

## US'S REPENTANCE FOR A WRONG HAPPENING IN SUBSTITUTION FOR MANY RIGHT ONES

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### **ABSTRACT**

In 2000, the U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated: "In 1953 the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran's popular Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh." Later in 2009, the US President Obama as well reiterated the same. Despite what was quoted, due to many reasons the US in taking the blame for helping the Iranian King through the operation AJAX to oust his Prime Minister in August 19, 1953 has taken the blame for a wrong happening. That from the legal viewpoint was not a coup d'état by the King. It likely was a plan for decolonization of the oil industry from the United Kingdom. It at the maximum can be deemed as an anti-coup movement against what at the maximum apparently was a coup d'état from the opposite i.e. the Mosaddegh's side. With regard to the legal definition of the coup d'état, and considering the required conditions, in despite to wrong opinions it could not be a coup from the Kings side. So, from this standpoint, it not only was not a shameful plot degrading the then Iranian government but was a credible triumphant movement.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated: "*In 1953 the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran's popular Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh. The Eisenhower Administration believed its actions were justified for strategic reasons; but the coup was clearly a setback for Iran's political development. And it is easy to see now why many Iranians continue to resent this intervention by America in their internal affairs*". (Ramos 2008, 25) Later in 2009, the US President Obama as well stated that "*in the middle of Cold War, the United States played a role in the overthrow of a democratically-elected Iranian government*". (White House 2009) This official attitude has as well entered the school texts of the US. (CCPS 2008)

Despite what was quoted, due to many reasons the US in taking the blame for helping the Iranian King through the *operation AJAX* to oust his Prime Minister in August 19, 1953 has taken the blame for a wrong happening. What was on that day done from the legal viewpoint was not a coup d'état by the King. It likely was the last phase of a tripartite formerly planned attempt for cutting the UK's monopoly right off the Iranian oil; a plan for decolonization of the oil industry from the United Kingdom. It at the maximum can be deemed as an anti-coup movement against what at the maximum apparently was a coup d'état from the opposite i.e. the Mosaddegh's side. With regard to the legal definition of the coup d'état, and considering the required conditions, in despite to wrong opinions (Ghaffari 2000, 8) it could not be a coup from the Kings side. So, from this standpoint, it not only was not a shameful plot degrading the Iranian government but was a credible triumphant movement.

### IT WAS NOT A COUP D' ÉTAT

Due to many reasons what happened in Mordäd 28, 1332 Solar Hijri (August 19, 1953) was not a coup d'état. The King despite to some opinion (Mahdavi 2003, 10) had not lost his power or "legitimacy". He had the right to oust the Mosaddegh and there was nothing legal to bar him from enjoyment of his right for ousting his self-appointed Prime Minister.

### MOSADDEGH HAD NOT GRASPED THE KING'S POWER

Mosaddegh was the Prime Minister and not the King. He had not substituted the King so despite some opinion (Lang 2007, 148 & Kaviani 2006, 386) it is wrong to believe that the Mosaddegh was replaced or "overthrown" by the King. As well it is wrong to say that after Mosaddegh the King was "reinstalled" (McKahan 2009, 287). He had come to the power by the King's appointment and the Parliament's vote of confidence (Kressin 1991, 35) and despite wrong opinions (Fatah 2008, 37) not by election and despite some other opinions (Jones 2011, 2 & Ramos 2008,

25) he was not elected quite democratically. He never claimed that he has grasped the King's power and in fact whatever he did he used to do as the King's representative. He was an old man, 69 years old at the start of the upheaval (Kressin 1991, 2) which had spent his life in service of the Kings, whether from the Qajar or the Pahlavi dynasty. He was old enough not to ask the power for himself. He exceptionally made objections but never lost his loyalty to the King. He never assembled the anti-King or the anti-monarchists around himself for toppling the King and despite the wrong opinions (Balaghi 2013, 71) his government was never "anti-monarchist".

