soviet ties would have on Iran's relations with the United States. In general this wing of the party was strongly supportive of American policies and hoped that Iran would strongly back US positions on important issues. Their view of the Shah's and Iranian government's approach to the Soviet Union was that it was based upon political manoeuvring and deceit. On the other hand the SAVAK noted that the left wing of the National Front and the Tudeh party as a whole shared similar views in that they considered improved relations with the Soviet Union detrimental due to the possibility that it would improve political and social stability within the country, thereby acting against their interests.⁴⁷⁹ The Tudeh party in particular viewed the likelihood of such developments with alarm, as it would take away from the conditions necessary to further expand on their support base within the country and would thus seriously harm the long term interests of the party.⁴⁸⁰

Members of the government at the time were of the view that Iranian attempts to improve relations with the USSR were being met with approval and support by the US and that this

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Hāšemi, p. 232.

⁴⁷⁸ Hāšemi, p. 235.

⁴⁷⁹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 25 (document no. 312/2530) [17/09/1962].

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

was reflective of the general improvement in US-Soviet ties, particularly on the issue of Cuba and a cooling in Soviet support for Fidel Castro.⁴⁸¹

The 8th directorate's focus on internal public opinion can be attributed to a broader focus of counter-intelligence in this instance. Such a focus was particularly important as a result of the SAVAK's belief that the primary motivation behind the Soviet Union's willingness to improve relations was aid for Iran's industrial development that would eventually lead to a communist takeover of the state.⁴⁸² It is precisely for these reasons that the SAVAK sought to acquire and analyse internal opinions and actions relating to the Soviet Union. These actions clearly led to a crossover into a realm which could be considered as both counter-intelligence and domestic intelligence. The problematic nature of such activities will be elaborated upon in the conclusion of this thesis.

5.1.1.2 DIPLOMATIC INTELLIGENCE

For the SAVAK, the opinions of foreign states were also of importance in developing their intelligence estimates, and obvious targets of intelligence collection to satisfy this need were the embassies of foreign states.

Worrying about the effects that Soviet economic aid would have on its influence within Iran, in September of 1962, the SAVAK had been able to recruit a Romanian embassy interpreter to act as an intelligence agent.⁴⁸³ Intelligence provided by this agent indicated that the Soviet Union was intending to increase economic co-operation with the government of Prime Minister Alam.⁴⁸⁴ By getting to the source of why such economic aid was being provided by the Soviet Union, the Romanian agent was able to inform the SAVAK that the reasoning lay

⁴⁸¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 29 (document no. 312/2564) [17/09/1962].

⁴⁸² United States. Central Intelligence Agency, *Iran*, National Intelligence Estimate Number 34-66. Created 24/3/1966, p. 3.

⁴⁸³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 28 (document no. 331/15393) [17/09/1962].

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

in the USSR's belief that it would set off a political chain reaction within Iran.⁴⁸⁵ It was clear that the Soviet strategy was to get as close as possible to the Iranian government so as to be able to provide unconditional and obligation free economic aid. The SAVAK's agent was further able to inform them that the USSR was of the view that such forms of economic aid would sway Iranian public opinion in their favour and that ultimately such an outcome would be a victory in the ideological war against the Americans.⁴⁸⁶ Further aiding this view was the fact that the previous Iranian government, led by Dr Amini had claimed that the Americans had ceased economic aid to Iran.⁴⁸⁷ Soviet intelligence had been able to use this opportunity to spread anti-American propaganda via radio broadcasts beamed into Iran.⁴⁸⁸ More worrying for the SAVAK, as far as Iran's internal security was concerned, was the fact that leftist organisations within the country had also raised this same issue and were spreading anti-American propaganda with views that favoured closer Iranian co-operation with the USSR.⁴⁸⁹ The Romanian agent had made clear that the USSR was economically prepared to go to great lengths in removing American influence within Iran.⁴⁹⁰

After receiving news in late September of commercial negotiations between Iran and the USSR and a loan which the Soviet Union had given Iran, the SAVAK had also become aware of rumours that the Iranian government were preparing to hand oil rights (Alborz) to the British Petroleum company.⁴⁹¹ In addition they were informed that BP were to begin

⁴⁸⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 29 (document no. 331/15398) [17/09/1962].

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Kazemzadeh, p. 74.

⁴⁸⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 35 (document no. 331/15396) [22/09/1962].

⁴⁸⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 149 (document no. 331/15415) [08/06/1965].

⁴⁹⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 35 (document no. 331/15395) [22/09/1962].

⁴⁹¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 39 (document no. 312/2061) [28/09/1962].

construction of an oil pipeline from Qom.⁴⁹² In return for the Soviet loan the Iranian government were planning on handing over to the USSR projects involving the construction of airports, building complexes and dams (similar to dams being built at that time by the USSR in Afghanistan).⁴⁹³ The SAVAK's counter-intelligence directorate had also gathered intelligence at that time that the USSR was to be given the Khuryan oil rights.⁴⁹⁴ It was decided within the 8th directorate that unless further evidence of these outcomes were gathered, then no action was to be taken.⁴⁹⁵ This caution by the SAVAK toward the USSR was borne out of the fact that historically Russia had aimed to acquire control of Iran's northern oilfields, Mazandaran in particular, and just as it had invaded Iran's northern territories during World War II, the 8th directorate feared that a repetition of such an occurrence was possible.⁴⁹⁶ The directorate also felt that the USSR was now using its military strength to force the Iranian government into making decisions that it would not make under ordinary circumstances.⁴⁹⁷ What in particular pushed the USSR to act more forcefully was the fact that Royal Dutch Shell was at this time involved in oil negotiations with the Iranian government.⁴⁹⁸ This concerned the USSR to such an extent that a special delegation was sent to Iran via the Soviet foreign ministry.⁴⁹⁹ Iranian oil was of such importance to the USSR that this delegation was sent almost immediately after the Iranian government had commenced negotiations with the American 'Sinclair Oil' company over oil rights in the Baluchestan

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 20 (document no. 312/2064) [01/09/1962].

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 21 (document no. 312/2065) [01/09/1962].

⁴⁹⁶ Kazemzadeh, p. 113.

⁴⁹⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 22 (document no. 312/2066) [01/09/1962].

⁴⁹⁸ Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The Soviet Union and International Oil Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 127.

⁴⁹⁹ Robin Laird and Erik P. Hoffmann, p. 210.

region.⁵⁰⁰ After hearing of the USSR's offers of loans and construction aid in exchange for access to Iranian oil, the ongoing negotiations with Sinclair Oil and the British had been immediately cancelled.⁵⁰¹ Soon after arriving in Iran the Soviet ambassador to Iran had made contacts with senior Tudeh party figures and had stressed the importance of oil in the USSR's economic relations with Iran.⁵⁰² He had also made clear that failure to approve oil agreements would result in Soviet-Iranian relations being harmed.⁵⁰³ Access to Iranian oil was inevitably seen by the SAVAK as one of the pre-conditions for Soviet aid to Iran. This included intelligence at that time that in exchange for a hundred million dollar aid loan, the Soviet Union was seeking access to oilfields located in Semnan.⁵⁰⁴

Intelligence sources were also able to provide information on opinions within embassies such as that of the Indian, British and American embassies.⁵⁰⁵ The 8th directorate's sources indicated that Indian diplomats were altogether supportive of closer Iran-Soviet ties and were optimistic about the results that such an initiative would bring for the Middle East in particular.⁵⁰⁶

Intelligence sources providing information on views within the British Embassy also indicated that the British government as well as British citizens within Iran were in support of improved Iran-Soviet ties but for altogether different reasons. Closer Iranian ties with the Soviet Union were seen as a critical factor in breaking the dominance of American influence

⁵⁰⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 23 (document no. 312/2067) [01/09/1962].

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 111 (document no. 322/9560) [23/09/1964].

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 24 (document no. 312/2067) [01/09/1962].

⁵⁰⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, pp. 18-19 [01/09/1962].

⁵⁰⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 28 (document no. 312/2563) [19/09/62].

within Iran.⁵⁰⁷ In particular there was hope that such ties would in the near future create greater political and economic difficulties for the US vis-à-vis Iran.⁵⁰⁸

Sources gathering information from inside the US embassy indicated that the US remained highly sensitive to changes in Iranian foreign policy and that frequent attempts were made by US intelligence agencies to evaluate the opinions of key political entities and the Iranian public, so as to better understand the future course of Iranian policies.⁵⁰⁹ Although the US had considered that Iran would make attempts at improving its relations with the USSR it still remained uncertain as to the precise reasons and thinking that lay behind such a major foreign policy decision.⁵¹⁰ As a result, new American intelligence efforts were put in motion to better understand the reasoning behind this Iranian decision and what the possible outcomes might be.⁵¹¹ The SAVAK learned that US intelligence officers based in the US embassy strongly suspected that the Shah was directly involved in this new initiative towards the USSR and that direct negotiations were taking place through non-standard diplomatic channels.⁵¹² The fact that the USSR had quickly and positively reacted to these new signals coming from Tehran suggested to the Americans that this was evidence of the Shah's involvement.⁵¹³ It was also made clear to the SAVAK that the US was concerned that its interests could be negatively affected by these new developments, particularly as they considered the Iranian

⁵⁰⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, pp. 18-19 [01/09/1962].

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 19 [01/09/1962].

⁵¹⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, pp. 26–27 (document no. 312/2558) [19/09/1962].

⁵¹¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 19 [01/09/1962].

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

Prime Minister and his government to be naive and ill experienced as far as understanding the strategies and true intentions of Soviet foreign policy.⁵¹⁴

The SAVAK at this time were also gathering intelligence on developments relating to US-Soviet relations and the impact that this would have on their policies toward Iran and the Middle East.⁵¹⁵ Following the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the SAVAK through intelligence on diplomatic discussions at the Soviet embassy in Tehran became aware that in return for no longer maintaining missile bases in Cuba, the Soviet Union had specifically singled out Iran as a country in which the US would have to reduce its presence.⁵¹⁶

The Soviet government also remained perturbed about seemingly anti-Soviet propaganda being released by elements in the Iranian government.⁵¹⁷ The SAVAK noted that in September of 1963 the Soviets were still laying out pre-conditions for improved relations, and amongst these was the removal of the Iranian information minister at the time, Nasratollah Moinian who had been singled out due to his role in disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda.⁵¹⁸ Although the Iranian government had agreed to these conditions, Moinian's close links with the Shah ensured that he would remain in his position of influence.

The 8th directorate feared that in their exuberance to improve Soviet-Iranian relations the Iranian government was now willing to go as far as allowing the Soviets to dictate the removal of an Iranian government member. These sentiments were also shared by the Iranian business and religious communities who remained fearful of their interests being undermined by an increased Soviet ideological influence in Iran.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, pp. 26–27 (document no. 312/2558) [19/09/1962].

⁵¹⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 60 (document no. 331/26079) [08/12/1962].

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 112 (document no. 326/1909) [07/10/64].

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

5.1.2 OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE

The SAVAK fully understood the impact of propaganda and the influence of the media in affecting political decision making, both inside and outside of Iran. As such, collaborative efforts were pursued between the foreign and counter-intelligence directorates for the analysis of foreign media.⁵²⁰ The Soviet *Izvestia* newspaper was considered by the SAVAK to be the voice of the Soviet government and therefore much attention was given to it in understanding official Soviet positions.⁵²¹ Along with *Izvestia*, the other major Soviet newspaper, *Pravda* was also analysed as it was viewed as the official mouthpiece of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), a Soviet military newspaper was also regularly utilised as part of the SAVAK's open source analyses.⁵²²

Although open source analysis has at times been derided as glorified news clippings by ill informed intelligence consumers, adept intelligence practitioners have always understood its value in intelligence gathering and this was no different for the SAVAK. As far as Iran's willingness to improve relations with the USSR was concerned, this new policy was looked upon positively by these Soviet newspapers and considered as a step towards world peace and establishing a new state of security between the two nation states.⁵²³ In addition they considered it a model of diplomacy for all other nation-states bordering the USSR.⁵²⁴

Soviet radio propaganda was also given a great deal of attention by the SAVAK. In September 1962 Radio Moscow and the National Voice of Iran (NVI - a Soviet based radio station with ties to Tudeh party members) linked the issue of Soviet involvement with Cuba to US involvement in Iran.⁵²⁵ The information broadcast suggested that Americans were

⁵²⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 20 [01/09/1962].

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 21 [01/09/1962].

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 20 [01/09/1962].

planning on constructing and establishing military bases in Iran as a threat to the Soviet Union with little consideration for the consequences that this would have for Iran.⁵²⁶ Furthermore, the issue of foreign advisors in Iran was also raised. It was claimed that the US Chief of Staff (General George H. Decker) and American advisors were using Iran's membership of CENTO as an excuse to secretly utilise the North-West of Iran (along with North-East Turkey) as a point of attack for the US against the USSR with the use of medium range missiles and aerial attacks.⁵²⁷ The SAVAK understood such Soviet propaganda to be a tool for increasing anti-American sentiment within Iran and although such propaganda had also been transmitted in previous years, there was an estimation by the SAVAK's counter-intelligence directorate that as the USSR began to fully understand the seriousness of Iran's new foreign policy towards the Soviet Union, such propaganda would be reduced.⁵²⁸ The NVI in particular had been extremely vocal in its anti-Shah rhetoric since its creation in 1959, established in response to military agreements made in that year between the US and Iran.⁵²⁹ The 8th directorate's judgement would in time prove to be correct as only days after details of Iran's new policy towards the Soviet Union had emerged, all Soviet based radio stations reduced their anti-Iran rhetoric.⁵³⁰

The SAVAK noted that Soviet propaganda would always peak at specific opportune moments, this included Lyndon Johnson's visit to Iran in August of 1962.⁵³¹ An Iranian agent that maintained connections with Soviet officials was able to provide insight relating to

⁵²⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, pp. 20-21 [01/09/1962].

⁵²⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 21 [01/09/1962].

⁵²⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 94 (document no. 312/2659) [13/06/1964].

⁵²⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, pp. 21-22 [01/09/1962].

⁵³⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 32 (document no. 312/2592) [22/09/62].

⁵³¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 7 (document no. 312/2226) [28/08/62].

Soviet perceptions of this visit: It was made clear that the Soviet Union was not too concerned about losing out to American influence within Iran.⁵³² The main reason behind this thinking was that Soviet intelligence officers within Iran had been able to gather information on Iranian public opinion and this had indicated that up to ninety percent of Iranians maintained anti-American sentiments. Furthermore, Soviet intelligence observed that the more the US increased its support for Iran's ruling system, the greater the Iranian public's antipathy towards both the system and the US would grow. Although anti-British feeling had also been observed at high levels within Iranian public opinion, it was seemingly not as elevated as that of anti-US sentiment. In addition, as the SAVAK were all too aware of the effectiveness of Soviet propaganda within Iran, their views were further backed up by the fact that, as their agent informed them, the Soviets were highly satisfied with their anti-American propaganda activities within Iran.⁵³³

5.1.3 PUBLIC OPINION

Of perhaps greatest concern for the SAVAK's CI directorate was the reaction of the Iranian public to these new diplomatic developments between Iran and the USSR.⁵³⁴ In assessing Iranian public opinion it was clear that there was a growing positive sentiment towards the Soviet Union.⁵³⁵ The 8th directorate was of the view that far from taking a more conciliatory approach towards Iran, Soviet intelligence would covertly utilise these positive Iranian perceptions of the USSR as a weapon in advancing its own ideology.⁵³⁶ It was assessed that this would be done via indirect sources of propaganda, ground operations within Iran and the support of anti-regime organisations.⁵³⁷ The 8th directorate feared that positive perceptions of

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, pp. 14-15 [01/09/1962].

⁵³⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 15 [01/09/1962].

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 20 [01/09/1962].

the Soviet Union could easily develop into more vigorous support of the Soviet Union, or at worst, acceptance of the communist ideology.⁵³⁸ In order to counteract this possibility the 8th directorate estimated that certain political conditions would have to be met. These included increasing social equality, reducing poverty and unemployment, as well as generally improving the economic condition of the country.⁵³⁹ Another element recognised by the 8th directorate in adding to Soviet influence was corruption.⁵⁴⁰ The 8th directorate considered it necessary that solid measures be taken against corruption in order to uproot it from all government related bodies. To supplement these measures the counter-intelligence directorate felt that instilling a stronger sense of national pride in the people would also act as barrier against communist influence.⁵⁴¹ The last of these recommendations is the spread of religious beliefs in the general population and the youth in particular but suggests the promotion of more modernist approaches to religion and faith.⁵⁴²

As a goodwill measure, Leonid Brezhnev, at that point acting as the Soviet Union's Head of State (Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet), visited Iran in November of 1963.⁵⁴³ Developments during this visit had been of concern for the SAVAK, particularly the highly positive sentiments of the Iranian people towards Brezhnev.⁵⁴⁴ This was considered by the SAVAK to be a critically important issue.⁵⁴⁵ For the SAVAK, such an outpouring of

⁵³⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 21 [01/09/1962].

⁵³⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 24 [17/09/1962].

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 24 [17/09/1962].

⁵⁴³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 64 (document no. 300/550) [18/11/1963].

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

excitement and support for a visiting head of state was without precedent.⁵⁴⁶ The visits of Queen Elizabeth II, President Eisenhower and European heads of state had all for the SAVAK been overshadowed by this visit and the total number of people observing Brezhnev's visit was considered to be at the very least fifteen times greater than the attendance at any previous trip to Iran by a head of state. SAVAK intelligence officers present at the route taken by the Shah and Brezhnev reported that amongst the immense numbers of people in attendance there also seemed to be a large contingent of activist workers present from the south of Tehran and surrounding regions. A number of Tudeh party members were also identified as being present amongst these attendees.⁵⁴⁷ One SAVAK officer estimated the number of Tudeh party members present from the north of the country to be at least a hundred. It was also judged that amongst those present and actively supporting the visit, there were no limitations to any particular social class.⁵⁴⁸ For the SAVAK's 8th directorate, the people's general perception was that Brezhnev represented true democracy and people's rule.⁵⁴⁹ Brezhnev's demeanour during the procession was also viewed positively with most people noting his seeming excitement and desire to step off the Shah's Royal Chariot and stand amongst the people. Negative perceptions of the Shah were also noted by the SAVAK, as in contrast to Brezhnev, the Shah had remained firmly seated at the back of the Royal chariot, projecting an image of aloofness. This perception in turn led to a feeling by the large numbers of people present that the Shah was most likely resentful of the fact that such numbers had been present to greet Brezhnev whilst his own processions with Empress Farah had frequently been a much quieter affair. The SAVAK though was not alone in its concerns towards such a vast and vocal outpouring of positive emotions towards a Soviet leader. It was noted that merchants and clerics present in the vicinity of the route had been

⁵⁴⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 65 (document no. 300/550) [18/11/1963].

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 66 (document no. 300/550) [18/11/1963].

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

disappointed with the people's sentiments towards Brezhnev and were concerned with the future of the country if such sentiments were to continue to grow.⁵⁵⁰

5.1.4 DIRECTORATE 8 AND US INTELLIGENCE

In their meetings with the SAVAK, CIA intelligence officers stationed at the US embassy in Tehran were also expressing their shock and surprise at Iran's willingness to allow numerous Soviet and Eastern bloc labourers and specialists to enter Iran, as these could easily be opportunities for Soviet intelligence to further their activities in Iran. The SAVAK were notified that American residents and officials in Tehran had become increasingly aware of an alarming growth in anti-American propaganda amongst Iranians since the Iranian government's rapprochement with the Soviet Union.⁵⁵¹ As the CIA explained to the SAVAK, this was proof that anti-American propaganda previously disseminated by the Soviet Union and Iranian organisations opposed to US influence in Iran, was now becoming successful in implanting its message. Although Iran's previously hostile relations with the Soviet Union had attenuated the impact of anti-American propaganda, improved Soviet relations and the enhanced perception of the Soviet Union by the Iranian public that followed it meant that the public were now more willing to see the US as a malign player in Iran.⁵⁵²

Although this receptiveness by the Iranian public to anti-American propaganda was considered important, another key factor identified to the SAVAK by the CIA's Iran station was the role of Iranian government members who had commended Soviet economic aid to Iran whilst criticising the Americans for reducing such aid. The CIA station in Tehran, considered anti-American propaganda to have become so effective that the Iranian public's perceptions of the US were now similar to if not worse than what perceptions of the British and Soviets had been several years earlier. It was made clear to the SAVAK that US officials were concerned enough by this growing trend that they were now allocating a great deal of

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 128 [02/03/1965].

