

**#1323 America as Media-Persia, II – Toward the Iran Hostage Crisis: 1925-1979, The Time of the Pahlavi Dynasty, which attempted to represent the reinstatement of the Persian kingship of the times of Cyrus the Great**

**The Crowning of the Pahlavis.** At a precarious moment in Persian history – with Iran poised between the two powers of Britain and Russia – on February 21, 1921, three thousand Persian Cossacks led by a ranking officer of whom no one had heard, Reza Khan, and accompanied by a well-known newspaper editor, Seyyed Zia al-Din Tabatabai, marched into Tehran and without firing a shot, overthrew the government. At first Seyyed Zia became prime minister and Reza Khan minister of war. But in short order, Reza Khan ousted Seyyed Zia and in May of 1921 assumed the premiership. He became

the unchallengeable power in the land.

Within four years, he deposed of Ahman Shah, the last ruler of the Kajar Dynasty. On December 12, 1925, Reza Khan was himself acclaimed Shah, the first ruler of the Pahlavi Dynasty. On April

25, 1926, the official

coronation was held. The

new Shah's six-and-one-

half-year-old son,

Mohammed Reza, had a

central part in the

ceremonies. After Reza

Khan placed the crown of

kingship on his own head, he

turned to his young son and

placed a small crown on the

head of the boy. With that act,

Mohammed Reza Pahlavi – the future

Shah of Iran from 1941-1979 – was

officially designated the Crown

Prince. Reza Khan had chosen as his

dynastic name *Pahlavi* because it was

the Persian language that Iranians

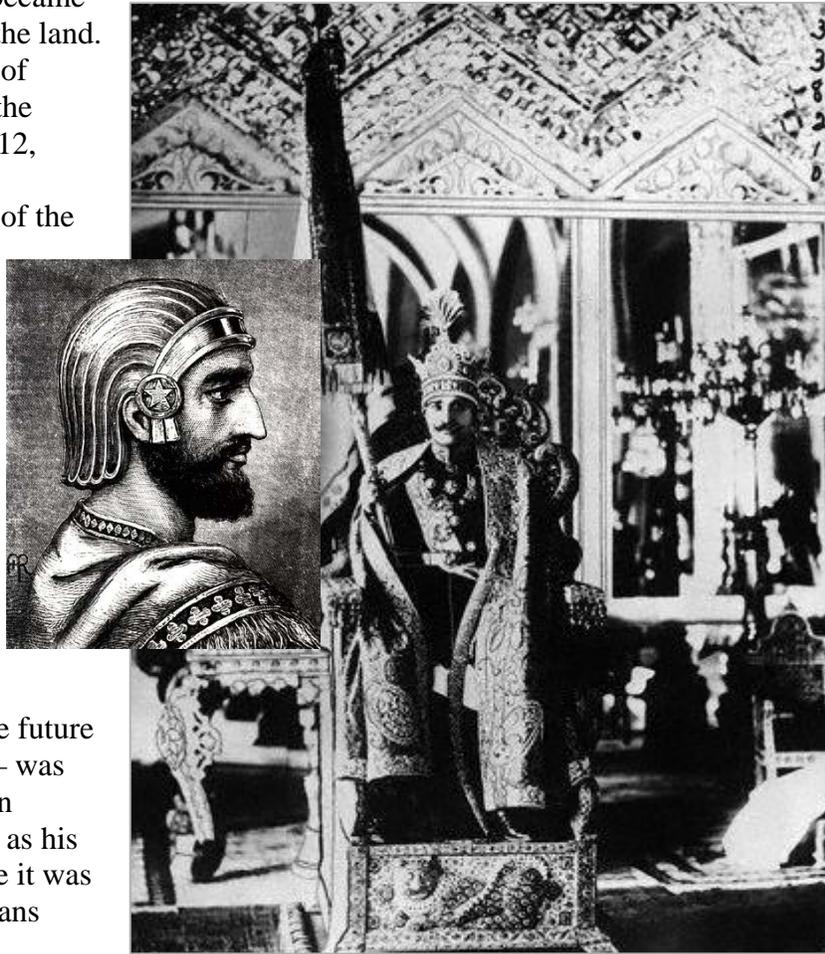
spoke before Arabs destroyed

independent Persia. It was said at his

enthronement, "The people of Persia

are celebrating, not because a new Shah has come to the throne, but because the event has

created the impression that Persia is resuming her historic glory and prosperity . . ."



