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15 March 1951

NIE-6
Note in SE-3

TO: Ray S. Cline

FROM: R. L. Hewitt

SUBJECT: Iran

[redacted] came in this afternoon and looked at the crash estimate. Although he agreed that the danger of a collapse of the Iranian Government was not "imminent," he was very unhappy about the conclusions reached. I am sure that he and [redacted] were principally responsible for raising the issue of a crash estimate. He argued very strongly that the death of Razmara removes the one man capable of holding the armed forces together; that the government will become progressively weaker; and that Iran will be taken over by the Tudeh Party without benefit of Soviet intervention unless something is done about it. In this connection he pointed out that Allan Dulles was conferring with the Iranian desk at State, which felt very worried about the situation, and that State was preparing a memorandum for presentation to the Secretary and to the NSC urging a drastically stepped-up aid program for Iran.

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I'm doubly sorry that [redacted] wasn't better briefed yesterday in that he would then have ~~been able to~~ been able at least to raise in the meeting this morning his central point about the inability of the Iranian armed forces to hold together under one leader, without intra-army plotting, now that Razmara is dead.

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Aside from the crash estimate, however, this indicates that there is a real problem of getting an agreed-on estimate of the situation in NIE-6. Ted, Arthur, and the State ~~desk~~ desk people are looking for an NIE which will at least not undercut their attempts to get an authorization for Iran. [redacted] is independently of the same mind regarding the dangers of the Iranian situation and the desirability of an estimate supporting the argument for more aid.

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The IAC representatives, on the other hand, appear to take the ~~other~~ other side. [redacted] of OIR, whose conclusions were watered down some in the NIE-6 draft to take account of [redacted] and [redacted] ~~views~~ views, takes the line that: (a) we cannot get Iran to align itself firmly with the West no matter what we do; (b) despite its internal weaknesses, Iran is unlikely to fall to the Soviets or alienate itself from the West unless a severe economic crisis develops or ~~in~~ unless—as indicated in the meeting this morning—the the present ~~crisis~~ type of crisis is somehow aggravated and prolonged. OIR is ~~skeptical~~ skeptical about the capabilities of the Tudeh Party in the short run and does not share the belief of Ted, Arthur, and [redacted] that Iran is now headed steadily down hill toward real trouble. From the remarks made this morning, it appears safe to say that the Army, Air, Navy, and JCS representatives would agree. None of them would oppose a stepped-up aid program for Iran; probably they would all feel that some continuing US ~~support~~ support for Iran would be desirable. If they accepted ~~the~~ OIR's lead, however, they would indicate some doubt as to ~~the~~ the need for an augmented aid program and as to the extent of its effectiveness. As for myself—and I cannot claim to be a genuine Iranian expert—I still generally share these agency views, although to some extent shook me by bringing up the idea of warring groups within the armed forces.

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So, there you have it. Within the staff, there is ~~some~~ a genuine difference in outlook. The varying opinions of the Board you yourself know. As for the outside agencies, Ted and Arthur, representing one ~~general~~ source of expertise on Iran, differ drastically from the ~~present~~ apparent views of the IAC agencies. (Incidentally, OIR would also appear to differ ~~from~~ with the State political desk.)

This situation appears to me to require ~~serious~~ ~~consideration~~ a decision as to the method of procedure to be followed, both in the staff and at higher levels. We could attempt to change the present draft so as to represent more clearly the fears which are expressing, and conceivably we could amend it so as to make it completely two-faced and maybe even sell it. Basically, however, the fact that a sharp difference of ~~opinion~~ opinion is involved will have to be faced.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

14 March 1951

SUBJECT: NIE-6: IRAN'S POSITION IN THE EAST-WEST CONFLICT

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the position of Iran in the East-West conflict.

CONCLUSIONS

1. ~~The US security interest in the continued independence of Iran under a government willing to cooperate with the West~~ might be jeopardized in the following ways:

- a. A Soviet military attack could be launched on Iran with little or no warning, and Iran is incapable of defending itself against such an attack.
- b. The Iranian government, under the pressure of extreme nationalist elements, could take measures to restrict sharply or to eliminate

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Western interests in Iran.

- c. The political and economic instability of Iran could lead to the collapse of the present regime and the establishment of an anti-Western or even a Soviet-dominated government.

2. We believe, however, that:

- a. A full-scale Soviet invasion is unlikely unless the Kremlin is fully prepared for the eventuality of general war.
- b. The Iranian Government may further restrict but is unlikely to eliminate Western interests in Iran.
- c. There is a danger that the present internal crisis in Iran may lead to a political collapse, which in turn might provide an opportunity as well as a pretext for limited military intervention by the USSR.

3. Western military and economic assistance probably would in the long run increase Iran's stability and strengthen

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Iranian will to resist Soviet pressures, but it could not be expected to result in a firm Iranian commitment to a policy of cooperation with the West.

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