⁵⁵² Ibid.

their resources towards the identification of specific sources of anti-American propaganda in Iran and preparing courses of action that would counter its impact.⁵⁵³

5.2 DIRECTORATE 8: CONTINUED MISTRUST (1964-1969)

5.2.1 IMPACT OF THE NEW BREZHNEV-KOSYGIN LEADERSHIP IN THE USSR

Of particular interest for the SAVAK was the impact that the new Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership would have on Soviet policy towards Iran.⁵⁵⁴ In late October 1964, the 8th directorate carried out analyses of the implications that the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership would have on Iranian public opinion.⁵⁵⁵ For all individuals in the public realm it seemed that the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership had been a very important topic of discussion. The SAVAK concluded that Nikita Khrushchev had been considered as a man of peace by those Iranians that remained politically impartial.

On the other hand, the SAVAK assessed that the Tudeh, having been disappointed with Khrushchev's willingness to proceed with an Iran-Soviet rapprochement, were glad to see him removed as he was considered to be an appeaser of the West. The Tudeh party it was claimed had further come to view Khrushchev as a supporter of liberalism who was gradually eliminating the lines that separated socialism from capitalism. For the Tudeh it seemed that in his endeavours at making peace with the capitalist world Khrushchev had effectively sold out the socialist movements in those countries. The result of such actions had in many cases weakened and sounded the death knell for these socialist movements. The SAVAK observed that the Tudeh party had gone as far as blaming Khrushchev for their failures in Iran. It was thus hoped by the Tudeh that with Khrushchev no longer in power, the new leadership would re-establish the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) which had been dissolved by Khrushchev. The SAVAK also discovered that the Tudeh party further hoped that at the very least the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership would more strongly support communist parties that were operating within capitalist countries. For the Tudeh in particular it was anticipated that

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 118 (document no. 262/10285) [22/10/1964].

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

such an action would strengthen the party and that with Soviet aid they would be able to resume their revolutionary activities with vigour.⁵⁵⁶

Those that remained largely free of political biases considered the Soviet Union amenable in that as long as rational leaders were willing to sit down to negotiate and compromise with one another, there would be benefits for the countries involved. These individuals that were representative of all social classes no longer viewed the Soviet Union as an entity to be feared as it was considered that its internal divisions had weakened it. Despite what could be considered as Khrushchev's once aggressive policies towards Iran, the aforementioned group of public opinion viewed him with admiration as a man of peace that overall had brought an era of peace and calm to the world.

The SAVAK also observed that the arrival of the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership was of concern for the Arab world.⁵⁵⁷ It was assessed that Khrushchev's removal from power was negatively viewed upon by Arab governments as Khrushchev was considered to be a supporter of the Arab world and that these governments knew very little of the attitudes of Kosygin and Brezhnev towards Arab causes. The SAVAK noted that Arab governments were particularly concerned at the possibility of Brezhnev supporting Iran at the Arab world's expense. This it seemed was due to the awareness of Arab governments that only several months earlier, in November 1963, as Soviet president, Brezhnev had made a state visit to Tehran, giving a toast to the health of the Shah with no indication that the Soviet Union would in any way oppose any element of his rule. This visit had been made following numerous offers of Soviet economic aid, including breeding facilities on the Caspian Sea for 3,500,000 sturgeon, which had placed Iran in a better position to compete with Soviet-produced caviar.⁵⁵⁸ In advance of Brezhnev's visit, several Eastern bloc states had also offered Iran US \$160 million in economic loans.⁵⁵⁹ In addressing a joint session of the Majles, Brezhnev had also proclaimed that "at present, no clouds of misunderstanding darken the

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettelâ'ât (ed.), *Čap dar Irân beh Revâyat-e Asnâd-e SAVAK: Ravâbet-e Irân va Šowravî...*, p. 112 (document no. 326/1909) [07/10/1964].

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettelâ'ât (ed.), *Čap dar Irân beh Revâyat-e Asnâd-e SAVAK: Ravâbet-e Irân va Šowravî...*, p. 114 (document no. 301/3853) [08/10/1964].

relations between Iran and the Soviet Union.”⁵⁶⁰ It seems though that those very positive signals somewhat hid the fact that the Iran-Soviet rapprochement was still a rather tentative one as during Brezhnev’s very visit, three Soviet jets venturing eighteen miles deep into Iranian airspace shot down an unarmed Iranian plane on a photographic mapping mission for the Shah’s White Revolution land reform programme, killing the Iranian surveyors on board.⁵⁶¹ Even further into the rapprochement, in August 1964, a Soviet MiG-17F aircraft shot down an Imperial Iranian Air Force plane proving, as the SAVAK’s counter-intelligence directorate were well aware, that despite the political rapprochement the security situation between both states remained tense.⁵⁶²

5.2.2 SOVIET HUMAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

The total number of KGB and GRU officers present in Iran at this time remained constant. By the SAVAK’s estimates, between fifty to sixty intelligence officers were active in Iran, but in addition to the KGB and GRU, the Soviet Union was able to rely on other Eastern bloc intelligence organisations and on communist groups with which it had links.⁵⁶³ The activities of these non-Soviet intelligence organisations were run with KGB and GRU backing and involvement.⁵⁶⁴ In addition to Tehran, Soviet intelligence personnel were able to operate out of consulates located in Rasht, Isfahan and Tabriz.⁵⁶⁵ The SAVAK’s counter-intelligence directorate discovered that KGB and GRU officers in Iran would often use covers that involved jobs within the embassy’s commercial section, banking, the *Ingosstrakh* Insurance Company, *Aeroflot* (the Soviet national airline), *Tass* and *Novosti* news agencies, Soviet hospital staff and branches of the Soviet Film Export Agency.⁵⁶⁶ The Soviet hospital in Tehran, considered as one of the best in the city, was operating under Soviet administration,

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Curtis Peebles, *Shadow Flights: America’s Secret Air War against the Soviet Union* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2000), p. 69.

⁵⁶² Peebles, p. 73.

⁵⁶³ Hāšemī, p. 445.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁵ Hāšemī, p. 446.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

and had become the target of several SAVAK counter-intelligence operations. In one notable incident during late April 1964, the 8th directorate were able to identify a staff member of the Soviet hospital as an intelligence officer acting in support of the Tudeh party.⁵⁶⁷ Operating under the name of ‘Professor Zakharov’ this Soviet intelligence officer was identified as being fluent in Turkish and Persian with the specific task of ensuring that Tudeh party members received any required training in order to enhance operational capabilities. The key role of this intelligence officer was noted by the SAVAK due to the fact that only upon his approval would any Tudeh party member be aided in their entry to the Soviet Union for the necessary training. ‘Professor Zakharov’ was also able to provide basic training to individuals within Tehran itself. The 8th directorate had discovered through surveillance measures that he had been meeting with a Tehran University student with the surname of ‘Rasouli’ and had provided this individual with training.⁵⁶⁸

Indeed the Soviet hospital’s links with the Iranian medical community placed it in an advantageous position with regards to recruiting well educated Iranian citizens. In 1965 South African intelligence arrested a GRU ‘illegal’ and upon his detention it was discovered that in his possession were pharmaceutical catalogues that contained encrypted messages written in invisible ink.⁵⁶⁹ In order to avoid raising suspicions these catalogues had not been sent directly to the Soviet Union, but surprisingly for South African intelligence they were addressed to an Iranian medical facility in Tehran.⁵⁷⁰

Soviet intelligence were well aware that in many circumstances radio transmissions were potentially insecure and could be intercepted or reveal the location of the agent or officer carrying out the transmission.⁵⁷¹ The sending of intelligence via mail was thus viewed under

⁵⁶⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 80 (document no. 20/2039) [21/04/1964].

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Hāšemi, p. 459.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Stuart A. Herrington, *Traitors among Us: Inside the Spy Catcher’s World* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1999), p. 126.

certain circumstances as a more secure method of exchanging communications.⁵⁷² The KGB and GRU understood though that as with the CIA's operation HT-LINGUAL, which in 1955 had begun to intercept and open mail to and from the Soviet Union, the intelligence and security services of several other countries would be likely to do the same.⁵⁷³ Under such circumstances, Soviet intelligence officers and agents were provided with forwarding addresses to countries in which it was believed that all mail to and from the Soviet Union would not be screened.⁵⁷⁴ It was the use of such reasoning that had led to the GRU illegal operating in South Africa being provided with instructions to forward intelligence to Iran and not directly to the Soviet Union.⁵⁷⁵ The South African foreign ministry passed details of this case to the Iranian embassy in Pretoria, and this was in turn forwarded to the SAVAK. Using the information at hand, the SAVAK's surveillance measures revealed that the individual responsible for receiving the catalogues was in fact an Iranian medical doctor by the name of Dr Mazaheri.⁵⁷⁶

The 8th directorate observed that in the nearby surroundings of his home Dr Mazaheri had been meeting with a Soviet intelligence officer and handing over documentation. Having decided that there would be no further benefit in allowing this to continue, Dr Mazaheri was arrested on a night soon after making contact with his Soviet case officer and was immediately taken in for interrogation.⁵⁷⁷ The 8th directorate was particularly interested in this case as their records revealed no evidence of Dr Mazaheri having any previous or existing links with communist organisations.⁵⁷⁸ In his confession Dr Mazaheri claimed that several years earlier during a visit to his brother's residence he had been introduced to a Soviet pharmaceutical expert. As a result of their similar medical backgrounds Dr Mazaheri had in time developed a friendship with this Soviet pharmaceutical expert and it was at this point

⁵⁷² Herrington, p. 108.

⁵⁷³ Herrington, p. 115.

⁵⁷⁴ Len Scott, *Journeys in Shadows* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p.162.

⁵⁷⁵ Hāšemi, p. 459.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Hāšemi, p. 460.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

that the Soviet pharmaceutical expert had asked him to hand over the pharmaceutical catalogues which were being sent to Dr Mazaheri. Soon after receiving the first piece of mail from South Africa, the Soviet pharmaceutical expert provided Dr Mazaheri with training in counter-surveillance and information exchange measures that would better place him in avoiding any suspicions. Dr Mazaheri would use this training and advice to hand over the materials from South Africa to the Soviet pharmaceutical expert and would receive cash payments in return. Dr Mazaheri also claimed that the Soviet pharmaceutical expert had been very eager to meet his son who at the time was attending university, but up until that point Dr Mazaheri had been unwilling to arrange such a meeting.

As a result of the Soviet pharmaceutical expert having met Dr Mazaheri at his brother's residence, suspicions were also raised within the SAVAK's counter-intelligence division with regards to the brother who interestingly for the SAVAK happened to be a postal office employee. He too was arrested and under interrogation confessed that his contact with Soviet intelligence had begun over two decades earlier in September of 1941 during the occupation of Iran. Having already been a postal office employee at that time, a Soviet embassy staff member who had officially been in charge of dropping off embassy mail at the post office had approached him and in time a friendship had developed between the two. It was at this point, Dr Mazaheri's brother claimed under interrogation, that he accepted Soviet instructions to be carried out at the post office. The Soviet intelligence officer with whom he had developed a friendship was eventually reassigned, seemingly to a different country, but prior to leaving he had introduced Dr Mazaheri's brother to his replacement and the arrangements continued as before up to the point of his arrest. Dr Mazaheri's brother also claimed that during this period of time he had introduced other Iranians to his Soviet case officer.⁵⁷⁹

5.2.3 SURVEILLANCE

In order to identify potential Soviet intelligence officers, the 8th directorate at this time had also begun to use the tapping of telephone communications.⁵⁸⁰ Although the KGB and GRU officers were highly cautious in avoiding open communications that would reveal sensitive

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 190 (document no. 45/4969) [28/12/1965].

information, the SAVAK discovered that occasional slip-ups would occur that would allow them to identify Soviet intelligence officers or to acquire useful intelligence.⁵⁸¹ The use of public telephones around the Soviet embassy were also discovered to be a useful source of communications intercepts, in that to communicate with Soviet officials at the embassy, intelligence officers would often receive calls from agents and other contacts using public phones in the vicinity of the Soviet embassy.⁵⁸² The SAVAK also discovered that every few days KGB and GRU intelligence officers that did not normally operate out of the Soviet embassy were requested to attend the embassy. These requests which were normally made by telephone helped the 8th directorate to identify Soviet intelligence officers operating within different organisations and in some cases also revealed their ranks. Furthermore, these intercepts revealed, more indirectly, details that were also of use for intelligence purposes, including the operational state of their organisations as well as more personal sentiments with regards to familial matters and feelings towards their superiors which evidently included details of more senior intelligence officers. All of this information proved to be highly useful for the SAVAK in identifying and creating individual profiles of known Soviet intelligence officers operating within Iran.⁵⁸³ The 8th directorate was finally reaping the rewards of its efforts over the previous years to train enough Russian language specialists so as to allow it to swiftly translate and analyse numerous intercepted Soviet communications.⁵⁸⁴

The building of this cadre of Russian language specialists had not been without its problems. Although immigrants that were native Russian speakers were available to the SAVAK, it was felt that such individuals could not be trusted.⁵⁸⁵ Although the SAVAK had considered sending Iranian intelligence officers to the Soviet Union for language training, it was again felt that such individuals would, as with native Russian speakers, be considered untrustworthy, particularly as the KGB and GRU would have easy access to such individuals. There were no such fears for Chinese language specialists as these individuals were sent to

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 191 (document no. 46/4973) [09/01/1966].

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Hāšemī, p. 462.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

China for their language training. A decision was eventually made to send the relevant SAVAK officers to US universities where they could successfully acquire Russian language skills without the elevated risk of being exposed to Soviet intelligence.⁵⁸⁶

Although the SAVAK would often take an active approach towards discovering Iranian agents of Soviet intelligence, there were also instances in which such Iranians would be willing to approach the 8th directorate and act as double agents.⁵⁸⁷ It was discovered that such individuals had been working with Soviet intelligence for extended periods of time but that over time and for various reasons they had grown disaffected with their handlers.⁵⁸⁸ Reasons for such disaffection included negative treatment at the hands of Soviet case officers and also a fear of these same officers.⁵⁸⁹ A number of these individuals had also chosen to approach the SAVAK out of a psychological sense that they were acting as traitors against their own country.⁵⁹⁰ Such individuals proved to be of great use for the SAVAK as they were able to accurately identify Soviet intelligence officers and explain in detail their known objectives. Less willing Soviet intelligence agents that were identified by the SAVAK and faced with imprisonment or execution were also made to work as double agents.⁵⁹¹

In their counter-surveillance measures at this time the SAVAK were well aware that similar to their surveillance of the Soviet embassy, KGB and GRU officers were also assigned to acquire information on those entering and exiting known SAVAK sites in Iran. As a result, 8th directorate surveillance units were briefed and debriefed at random sites which were not in frequent use by the SAVAK.⁵⁹² Such units were required to be available at all hours of the

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 289 [21/09/1967].

⁵⁸⁸ Hāšemī, p. 462.

⁵⁸⁹ Hāšemī, p. 463.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 289 [21/09/1967].

⁵⁹² Hāšemī, p. 463

day, particularly as KGB and GRU officers would at times choose to operate under cover of darkness.⁵⁹³

5.2.4 IRANIAN-SOVIET BORDER

In preventing Soviet intelligence officers and agents from entering the country illegally, border defences were an important factor, and the 8th directorate were given the responsibility of protecting northern border areas.⁵⁹⁴ This was no easy task especially due the fact that the long 1600km border that Iran shared with the Soviet Union included widely varying terrain. The Soviet side of the border was heavily guarded with little chance of individuals entering or exiting without official permission. Soviet border posts were distanced from one another depending upon the terrain and their proximity to towns and cities. Fewer border posts were placed around terrain that was deemed to be hazardous to cross and border posts closer to Iranian towns and cities were more heavily staffed and equipped. Of particular concern for the 8th directorate was that although Iran had set up its own border posts manned by the Iranian border guard and gendarmerie, these did not have an adequate number of guards or equipment to fully secure Iran's side of the border.⁵⁹⁵ Limited resources meant that on the advice of the 8th directorate, border guard resources had to be allocated depending upon intelligence that would indicate whether there was a likelihood of Soviet intelligence infiltration or activity. This imbalance in land border defences also extended to the Caspian Sea, where Soviet patrol boats outnumbered Iranian patrol boats.⁵⁹⁶

The Soviet border defences were taken seriously not least because as SAVAK intelligence indicated, Iranian villagers from border areas that had accidentally strayed into Soviet territory were often detained and taken in for questioning by KGB and GRU intelligence officers.⁵⁹⁷ Villagers though were not the only group of apparently innocent individuals detained by Soviet border guards. The 8th directorate had become concerned over the fact that

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Hāšemī, p. 464.

⁵⁹⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 256 (document no. 7/20/28327) [06/02/1967].

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Hāšemī, p. 465.

seemingly overzealous border guards had begun to cross into Iranian territory and were detaining leisure hunters, forestry officials and individuals carrying out geological or meteorological work. These individuals were interrogated, in some cases pressured into providing information and attempts were made at convincing them to become agents for Soviet intelligence. Not all of these detained individuals informed the SAVAK of their detention, but those that did provided the 8th directorate with useful information pertaining to the methods used by Soviet intelligence to secretly allow Iranian agents to be guided through its borders.⁵⁹⁸ The 8th directorate was able to glean this information by arranging for these individuals to act as double agents.⁵⁹⁹ Each of these agents were informed by Soviet intelligence that they would be contacted at an opportune moment and would be requested to move to a specific border location at night and using a certain sequence of lights with the use of a torch would identify themselves to the Soviet border guards at which point they would be guided into Soviet territory. Upon their entry into the Soviet Union these agents would provide their Soviet case officers with the necessary information and would then be given a cash payment as a reward. The 8th directorate discovered that the intelligence the KGB and GRU were seeking from such agents related to military and police security sites, names of commanders, heads of government offices and organisations and any planned changes, names of influential individuals, in-depth details of border towns, communication lines, goods produced, the general economic status of the people and their general sentiments.⁶⁰⁰ Individuals detained at the border who were of no potential intelligence value for the KGB and GRU or who were unwilling to cooperate were dealt with harshly. In such instances these individuals would be tried and sentenced under Soviet law with maximum prison sentences of up to three years.⁶⁰¹ Warnings by the Iranian border police and the Iranian foreign ministry would under these circumstances be ignored.⁶⁰² The double agents that had been working for

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 263 (document no. 25/28365) [09/04/1967].

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Hāšemī, p. 465.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

the SAVAK were mostly operating out of Iranian border provinces such as Khorasan in the north-east and Azerbaijan in the north-west.⁶⁰³

One notable area in which there were frequent problems with Soviet border guards was the Iranian border town of Astara situated in Iran's north-west Gilan province and located south of Soviet Astara in the Kura-Aras Lowlands of Soviet Azerbaijan.⁶⁰⁴ The official border separating the two, which had been established in 1828 under the treaty of Turkmenchay, was the Aras River. Surrounded by the cover of forests and with only a narrow river separating the Iran-Soviet border, it was not considered a difficult task to cross this section of the border. During the spring and summer months it was not uncommon for people in the surrounding region to visit the Aras river. As a result of the large numbers of people visiting this area there were instances in which individuals would innocently end up swimming and moving into Soviet territory. Having become aware of these border infringements Soviet patrol guards would often be dispatched to such areas. The 8th directorate considered this behaviour to be overly aggressive as any Iranian caught stepping into Soviet territory at these locations, be it for innocent reasons, would be immediately arrested.⁶⁰⁵ These individuals would be taken in for questioning with documents and photos being taken as evidence. As the 8th directorate discovered though, such seemingly excessive measures against innocent people were not being carried out to dissuade border infringements, but to recruit these ordinary individuals as agents.⁶⁰⁶

One such notable case involved the detention of a youth from Astara in his final year of schooling in April of 1967 who had claimed to be on Iranian territory before being arrested by Soviet border guards.⁶⁰⁷ After being transferred to a central detention centre he had drawn the interest of KGB officers who were impressed by his intellect as well as overall potential and considered him a fine candidate to be moulded into an agent. After confirming his name,

⁶⁰³ Hāšemi, p. 466.