His cabinet as well was quite loyal to the King. They never talked about overthrowing him. None of them have ever shown any degree of willingness to overthrow the King. In fact, all ministers of his cabinet as well were appointed by the King. The upheaval as well was never an anti-King one. It was an anti-UK movement for liberation and nationalization of the Iranian oil industry. There may have been some persons who liked to evade the upheaval from its basic goals but it was never named by the Mosaddegh and his closed-byes as an anti-King or anti-monarchy movement. The King was doing his constitutional duties along with the Mosaddegh administration. He signed the Parliament's enactment for nationalization of the oil into the law and never objected the Mosaddegh's movement for nationalizing the oil. At the course of nationalization, he never attempted to oust the Mosaddegh and in August 19 it was only 6 days that he had departed the country.

Once Mosaddegh wanted to attain control of the army by acquiring the right to appoint the minister of war, but the King and the Parliament at first did not agree. Resignation of the Mosaddegh and public sentiments made the King to set back and accept the Mosaddeghs want. However, Mosaddegh needed the army to accomplish his job for de-colonializing the oil industry and ousting a superpower from the country. This did not mean that the Mosaddegh made a coup and overthrown the King. After that happening the King had not lost his stance as the monarch and was ruling the country.

#### ***THE KING HAD THE RIGHT TO OUST THE MOSADDEGH AND HIS CABINET MEMBERS***

Constitutionally it was the King's right to oust any of the ministers including the prime minister without presenting any justification. Despite wrong opinions, Mosaddegh was not the president (Paul 2006, 9) or president-elect (Draine 2012, 6) but the Prime Minister and in that times constitution, as far as the King's right for their appointment or dismissal was concerned, there was no difference between the prime and other ministers. Enforcement of this right was not subject to any condition including the affirmative vote of the Parliament or the Senate. The King was the monarch and that right was as any before rested in his hands. Prime Minister's or in the given case Mosaddegh's consent was not required. There was no need for a referendum and taking the nation's

consent. This right was not only about the Mosaddegh himself but about the whole his cabinet and enforcing this right after consultation with the foreign powers including the US does not overhaul it into illegal and “messy” (Fatah 2008, 307). As doing it against the will of the nation’s majority would not overhaul it into illegal. As the King consumed this right by issuing the Decree for dismissal of the Mosaddegh in August 16, it is wrong to be said (Kaviani 2006, 375) that in the August 19 “the legitimate government of Iran” overthrown.

There was no bar for the King to oust the Mosaddegh. He had never promised not to dismiss him and had no constitutional duty for not ousting him. Due to many wrongdoings of the Mosaddegh in his last months, the King was not under the heavy pressure of the public. As well he was not under the pressure of the situation, because the Mosaddegh's mission for nationalization of the oil was accomplished out. The King was young and safe and as interested in country’s prosperity as the Mosaddegh was. He had never shared the power with the Mosaddegh. So, the USA has assisted a legitimate King to legitimately dismiss his at most non-obedient Prime Minister.

#### ***THE COUNTRY WAS STALLED AND THERE REMAINED NO WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS***

Mosaddegh was to decolonize the oil industry and he was successful. But the oil had to be extracted and sold and Mosaddegh was not able to do it by Iran alone, he had to have agreement with the specialist international companies and those were mostly belonging to the USA and other western countries. On one hand he was reluctant to do so but on the other hand his own ideas for coping with this problem and extracting the country out of the crisis were “self-defeating” (Moore 1992, 22). There was no other remedy, because Iran lacked the capacity to run the oil industry on its own. In fact, even in that date the share of Iran in the profits driven from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was enough to considerably make the Iran’s economy dependent on the oil income. By the nationalization, oil production “decreased from nearly 250 million barrels in 1950 to just ten million barrels in 1952” (Moudgil 2009, 49) and the resultant economic problems were among the main reasons for Mosaddegh’s fall.