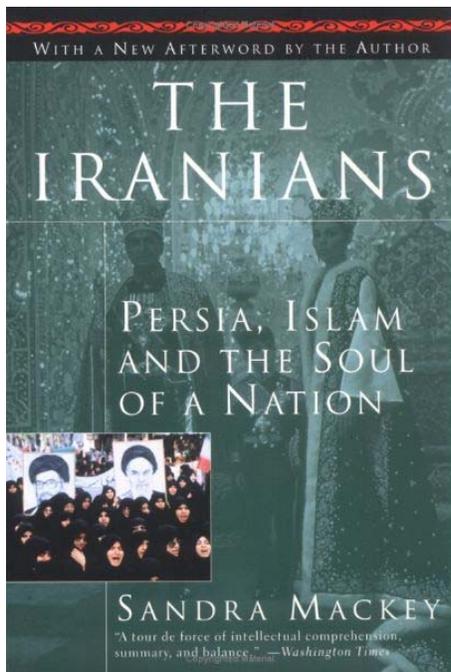
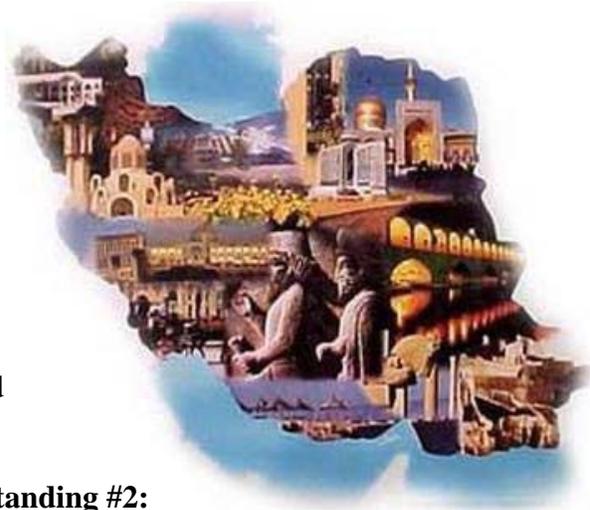
Reza Shah at his coronation, April 25, 1926

**Key Understanding #1: *The Pahlavis as the second Achaemenids.* The Pahlavis would attempt to characterize their dynasty as a revival of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia's past. The Achaemenid Empire is another name for the empire of Media-Persia that existed**

from the time of Cyrus the Great's defeat of Babylon in 539 B.C. to its defeat by Alexander the Great in 330 B.C.

**A reestablishment of the glory of ancient Persia, but fashioned on the Western model.**

Because the people of the Western world had achieved in a material sense many of the things that he desired for his own country, Reza Shah seized aspects of the West as tools with which to build Iran into a modern country. The old ways of the East had to give way to the new ways of the West. Reza Shah ripped down whole sections of Tehran and other cities, replacing them with broad boulevards accessible to motorized vehicles.



**Key Understanding #2:**

***Bypassing Islam for Cyrus***

***the Great. In the pursuit of rapid modernization fashioned on Western models, Reza Shah decided to bypass Islam and its traditional way of life by linking the nation of modern Iran to a glorified image of ancient Persia during the Media-Persian dynasty and empire established by Cyrus the Great. [A good source for the understanding of this time period in Iran is the book *The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation*, by Sandra Mackey, © 1996.]***

***2 Chronicles 36:22-23 (KJV) Now in the first year of CYRUS KING OF PERSIA, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,***

***23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to BUILD HIM AN HOUSE IN JERUSALEM, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? THE LORD HIS GOD BE WITH HIM, AND LET HIM GO UP.***

Here is #1323–Doc 1, a picture of Reza Shah during his time as minister of war.

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[<< Previous](#)

[Main Page and List of Unsealing Summaries](#)

[Next >>](#)