⁶⁰⁴ Hāšemi, p. 467.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 263 (document no. 25/28365) [09/04/1967].

⁶⁰⁷ Hāšemi, p. 468.

city of residence and details of his family, by the student's own recollections the KGB had curiously proceeded to provide him with in-depth information relating to the activities of his headmaster and teachers, detailing which of these individuals would be receptive to bribes and their general psychological profiles, including methods which could help the student to improve his standing amongst these people on a personal level. By the accounts of the student the KGB had continued to explain that to improve his standing and thus his future chances of success, he would have to do more than simply focus his efforts on academic success. It was explained to him that understanding the character of each of these teachers and his headmaster would be critical in his ability to succeed and he was provided with advice on how to strengthen the links with these key individuals. After providing the youth with a cash payment, the KGB officers asked whether he would be willing to work for them and having accepted this offer he was then made to provide a written guarantee that he would under no circumstances reveal to anyone that he was acting as an agent. Such a written guarantee would of course have meant very little, if anything, legally and was most likely done to instil a strong feeling of commitment on the part of the youth with seemingly no opportunity to opt out of his agent status at any future point in time. By the recollection of the youth, to further emphasise this point it was made very clear by the KGB officers that any attempt at informing Iranian intelligence and security services of his Soviet agent status, or any details provided by him concerning the matters discussed by the KGB officers, would result in his life being threatened. Arrangements were then made for a future meeting and the youth was released back into Iranian Astara.⁶⁰⁸

Several months after completing his school studies he was once again contacted and ordered to take part in officer or police entrance examinations. The youth was provided by his Soviet handlers with test papers and physical training to prepare him for the entrance requirements and with such help was accepted into a law enforcement academy. Soon after, his contacts with the KGB were discovered by the SAVAK's 8th directorate and facing serious penalties upon failing to cooperate, was developed into a double agent. Under questioning by 8th directorate officers he would later claim that even the smallest of details provided to him by

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

his KGB case officers regarding examination questions and in-depth details of key individuals had proven to be entirely accurate.⁶⁰⁹

The extent of such Soviet intelligence attempts to develop agents from very early on had become a serious issue for the SAVAK and despite their attempts to counteract Soviet intelligence activities at the border, there was a general acceptance within the 8th directorate that with the volume of intelligence activities alone there simply were not enough resources to acquire full control of the situation.⁶¹⁰ It was felt that control of the Soviet-Iran border had in fact fallen under the complete dominance of the Soviet Union and that any targeted individual could be smuggled by Soviet Intelligence into Soviet territory and that any Soviet agent or officer could enter Iranian territory unnoticed.⁶¹¹ By questioning agents such as the youth from Astara, the 8th directorate had realised the extent to which Soviet intelligence held total information awareness of border regions and towns. Any Soviet agent or intelligence officer illegally crossing the border into Iranian territory had also been provided with complete mapping details of their territory of operation, however remote or obscure the details and area of targeted operations.⁶¹² Details provided for border cities would include safe houses, bus routes, coffee shops, travel inns, likely check points as well as any other information which was deemed to be of use for the agent or officer.⁶¹³

KGB and GRU ‘illegals’ would often be the main candidates for unofficial entry into Iran through its borders, as such an entry provided a further layer of cover for these intelligence officers. Following successful efforts to blend into local populaces there would be no clear background indication of such individuals being intelligence officers.⁶¹⁴ The SAVAK’s 8th directorate feared that such attempts at unofficial border entries would be on the rise due to

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 236 (document no. 45/26454) [02/07/1966].

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Hāšemī, p. 469.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 263 (document no. 25/28365) [09/04/1967].

the fact that counter-intelligence activities against Soviet diplomats in Iran were at an elevated level.⁶¹⁵ These fears also resulted in the 8th directorate speculating that Soviet intelligence officers with diplomatic cover would be more likely to target Iran from outside its borders in countries such as Iraq and Kuwait. The Soviet consulate in Basra was considered to be a likely base of Soviet intelligence operations against Iran.⁶¹⁶

Despite the fact that Iranian authorities could not possibly hold records of individuals having crossed the Iranian-Soviet border without authorisation, measures were still taken to ensure that Soviet ‘illegal’ intelligence officers maintained a credible background story.⁶¹⁷ One such case involved an illegal who was the son of an Iranian language teacher.⁶¹⁸ The family of this ‘illegal’ were Iranians that had immigrated to Baku. Growing up in the Soviet Union, Russian had become his first language but he had also become fluent in Persian and Turkish. He had eventually graduated and received an oil engineering degree from the Baku Oil Academy which at the time was known for training oil specialists from all over the Soviet Union and many foreign countries. During his time at the Baku Oil Academy he had been identified by KGB officers as an excellent ‘illegal’ candidate for operations within the 8th Department of the KGB First Chief Directorate. This department was geographically responsible for Arab nations, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece, Afghanistan, Albania and Iran. After accepting the offer of working for the KGB and completing the necessary operational training, he was dispatched by boat to Port Pahlavi and under cover of being a sailor succeeded in avoiding border authorities in his entry to Iran. Having landed on Iranian soil he was then ordered to proceed to Tehran where details of his mission would later be confirmed. As further cover, documents in his possession indicated that he was an Iranian immigrant from Kuwait who was now returning to his homeland to seek employment.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelāʾāt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 251 (document no. 14418) [27/12/1966].

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Hāšemī, p. 470.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

In another instance of Soviet human intelligence operations at this time, Ali Abadi, a military officer from Zahedan (south-east Iran) had aroused the suspicions of the local counter-intelligence section in May of 1968.⁶²⁰ After being arrested and interrogated it was discovered that he had been an agent of Soviet intelligence. His specific task had been to provide information on the local Baluchi society. In his previous meetings with his KGB case officer it had been arranged for him to receive instructions left at a dead drop location in Isfahan, which happened to be under an isolated bridge, at a specific time and hour of the day. It was at this dead drop that he would also collect cash payments for previously provided intelligence. At one such collection attempt he had been left instructions to visit a specific location on the highway between Qom and Isfahan. At this location he would meet an individual by a certain description and after approaching this person would receive a parcel containing radio equipment that would later be used to transmit any gathered information to Soviet intelligence.⁶²¹

5.2.5 THE TRADING AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The trading and business community in Iran's northern provinces during this period of time were also targets for the recruitment of intelligence agents.⁶²² Operating as business partners, Soviet intelligence officers would often be able to build strong contacts within this community, and make use of their resources. As a reward for their efforts these traders would either receive cash payments or goods at discounted prices, which could later be sold on for large profits.⁶²³ In many instances the particular goods provided by Soviet intelligence were also seen by the 8th directorate as being part of an effort to further Soviet objectives in Iran.⁶²⁴

In one such case in February 1966, the 8th directorate discovered that a trader having imported twenty tonnes of printing paper from the Soviet Union had in communications with

⁶²⁰ Hāšemī, p. 469.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 334 [26/07/1968].

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 225 (document no. 300/106) [04/05/1966].

close contacts promised to sell these on at levels far below the market price. The 8th directorate feared that this was an attempt by Soviet intelligence to provide a cheap resource for those wishing to print what was considered by the SAVAK to be pro-Soviet propaganda.⁶²⁵

Due to the nature of their occupations traders and sellers were also considered by Soviet intelligence to be highly aware of information relating to their areas of business, including an awareness of individuals of influence and key routes that would avoid the authorities.⁶²⁶ In addition, their large contact networks and negotiation skills were considered to be of great importance for Soviet intelligence. Their knowledge and contacts were also not simply limited to their areas of trade as many of them would travel frequently and gain further information relating to other areas of Iran. These travel requirements meant that any information gathered could be safely passed on to Soviet case officers without the need for any radio equipment and without raising any suspicions.⁶²⁷ Regular travelling also allowed these traders to smuggle Tudeh party members and Soviet intelligence officers to the Soviet-Iranian border and from border areas to other major cities.⁶²⁸

The SAVAK's 8th directorate, also being aware of the potential use of such a community for intelligence, was active in gathering information from such traders.⁶²⁹ Information gained would also spread rapidly within the trading community. This would in certain instances aid the 8th directorate in its awareness of certain issues, but concurrently there was an awareness that Department A, the Disinformation Department of the KGB's First Chief Directorate, could make use of this resource to spread rumours in pursuit of its own interests.⁶³⁰ Having arrested several of these traders on charges of acting as agents of Soviet intelligence, the

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Hāšemi, p. 471.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Hāšemi, p. 472.

⁶²⁹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 142 (document no. 369) [30/05/1965].

⁶³⁰ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 166 (document no. 322) [10/07/1965].

SAVAK's 8th directorate became aware that many of these traders had been aiding Soviet intelligence for extended periods of time and had been in contact with many of the Tudeh party's most active and senior members.⁶³¹

Using information from sparsely populated border areas where the presence of strangers rarely went unnoticed, the 8th directorate was able to estimate the period of time in which these traders had been active in the smuggling of Tudeh party members and Soviet intelligence officers. In order to prevent these smuggling operations the SAVAK's 8th directorate repeatedly suggested to the government, without much success, to merge smaller villages in border areas, so as to create a more integrated line of communication for security purposes. Furthermore, such a merger of villages would have allowed the pooling of resources which would have better positioned them in enforcing the law and hindering Soviet intelligence activities.⁶³²

5.2.6 INDUSTRY

The political rapprochement that had been initiated in 1962 provided a fine opportunity for Iran to further its economic development as a result of Soviet loans and construction projects. For the 8th directorate however, these economic opportunities merely presented Soviet intelligence with another avenue in which it could spread its objectives, particularly those relating to ideology. The SAVAK's 8th directorate continued to operate with an assumption that Soviet intelligence were seeking to spread their ideology within all Iranian social classes with a particular focus on the working class. The economic loans and construction projects would not have been a concern for the SAVAK had it not been for the large number of Soviet labourers and engineers that were inevitably involved in these efforts. These individuals were considered by the SAVAK to be likely agents of influence that would seek to sway the opinions of Iran's key labour forces in their favour.⁶³³ Of further concern for the 8th

⁶³¹ Hāšemi, p. 472.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 205 [25/01/1966].

directorate was that these Soviet personnel were involved with Iran's core industries, including oil, water, electricity, and in particular the steel industry.⁶³⁴

Plans for future steel production in Iran had been set by the signing of a contract with the USSR in 1965 to finance and erect a steel plant in Isfahan for the National Iranian Steel Company and repayment of the loan was to be done through deliveries of natural gas from Iran to the USSR. The state-owned Isfahan steel plant (Aryamehr Steel Mill, later called Zob Ahan Isfahan) maintained a production capacity of 550,000 tons per year but a contract for the expansion of the capacity to 1.9 million tons per year of structural steel would also later be signed with the USSR, further extending Soviet involvement in this project and increasing the 8th directorate's concerns. It was believed by the 8th directorate that a concerted effort together with the 3rd directorate (internal intelligence) would have to be made to repel any Soviet intelligence efforts in these projects so as to maintain Iran's national security.⁶³⁵ It was decided that these efforts would not only include activities aimed at Soviet personnel but would also focus on Iranian workers involved in these projects. By the 8th directorate's estimations preventative measure would have to be taken to reduce the susceptibility of Iranian workers to Soviet ideological influences. It was thought that Soviet intelligence would seek to take advantage of any opportunities that would arise as a result of Iranian workers being unsatisfied with their employment circumstances.⁶³⁶ It was thus decided that a focus would have to be placed on eliminating or at the very least reducing any sources of discontent for Iranian workers.⁶³⁷ As a result of such an effort, the managers of such employees across all industries involved in Iran-Soviet construction projects were to be made to respect the rights of Iranian workers. It was also determined that the likely presence of Soviet intelligence officers amongst Soviet industrial personnel would present the 8th directorate with opportunities to turn any potential Iranian agents into double agents but that a

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 278 [18/05/1967].

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 279 [09/04/1967].

risk remained of Soviet intelligence making use of their own double agents in feeding disinformation to the SAVAK.⁶³⁸

8th directorate intelligence officers assigned to these construction projects were also required to submit reports on any Iranian employee thought to be acting suspiciously or exposed to circumstances that would make them vulnerable to Soviet intelligence.⁶³⁹ An analysis was to be made of the background details of all Iranian employees with a particular emphasis on any ideologies that the workers were sympathetic towards.⁶⁴⁰ All of these instructions were approved by the head of the 3rd directorate at the time, General Nasser Moghaddam.⁶⁴¹

Despite improved relations on the diplomatic level, the SAVAK clearly had not adjusted its prejudices towards the Soviet Union, continuing to believe that economic aid would in some way be used to undermine the political status quo. This belief also clearly continued despite evidence that the Soviet Union had moderated its approach to Iran in comparison to the years preceding the diplomatic rapprochement in 1962.

It is also of note that in the same manner that the SAVAK's internal security directorate was tasked with gathering intelligence on Iranian dissidents operating abroad, the counter-intelligence directorate's responsibilities led it to gather intelligence which could arguably be considered as relating to internal security. This led it to gather intelligence not only on the Soviet Union but also on Iranian citizens and politicians.

Whilst the SAVAK's primary counter-intelligence concerns during this period related directly to the Soviet Union, there was also an understanding within the directorate that other countries could be used as third parties in advancing Soviet interests. As will be shown, Iraq would from the outset become a major and continuing concern for the SAVAK. On this front though it would be the foreign intelligence directorates that would play a frontline role in countering what was believed to be Soviet interests.

⁶³⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 288 [21/09/1967].

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Čap dar Irān beh Revāyat-e Asnād-e SAVAK: Ravābet-e Irān va Šowravī...*, p. 289 [21/09/1967].

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

6 CASE STUDY B: IRAQ 1958-1968

6.1 1958-1963: FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ON THE QASIM REPUBLIC

Almost immediately after Qasim's rise to power there were suspicions in the SAVAK that Soviet intelligence had engineered the coup against the Iraqi monarchy.⁶⁴² It was considered likely that the Soviet Union would seek to counter-balance Iran's pro-western stance by creating an antagonistic force in Iraq.⁶⁴³ In addition, there were fears that with Iraq aligning with the Soviet Union there would be greater efforts at destabilising Iran.⁶⁴⁴

6.1.1 IRAQ AS AN OPERATIONAL BASE FOR IRANIAN COMMUNISTS

A conference held for Middle Eastern communist organisations on February 26, 1959 presented the SAVAK with a fine opportunity to gain insight into the thinking of Iranian and Iraqi communists.⁶⁴⁵ Agents that had infiltrated the conference were able to report that a number of statements and positions had been agreed upon at the conference.⁶⁴⁶ Full support was expressed for Qasim's leadership and it was made clear that all efforts would be made with the use of arms to prevent actions against his rule.⁶⁴⁷ Particularly important for the SAVAK was that full Iraqi support was expressed for Iranian communists and their actions against the Pahlavi monarchy in their efforts to establish a 'democratic republic'.⁶⁴⁸ The SAVAK's foreign intelligence section also discovered that in a secret session held at the

⁶⁴² Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettela'at (ed.), *Ravabet-e Iran va 'Erāq...*, p. 57 (document no. 313) [09/09/1958].

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettela'at (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daheli-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 13 (document no. 8200) [12/10/1958].

⁶⁴⁵ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettela'at (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daheli-ye 'Erāq...*, pp. 20-22 [28/02/1959].

⁶⁴⁶ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettela'at (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daheli-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 20 [28/02/1959].

⁶⁴⁷ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettela'at (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daheli-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 20 [28/02/1959].

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

conference, Iranian communists had requested immediate support for protests and other disruptive activities throughout Iran with a particular emphasis on Azerbaijan and Abadan.⁶⁴⁹ Actions against the Western presence in Iran were also requested by Iraqi and Soviet ‘comrades’.⁶⁵⁰ Specific requests were made by Iranian communists for financial and logistical support with an emphasis on armaments for supporters within Iran.⁶⁵¹ Of particular concern for the SAVAK was that claims were made by Iranian communists that a significant number of Iranian army officers would be supportive of efforts aimed at toppling the Pahlavi monarchy. Considering the support of such army officers it was suggested that the arrangement of immediate protests throughout Iran would be of great value. Iran’s hostile relations with the Soviet Union at the time were also pointed out as being an important factor leading the USSR to be supportive of any efforts aimed at creating a revolution in Iran.⁶⁵²

Such intelligence gathered by the foreign intelligence directorate was of use for all of the SAVAK’s core directorates.⁶⁵³ The names of identified Iranian communists attending the conference were forwarded to the 3rd (internal security) directorate, whilst the counter-intelligence directorate was warned of possible efforts by Soviet and Iraqi intelligence elements to aid Iranian communists. Lastly, the foreign intelligence directorate in acquiring such valuable intelligence was able to focus its resources on specific Iraqi government and communist organisations that were likely to be involved in aiding subversive activities within Iran.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁴⁹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, pp. 20-21 [28/02/1959].

⁶⁵⁰ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 20 [28/02/1959].

⁶⁵¹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 21 [28/02/1959].

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 22 [28/02/1959].

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

By early 1959 the SAVAK were noting that joint Iraqi and Soviet efforts were being made at causing unrest in Iran's Kurdish regions.⁶⁵⁵ Daily transmissions of Iraqi propaganda against the Iranian leadership were becoming a growing cause of concern for the SAVAK. Iraq's military efforts in its Kurdish regions had forced growing numbers of Iraqi Kurds to seek refuge on Iranian territory and this was seen as an opportunity for the SAVAK to fight back against Iraqi propaganda. It was decided that by using the knowledge of these Iraqi Kurds, radio broadcasts from Iran's western Kermanshah region could be used to broadcast anti-communist propaganda into Iraq's Kurdish regions. These broadcasts were to focus on the 'corruption of the communist system' with an emphasis placed on the Iraqi government's activities against the Kurds. Iran's senior army commanders were also in agreement with these recommendations and they were soon followed up to completion by the operational section (2nd directorate) of the foreign intelligence directorate.⁶⁵⁶

Fears of growing Soviet involvement in Iraq were also becoming realised.⁶⁵⁷ A report from Iraq on the March 3, 1959 indicated that several thousand Soviet personnel had entered Iraq over the last three months and were involved in the training of Iraqi military personnel. The SAVAK also discovered that in late December two Soviet military officers had visited Iraq and with the aid of Iraqi military officers were acquiring intelligence on Iranian border posts by thoroughly noting details of their operations and taking photographs.⁶⁵⁸ In August 1960 the SAVAK received reports that the Soviet Union was planning on establishing two missile bases in Iraq.⁶⁵⁹ The SAVAK noted that in return for being willing to host these two Soviet missile bases, Iraq had asked that its position relating to the Shatt al Arab be supported.⁶⁶⁰ Iraqi propaganda against Iran at this time had also seemingly increased and the SAVAK

⁶⁵⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 29 (document no. 7272) [21/02/1959].

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 40 (document no. 129) [19/03/59].

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 57 (document no. 213) [09/08/1960].

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

feared that Gamal Abdel Nasser was likely to have been the architect of these attempts at weakening Iran's position in the region.⁶⁶¹

The SAVAK at this time became increasingly alarmed at the growing involvement of Iraqi communists in Iran.⁶⁶² On April 11, 1959 the SAVAK's foreign intelligence analysts noted that Iraqi communists trained in propaganda and subversion were illegally entering Iran. In Iran these Iraqi communists were providing 'substantial resources' for Iranian communists and newspapers linked to them. There were once again frustrations expressed at the lack of border controls which allowed these Iraqis easy entry into Iran. Law enforcement authorities were blamed for not taking decisive action to stem the inflow of Iraqi communists. Two months later on July 2, 1959 the SAVAK were once again faced with reports of Iraqi communists entering Iran with hostile intentions. In this instance two hundred armed Iraqi communists were identified as having entered Iran's Western Kermanshah province. The SAVAK noted that armed with substantial resources for propaganda these Iraqi communists had been specifically instructed to utilise these resources against the Pahlavi monarchy.⁶⁶³ Iraqi communists though were not the only group of Iraqis seen to be entering Iran for subversive purposes.⁶⁶⁴ Whilst large numbers of armed Iraqi communists were entering Iran, a smaller group of ten Turkish speaking Iraqis were known to have entered Iran's West Azerbaijan province and were spreading anti-monarchy propaganda within the Orumieh district and its surrounding villages.⁶⁶⁵

The SAVAK were also concerned at the growing involvement of Iranian communists with Iraqi authorities.⁶⁶⁶ On May 30, 1959 the SAVAK noted that a number of Iranian communists

⁶⁶¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 57 (document no. 213) [09/08/1960].