The problem for Mosaddegh somehow persisted not because the upheaval did not succeed but because the Mosaddegh had no theoretical idea what the nationalization of natural resources meant. Seemingly he was thinking about an impossible situation i.e. the extreme nationalization in which the oil was to be extracted by the Iranians and marketed by the Iranians. But at that time both were impossible to be done by the Iranians. Mosaddegh had suspended the parliament. The oil needed to be managed by the foreign companies but the Mosaddegh's cabinet was not in a situation to make a reliable and reasonable deal maintaining the country’s interests. An active parliament was needed to mull every proposed deal but its activity was suspended. To make a long term deal, the King had to have consent. But there was not a collaborating situation between the King

and the Mosaddegh anymore. The country was not politically stable enough and the Tudeh communist party which supported the oil nationalization movement (Jones 2011, 2) was strong enough to lead the country under domain of the USSR Bolshevism (Kressin 1991, 52). Only a few years had passed the WWII. The King had many who were ready to help him in ousting the Mosaddegh. In fact, after the nationalization of oil they did their mission very well. Army and the Parliament were the most important.

#### **A TRIPARTITE DE-COLONIALIZING PLAN**

In fact the King was very interested to gain more profits from the oil, the US as well coveted to have a share. But the King was afraid that any harsh action against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (its half belonging to the UK government, remaining belonging to a British national, a small part belonging to Iran) may lead to his overthrow. So a victim was needed to shield the King. The old age of Mosaddegh and his zealous loyalty to the monarchy brought about the idea that he was a right choice for playing a volunteer victim for getting the country's oil industry ride of the colonialism. Mosaddegh had to play as the Iran's Gandhi in de-colonializing the country's oil industry. It was predictable that as usual for meeting such a purpose the nationalizing Gov't gets toppled under the nationalized proprietor's pressure but the new coming Gov't would be able to defy returning the pre-nationalization situation. Here as well the same scenario in a diminished way championed. This led to nationalization of the oil industry but with this trick, not the national gov't but only the nationalizing administration collapsed.

#### **MOSADDEGH'S ROLE**

It is likely that he deliberately sacrificed himself to save the King from the UK's retaliating movements. Iran was nationalizing the "Britain's largest overseas investment", so the Britain shut the Abadan refinery (the world's largest oil refinery of the day), blockaded the Iranian oil from the world market and as a result virtually bankrupted the Iran's economy. (Branikas 2004, 38) British government even sent warships to the Persian Gulf and threatened to launch an armed invasion against Iran. (Salehi 2011) However, this while being de-colonialization, was some kind of breaching the international obligations (cancelling an oil concession which was due to be expired in 1993). In 1953, it was only a few years after the India's independence from the UK, and the UK's wealth and strength withdrawn from India were collected in the present UAE just under the Iranian territory. Mosaddegh as a "nationalist" (Juneau 2009, 13) figure had a very difficult job of nationalizing the oil and not letting the King to be harmed or overthrown. Mosaddegh had to play as a person who had made a coup d'état, aggressively nationalize the oil and return the country in the new situation to the King. There was no destiny for him. He was to be toppled after the successful accomplishment of the nationalization plan.

For the purpose, Mosaddegh gathered nationalists, communists and Islamists together, but after nationalization of oil, there was nothing in common to keep them still together. It was impossible to keep that tripartite coalition and continue working. Each of them (Kressin 1991, 58) wanted a different type of governance, some of them interested in grasping the whole power. However, although Mosaddegh was not interested, but the trickery had brought about a situation in which others coveted to grasp the power. In fact, Mosaddegh was not in a position to keep continuing in administration of the country so most of the reforms he suggested were slogans for attracting the public opinion. He suspended the Parliament and his cabinet substituted the Parliament for enactment of the laws. In fact, he did not need to suspend the whole activity of the Parliament but the activities concerning the oil industry. Suspending the whole Activities of the Parliament prevented his administration from its intellectual and social assistance.

The communists as well the Islamists even the nationalists were not aware what exactly was going on. In fact, Mosaddegh to bring about the legal conditions of nationalization had to show that the nationalization is for the public interest, according to the legal means, indiscriminative and against payment of fair and prompt compensation. Three other conditions were met or ready to be met; Parliament and the Senate had approved the oil nationalization and the King was consented to it, there was no place for indiscrimination and Iran was ready to pay compensation. To meet the public interest requirement, Mosaddegh had to give way to protests which could be held by every social group. Those groups played their roles almost completely in ripening the nationalization and as well in ousting the Mosaddegh.

