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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

4 October 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Allan Evans (OIR)  
Colonel Gerald F. Lillard, USA (G-2)  
Captain Ray Malpass, USN (ONI)  
Colonel Jack E. Thomas, USAF (AFOIN-2A)  
Captain Charles M. Heberton, USN (JIG)

SUBJECT : SE-33: Prospects for Survival of Mossadeq  
Regime in Iran

1. The attached draft estimate is forwarded for review.
2. It is requested that your representative meet with us at 2:00 Monday, 6 October, in Room 146 South Building, to discuss this draft preparatory to the special meeting of the IAC on Wednesday, 8 October.

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Executive Secretary

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SUBJECT: SE-33: PROSPECTS FOR SURVIVAL OF MOSSADEQ REGIME  
IN IRAN

THE OIL ISSUE

1. An early settlement of the oil dispute with the UK is unlikely. In view of the intense anti-British sentiment in Iran, any agreement which Mossadeq could accept would require greater concessions than the British have given any indication of offering. On the other hand, Mossadeq's prestige would be greatly enhanced if he succeeded in effecting the sale of oil despite the British boycott.

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

2. The loss of oil revenues has not seriously damaged the Iranian economy, although there have been some price increases, curtailment of urban business activities, and reduction of imports. However, the financial position of the government has been seriously affected. Unless the government restores revenues from the sale of oil,

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substantial budgetary cuts and/or extensive borrowing and currency expansion are inevitable, with increasingly severe political and economic effects.

BALANCE OF POLITICAL POWER

3. a. Recent events have produced far-reaching changes in the traditional political balances of power in Iran. The Shah has less capability for independent action. The formerly dominant landowning class has also lost political initiative. The Army probably is capable of coping with any domestic disturbances, but it has been demoralized by Mossadeq's policy toward it and no longer has a clear allegiance. The National Front under Mossadeq has thus become the dominant political force in Iran.
- b. The principal threat to Mossadeq's continued control over the heterogeneous National Front arises from the activities of Mullah Kashani, fanatical Moslem leader. His agitation among peasants for agrarian and social reform is creating unrest which Mossadeq may be unable to control. His extreme intransigence on the oil issue

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and uncompromising demands for the expulsion of all Western influence and interests from Iran adds to Mossadeq's difficulties. Kashani has also shown a tendency to seek Tudeh support.

- c. While the Tudeh Party has become stronger in recent months, it is almost certainly incapable by itself of overthrowing the government by force or subversion. It will, however, probably support Kashani in the belief that if Kashani were in power its opportunities for taking over the country would be improved.

RUMORS OF COUP

4. There are numerous reports that Mossadeq is losing support and that various groups are plotting his overthrow. Almost all these reports mention Kashani as a participant in these plots, but they disagree as to: whether Kashani is to be the leader or the tool of such an attempt; the relationship between Kashani and the Tudeh; the extent of Kashani's support within the National Front; and the position of the Army and the Shah. One report even suggests that Mossadeq and Kashani themselves are circulating rumors of a coup or a break between them in order to frighten the US and UK into yielding on the oil dispute.

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LIKELIHOOD OF A COUP

5. We do not believe there is sufficient evidence to estimate the likelihood of an attempt against Mossadeq, the composition and intentions of the group or groups which might make such an attempt, or the means they might employ.

PROBABLE OUTCOME OF A COUP IF ATTEMPTED

6. We estimate, however, that Mossadeq, if he escapes assassination, can probably resist all efforts to overthrow him. Anti-Mossadeq forces can choose from among the following methods of seizing power:

- a. Constitutional means: An attempt may be made to overthrow Mossadeq when the Majlis reconvenes on 9 October. It appears unlikely that Kashani could persuade the Majlis to vote to oust Mossadeq in view of the absence of any issue which could serve as a basis for attacking Mossadeq, the resources at Mossadeq's disposal for controlling the deliberations of the Majlis and Mossadeq's record as champion of nationalist aspirations.
- b. Military Coup: A military coup against Mossadeq is not likely to succeed because Mossadeq has had the

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opportunity to eliminate elements in the Army hostile to him, and none of the Army personnel reported as currently being involved in plots against Mossadeq are believed to have the prestige or influence to obtain the necessary support from the Army.

- c. Mob Violence: A contest in the streets between the forces supporting Mossadeq and Kashani would be bitter and destructive. The lineup of forces would depend in large part on the specific issues involved at the time the rioting broke out. If there is a break between Mossadeq and Kashani, we believe that Mossadeq could rally greater forces than Kashani.

The lineup would probably be as follows:

1. Mossadeq: the bulk of the National Front rank and file in the cities; Dr. Baghai's Iranian Workers' Party with its organized street fighting forces; the Somka (pro-Nazi) Party, providing the Tudeh supported Kashani; and the Army and part of the Police force, providing they were given specific and direct orders.

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2. **Kashani:** his followers in the National Front; the Bazaar mobs and the bands organized by his son; the Fedayan terrorist organization of Moslem extremists; the Tudeh and its various subsidiaries; and possibly some support from the tribes if the Army sided with Mossadeq.
- d. **Assassination:** Assassination of Mossadeq would probably result in the accession to power of Kashani.

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