⁶⁶² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 48 (document no. 485) [11/04/1959].

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 58 (document no. 7629) [02/07/1959].

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 55 (document no. 3216) [30/05/1959].

who had previously received training in the Soviet Union were now working within the Iraqi Army.⁶⁶⁷ One Tudeh party member was identified as working for the Iran section of Iraqi Army Intelligence. Another Iranian communist identified as ‘Pezeshkian’ had been spotted on a number of occasions wearing Iraqi army officer uniforms.⁶⁶⁸

6.1.2 SAVAK ATTEMPTS AT UNDERMINING THE QASIM GOVERNMENT

In seeking to undermine the Qasim government the SAVAK were actively attempting to find weaknesses that could be exploited. Regular intelligence reports were provided on the status of the Qasim governments and any opposition to it. On 29 August, 1959 the SAVAK’s foreign intelligence section reported that there was already growing unease towards Iraqi communists and that the government had arrested a number of such communists in order to question them.⁶⁶⁹ There were suggestions that Iraqi communists were possibly seeking to undermine the Qasim government but that having become aware of such plans the government was now initiating surveillance measures against Iraqi communists.⁶⁷⁰ Iranian communists were not exempt from these measures, as the foreign intelligence directorate forwarded to the internal security directorate on September 5, 1959 reports that violent clashes had taken place between Iraqi government forces and Tudeh party members in the city of Sulaymaniyah.⁶⁷¹ This had resulted in a number of Tudeh party members being arrested and imprisoned. The SAVAK also noted the growing power of Iraq’s National Democratic Party and their unease towards a number of Qasim’s policies.⁶⁷²

Weeks earlier there had been unrest in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk as a result of violent clashes between Iraqi Turkmens and communists which had led to the deaths of several dozen

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 63 (document no. 62) [29/08/1959].

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 65 (document no. 62) [05/09/1959].

⁶⁷² Ibid.

Turkmens.⁶⁷³ The SAVAK noted that public opinion in Iraq was now sensing that similar upheavals could happen in other Iraqi cities.⁶⁷⁴ The SAVAK also noted disorder in Iraq's military ranks, particularly with new recruits, a number of which were identified as having deserted their units soon after the completion of their training.⁶⁷⁵ Further reflecting the Iraqi government's concern over opposition groups were its attempts at seizing weapons held by ordinary citizens and actively searching for such weapons.⁶⁷⁶

The SAVAK's agents in Iraq reported that the general perception of the Iraqi people was that economic conditions had been better prior to Qasim's rule.⁶⁷⁷ There was now growing discontent as result of rising unemployment and fears remained of economic instability which prevented businessmen from proceeding with new investments. Failures in enforcing law and order were also described, suggesting that Iraqi police forces did not have sufficient control of internal security. The SAVAK reported that this insecurity had resulted in Iraqis fleeing the country, with approximately 10,000 Iraqis in Turkey, 30,000 in Lebanon and Syria, and 15,000 in Iran, with these figures rising on a daily basis.⁶⁷⁸

Later in September 1959 the SAVAK continued to describe the security situation in Iraq as unstable with Iraqi people now generally being untrusting of government officials.⁶⁷⁹ The Iraqi military was also continuing to have problems with growing discontent amongst its military officers, particularly as a result of limited recruits. The SAVAK felt that this intelligence reflected the possibility of a coming revolution which would displace Qasim.

⁶⁷³ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 66 (document no. 1421) [12/09/1959].

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 63 (document no. 62) [25/08/1959].

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 66 (document no. 1421) [12/09/1959].

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 71 (document no. 2447) [16/09/1959].

Iraq's tribal chiefs in particular were seen by the SAVAK as expecting radical political change.⁶⁸⁰

In penetrating Iraq's military ranks the SAVAK's foreign intelligence operatives were able to report in late September 1959, based on information from Iraqi officers, that the Soviet Union was engaged in engineering a coup d'état against the Shah.⁶⁸¹ In organising this attempt, the SAVAK stated that on August 24 several thousand communist Iraqi Kurds had entered Iran along with a hundred Iranian communists. In their communications with the SAVAK, British intelligence had verified this information. Further details supporting the probability of a Soviet backed coup in Iran came from surveillance of a Tudeh party member.⁶⁸² Although the individual's name is not identified, he is described as a 'senior Tudeh party member'. Surveillance operations in Iraq revealed that Soviet intelligence officers were meeting this Tudeh party member at a safe house in Baghdad and were discussing possibilities for a communist coup attempt in Iran.⁶⁸³

The SAVAK were also identifying frictions in relations between Iraqi communists and the religious community. In October 1959 the SAVAK reported that in Baghdad and Iraq's cities of religious significance, Muslim clerics were facing great difficulties due to the actions of Iraqi communists. The SAVAK discovered that there were growing instances in which religious sermons would be disrupted by communist groups and that on several occasions such groups had taken over religious establishments and converted them to general sites for public use.⁶⁸⁴

Intelligence received in October 1959 indicated that Soviet advisers in Iraq had been recommending action against Iran, suggesting that Iran was distracted by Soviet efforts and

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁸¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 81 (document no. 9431) [24/09/1959].

⁶⁸² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 87 [09/10/1959].

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

that the moment would be a fine opportunity to create unrest amongst Iran's Kurds.⁶⁸⁵ A month later there were reports that Iraqi weapons were being smuggled into Iran for subversive reasons.⁶⁸⁶ Intelligence received from within Iraq also created suspicions that a number of Iranian government members might be handing over information to Iraqi intelligence.⁶⁸⁷

The Shah at this time had made clear his concerns with developments in Iraq, particularly of its potential impact in relation to Iran as a result of the high volume of Iraqi sourced media propaganda against the Iranian state.⁶⁸⁸ This state of affairs was deemed unacceptable by the Shah and all Iraqi responses to Iranian concerns had suggested that the Iraqi state had no control over the media and that this was reflective of the freedom and democracy provided by the state.⁶⁸⁹

Whilst the SAVAK's intelligence indicated that the Soviet Union was planning to exploit Iran's Kurdish population, the 2nd directorate was proceeding with its own plans to create unrest amongst Iraqi Kurds.⁶⁹⁰ Meetings were held between the SAVAK's operational officers and senior Kurdish party leaders and tribal chiefs, including Mustafa Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.⁶⁹¹ Iraqi officers exiled soon after the revolution were also involved in these negotiations. A great deal of care was taken to maintain the secrecy of these meetings, particularly to disguise the efforts from Soviet intelligence. The SAVAK though understood that their attempts at influencing Iraq's Kurds would be unlikely to succeed if the

⁶⁸⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 20 [13/11/1959].

⁶⁸⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 65 (document no. 389) [28/12/1959].

⁶⁸⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 44 (document no. 39772) [17/12/1959].

⁶⁸⁸ *Īsā*, p. 45.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁰ *Īsā*, p. 35.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Iranian state itself was viewed as suppressing Kurdish rights.⁶⁹² To counteract the possibility of these impressions the SAVAK established and funded a Kurdish language newspaper titled 'Kurdistan' which was distributed around the Middle East to all countries with ethnic Kurdish populations.⁶⁹³ This would be the first time in Iranian history that an Iranian based Kurdish language newspaper would be freely distributed. In further attempting to garner Kurdish support, a number of detained and convicted Kurds were released, whilst brief Kurdish language broadcasts were allowed in Tehran as well as a number of other major towns.⁶⁹⁴ Kurdish radio broadcasts in Mashhad were viewed as particularly important as it was determined that Kurds in the surrounding region were listening to Kurdish language radio transmitted by the Soviet Union, and thus likely to be influenced by Soviet propaganda.⁶⁹⁵ Iranian TV had also begun broadcasting Kurdish cultural programming. The SAVAK determined that these efforts had led to a great deal of positive responses from Iranian Kurds and had also aided in blunting any foreign sourced criticism of the Iranian state's actions vis-à-vis the Kurds.⁶⁹⁶

It was made clear within the foreign intelligence directorate in late 1959 that the SAVAK would be pursuing with maximum effort the goal of overthrowing Qasim and returning the monarchy to power.⁶⁹⁷ Major Pežmān Īsā, a SAVAK foreign intelligence officer assigned to Iraq would play a key role in organising these efforts. Aiding Isa in acquiring Iraqi contacts was Rashid Keliddar, an Iraqi Shia and brother of Sheikh Ali Keliddar Kazmin. Keliddar provided Major Isa and the SAVAK with a vast number of Iraqi contacts, particularly key political figures from the deposed regime. These individuals included both Iraqi exiles and Iraqis that held sensitive posts in Qasim's government. Keliddar aided Major Isa in developing biographical profiles of each of these individuals whilst providing their residential addresses together with the covert measures that were required in order to approach a number

⁶⁹² Īsā, p. 63.

⁶⁹³ Īsā, p. 64.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵ Īsā, p. 65.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁷ Īsā, p. 66.

of these figures. A key location for a number of these exiles was Beirut, where Major Isa travelled to and was able to raise discussions with the powerful Chalabi family and key Kurdish leaders. Although Major Isa recognised the importance of maintaining these activities and discussions as secretive as possible, he remained powerless and concerned over the possibility that the Shah could have been providing these details to other foreign or Iranian individuals, thereby potentially compromising the SAVAK's plans. The sole foreign leader that Major Isa understood to be aware of the SAVAK's plans was Jordan's King Hussein.

Intelligence at this time also indicated that Iranians in Iraq were becoming a target of anti-Iranian efforts.⁶⁹⁸ The SAVAK noted that the Iraqi army had been instructed to inform all Iraqis to carry personal identification at all times, and that any individual without such documentation would be presumed to be Iranian and placed under arrest.⁶⁹⁹ Yet there would be increased refinement to these anti-Iranian sentiments as Iranians opposing the Shah's rule were openly encouraged to move to Iraq where they would be granted political asylum and provided with financial incentives.⁷⁰⁰ Iranian students studying in Iraq were also used for intelligence purposes in Iraq, although a number no longer considered the country to be safe and were returning to Iran.⁷⁰¹

Growing Soviet involvement in Iraq was again noted in December 1959 with reports that 50 Soviet advisers had entered Iraq and that 500 Iraqis had been sent to the Soviet Union for training.⁷⁰² It was also reported that Iraq was increasingly becoming aware of Iranian intelligence activities in Iraq and that instructions had been given to target Iranian operations in Iraq.⁷⁰³ Furthermore, Iraq's senior army commanders had issued a warning to the general

⁶⁹⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 40 (document no. 1904) [14/12/1959].

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 62 (document no. 9721) [28/12/1959].

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Dahelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 111 (document no. 15/7255/38) [07/12/1959].

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

populace that any individual travelling without identifying documentation would be arrested as Iranian agents and imprisoned.⁷⁰⁴

The likelihood of increased radio propaganda was raised with reports in early January of 1960 that under directions from a Soviet intelligence officer, a radio transmitter was being constructed in Western Iraq.⁷⁰⁵ A number of Iranian communists based in Iraq were identified as being involved with the project.⁷⁰⁶ The radio transmitter would later broadcast the ‘National Voice of Iran’ radio station. This Soviet-run radio station did not have official links with the Tudeh party, but members of the party were involved with its running. There were further worries in the SAVAK when it was discovered that a number of Iranian officers that had escaped to the Soviet Union were now turning up in Iraq.⁷⁰⁷ These Iranian officers were found to be working alongside Soviet officers with the Iraqi army and were tasked with planning operations against Iran.⁷⁰⁸

In December 1959, SAVAK officers learned that a large number of protests were being organised in Iraq against Iran and that there had been much anger over the 1937 Treaty of Tehran which had resulted in a thalweg delimitation in the six mile section of the Shatt al-Arab that ran alongside Iran’s Abadan anchorage.⁷⁰⁹ This treaty was considered a violation of Iraq’s right of control over the entire Shatt al-Arab.⁷¹⁰ Rather than being a genuine display of the Iraqi people’s anger, the SAVAK considered these protests to be organised by government forces, particularly as Qasim had been quite vocal in his displeasure at the Shatt

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 118 (document no. 129) [03/01/1960].

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 122 (document no. 4287) [16/01/1960].

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va ‘Erāq...*, p. 42 (document no. 14799) [16/12/1959].

⁷¹⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 35 (document no. 10384) [15/03/1959].

al-Arab border line.⁷¹¹ On the November 2, 1959 Qasim had stated that he would not allow agreements signed by Iraq's previous rulers to get in the way of what it considered to be Iraq's rightful border lines.⁷¹² It was made clear that the use of military force and other resources would be used to take what was considered to be Iraqi territory.⁷¹³ As a result of the protests Iranians in Iraq were kept under close watch and were not allowed to move freely within the country.⁷¹⁴ The SAVAK also noted that Iraqi communists were behind a number of the protests which had been arranged.⁷¹⁵ In late December 1959 there had been a large number of protests organised by Iraqi communists and individuals not linked to any communist organisation were actively encouraged to take part and were transported to protest sites.⁷¹⁶ Interestingly, the SAVAK discovered that Qasim and a number of Iraqi government members had also been present at these protests.⁷¹⁷ Qasim had encouraged the use of slogans against Jordan, Egypt and Iran. The communists present at these protests were identified as being linked to Arab, Iranian and Palestinian communist organisations. The SAVAK also discovered that anti-Iranian measures in Iraq had grown to such an extent that Iranian media was also banned.⁷¹⁸ Reports indicated that published Iranian media seized in Iraq were burned. In one instance an Iranian magazine and newspaper seller in Iraq was arrested and

⁷¹¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 59 (document no. 10655) [26/11/1959].

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 59 (document no. 10655) [26/11/1959].

⁷¹⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 62 (document no. 9721) [28/11/1959].

⁷¹⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 55 (document no. 3216) [27/12/1959].

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

⁷¹⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 63 [28/12/1959].

⁷¹⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 79 [28/12/1959].

imprisoned for nine days. Any other individuals discovered to be supplying such media into Iraq were referred to Iraqi intelligence and treated harshly.⁷¹⁹

In late January 1960 the SAVAK noted that Iranians that had sought asylum in Iraq for political reasons were being welcomed and transported to Basra.⁷²⁰ Iraqi authorities were providing these Iranians with free housing, food and clothing.⁷²¹ In addition, a monthly allowance was paid, but the SAVAK concluded that such support was only being provided on the basis that these Iranians would be willing to act as intelligence agents in Iran. In early March 1959 The SAVAK had also discovered that Iraq was increasingly using radio propaganda to encourage the immigration of Iranians to Iraq.⁷²² Intelligence gathered by the SAVAK's foreign intelligence operatives indicated that in return for immigrating to Iraq Iranian families were being paid 10-15 Iraqi dinars per month.⁷²³ Those who had been willing to immigrate to Iraq were described as 'simple villagers' that had been 'deceived' by Iraqi authorities.⁷²⁴ In further attempting to prevent Iraqi access to possible Iranian agents, the SAVAK's foreign intelligence section sought measures that would prevent their emigration from Iran.⁷²⁵ Illiteracy was identified as a critical factor that resulted in these emigrating Iranians believing Iraqi propaganda. A lack of regional authority was also seen as an important factor in that people did not view the state as being worthy of respect. Weak local authorities were seen as encouraging greater flouting of local laws and regulations which in turn had created greater friction between local authorities and inhabitants. Furthermore, growing disaffection amongst local authorities had resulted in them ignoring their duties,

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 30 (document no. 40451) [24/01/1960].

⁷²¹ Ibid.

⁷²² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 39 (document no. 1518) [18/03/1959].

⁷²³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 30 (document no. 40451) [03/03/1959].

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 39 (document no. 1518) [18/03/1959].

particularly in relation to illegal cross border traffic. Poverty and powerful landlords were seen as further contributing to the alienation of local people along with conflicts relating to religion.⁷²⁶

The SAVAK learned at this time that Iraqi authorities were fearful of Iranian attempts to infiltrate Iraq.⁷²⁷ Much like Iran's border controls, Iraq's border security was considered to be insufficient in preventing illegal entry.⁷²⁸ As a result of this realisation, in order to discourage the illegal entry of Iranians into Iraq, border communities were provided with weapons. Iraqis were also being discouraged from entering Iran as the SAVAK discovered that the authorities were refusing to provide passports for any Iraqis wishing to visit Iran. Senior Iraqi military personnel were particularly seen to be opposed to such visits.⁷²⁹

Iran was also concerned at Iraq's increasingly vocal claims to full control over the Shatt al Arab and the support that it was receiving in the Arab world.⁷³⁰ Iran's concerns had been further heightened as only several months earlier, in January 1960 the Arab League had published an article stating that Iraq should rightfully hold full sovereignty over the Shatt al Arab waterway.⁷³¹ Iran's fears over Iraq acting to take full control over the Shatt al Arab resulted in it assigning a great deal of military resources to its border with Iraq.⁷³²

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 40 (document no. 1518) [19/03/1959].

⁷²⁸ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 31 (document no. 1159) [16/04/1959].

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

⁷³⁰ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 59 (document no. 10655) [05/09/1960].

⁷³¹ E. Lauterpacht, "River Boundaries: Legal Aspects of the Shatt-al-Arab Frontier," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 2 (1960), pp. 208-236.

⁷³² Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 59 (document no. 10655) [05/09/1960].

By late January 1960 the SAVAK were reporting that Iraq was growing increasingly unstable with the passing of each day as a result of internal divisions.⁷³³ The SAVAK's intelligence indicated that Kurdish and Arab tribal chiefs were waiting for the opportunity to take up arms and act against the Qasim government.⁷³⁴ The SAVAK reported that access to such arms was made possible by large weapons shipments entering Iraq from Syria. A number of these weapons were utilised by Iraqi tribes in the south which had led to clashes with government forces in the proximity of Basra.⁷³⁵

Tensions with Iraq were increased further when the SAVAK gathered intelligence in February 1960 that the Iraqi government had instructed its border troops to either encourage the defection of Iranian soldiers or kill them on sight and to drag them onto Iraqi soil.⁷³⁶ At the same time border tribes were being provided with weapons by the Iraqi government in order to discourage the entry of Iranian authorities onto Iraqi territory.⁷³⁷

In March 1960 the SAVAK became aware of dissent within the officer ranks of Iraq's military. Intelligence indicated that a number of Arab army officers were opposed to Qasim's rule and that plans had been discussed to create a revolution that would depose Qasim. Reasons given for their inaction at that point included the need for access to a greater number of weapons and equipment, as well as the risk that their troops were not yet loyal enough to be trusted to support them in the event of an uprising. It was also noted that many disagreements still remained between Iraq's army officers.

Iraq's instability though remained a frequently raised topic within the foreign intelligence directorate, with the SAVAK stating in late April 1960 that the likelihood of a revolution was

⁷³³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 125 (document no. 16/14415) [20/01/1960].

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Ibid.

⁷³⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 130 (document no. 16/14761) [03/03/1960].

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

continuing to increase.⁷³⁸ Particularly notable were reports of frequent clashes between Iraqi communists and groups opposed to them. These clashes would often turn violent resulting in a number of deaths. As a result of such reports, the political situation in Iraq was deemed unviable and it was judged by the SAVAK that a revolution could occur at any moment.⁷³⁹

In late March 1960 information on Soviet training and aid for Iraq was again acquired.⁷⁴⁰ Newly arrived Soviet army officers were providing training both for the Iraqi army and internal security organisations. A number of Iraqi officers had also been sent to Almaty in order to receive military training.⁷⁴¹ In April of that year Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan visited Iraq. The SAVAK learned that this visit was much opposed by the Ba'athists and Islamic organisations and their displeasure at this trip had been focused on Qasim.⁷⁴² The SAVAK judged that one of the purposes of Mikoyan's visit was to jointly plan with Iraq a coup d'état against the Jordanian monarchy.⁷⁴³ Although by early 1961 there were an increasing number of reports relating to a government crackdown on Iraqi communists, this was not deemed serious enough by the SAVAK to substantially harm Soviet-Iraq relations.⁷⁴⁴

By late October 1962 the SAVAK were noting an increasing number of Qasim opponents escaping from Iraq, particularly those associated with the Ba'ath party.⁷⁴⁵ It seemed clear for the SAVAK that Qasim was by now taking a harder line against those deemed to be his adversaries in the military and political establishments. Military officers and political figures

⁷³⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 161 (document no. 3350) [21/04/1960].