### ***THE KING'S ROLE***

The King ousted the Mosaddegh not when the nationalization process was on course but when it was done off. In the course of nationalization, he even accompanied the Mosaddegh. (Kressin 1991, 44) If the King was a puppet for the UK, after Mosaddegh he had to return the oil industry to the same situation as of before Mosaddegh and recognize the UK's monopoly right over the Iranian oil industry but he never did so. Mosaddegh made his service to the nation, despite opinions that "the Shah [the King] denationalized Iran's oil industry and about 60% of it went to American firms", the King never returned the situation back. The oil remained Iranian and a consortium of 40% American, 40% British and 20% other Western Countries' oil companies based on public agreement undertook the responsibility of exploration, extraction and marketing of the Iranian oil products against fair consideration. The new contract was not a monopolistic one containing concessions for the US, UK or any other country. Iran was free to make other agreements with other operators as desired. So, despite opinions reiterating that the institution of monarchy was "dysfunctional" (Mahdavi 2003, 10) it seems that everything had been happened with undercover participation of the monarch. The Monarch was

agree to the Parliaments enactment for nationalization of the oil and had signed it into the law. The father of the King i.e. the King Reza as well had about 20 years before criticized the Iran's share in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's profits and as a result some amendments had taken place accordingly. Even before the appointment of Mosaddegh as Prime Minister some negotiations for making adjustments (Marsh 2003, 9) in the related contract were underway, but Iran was not satisfied (Haija 2014, 41). The King himself always stated that the Mosaddegh had done a coup d'état. Therefore, for him what in that day (August 19, 1953) happened was not a coup d'état but an anti-coup movement. In fact this was a better interpretation. Despite wrong opinions (Jones 2011, 2) the King's movement against the Mosaddegh could never be deemed as a coup d'état, so it was the Mosaddegh who had made a coup d'état. Mosaddegh restraining the democracy had suspended the Parliament and was acting as a dictator, at the end even not obeying the Kings orders. So, with some ignorance it can be said that the Mosaddegh had cripplingly made a coup.

#### ***THE US'S ROLE***

The King had naturally to be assisted by the UK in anti-Mosaddegh movement, so what was the role for the US in this case? Surely the UK alone had enough power to overcome the problem and make a new deal with Iran, so what was the use for participation of the US? From the beginning of the upheaval the US embassy was the main reference of the GB, the King and the Mosaddegh. The US was deemed as friend of both, UK and Iran. US used to mediate the dispute, helping Iran while helping the UK. Mosaddegh always had a warm relationship with the US. (Kressin 1991, 75) Seemingly the US has assisted (Tabrizi 2012, 29) the oil nationalization scenario to take place and has enjoyed from the outcome (Uludag, Soner and Gurol 2013, 107). It can be guessed that from the beginning the nationalization upheaval was a tripartite plan of the King, the US and the Mosaddegh; all against the GB. The British were not aware of the situation, so they used to refer to the US for help in direct military intervention in Iran but the US used to abstain, many (Marsh 2003, 1) think that the change of administration in US led to change of attitude in that country, but, this might have happened when the conditions have become ready i.e. the Britain had come back from the Hague International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the UN Security Council empty handed. In this way the Iran's nationalization of oil could not be challenged, what was left to be challenged was the Mosaddegh. The US was agree with this one although disagree with the former one.

#### **CONCLUSION**

We are unless exceptionally accustomed to look at our former rulers including the King Mohammad Reza even the Mosaddegh not as nation's servants but as treasurers. We never want ourselves to feel indebted to the King or the Mosaddegh. But despite all these, the nationalization movement has been a successful plan tailored and accomplished by the

King, Mosaddegh and apparently by the US. For the Iranian nation within more than four hundred years of mostly failed defiance against the western states, i.e. since the expulsion of Portuguese from the ganberoon port (thereinafter Bandar Abbas), this was a national plan in dealing with a foreign colonial power which was successfully accomplished. So, no coup has happened in Mosaddegh's dismissal and as a result the US if desired has to apologize to the Iranian nation not for assistance to a coup but for assisting the cruelties done and massacres happened in that day as well for other cruelties assisted or caused later.

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