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 152 (document no. 54) [27/03/1960].

⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

⁷⁴² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 165 (document no. 3857) [24/04/1960].

⁷⁴³ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 222 (document no. 4/1246) [09/02/1961].

⁷⁴⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 261 (document no. 331/20747) [25/10/1962].

were discovered to be escaping through a route that was taking them from Basra to the neighbouring Iranian port city of Khorramshahr. Hiding amongst Iranians travellers they would then seek entry to their final destination in Kuwait. The SAVAK discovered that despite Kuwait's awareness of such Iraqi figures entering its borders, it was choosing to turn a blind eye to such cases and was in many instances aiding their escape.⁷⁴⁶

Chaotic political conditions in Iraq meant that the SAVAK from early 1960 was anticipating a revolution, although it could not discern precisely which group or individuals would take Qasim's place in the event of a revolution. Communists and Ba'athists were judged to be the most likely to overthrow Qasim and the strong threat from Iraq's military ranks was also noted.

6.1.3 FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE MEASURES AGAINST IRAQI DIPLOMATS IN TEHRAN

Foreign intelligence activities targeting Iraq at this time were not limited to being carried out on Iraqi soil. The SAVAK were aware that Iraq's embassy could potentially be of great value for foreign intelligence purposes.⁷⁴⁷ Not only could files at the embassy reveal what was occurring within Iraq but such information could also shed light on what activities the Iraqi government were carrying out on Iranian soil. There was already an awareness within the SAVAK that Iraq and a number of Arab countries, including Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Libya were active in gathering political, social, economic and military intelligence on Iran.⁷⁴⁸ As a result of this, the SAVAK's internal security, counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence directorates all stood to benefit from acquiring information from within the Iraqi embassy and as a result efforts were undertaken both to recruit agents and to gain access to its premises.⁷⁴⁹

Although the SAVAK were not successful in recruiting any Iraqi embassy employees as agents, there was greater success with a number of Iranians that had been employed by the embassy. Unlike the embassies of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, the embassies of Arab countries were considered to be much less secure and thus the recruitment of agents and

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁷ Hāšemī, p. 520.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁹ Hāšemī, p. 521.

internal access was considered a possibility. The SAVAK in time identified one of Iraq's embassy staff members as an Iraqi colonel with links to Iraqi intelligence and as a result it was decided by the SAVAK that this individual would most likely hold information that would be of value for intelligence purposes.⁷⁵⁰

Having recruited Iranian agents inside the Iraqi embassy, the SAVAK were also aware that the colonel maintained a safe at his embassy office. Although the SAVAK had attempted to use these agents to gain access to the safe, it became clear after a number of such attempts that under the existing circumstances the operation would not be a success. The main problem that the SAVAK faced was that no agent could gain access to the colonel's safe key. The key was kept attached to the colonel's belt at all times, and as such, efforts aimed at acquiring the key and making a copy were made extremely difficult. The SAVAK though were fortunate in discovering that the colonel had been making visits to a mistress. Considering this an excellent opportunity to acquire the colonel's key, the SAVAK convinced the colonel's mistress to aid them in their operation. On one particular night the colonel visited his mistress and whilst seated in the living room remained unaware that SAVAK operatives lay in wait in an adjacent room, seeking their opportunity to take and copy the colonel's safe key. The SAVAK operatives remained waiting as the colonel grew increasingly inebriated from drinks served to him by his mistress. As the SAVAK had instructed her, the mistress then proceeded to undress the colonel in the living room prior to entering the bedroom. Drunk and now with scant concern for his safe key the colonel was taken to the bedroom and the door closed, finally allowing the SAVAK operatives to emerge from hiding and to make a copy of the safe key.⁷⁵¹

With a copy of the safe key at hand, the SAVAK waited for their opportunity to break into the Iraqi embassy. The opportunity eventually arose on a night in which the embassy was free of any diplomatic or security personnel. SAVAK operatives were placed around roads leading to the embassy and making use of covers as city policemen were instructed to warn operatives entering the embassy of any Iraqi staff or guards heading towards them.⁷⁵² Plain

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

⁷⁵² Hāšemī, p. 522.

clothes SAVAK operatives were also stationed at key positions ready to create diversions such as automobile accidents. Fortunately for the SAVAK, the operation proceeded smoothly, with operatives gaining access to the safe and photographing its contents. Having left no trace of their presence, any risk of a serious diplomatic incident had been avoided.⁷⁵³ The documents that were later analysed proved to be of great intelligence value in detailing Iraqi policy and intelligence activities towards Iran. Attempts were also made at recruiting the Iraqi colonel as an agent with the use of compromising photos of the colonel and his mistress. The Iraqi colonel though had refused to be blackmailed by the SAVAK into becoming an agent and was in time recalled back to Iraq. Soon after, the SAVAK discovered that security procedures at the Iraqi embassy were substantially improved thereby preventing any easy access to its premises. As a result the SAVAK became dependent on Iranian agents that were employed in the embassy. Having complete plans and details of the embassy at hand the SAVAK were in later years able to succeed in acquiring access to further sensitive Iraqi documents.⁷⁵⁴

6.2 1963-1968: CONTINUED EXPANSION OF CAPABILITIES

6.2.1 THE SAVAK'S ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTCOME OF THE 1963 COUP

In the period following Qasim's overthrow the SAVAK continued to follow events in Iraq with great interest. The SAVAK reported that despite the relevant calm in Baghdad, there were clashes occurring at night with gunfire being heard.⁷⁵⁵ It was also clear for the SAVAK's foreign intelligence section that the Ba'ath party had begun to take action against Iraqi communists. Reports were being received that government employees thought to be communist sympathisers were being interrogated and imprisoned. It was of concern for the SAVAK that groups of Iranians and Kurds were also being arrested alongside these individuals. Any Iranian unable to present identifying documentation was arrested and in some instances deported. In addition, targeted Iraqi Kurds were being arrested and taken to

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁵ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 265 (document no. 233/27560) [28/02/1963].

Baghdad.⁷⁵⁶ As a result of the Ba'ath party's harsh measures against Iraqi communists, the SAVAK noted an immediate influx of communists into Iran.⁷⁵⁷ These party members were taking refuge in the surroundings of Khorramshahr.⁷⁵⁸

The continuing instability in Iraq led the SAVAK to believe that another coup d'état could soon take place.⁷⁵⁹ The Ba'ath party's execution of Communist party leaders had resulted in a number of protests taking place in Baghdad. The situation had been further worsened by clashes with police and military forces that had sought to break up these protests. As a result, the SAVAK described the political situation in Iraq as extremely unstable, further exacerbated by an economic downturn which had led many Iraqis to be pessimistic of future developments and more likely in the SAVAK's estimate to create unrest. The SAVAK's intelligence also indicated that the Iraqi military remained on high alert throughout Baghdad and other major Iraqi cities and were prepared to come to the aid of police forces facing any difficulties. Regular military checkpoints had been set up throughout the country and physical searches were being conducted. Of particular concern for the SAVAK was that Iranians were being singled out for harsh treatment.⁷⁶⁰

In the following week the SAVAK received reports that Iraqis were becoming increasingly angry at the actions of the Arif government. The SAVAK's intelligence indicated that on daily basis 200-300 individuals were being arrested and imprisoned by the new regime resulting in Iraqi prisons being filled to near capacity. Of particular concern for the Iraqi people had been unannounced late night visits by Iraqi authorities searching for individuals to arrest. As the SAVAK learned, the media had also become a target for Iraqi authorities, resulting in the closure of any newspapers that expressed opinions against the new government or the Ba'ath party. The SAVAK though became aware of internal divisions between senior Iraqi government figures and reports indicated that shows of unity in the

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁷ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 266 (document no. 36072) [09/03/1963].

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 267 (document no. 36072) [14/03/1963].

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

actions of the Iraqi government and the Ba'ath party were a falsehood. The SAVAK's foreign intelligence were also aware of continuing divisions within the military, with some officers still refusing to make any serious commitments to any particular faction.⁷⁶¹ Continuing unrest had resulted in Abdul Salam Arif making a direct request to Iraqi clerics in major cities to take a stronger role in calming any social disturbances.⁷⁶² A number of the remaining Kurdish and Arab opposition forces had by this time fled to Iraq's Kurdish region and were continuing propaganda operations against the Arif government. Iraq's Kurds were also making clear that they were prepared to fight to the death in order to ensure Kurdish independence for Iraq.⁷⁶³ In taking this position the SAVAK noted that an increased number of weapons were now being distributed to Kurdish areas in order to discourage Arif from proceeding with attacks. Iranian Kurds were also identified as having entered Iraq in order to support these efforts.⁷⁶⁴ This had been the case despite requests from Mustafa Barzani, president of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and leader of the Kurdish independence movement, for Iranian Kurds not to get involved in ongoing fights in Iraq.⁷⁶⁵ Iranian Kurds though had been angered by the Iraqi government's attempts at destroying the Kurdish independence movement and killing its members.⁷⁶⁶

6.2.2 THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PERSECUTION OF IRAQ'S COMMUNISTS

On July 4, 1963 the SAVAK received reports that Iraqi communists were continuing to flee Iraq.⁷⁶⁷ Thirty of these individuals were identified as having entered Iran and were in hiding

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 272 (document no. 1596) [19/05/63].

⁷⁶³ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁴ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 273 (document no. 311-2-791) [26/05/1963].

⁷⁶⁵ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 278 (document no. 331/15417) [10/07/1963].

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁷ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 275 (document no. 1439) [04/07/1963].

in Tehran. Ten of these Iraqi communists had been sentenced to death by Iraqi courts. Despite the lack of an immediate threat to internal Iranian security, the SAVAK were well aware that in the Qasim era the Iraqi communists had been involved in aiding the Tudeh party and as such it was decided that their presence in Iran would not be acceptable. Indeed, it was also discovered by the SAVAK that these Iraqi communists had sought to contact members of the Tudeh party whilst in hiding in order to request financial aid. These efforts aimed at acquiring financial aid were to primarily facilitate the escape to the Soviet Union of the ten convicted Iraqi communists. Due to the perceived risk of these Iraqi communists being a possible future security threat, orders were given to have them arrested. Although it had been planned for the arrests to be undertaken by the police force, it was soon decided that for security reasons the SAVAK's Tehran branch would be better suited for the operation.⁷⁶⁸

Later reports indicated that the Tudeh party were becoming involved in aiding the escape of Iraqi communists.⁷⁶⁹ Only days after receiving news of Iraqi communists hiding out in Tehran, a SAVAK agent in the Tudeh party reported that instructions had been given to party members to assist in the smuggling of six Iraqi communists into the Soviet Union. The Tudeh party had also provided these Iraqis with forged Iranian identification documents. The SAVAK's agent reported that these Iraqi communists were being taken towards the north-western Iranian city of Ardabil, close to the Soviet border. Immediate instructions were sent to the SAVAK's Azerbaijan station for the arrest of the six Iraqi communists. Further instructions were given to the SAVAK's northern offices to remain on alert for attempts to smuggle Iraqi communists across the border.⁷⁷⁰

The SAVAK quickly became aware of Iraq's rapidly deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union as a result of the continuing persecution of Iraqi communists.⁷⁷¹ In late July 1963 as the Iraqi military were busy pursuing Kurdish militants in the north, the SAVAK received reports that many of the Soviet arms which had been purchased in the Qasim era were now in

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 277 [09/07/1963].

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 279 (document no. 1083) [28/07/1963].

extremely low supply. The SAVAK learned that requests to the Soviet Union by the Iraqi government for armaments were being ignored. SAVAK agents at Iraqi ports were also reporting that no weapons shipments had arrived for several weeks. As a result of this shortfall in weapons supplies, the Iraqi government had been forced to rely on limited Syrian supplies in order to continue its fight in the north.⁷⁷²

At this time Nasser's involvement in seeking to establish a settlement between the Iraqi government and the Kurds was viewed with a great deal of concern by the SAVAK. The SAVAK judged that although pan-Arabist Iraqis were welcoming of Nasser's involvement in this issue, Iraqi political figures and 'patriots' were irritated that a foreign leader would attempt to become involved in what was part of Iraq's internal affairs. The SAVAK also judged that amongst these latter groups there was a belief that Nasser was choosing to become involved in Iraq's affairs in order to exert greater control over the country and the north in particular. If Nasser's attempts at establishing calm were to be successful, the SAVAK judged that in gaining greater influence in Iraq's north, Nasser would be able to use this power to take action against Iran. The SAVAK were in no doubt that Nasser was attempting to make Iraq part of his own domain.⁷⁷³

Further adding to instability in Iraq at this time was the reality of sectarian violence.⁷⁷⁴ The SAVAK's foreign intelligence operatives reported in May 1964 that both Sunnis and Shias were increasing the volume of propaganda against one another. It was noted that the conflict between the two was at its most intense in the cities of Karbala and Najaf. In the same month Iraq's insecurity had also been used as an excuse by Khrushchev to decline a direct offer from Abdul Salam Arif to visit Iraq.⁷⁷⁵ This instability had once again resulted in the SAVAK receiving reports from agents that the Iraqi people were expecting a coup d'état in the near

⁷⁷² Ibid.

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 304 (document no. 379) [11/05/1964].

⁷⁷⁵ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 314 (document no. 477) [28/05/1964].

future.⁷⁷⁶ Further reports of violence between Sunni and Shia groups in Baghdad were received in mid-July with indications that these clashes were the most violent yet which had resulted in a number of serious injuries on both sides.⁷⁷⁷

6.2.3 OBSERVING PAN-ARABISM AND MONITORING IRAQ'S RELATIONS WITH NASSER IN AN UNSTABLE IRAQ UNDER ABDUL SALAM ARIF

The SAVAK understood that Iraq's Pan-Arabist sentiments continued to remain active.⁷⁷⁸ In late June 1964 the SAVAK received reports that two Iraqi military units were being sent to Egypt in order to conduct a ten day joint military exercise. This had been preceded by agreements between Egypt and Iraq for greater political, economic and military cooperation. Iraqi army units were also being provided with technical training by Egypt. Of particular interest for the SAVAK was the possibility that Egypt and Iraq would establish a joint military command centre as such discussions had already been raised. Due to Iraq's prolonged state of insecurity the SAVAK discovered that Arif had made requests to Nasser for military aid that would be utilised for internal security purposes. The SAVAK assumed that such a request was being made due to a genuine fear by Arif that his rule was at risk of being overthrown.⁷⁷⁹

In their analysis of Iraq-Egypt relations and its impact on Iraqi public opinion the SAVAK concluded that the majority of Iraqi people were opposed to any commitments made with Egypt that would reduce Iraqi independence. Iraqi Shia were identified by the SAVAK as being the 'largest and most serious force of opposition' against the rule of Abdul Salam Arif. It was noted that Iraqi clerics in Karbala were strongly opposed to deepening Iraq-Egypt relations. The SAVAK learned that these clerics were warning the Iraqi government to respect the rights of the people and that failure to do so would result in a revolution. It was

⁷⁷⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 317 (document no. 326/609) [09/05/1964].

⁷⁷⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 325 (document no. 719) [11/07/1964].

⁷⁷⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 320 (document no. 316/11439) [23/06/1964].

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

clear for the SAVAK though that Arif was refusing to give in to such threats, as the government had described these as being made by ‘devils’ and arrested a number of Iraqi Shia thought to be involved in anti-government propaganda. In addition to opposition from the Iraqi Shia, the SAVAK identified Iraqi Ba’athists and Communists as still being active in opposing Arif. It was clear for the SAVAK that despite the Iraqi government’s dismissal of threats posed to it, its security forces were highly active in seeking out and eliminating any threats, yet not all of these were related to external forces.⁷⁸⁰

In mid July 1964 the SAVAK’s foreign intelligence section received a report that Iraqi security forces in Baghdad and a number of other Iraqi cities had made arrests of people based in government offices and the military.⁷⁸¹ Iraqi security forces had implicated these arrested individuals in a plot for a coup d’état against Arif. The SAVAK speculated that these Iraqis were most likely Ba’ath party members. The SAVAK understood that the Ba’ath party remained heavily involved in anti-government activities. The SAVAK also identified the military as being a major source of anti-Arif sentiments as a result of the Ba’ath party’s activities.⁷⁸² A significant threat to Arif’s rule emanating from the military was identified by the SAVAK in late July.⁷⁸³ The SAVAK concluded that ‘a coup d’état could occur at any moment’ with senior military figures being the driving force behind such a possibility. It was noted that the displeasure of senior Iraqi military figures had grown as result of agreements that Iraq had signed with Egypt. These signed agreements had resulted in increased security cooperation leading to a number of Egyptian military officials being posted to Iraq.⁷⁸⁴

In early August 1964 the SAVAK received reports indicating that the security situation in Baghdad was in a critical state.⁷⁸⁵ Arif’s frustration with the Ba’ath party’s plots against his

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁸¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā’āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 334 [18/07/1964].

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā’āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 335 (document no. 791) [20/07/1964].

⁷⁸⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā’āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 338 (document no. 935) [02/08/1964].

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

rule had resulted in heavy handed security measures leading to a large number of road closures and checkpoints being established. The SAVAK noted that senior Iraqi military figures resented the involvement of Egyptian officials in defending Arif's rule.⁷⁸⁶ The SAVAK's operational officers noted that of further concern for Arif's rule was the increasing amount of opposition from Iraqi traders.⁷⁸⁷ These individuals had begun to protest in greater numbers against Arif, in particular in Shia areas. In these same areas attempts were being made to convince Iraqi military officers to join their cause. Growing fears of plots against Arif had resulted in a greater number of security measures targeting the Iraqi business and trading community.⁷⁸⁸ The SAVAK discovered that worries over the growing involvement of the Shia community against the Iraqi government had resulted in Arif visiting a number of Shia clerics in Najaf in order to decrease the number of protests taking place.⁷⁸⁹ The SAVAK noted that much to the irritation of a number of Iraqi military officers, Nasser had sought to mediate in the sectarian conflicts taking place between Iraqi Shia and Sunnis.⁷⁹⁰ The SAVAK also judged that Arif held anti-Shia views, particularly as a result of their propaganda against his rule which had led to continuing arrests of Shia followers. A number of these arrested Shia had been deported to Iran.⁷⁹¹

The SAVAK judged that arrests made by the Iraqi government had not yet managed to put an end to the continued plots against Arif.⁷⁹² The Arif government though remained concerned enough to continue with arrests of those it judged to be against it.⁷⁹³ In August 1964 the

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 339 (document no. 943) [02/08/1964].

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 342 (document no. 968) [06/08/1964].

⁷⁹⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 343 (document no. 2/917) [08/08/1964].

⁷⁹¹ Ibid.

⁷⁹² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 346 (document no. 1004) [09/08/1964].

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

SAVAK received news that a number of Iraqi military political figures had been arrested on suspicion of planning a coup d'état. Those arrested included twenty five military officers. A number of clerics had also been arrested on charges of spreading propaganda against Arif, but were released after public protests.⁷⁹⁴

In mid 1964 the Iraqi government had been involved in nationalising a number of industries, which the SAVAK speculated was an attempt to improve relations with the Soviet Union.⁷⁹⁵ It was judged that as an intermediary, Nasser had informed Arif that such positive signals would result in the Soviet Union resuming the supply of much needed arms to Iraq.⁷⁹⁶ The SAVAK had also received intelligence that the Iraqi army would soon be sending a number of military officers to the Soviet Union for training, and that it was expecting the delivery of weapons from the USSR.⁷⁹⁷

By August 1964 the SAVAK received further indications of a warming in relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union. As a result of Soviet instructions, Bulgaria had proceeded to aid the Iraqi government in establishing a large number of industrial factories. Further technical and construction aid was provided for the building of bridges. Materials required by the Iraqi government had also been supplied. The SAVAK noted that despite such aid, the Iraqi government feared that a number of the Bulgarian personnel could be intelligence officers. As a result of such suspicions they were all placed under constant guard by Iraq's security service in order to prevent them from making contact with any Iraqis.⁷⁹⁸

Overall, the SAVAK were of the view that by late August 1964 relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union were positive and were rapidly improving. The SAVAK became aware that in addition to giving instructions for construction aid from Bulgaria, the Soviet Union had begun to provide Iraq with aid that would develop its rail transportation capabilities. The

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁵ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 336 (document no. 788) [20/07/1964].

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁷ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 340 (document no. 944) [02/08/1964].

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid.

SAVAK noted that improved relations were also leading to a greater number of Iraqis being sent to the USSR for technical training. Of some concern for the SAVAK was the fact that the Soviet Union had finally begun to re-supply Iraq with weapons. Although no heavy artillery had yet been dispatched, light weaponry had been provided as requested by the Iraqi government.⁷⁹⁹ The SAVAK doubted though whether any Soviet aid would result in substantial economic benefits for the Iraqis.⁸⁰⁰ In their analyses the SAVAK at this time judged that most Iraqi families were worse off than they had been under Qasim. The SAVAK concluded that this had been further exacerbated by political frustrations as a result of the Arif government being able to arrest and kill any individual judged to be their enemy.⁸⁰¹ Iraqis were described by the SAVAK as being ‘angry’ and were expecting a bloody revolution like no other in Iraq’s history.⁸⁰² Furthermore, the SAVAK judged that the majority of Iraqis partly blamed Egypt’s involvement in Iraqi military and political affairs as being responsible for the difficult economic circumstances facing the country.⁸⁰³

The SAVAK became aware of further discrimination against Iraqi Shias in late August 1964.⁸⁰⁴ Intelligence indicated that although the Iraqi army was leading a drive for new recruits, Iraqi Shias were not being accepted.⁸⁰⁵ The SAVAK estimated that Egypt’s involvement in Iraq’s military affairs could be partly to blame for such a discriminatory policy.⁸⁰⁶

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 350 (document no. 13/1210) [11/08/1964].

⁸⁰¹ Ibid.

⁸⁰² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 352 (document no. 1097) [15/08/1964].

⁸⁰³ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 353 (document no. 1148) [22/08/1964].

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā‘āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye ‘Erāq...*, p. 356 (document no. 1179) [23/08/1964].

In their analysis of Iraq's foreign policy in late August 1964, the SAVAK judged that Iraq was pursuing a neutral foreign policy and was willing to establish good relations with any country that did not interfere in its internal affairs, particularly countries that were willing to supply it with weapons.⁸⁰⁷ The SAVAK also concluded that although Iraq preferred to receive its supply of weapons from the Soviet Union, any extensive preconditions by the USSR on the supply of such weapons would cause Iraq to look elsewhere, such as the US.⁸⁰⁸ It was also clear for the SAVAK that Iraq was in a substantially weak economic position which had forced it to seek economic aid from countries such as Kuwait and the US.⁸⁰⁹

Intelligence provided by Kurds inhabiting Iran's border regions with Iraq provided the SAVAK with further proof that Iraq's internal security remained highly fragile.⁸¹⁰ These sources indicated to the SAVAK that Ba'athists, nationalists, communists, Shias and Sunnis were all engaged in disputes with one another which would frequently turn violent.⁸¹¹ Despite these realities, the SAVAK concluded that Nasser continued to fully support Arif's position in Iraq. Egyptian support for Arif's rule though did little to enhance the security of his rule.⁸¹² In late August 1964 the SAVAK once again received reports of an attempted plot against Arif which Iraq's security forces had seemingly foiled. In this substantial security operation in Basra, the SAVAK judged that 1,800 Iraqis had been arrested and imprisoned by the Iraqi government on the charge of undermining Arif's rule. Of those arrested, thirteen had been given a death sentence.⁸¹³

⁸⁰⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 355 (document no. 1/158) [23/08/1964].

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 357 (document no. 1178) [23/08/1964].

⁸¹⁰ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 358 (document no. 20/1193) [23/08/1964].

⁸¹¹ Ibid.

⁸¹² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 359 (document no. 1249) [27/08/1964].

⁸¹³ Ibid.

The SAVAK's concerns relating to Iraq continued to grow as Iraq's relations with Egypt improved.⁸¹⁴ By the end of August 1964 the SAVAK were reporting that a joint Egyptian-Iraqi military force was being dispatched to Iraq's border zone with Iran. Although no joint bases had been established in any of these border areas the SAVAK estimated that this would be a likely possibility if relations between Iraq and Egypt continued to improve. The SAVAK received intelligence that this joint Egyptian-Iraqi military force had been particularly interested in inspecting Iraq's border region near Basra as well as the Shatt al-Arab.⁸¹⁵

The SAVAK's fears of improved Egyptian ties with Iraq were further heightened by intelligence reports from officers in contact with Egyptian officials.⁸¹⁶ These intelligence reports indicated that Egypt was planning on issuing Egyptian and Kuwaiti passports to a number of its intelligence officers to infiltrate Iran and proceed with propaganda and subversion activities. The SAVAK estimated the total number of Egyptian officials in Iraq as being approximately six thousand and that they were involved in all of Iraq's governmental ministries. The number of Egyptian military personnel that had been sent to Iraq to provide training was also estimated at approximately six thousand.⁸¹⁷

By early September 1964 the SAVAK's foreign intelligence section was reporting that anti-government activities in Iraq were growing in intensity.⁸¹⁸ The SAVAK correctly judged that the Iraqi government would now take further action against Iraqi clerics whom it blamed for organising the protests. As a result of such actions the SAVAK deduced from human intelligence reports that Iraqi clerics were increasingly becoming angered by the Iraqi government's actions against them, particularly as a result of a number of clerics being placed under house arrest. In addition to actions against Iraqi clerics, the SAVAK also

⁸¹⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 360 (document no. 1280) [30/08/1964].

⁸¹⁵ Ibid.

⁸¹⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 363 (document no. 2/1073) [07/09/1964].

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

⁸¹⁸ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 362 (document no. 1314) [05/09/1964].

became aware of continuing fears of a revolt in Iraq's military ranks.⁸¹⁹ This had resulted in a number of officers being arrested and fearing a similar fate, a number of Iraqi officers had chosen to flee to Syria.⁸²⁰ Iraqi intelligence also claimed at this time that an assassination plot against Arif had been foiled and that those responsible were senior military officers, one of which was a General.⁸²¹ The SAVAK also learned that the same General, identified as General Abdelkarim Nusrat, had planned a coup upon a visit by Arif to the Iraqi city of Iskandariya.⁸²² General Nusrat had secretly been a Ba'ath party member whose coup attempt had been foiled by a joint Egyptian and Iraqi intelligence effort.⁸²³

The SAVAK at this time were concerned that Iraqi intelligence activities targeting Iran were on the rise.⁸²⁴ One indication of this was the growing Iraqi encouragement of Iranian Arabs to work on Iraqi construction projects. The SAVAK were concerned that these individuals would later be used as agents by Iraqi intelligence. The SAVAK judged that difficult economic conditions in Iran were facilitating the flow of Iranian Arabs into Iraq and that weak border controls would not prevent such migration. Nevertheless, instructions were given by the SAVAK to border authorities to remain on high alert. Militarily though, the SAVAK were not too concerned by Iraqi forces, as the SAVAK judged that despite increased Egyptian training and Soviet aid, the Iraqi military remained weak.⁸²⁵ The Iraqi Air Force in particular was judged by the SAVAK to be significantly hampered due to a lack of effective training and a limited number of fighter jets.⁸²⁶ Of particular interest for the SAVAK was the

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

⁸²⁰ Ibid.

⁸²¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 367 (document no. 1377) [13/09/1964].

⁸²² Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 368 (document no. 1392) [15/09/1964].

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 364 (document no. 2/1080) [09/09/1964].

⁸²⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, pp. 369-370 [15/09/1964].

⁸²⁶ Ibid.

Iraqi navy which the SAVAK noted was involved in an expansion of its capabilities targeting the southern Persian Gulf. The SAVAK had also been made aware of yet another joint Iraqi-Egyptian training exercise that had taken place on September 17, 1964.⁸²⁷ This had involved four Egyptian divisions, including land and air forces. The SAVAK noted that whilst the Iraqi government had sought to stir nationalist Arab sentiments by widely publicising news of the exercise, most Iraqis, particularly in Basra and its surrounding regions, were opposed to co-operation with Egypt. The SAVAK's sources had claimed that these people had gone as far as denouncing the Iraqi and Egyptian leaders.⁸²⁸

Although the SAVAK had earlier feared that Iranians encouraged to migrate to Iraq would be utilised as intelligence agents, further intelligence in later months indicated a different reality.⁸²⁹ The SAVAK's sources made clear that not only were Iranians in Iraq unhappy with the overall quality of life there, but that they were also fearful of deportations to Iran and harassment as a result of laws which could be changed overnight on the whims of Iraqi leaders. The SAVAK reported that on a daily basis one to two truckloads of Iranians were being transported to the Iranian border for deportation. The SAVAK reported that as a result of their uncertain situation in Iraq, the majority of Iranians were opposed to the Iraqi government and were hoping for its overthrow. Particularly strong negative sentiments were held by these Iranians towards Gamal Abdel Nasser and his policies in the region. A number of these individuals had also labelled Nasser a communist.⁸³⁰

In mid-December 1964 the SAVAK reported that as plots against the Iraqi government continued, so did arrests of individuals alleged to be involved in these coup attempts.⁸³¹ The SAVAK noted that the most recent of these foiled plots, had been led by a tentative alliance

⁸²⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 375 (document no. 1470) [23/09/1964].

⁸²⁸ Ibid.

⁸²⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 378 (document no. 231/13585) [14/10/1964].

⁸³⁰ Ibid.

⁸³¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 389 (document no. 316/30349) [17/12/1964].

of Iraqi monarchists and communists.⁸³² Amongst those arrested had been a commander of a military division based in Kirkuk and a communist officer.⁸³³ What remained of particular concern for the SAVAK though was Iraq's military cooperation with Egypt.⁸³⁴ In January 1965 the SAVAK was alarmed by reports that the Egyptian military was both increasing supplies of military aid to Iraq and expanding its own military presence there. The SAVAK's human sources indicated that at least ten thousand Egyptian officers and military specialists had recently entered Iraq. Furthermore, these sources made clear that 350 planes loaded with various weaponry had flown to Iraq and that plans had been made to follow these shipments with the arrival of thirty thousand Egyptian troops. Of further concern for the SAVAK was that their sources indicated that in addition to Egyptian military activities in Iraq, the Soviet Union was also active in the field of military aid to the country. The SAVAK's estimates suggested that approximately 2,500 Soviet military specialists were operating in Iraq as civilians. These Soviet specialists were also involved in facilitating closer military co-operation on the ground between Iraqi and Egyptian forces.⁸³⁵ The SAVAK were also informed that despite the opposition of Iraqi communists towards the government, most were supportive of Iraqi efforts aimed at strengthening ties with Egypt and the USSR.⁸³⁶

The SAVAK's concerns about Egyptian influences on Iran and its activities there grew further as it became aware of intelligence indicating that Egypt was encouraging Iraq to pursue subversive actions in Iran's Khuzestan region.⁸³⁷ The SAVAK's foreign intelligence operatives in Iraq reported that in a meeting with Iraqi officials, the Egyptian ambassador to Iraq had suggested that Egypt would be willing to provide money and false documentation

⁸³² Ibid.

⁸³³ Ibid.

⁸³⁴ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 392 (document no. 321/36408) [12/01/1965].

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

⁸³⁶ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 394 (document no. 311/37109) [18/01/1965].

⁸³⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Daḡelī-ye 'Erāq...*, pp. 404-405 (document no. 4940/609) [08/03/1965].

for the purposes of creating unrest in Iran's Khuzestan region.⁸³⁸ It was also suggested that Kuwait be used as a base for such operations. Although there is no indication of why Kuwait was to be chosen for such a task, it would have been evident for both the Egyptians and Iraqis that Iranian intelligence was maintaining a high concentration of its foreign intelligence resources for the purposes of targeting Iraq. The SAVAK's sources indicated that foreign Arab involvement in Khuzestan was viewed as being justified due to a belief that Iran was maintaining a high level of support for Iraq's Kurds. Although Iraq's Kurdish regions had been a source of troubles for the Iraqi government for an extended period of time, Iran was considered the primary source of these troubles rather than genuine Kurdish separatist sentiments. The Iraqi government would frequently blame Iranian Kurds for its troubles in the north, suggesting that the issue would only be dealt with once all Iranian Kurds had been forcibly expelled from Iraq. At the very least it was suggested by the Iraqi government that these Iranian Kurds must cease all contacts with Iran. In sum, it was believed that these Iranian Kurds were the main source of malign influence on Iraqi Kurds.⁸³⁹

The SAVAK's intelligence indicated that any unwillingness to undertake subversive actions against Iran may have been a result of factional rivalries within the Iraqi government, particularly between the President and his brother Abdul Rahman Arif who had earlier been appointed head of the Iraqi army. The SAVAK's sources pointed out that the divisions at this time had resulted in such friction that in one heated exchange two members of the Iraqi cabinet had come close to exchanging blows with the use of chairs. The SAVAK discovered that although Iraq had been somewhat reluctant to continue with any operations on Iranian soil, Iranians on Kurdish Iraqi territory, Kurds or otherwise, were seen as fair targets.⁸⁴⁰ In an assessment dated May 29, 1965 the SAVAK had received information that on the orders of senior Iraqi military commanders Iranians residing in Iraq's Kurdish territory were being arrested and tortured.⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁸ Ibid.

⁸³⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁰ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Tahavvolāt-e Dahelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 417 (document no. 880) [29/05/1965].

⁸⁴¹ Ibid.

Despite some evidence suggesting that the Iraqi government was not pursuing any ardent efforts aimed at destabilising Iran, the SAVAK's suspicions remained.⁸⁴² Speculation was rife in March 1965 that parts of Soviet weapons shipments were being distributed to Iraqi border tribes to smuggle into Iran. Although these Soviet weapons shipments alone were a source of concern, the possibility that these weapons could be entering Iran was of far greater concern, due to its implications for internal security. These fears were partly borne out of the fact that Egypt's influence within Iraq had been growing and that the SAVAK's intelligence sources had made it clear that Egypt was seeking to destabilise Iran's internal security and at worst to foment a revolution that would depose the Shah. The SAVAK's sources also indicated that Iraq's military intelligence was under the heavy influence of Egyptian officers.⁸⁴³

By July 1965 the SAVAK noted that on President Arif's orders, and in their quest to remove Iranian influence from Iraq, Iraq's security forces had turned their attention towards Iranian clerics in Najaf.⁸⁴⁴ The SAVAK's intelligence noted that all Iranian clerics residing in Najaf had been ordered to return to Iran. This had led to the dismay of Shia in Najaf, resulting in a number of anti-government protests in Najaf and Basra. The SAVAK also perceived this decision as yet another discriminatory act by the Arif government against the Shia.⁸⁴⁵

The SAVAK were also aware that despite their attempts at discovering and curtailing any Egyptian or Iraqi operations due to take place on Iranian soil, these same countries could utilise propaganda from outside Iran's borders. The SAVAK's intelligence indicated at this time that Egypt and Iraq's national broadcasters were finalising agreements aimed at increasing their co-operation. Although much of the content of these agreements seemed harmless to Iranian national security, what stood out for the SAVAK was that plans were being made to establish a powerful radio transmitter in Basra that would target the entire Persian Gulf region. The SAVAK's sources indicated that the primary purpose of this station

⁸⁴² Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 406 (document no. 210/43896) [11/03/1965].

⁸⁴³ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 407 (document no. 313/43224) [11/03/1965].

⁸⁴⁴ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 422 [11/07/1965].

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid.

was to counteract an Iranian transmitter. In the SAVAK's analysis, Iran's broadcasts to the region were viewed as anti-Arab by the governments of Egypt and Iraq. This new co-operative effort by Egypt and Iraq in anti-Iranian propaganda measures was clearly viewed with a great deal of seriousness by the SAVAK, particularly for its implications in relation to Iran's ethnic Arab minority.⁸⁴⁶

Towards the end of 1965, as Arif's interest in a union with Egypt had begun to wane, the SAVAK discovered a serious shift in Iraqi policy towards Egypt.⁸⁴⁷ For the SAVAK, this policy shift had seemingly begun with the resignation of Arif's pro-union Minister of Culture and Guidance, General Abdel Karim Farhan, and his immediate decision to relocate to Egypt. The SAVAK reported that soon after this event, a large number of key Nasser supporters were arrested in Iraq and immediate limitations were placed on the activities of Egyptian officers and soldiers still operating in Iraq. Nasser's portraits which had previously been put up side by side with Arif's in government departments were also immediately removed. Further measures included the expulsion of Egyptian teachers upon the ending of the academic year. Although the SAVAK could not estimate whether this was merely a temporary rift between Egypt and Iraq or events with long term consequences it was clear that the period of highly amicable ties between the two countries had come to an end.⁸⁴⁸

6.3 COINCIDING INTERESTS AND A STRENGTHENING INTELLIGENCE RELATIONSHIP: THE SAVAK AND MOSSAD COOPERATING ON IRAQ

Relations between Israeli intelligence and SAVAK had been forged soon after its creation, due to the strategic interests of both countries.⁸⁴⁹ Both countries had interests in maintaining a close watch on the surrounding Arab countries, as it was these countries that were seen as regional threats. For the SAVAK, Israel had much valued intelligence expertise that it could learn from, and for Israel, Iran was one of the few surrounding countries that it could depend

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Taḥavvolāt-e Daḥelī-ye 'Erāq...*, p. 424 (document no. 313/20851) [28/07/1965].

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁹ Abrahamian, p. 41.

on as an ally.⁸⁵⁰ The SAVAK had been trained by US intelligence in the first five years after its establishment but other countries would take its place after this period.⁸⁵¹ The Iranians had sought further expertise from the British, and though Britain had provided training, there was still a need for increased intelligence training.⁸⁵² It was then that the close intelligence relationship between the SAVAK and Israel's Mossad began. At this time Iran had *de facto* recognised Israel, and Israel had a quasi embassy established in Tehran with a Mossad intelligence officer, Ya'akov Nimrodi, acting as intelligence liaison.⁸⁵³ With the help of Nimrodi, a dedicated training unit was established within SAVAK to train its future intelligence officers. The officers that were to staff the training unit were sent to Israel in two to three, ten-man groups for instruction. The period of instruction would normally last between one or two years and by admission of the SAVAK's intelligence officers, this was the best training that they had ever received.⁸⁵⁴ Gradually, as the SAVAK's training unit became increasingly capable, it began inviting Mossad officials to Iran. One of the important areas of expertise that Mossad was providing the SAVAK was in the field of counter-intelligence.⁸⁵⁵ Amongst the counter-intelligence training provided by Mossad to SAVAK intelligence officers, were details regarding the different organisations and elements of Soviet intelligence, as well as the activities of political and intelligence organisations within Eastern Europe. Other information provided included details of the Soviet economy, China and the Near East, the Marxist ideology, the intelligence services of communist countries, the impact of Israeli-Arab tensions in the Near East, terrorism and global terrorist organisations and Arab intelligence organisations.⁸⁵⁶ Information and training was also provided on intelligence technology. Another important element of liaison relations between the Mossad and SAVAK was that joint intelligence operations were carried out. Joint intelligence centres were set up

⁸⁵⁰ Abrahamian, p. 42.

⁸⁵¹ Fischer, p. 183.

⁸⁵² Fischer, p. 184.

⁸⁵³ Aḥmadī, p. 39.

⁸⁵⁴ Aḥmadī, p. 44.

⁸⁵⁵ Nağğārī-Rād, *Hamkāri-ye SAVAK...*, p. 56.

⁸⁵⁶ Nağğārī-Rād, *Hamkāri-ye SAVAK ...*, p. 59.

in three Iranian provinces for this purpose.⁸⁵⁷ Working together, these two intelligence organisations were able to collect intelligence of interest on Iraq and other Arab countries. Iraqis, Bahrainis and Kuwaitis were also jointly trained to carry out intelligence operations within Iraq.⁸⁵⁸

The most important target of intelligence for both the SAVAK and Mossad was Iraq, as it was perceived as being one of the most influential and powerful of the Arab countries.⁸⁵⁹ The SAVAK and Mossad also jointly worked together in training the Kurds as a counterbalance against Iraq and the Arabs. The Kurds were also an important source of human intelligence within the Arab world.⁸⁶⁰ Attempts were also made by the Israelis and Iranians to keep a close watch on Soviet aid entering Iraq, as both countries remained concerned about Soviet penetration of the Near East.⁸⁶¹ As the Soviet Union had very close relations with much of the Arab world, such operations were of great importance, especially as much of the arms being imported into Arab countries were being provided by the Soviet Union.⁸⁶²

For Israel, it was of great importance that the belligerent surrounding Arab states not surprise it with any weapons technologies that it was not aware of.⁸⁶³ Surveillance of Arab weapons technologies was also seen as being important for the SAVAK.⁸⁶⁴ For the purposes of support to intelligence operations, the SAVAK's technology directorate (5th directorate) maintained close relations with its equivalent section in the Mossad.⁸⁶⁵ The Mossad was able to provide the SAVAK with advanced information on weapons, chemical and photographic expertise. The Mossad also trained the SAVAK's 5th directorate in the use of advanced intelligence

⁸⁵⁷ Aḥmadī, p. 44.

⁸⁵⁸ Nağğārī-Rād, *Hamkāri-ye SAVAK ...*, p. 59.

⁸⁵⁹ Nağğārī-Rād, *Hamkāri-ye SAVAK...*, p. 66.

⁸⁶⁰ Delannoy, p. 124.

⁸⁶¹ Behrooz, p. 185.

⁸⁶² Ibid.

⁸⁶³ Aḥmadī, p. 46.

⁸⁶⁴ Aḥmadī, p. 47.

⁸⁶⁵ Nağğārī-Rād, *Hamkāri-ye SAVAK...*, p. 92.

technologies. Many of these technologies were developed and built in the US, but it was still the Mossad that would provide the training to the SAVAK for its use.⁸⁶⁶

The SAVAK in turn would provide the Mossad with valuable intelligence on Iraq and other Arab countries in the region.⁸⁶⁷ In order to gain a better understanding of the threat of terrorism, SAVAK intelligence officers were also provided with details of Palestinian terrorist organisations. Trained in Israel, these intelligence officers were taught about the organisational make-up of various Arab terrorist organisations, and the methods utilised by them.⁸⁶⁸

6.4 ABDUL RAHMAN ARIF

In contrast to his brother, the SAVAK noted in early May 1966 that Abdul Rahman Arif was pursuing a different approach towards Iraq's Shia population.⁸⁶⁹ The SAVAK assessed that whilst the second Arif was attempting to improve relations with Iraq's Shia, Egypt was opposed to this policy. The SAVAK suspected that Egypt was once again attempting to improve its standing and influence in Iraq, placing it in a position it had once held under Abdul Salam Arif's presidency. The SAVAK's intelligence at this time indicated that Egypt was actively spreading propaganda that would aid it in achieving its aforementioned goals. This propaganda, the SAVAK noted, had led to serious divisions within Iraq in relation to the national policy towards Egypt. These divisions had gone as far as appearing within families, with certain members being supportive of Nasser and others being against him and his policies. Iraqi loyalty towards the central government was seen as being extremely weak by the SAVAK, with young Iraqis seeking to avoid compulsory national military duties and attempting to escape to other countries in the Persian Gulf. The SAVAK reported that a number of these Iraqis had sought to escape to Iran and had been detained in Khorramshahr.⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁶ Nağğārī-Rād, *Hamkāri-ye SAVAK...*, p. 93.

⁸⁶⁷ Aḥmadī, p. 56.

⁸⁶⁸ Nağğārī-Rād, *Hamkāri-ye SAVAK...*, p. 108.

⁸⁶⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīḫī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 212 (document no. 313/5404) [11/05/1966].

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid.

Several months into Arif's presidency, in September 1966, in their analysis of the Iraqi government, the SAVAK noted that attempts were being made to improve relations with Iraq's neighbours.⁸⁷¹ The SAVAK concluded that whilst the Iraqi Prime Minister Najib Talib was a Shia, it remained unclear whether this fact or any proposed policies for improved relations would be followed through. The SAVAK's negative perceptions of Najib Talib were further emphasised by their intelligence that he was a supporter of Nasser and was seeking to align Iraq's policies with that of Egypt. Furthermore, the SAVAK stated that Talib and his cabinet's political inexperience in the field of international politics and foreign policy would make it difficult for them to achieve their objectives. The SAVAK also suggested in this analysis that Egypt was pursuing a policy of increasing divisions between Iran and Iraq.⁸⁷²

Over the next several years it became evident that the SAVAK's fears in relation to Iraq had failed to materialise and a new era of improved relations had blossomed under the presidency of Abdul Rahman Arif.⁸⁷³ This fact had been stated by the SAVAK soon after Arif's visit to Iran in March 1967.⁸⁷⁴ The SAVAK noted that although Iraqi government officials were seeking to maintain the newfound cordial relations, Iraq's intelligence and security organisation had remained opposed to this initiative.⁸⁷⁵ The SAVAK's intelligence indicated that Iraqi intelligence was presenting documents to the Iraqi government that could potentially undermine relations between the two countries. The SAVAK stressed that much of the intelligence on Iran that was being produced by Iraq's intelligence apparatus was falsified. One particular example mentioned by the SAVAK was the supposed continued aid of Iran to Kurdish separatists.⁸⁷⁶ The SAVAK stated that this information was blatantly false.

⁸⁷¹ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettelâ'ât (ed.), *Ravâbet-e Irân va 'Erâq...*, p. 210 [10/09/1966].

⁸⁷² Ibid.

⁸⁷³ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettelâ'ât (ed.), *Ravâbet-e Irân va 'Erâq...*, p. 244 (document no. 211/5854) [20/03/1967].

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁵ Markaz-e Barresi-ye Asnad-e Tarihi-ye Vezarat-e Ettelâ'ât (ed.), *Ravâbet-e Irân va 'Erâq...*, p. 287 (document no. 211/5789) [04/11/1967].

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid.

The SAVAK also later observed on March 3, 1968 that Iraq's military intelligence was providing the defence ministry with information that was likely to harm Iran-Iraq relations.⁸⁷⁷ Iraqi military intelligence was reporting that Iran was using its full resources to establish in southern Iraq an anti-Republican organisation amongst the Shia. In addition, Iraqi intelligence was reporting that weapons had been sent to a number of Iraq Shia in support of this purpose. The SAVAK sarcastically noted that this was all news to them.⁸⁷⁸

It became clear over time that frictions between Iranian and Iraqi intelligence were unlikely to subside, despite the improved relations on the government level.⁸⁷⁹ The SAVAK were reporting in April 1968 that Iraqi intelligence was maintaining close surveillance of Iran's embassy in Baghdad. Iraqi intelligence operatives were reportedly spotted making notes of all those entering and exiting the embassy as well as stopping and interrogating any Iraqis exiting the grounds. It was noted though that only days earlier the Iraqi ambassador to Iran had made clear his displeasure over reports that Iraq's consulate chief in Khorramshahr and his guests had been kept under close watch by SAVAK operatives.⁸⁸⁰ The SAVAK noted that Iraq's military intelligence continued to fear the likelihood of Iranian intelligence operating on Iraqi soil.⁸⁸¹ These fears were particularly related to anti-Nasserist efforts and any aid to Shia and Kurdish factions.⁸⁸²

Although relations between Iran and Iraq's governments had improved, the SAVAK remained wary of how long this could be sustained.⁸⁸³ The SAVAK suggested that to place too much trust in any Iraqi government would be an act of naiveté, owing to Iraq's turbulent

⁸⁷⁷ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 338 (document no. 211/61758) [03/03/1968].

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 349 (document no. 211/8211) [13/04/1968].

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁸¹ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 356 [15/04/1968].

⁸⁸² Ibid.

⁸⁸³ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 354 (document no. 211/3306) [14/04/1968].

history of coup d'états. The SAVAK stated that multiple conflicting and competing interests would lead to continued instability in Iraq.⁸⁸⁴

The SAVAK were also reporting at this time that Egypt was aiming to sabotage relations between Iran and Iraq.⁸⁸⁵ This was being done with the use of propaganda against Iran, stating that Iran, as Muslim nation-state, had failed to support the Arabs in their wars with Israel.⁸⁸⁶

As has been shown, in the context of the Cold War the SAVAK remained concerned over the possibility of a USSR-Iraq-Egypt axis that could undermine domestic stability. Whilst there may have been instances of Egyptian and Soviet involvement in Iraq that could be interpreted as being aimed at Iran. The fraught and unsteady relations of these three countries also made the possibility of any co-ordinated attempt to target Iran in this observed period a difficult prospect. Iraq though was undoubtedly a major foreign intelligence concern due to its geographic proximity and any developments there were closely followed. These concerns were heightened enough for the SAVAK to be used not only for observation purposes, but also as a tool of direct influence in Iraq, which will be elaborated upon in the conclusion.

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁵ Markaz-e Barresī-ye Asnād-e Tārīhī-ye Vezārat-e Eṭṭelā'āt (ed.), *Ravābet-e Irān va 'Erāq...*, p. 357 (document no. 313/3151) [16/04/1968].

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid.

7 CONCLUSION

Before coming to any major pronouncement regarding the validity of my hypothesis, I need to present my findings in relationship to my stated research questions on the structure, working and practices of the SAVAK's foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence.

I intended to shed light on the following research questions:

1. What reasons led to the establishment of Iranian foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities?
2. How were these capabilities structured and which operational methods were used?
3. Why were the USSR and Iraq targeted by Iranian foreign and counter-intelligence?
4. What was the relationship between intelligence and policy formulation and execution, especially foreign policy-making?

Based upon these findings I will then address the validity of my hypothesis about the SAVAK's Cold War thinking.

7.1 REASONS FOR ESTABLISHMENT

The question of why a state chooses to establish a foreign and counter-intelligence capability is clearly an important one, particularly when one takes into consideration the fact that a number of modern states choose not to establish any organisation dedicated to some of these specific purposes, particularly operations carried out on foreign soil. Canada and New Zealand for instance do not have foreign intelligence agencies for the purposes of gathering intelligence abroad using human sources.⁸⁸⁷ This makes clear that a decision to establish such capabilities is a deliberate choice that must be made and not one that is believed to be a necessity, as some international relations theories might suggest. One might argue that in the practice of counter-intelligence it could be judged that police forces would suffice, as was the case for Iran prior to 1957. Foreign intelligence though is a field which would be far beyond the capabilities of a regular police force. One might also argue that military organisations would be capable of pursuing both of these matters, but it is clear that entrenched in military

⁸⁸⁷ Geoffrey R. Weller, 'Change and Development in the New Zealand Security and Intelligence Services', *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 21 (2001), pp. 1-7 (p. 1).

thinking, such entities may often sway towards military issues and would be placed under an intolerable workload if forced to also focus on civilian intelligence matters. In a similar vein, whilst Iran maintained military intelligence capabilities, it did not believe this to be sufficient in achieving its defence and security goals.

It should further be stated that if we take away the words ‘official’, ‘secret’ and ‘covert’ from intelligence, then there is nothing done under the heading of intelligence that is not done in an identical or nearly identical way in the non-intelligence world.⁸⁸⁸ As such, it can be argued that some of the tasks that were carried out by the SAVAK’s foreign intelligence directorates were at one point part of the responsibilities that would normally be related to non-intelligence groups, such as journalists, diplomats and academics.

The findings here show that the Iranian state’s global perception gravitated towards realist theories which made the establishment of foreign intelligence a particular necessity. Perceiving the world through this conceptual lens inevitably leads to specific assumptions being made in relation to the security priorities of the Iranian state. Furthermore, this leads the state to become sensitive to a particular range of information which it believes to be highly pertinent. Interpreting the behaviour of foreign states through specific models, particularly during times of crises can further heighten likely responses.⁸⁸⁹

It can be argued that by bordering a highly powerful Soviet state which was openly hostile to it, the security of the Iranian state was interpreted as being in peril and that its existing defence and security structures at the time were not considered sufficient in facing this perceived threat.

Furthermore, in relation to the field of intelligence, Iran had not faced any other intelligence organisations as formidable as those operated by the Soviet state. Soviet intelligence had already gained a great deal of experience and expertise which had presented itself as a challenge even to those countries with existing professional intelligence capabilities. Also, past experiences with the Iranian communist movement had made clear to the Iranian state

⁸⁸⁸ Lawrence T. Mittelman, “Preface to a Theory of Intelligence,” *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 18, no. 3. (1974), pp. 19-22 (p. 22).

⁸⁸⁹ Mittelman, p. 22.

that there was a native source which Soviet intelligence would be capable of utilising for their own purposes.

A critical point that must be made is that Iran was not alone in its belief of a Soviet threat. The US in the period leading up to the SAVAK's establishment also feared Soviet expansionism. Although US intelligence was capable to a limited extent in aiding the Iranian state against the actions of Soviet intelligence, a native capability was considered to be far better placed in dealing with counter-intelligence challenges within Iran, particularly as native citizens of a country fare better in understanding their own populace. Whilst Iran's professional intelligence capabilities were established with US advice and training, they would not have come to fruition without a genuine desire by the Iranian state to develop such a capacity. As the figurehead and key decision maker in the Iranian state by the time of the SAVAK's establishment, the Shah clearly played a crucial role in enabling the creation of a foreign and counter-intelligence organisation. Therefore, one can argue that as the embodiment of the Iranian state it was the Shah's world view that was key in determining whether certain security structures were required or not. In particular, the Shah was a key factor in establishing a foreign intelligence capability, as the US's fears of Soviet expansionism led the Americans to focus primarily on developing Iranian counter-intelligence rather than foreign intelligence.

The close relationship with the US in the area of counter-intelligence also continued long after the establishment of the SAVAK. Evidence of this is made clear by memoirs and counter-intelligence related SAVAK documents that refer to close co-operation with the US. However, this relationship seems absent when one examines the SAVAK's foreign intelligence documents and activities, thereby indicating that the interests of both countries on this issue did not align as closely as they did on counter-intelligence matters.

It is clear though that the counter-intelligence training provided by the US could also be applied to the field of foreign intelligence. Indeed counter-intelligence training will have likely made the SAVAK highly effective in its foreign intelligence activities in locations such as Iraq, as Iraqi intelligence was significantly weaker in comparison to the formidable Soviet intelligence organisations active on Iranian soil.

Whilst the SAVAK's observations of Iraqi intelligence show gradual improvement of its security and operational effectiveness over the observed years, they were at no point considered as effective as Soviet intelligence. It is also important to note that whilst the US

was involved in the initial training of the SAVAK, this did not last indefinitely. By 1963 it was felt that the SAVAK's counter-intelligence section was of sufficient strength to gradually free it of any direct foreign training. A strong liaison relationship with US intelligence though was maintained over the next several years.

In establishing the SAVAK, one also has to consider why the Shah ultimately chose to create one intelligence organisation rather than following the advice of the US and creating two in the mould of the CIA and FBI. Establishing one intelligence organisation for all intelligence activities holds several advantages and disadvantages. It can be argued that creating one all powerful intelligence organisation can lead to a more efficiently functioning organisation. Furthermore the possibility for any inter-agency rivalry which could negatively impact effectiveness is eliminated. Unfortunately there is no insight into the Shah's mindset at the time of the SAVAK's establishment and thus one cannot be certain of the Shah's specific reasons for pursuing a single organisation for Iranian intelligence.

Whatever these reasons may have been, the decision to include all intelligence activities within one organisation led to the SAVAK gaining dominating power over Iranian intelligence. This near absolute power also increased the difficulty of any authority seeking to control and oversee the SAVAK.

It can be argued that intertwining numerous domestic and foreign intelligence responsibilities also led to the circumstances in which the SAVAK used domestic intelligence against Iranian political figures in support of its foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence activities. The possibility of such occurrences in separate intelligence organisations would have been made far less likely, though not impossible.

The issue of oversight is also one that has to be taken into account when looking at the establishment of the SAVAK. It is clear that although oversight structures were established, specifically the Imperial Inspectorate Organisation and Special Information Bureau, these were far from effective due to their lack of independent power and unwillingness to pursue their oversight duties. On the specific topic of foreign and counter-intelligence it also remains unclear what these organisation were required to report. SAVAK documents and memoirs of intelligence officers certainly seem to indicate that there was little concern in relation to these oversight bodies.

Whilst there were laws in place that positioned the SAVAK as being answerable to the Prime Minister, these were clearly ignored. Hostile relations between the SAVAK and the Prime Ministerial office also did little to improve this atmosphere. The SAVAK chief's powers were such that the individual holding the post would often be described as the 'second Shah'. It must be said that the SAVAK would only have been able to proceed in such a manner by having the Shah's consent in ignoring the Prime Minister.

7.2 STRUCTURES AND OPERATIONAL METHODS

7.2.1 COLLECTION METHODS

The SAVAK as has been shown exercised a wide variety of methods in the gathering of foreign and counter-intelligence, and as with most intelligence organisations, open source collection was established as the core method of intelligence gathering. This might lead one to argue that the information gathered from these open sources was of greater value than its covert collection methods, but evidence of successful human intelligence and technical intelligence gathering suggests that these other methods were also highly valuable.

These methods were of particular importance in the field of counter-intelligence, as no amount of open source collection would have revealed the Iranian agents recruited by Soviet intelligence in Iran. One must not devalue open source intelligence gathering in the field of counter-intelligence though. SAVAK documents make clear that its counter-intelligence was involved in frequent assessments of Iran-Soviet relations. One can argue that such assessments will have provided counter-intelligence officers with an indicator for the likely level of Soviet intelligence activity on its soil. At the very least the assessed quality of relations will have made clear to the SAVAK the aggressiveness with which Soviet intelligence would pursue its goals. Primary sources suggest that at least until the second year of the Iran-Soviet rapprochement, Soviet intelligence was highly active in Iran and willing to take bold actions with greater potential risk.

It is evident though that as with most intelligence organisations existing in a phase of significant diplomatic transition, the SAVAK had difficulty adjusting to new political realities. Suspicions of Soviet actions remained ever present whilst diplomatic overtures were being made at the same time. Whilst such resistance to recognise change may prove counterproductive in most instances, in the SAVAK's case it was clear that Soviet intelligence had not significantly altered the volume of its operations within Iran. Soviet

intelligence in Iran remained highly active in the field of human intelligence but was far less eager in its support of third parties against the Iranian state. It is also clear that in the period following the rapprochement, Soviet propaganda broadcasts had significantly toned down their previous vehement criticism of the Iranian state. It can be argued that the Soviet Union's less bold attitude towards Iran was also perhaps reflective of the Tudeh party's significantly weakened stature. By the time of the rapprochement the Tudeh party was no longer considered by the Soviet Union a significant political opposition force capable of mounting a serious challenge to the existing Iranian regime.

Furthermore, Iran was seeking to assert its independence from the US and a rapprochement with the USSR, at a time in which US-Soviet tensions were very slowly beginning to ease, provided it with a fine opportunity to do so and to stake a claim to the status of a non-aligned state.

The SAVAK were also clearly aware of significant negative public sentiments towards Iran's relations with the West and understood that a rapprochement with the USSR would be viewed in a positive light by these individuals and therefore contribute towards increased national stability.

Additionally, it is clear that as was the case with Soviet intelligence, the SAVAK were continuing to pursue their own human intelligence operations. Although recruitment of Soviet personnel as agents was made difficult, it would seem that the SAVAK viewed a number of the eastern bloc nations as being easier human intelligence targets. Whilst such agents were not able to provide the SAVAK with the full specifics of Soviet intelligence operations, they were at the very least able to inform the SAVAK of the general details of ongoing and previous operations. This was clearly an important factor in the SAVAK's counter-intelligence directorate being able to narrow down its focus of operations. This is particularly important when one takes into consideration its limited resources in the counter-intelligence field, particularly for language reasons, in comparison to its domestic intelligence focus.

The SAVAK's foreign intelligence collection methods targeting Iraq, primarily made use of open sources, whilst also placing an emphasis on human intelligence and technical intelligence. There are numerous documents referencing major Arab newspapers and the opinions contained within them. Frequent references are also made to information acquired from Iranians travelling to and working in Iraq. Whilst the SAVAK made use of these individuals, there does not seem to be evidence of information acquired from Iraqis of Iranian

origin. It can be argued that such a group would have been of great potential intelligence value, as argued by the Iranian Foreign Office. It would seem though that the SAVAK viewed such individuals as more of a hindrance and as providing Iraq with leverage over Iran, particularly as the SAVAK had sought at one point in 1963 to encourage the moving of this entire population group out of Iraq and into Iran. Of course this may not necessarily reflect a failure in the SAVAK's human intelligence methods in Iraq but rather the loyalty of these Iraqis of Iranian origin to the Iraqi state. It certainly seems presumptuous of the Iranian Foreign Office to believe that this population group could have easily been recruited as Iranian agents. Whilst it remains possible that the SAVAK would have been able to recruit such individuals as agents, there is the likelihood that the leverage that the Iraqi government held by hosting such a population group would have outweighed any potential intelligence benefits.

It is important to recognise that prior to 1964, the SAVAK's operational foreign intelligence officers were required to both collect open sources and to translate all foreign language sources to Persian. Only after the establishment of a dedicated SAVAK translation office in 1964 under the orders of the Shah, were these officers no longer required to carry out translation duties.

Technical intelligence was also of great value for the SAVAK, particularly in targeting Iraq's military communications. It is clear that access to such information allowed the SAVAK to better respond to Iraqi threats of a military origin. Furthermore, information relating to disagreements and general unrest within Iraq's military ranks was valuable in further understanding the internal dynamics of the Iraqi state, thus allowing the SAVAK to make improved judgements on its potential stability. This was particularly evident when intelligence was acquired on a number of occasions indicating that certain Iraqi military officers remained opposed to Abdul Salam Arif's presidency and several had been involved in the planning of coup d'états. Frequent references were also made during Arif's presidency relating to the discomfort of the Iraqi military to growing Egyptian influence in Iraq. This was clearly evidence for the SAVAK that significant powers in Iraq were displeased at Iraqi efforts to align itself closely with Egypt, thus somewhat alleviating its concerns of a strong Egyptian presence on its borders. The SAVAK's hopes for a decreased Egyptian presence as a result of Iraqi military pressure did not materialise though, as it was not until Abdul Salam Arif's rift with Egypt that this occurred.

7.2.2 COVERT ACTION

There can be no doubt that the SAVAK were involved in covert actions against various Iraqi governments. The most frequent core aim of these covert actions involved aid to Iraqi Kurds in order to topple or pressure Iraqi governments. The SAVAK's covert actions had reached their most aggressive peak at an early point in its history, in the years following the Iraqi revolution that brought Qasim to power. There were various reasons for this development. A critical factor was the Shah's fears for his own throne, particularly owing to the fact that it had been another monarchy that had been overthrown in neighbouring Iraq. Further exacerbating this situation was strong Soviet support for Qasim at a time when the Soviet Union was highly hostile against the Iranian state. The SAVAK also suspected that the Iraqi revolution had been engineered by the Soviet Union. Furthermore the SAVAK were receiving intelligence as early as October of 1959 indicating that Soviet advisers in Iraq were recommending action against Iran. The SAVAK's intelligence also indicated that Soviet advisers were recommending that unrest be created amongst Iran's ethnic minorities. At the same time there were reports that Iraqi weapons were being smuggled into Iran for subversive reasons. There were also suspicions that a number of Iranian government members were collaborating with Iraqi intelligence. One can therefore judge that all of this intelligence will have undoubtedly been viewed with a great deal of alarm both by the Shah and the SAVAK. It will also have been clear that defensive intelligence measures alone under such circumstances will have been perceived as unlikely to succeed given the great deal of resources available to the Soviet Union. A decision had clearly been made, either by the Shah or with his approval for offensive intelligence to be used. This is an important point as offensive intelligence often entails greater risks. Additionally, it must be understood that whilst covert action is essentially an offensive form of intelligence, it is the defensive side of intelligence (collection and analysis) that will ultimately determine whether cover action operations will be successful or not. It is this form of intelligence that establishes when and how covert actions should be used for particular targets, as well as aiding in the understanding of its short and long-term impacts.

The SAVAK had attempted to restore the Iraqi monarchy and create further problems for Qasim by fuelling in September of 1961 a Kurdish insurgency in Iraq. Earlier, the Shah had visited Jordan in November of 1959 and along with King Hussein condemned Qasim's rule. Both leaders had agreed on plans to remove Qasim from power. Although attempts at

restoring the monarchy inevitably failed due to the lack of a support base, aid for a Kurdish insurgency succeeded in draining a great deal of Iraq's military resources.

7.2.3 PRIORITISATION

Intelligence as with most other fields is subject to the economics of scarcity,⁸⁹⁰ it is limited in what it can do by both human and economic limitations. This undeniable fact forces all intelligence agencies into a system of prioritisation⁸⁹¹ and the SAVAK was no exception. The prioritisation of intelligence targets can often be led from within the intelligence organisation or from a policy related government body.

In the case of the SAVAK's foreign and counter-intelligence directorates, the evidence indicates that intelligence priorities were for the most part chosen from within the organisation. Intelligence officers are frequently well placed in identifying information that is lacking, therefore such individuals are better suited in providing direction on a smaller scale.⁸⁹² Government officials may at times intervene in this process to give some indication of priorities, but in the SAVAK's case this it seems rarely if ever happened.⁸⁹³ The rare times we are provided with suggestions of outside direction involves the Shah. The fact then that prioritisation came mainly from within the SAVAK forces us to put a great deal of emphasis on how intelligence officers identified and perceived threats and how these threats were then prioritised. As no foolproof method of identifying and prioritising threats existed we would have to conclude that intelligence failure in this field would be inevitable.

To better understand the problematic nature of the SAVAK's prioritisation methods the process of its intelligence analysis must be considered, as this will be the most likely area from which prioritisation would begin.⁸⁹⁴ It is also true that before intelligence analysts can

⁸⁹⁰ Hulnick, p. 185.

⁸⁹¹ Richard K. Betts, "Surprise Despite Warning: Why Sudden Attacks Succeed," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 95, no. 4, (1980), pp. 551-572, (p. 557).

⁸⁹² Stéphane Lefebvre, "A Look at Intelligence Analysis," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, vol. 17, no. 2, (2004), pp. 231-264 (p. 232).

⁸⁹³ Hulnick, p. 80.

⁸⁹⁴ Steven Rieber, "Intelligence Analysis and Judgmental Calibration," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2004), pp. 97-112, (p. 109).

make informed judgements, they require that collected intelligence be as accurate as possible. As discussed above, the SAVAK's assessments in the fields of foreign and counter-intelligence, when compared to other sources, prove that their judgements of political developments were for the most part quite accurate. This suggests that collected intelligence was certainly of appropriate enough quality and hence the prioritisation emerging from within the organisation seems to have been largely in line with what the realities required, notwithstanding the already mentioned rather short-term and reactive rather than long-term and proactive approach that characterised the SAVAK's foreign intelligence modus operandi.

7.3 THE CHOICE OF TARGETS FOR THE SAVAK'S COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

In examining the SAVAK's analyses one can also conclude that as with most intelligence and security related organisations, it approached its work in a setting of structural realism, which indicates that states are primarily concerned with their own security.⁸⁹⁵ Security in this instance is sought primarily from threats rather than power. This is an important distinction as in contrast to threats, power can be described as neutral force. In this sense, threats can be judged based on a number of factors relating to overall capabilities, proximity, offensive capability (vs. defensive) and perceived intentions. All things being equal, states that are of a closer proximity are considered more dangerous than those that are far away. In addition, states with larger offensive capabilities, this being the capacity to threaten the sovereignty of other states, pose a greater threat than states maintaining capabilities of a more defensive nature. Furthermore, states with aggressive intentions are viewed as more threatening than states seeking to maintain the status quo. This remains true even if the status quo directly counters the interests of the state.

In keeping with this view of structural realism, the SAVAK continued to perceive the Soviet Union as a threat after the rapprochement. This was the case despite the Soviet Union no longer threatening the Iranian state in any direct matter. Despite proceeding to maintain the status quo in relation to Iran, the Soviet Union remained a formidable power and neighbour

⁸⁹⁵ Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security*, vol. 9, no. 4, (1985), pp. 3-41, (p. 7).

of Iran, two factors which undoubtedly contributed towards it being viewed as a serious threat by the SAVAK.

Iraq, on the other hand, in relation to structural realism was not viewed with as great a deal of concern after improved relations, due to its significantly weaker military force in comparison to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it can be argued that Iran's military capabilities would have surpassed Iraq's at that period in time, thereby providing Iran with a further layer of security vis-à-vis Iraq. Of greater concern for the SAVAK was any potential Egyptian role in activities perceived as being against Iranian national security. Egypt's lack of proximity to Iran though can be perceived as a security barrier, which would better explain the heightened periods of concern in the SAVAK when Egyptian military personnel were stationed in Iraq at the time of Abdul Salam Arif's presidency. At no period in time though were Iraq or Egypt ever viewed with the same amount of concern as was the Soviet Union. Even at the height of the SAVAK's concerns in relation to Iraq during the term following Abd al-Karim Qasim's 1958 coup, it was the Soviet Union that was believed to be behind these events that could ultimately destabilise the Iranian state. There is of course currently no evidence of Soviet involvement in Iraq's 1958 coup, but the fact that the SAVAK believed this to be so despite the lack of evidence, makes clear its elevated threat perception of the Soviet state.

7.4 POLICY-MAKING

It would seem that the SAVAK's approach to the policy side of government was never set in a concrete manner or constrained by institutional laws. This is made all the more important given the US's initial role in helping to establish the SAVAK. The notion that intelligence analysis, at its best, is removed from the day-to-day work of government and requires distance from policy making and policy makers has deep roots in the American intelligence tradition. Interference in the intelligence process by policy makers can undoubtedly skew the objectivity of intelligence and thus damage its end product, yet it is difficult to expect an intelligence organisation operating in an undemocratic structure to act similar to one operating in a democratic environment.

Furthermore, there is no evidence of the US being involved in providing any advice for the Iranians on what approach to take with intelligence and policy. Indeed, much of the US's early involvement with the SAVAK was related to training rather providing any advice on the SAVAK's role in relation to other areas of government. It is important to note though that

independence from the policy side of government, even in a democratic state, is seldom a guarantee of objectivity. Given Iran's undemocratic state it would have been highly difficult, if not impossible, for the SAVAK to operate free of outside interference that would skew any potential objectivity.

Whether this state of affairs was a result of a lack of willingness to curtail its powers or a deliberate effort to strengthen it remains unclear. What is clear though is that in the years following its establishment, its rapid growth as an organisation reduced the possibility of any challenge to its powers by an outsider. It seems that the Shah in particular, the one man conceivably able to force change upon the SAVAK, did not display any desire to limit its role or powers. Rather than introducing any oversight requirements for the SAVAK, the Shah's actions led to the SAVAK being further strengthened, particularly in the realm of foreign affairs. This is further made clear by the fact that reports written by diplomats for the Shah were sent directly to the Royal Palace without any further involvement by the Foreign Office. Furthermore it is made clear that on the Shah's orders, the SAVAK's foreign intelligence resources were also used to target the Iranian Foreign Office.

To some extent these problems also reflect upon the nature of the Iranian state at this time, in that there was a lack of debate over what precisely the role of an intelligence organisation in a state ought to be. One must also consider though there was a greater focus placed upon urgently needed political and social reforms which would have decreased the focus placed upon intelligence affairs. In any case the Shah in particular preferred to err on the side of caution by encouraging the unhindered development of a counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence capability adept at counteracting malign foreign influences within the country and advancing perceived Iranian interests outside its borders. This it seemed was far more preferable to debilitated intelligence capabilities that may have left the country and the Shah's throne exposed to foreign threats. The Shah's own direct experiences with foreign intelligence involvement in Iran suggest that he fully understood the importance given to curtailing the intelligence activities of outside powers.

An important question that must be looked at though is whether the SAVAK's actions were in keeping with Iranian policy at the time. In the field of counter-intelligence the SAVAK was clearly in no position to substantially influence policy towards the Soviet Union and thus it can be described as more of a reactive approach. Although in their foreign intelligence activities the SAVAK were better placed in being able to diverge from national policy and

perhaps to pursue its own policies, there is no evidence of such a possibility. It seems that in this field the SAVAK were merely acting in keeping with government policy. Whilst the SAVAK and Iraqi intelligence remained understandably hostile to one another despite improved relations on the government level, there are no indications that the SAVAK was suspicious of Iraqi intentions. This is in contrast to its perceptions of Soviet policy during the rapprochement which was viewed with a great deal of suspicion and scepticism. This would reflect upon the fact that by the time Iran-Iraq relations had improved, Iran-Soviet relations had also seen considerable amelioration. Furthermore, Iraq was never viewed by the SAVAK as being as great of a threat as the Soviet Union. At the same time, the period of highly amicable Iraqi relations with Egypt had passed and thus Iraq was no longer viewed by the SAVAK as being an instrument of Egyptian intentions. It is important to note that whilst Iran-Iraq relations were improving, there was no such sign of similar developments between Iran and Egypt. This may likely have been a result of continuing hostile relations between the Shah and Nasser, particularly when one takes into account the fact that the Shah played a dominant role in guiding Iran's foreign policy.

7.5 ANALYSIS AND COLD WAR THINKING

In further focusing upon the analytical mindsets of the SAVAK's foreign and counter-intelligence directorates, the observed evidence suggests that there was no specific focus on the cognitive processing methods of analysts. This it seems would be similar to established practices within US intelligence organisations at the time, where analysts were seldom self-conscious and introspective about the analytical process.⁸⁹⁶ The SAVAK in reflecting this attitude were seemingly pursuing the generally accepted 'common sense' theory of knowledge, which held that one should simply attempt to observe information in an objective manner by ridding oneself of all preconceptions and prejudices.⁸⁹⁷ This clearly does not reflect the fact that most intelligence analysts process information with a set of assumptions relating to how events normally transpire.⁸⁹⁸

⁸⁹⁶ Heuer Jr., p. 5.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid.

As with the Soviet Union, the SAVAK's analyses suggest that Iraq, even after displaying signs of more peaceful interactions with Iran, was frequently considered a threat. Unlike the Soviet Union though, there were clear indications in foreign intelligence analyses that Iraq, after the fall of Qasim had significantly reduced its intelligence activities targeting Iran. Of particular note is the fact that there were far fewer reports of financial and logistical aid being provided to groups that were willing and seeking to undermine the political status quo in Iran.

Despite such assessments, analyses indicate that the SAVAK remained suspicious of Iraqi activities. This can be partly attributed to Iraq's relations with Egypt, which on the whole remained positive over the examined time period. Although the SAVAK uncovered occasional evidence of Egyptian attempts at undermining the Shah, there does not seem to be a substantial amount of actions that would warrant suspicions arising from such human intelligence activities. Instead the SAVAK's mistrust of Egypt can be partly attributed to the high volume of Egyptian propaganda against the Shah as well as bitter relations between Nasser and the Shah. At least until the rapprochement between Iran and the Soviet Union, Egypt and Iraq were viewed by the SAVAK as being amenable to Soviet wishes and being more than capable of working together in order to undermine Iranian national security. It is also important to recognise that as previously stated, past experiences will often distort future perceptions. In analysing Iraqi actions during the period in which Qasim was Prime Minister, the SAVAK which had only been established as an organisation several months earlier, was immediately exposed to a hostile Iraq with close relations to the Soviet Union. Further exacerbating this state of affairs was the fact that the Soviet Union itself was engaged in a hostile and high volume propaganda campaign against the Iranian state, including intelligence activities on Iranian soil which were aimed at facilitating the overthrow of the Shah. It can thus be argued that in being born into such a hostile environment, the SAVAK's future perceptions of the Soviet Union and Iraq were influenced by events in this period of time.

A further notable observation of the SAVAK's work in the fields of foreign and counter-intelligence is that it mostly took a 'current events' approach to intelligence analysis. This led to a greater focus on and importance being attributed to events as they were occurring, rather than proceeding with an increased number of in depth analyses that would possibly have been of long-term importance to key decision makers. The 'incremental analysis' approach of the SAVAK led to a development in which much of the focus was on acquiring new pieces of information, rather than considering accumulated evidence as a whole. It remains unclear

whether such an approach was driven from within the organisation or from outside factors, such as the decision makers for whom intelligence reports were being written. In looking at the requests of senior SAVAK officers on intelligence analyses, it seems that a great deal of interest was placed on acquiring more information rather than trying to attain an in depth understanding of what this information meant for Iranian national security. Thus, one can certainly not put all of the blame for this 'current events' approach of intelligence analysis on the analysts alone. The lack of strategic analysis is particularly evident in foreign intelligence targeting Iraq, where the majority of analyses seem to be observations of occurring events.

One area in which the SAVAK's analyses remain noticeably accurate is the frequent descriptions of Iraqi instability and potential unrest. The SAVAK's assessments of Iraq are in keeping with secondary sources that also describe Iraq at that period of time as being a land in which power struggles were continually occurring behind the scenes. The SAVAK frequently suggested that an Iraqi revolution could occur at any moment. Whilst such radical political changes did not occur as frequently as the SAVAK estimated, the risks of such developments remained likely.

As shown by their analyses the SAVAK were also frequently interested in observing public opinion, both domestic and foreign. There can be little doubt that observing public opinion is a critical factor in most intelligence assessments which target the national security of a state. This is of course related to the fact that as a mass agential force, the public can both influence political decision makers and possibly bring about more drastic political changes.

For the counter-intelligence directorate, it was the national public opinion of Iran that was primarily of interest. During and in the lead up to the Iran-Soviet rapprochement, the SAVAK's sources were clearly pointing towards an Iranian population which remained somewhat resentful of the influence of major Western powers over Iran. Attitudes towards the Soviet Union though were clearly positive, but were possibly related to a desire for a counterbalance to the West. This state of affairs was clearly of concern for the SAVAK, particularly when future risks of a largely pro-Soviet population were taken into account. The role of Soviet intelligence in this matter was also of concern for the SAVAK, as the SAVAK's sources were suggesting at this time that Soviet intelligence also held an interest in swaying Iranian public opinion, and thus the pro-Soviet Iranian sentiments of the Iranian populace were likely to be reflective of the efficacy of Soviet propaganda targeting Iran. The SAVAK's interest in the radio access of Iranians in certain areas also supports the view that

Soviet and other foreign propaganda was viewed as a serious concern for national security, in that it would likely be effective enough for at least a certain percentage of the population to be influenced by it.

In seeking to minimise the potential influence of foreign propaganda, which the SAVAK clearly understood they would not be able to put a halt to, it is of note that analysts made suggestions of potential social changes. Such suggestions are notable, as intelligence organisations seldom veer into territory which might be considered the realm of policy makers. The SAVAK were clearly in no position to implement these social changes, therefore it is likely that such suggestions would have been forwarded to key decision makers by senior SAVAK personnel. Amongst a number of the social changes indicated by the SAVAK was a reduction in corruption, which was viewed as fuelling the resentment of individuals towards centres of authority. This would suggest that the SAVAK did not shy away from criticising senior authority establishments. Such social awareness by the SAVAK also indicates that preventative approaches to security were held in high regard, rather than simply pursuing a less sophisticated reactive approach. Furthermore, rather than simply viewing problems in a superficial manner, the SAVAK understood that underlying problems that led to undesirable outcomes would also have to be addressed, even if this was not a task that they were explicitly assigned to deal with.

It would be incorrect to assume that Iran's inexperience alone with having a professional intelligence organisation was to blame for a number of the problems described here. Few states, if any start out with an ideal intelligence structure. The advantage that most democratic states hold though is that through a system of checks and balances an appropriate role, be it an unstable one, for the national intelligence organisation is eventually developed over time. In Iran's case this clearly did not occur, and with the exception of the Shah, there was no authority figure capable of imposing significant changes on either the SAVAK itself or the larger structure in which it was operating. Regardless of these shortcomings, there can be little doubt that over this observed period of the Cold War, the SAVAK's foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence structures were influenced by a Cold War mindset.

This thesis has broken new ground in examining and analysing the SAVAK's counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence activities for the very first time, thereby making an original and significant contribution to the available literature and knowledge on the

SAVAK. It has provided fresh insights into the SAVAK and Iranian national security from 1957-1968 and is the first serious study to have demonstrated that the SAVAK were operating under the influence of Cold War thinking. Although there may be possible shortcomings, not least due to limited source access; rectifying these will have to be left for another time, when hopefully the source situation will have further improved.

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