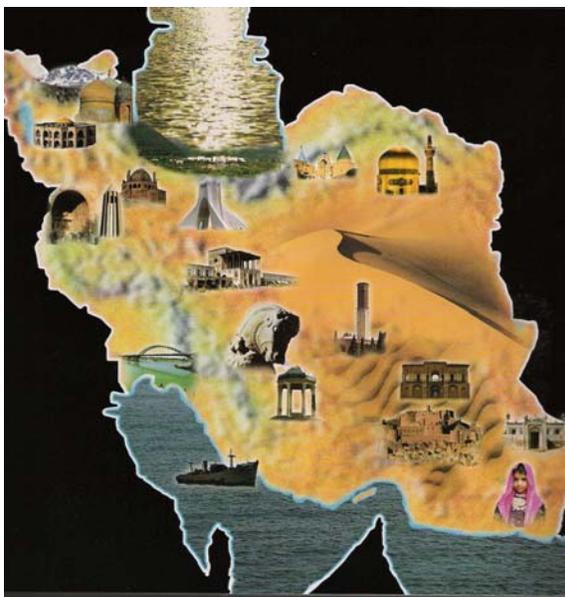
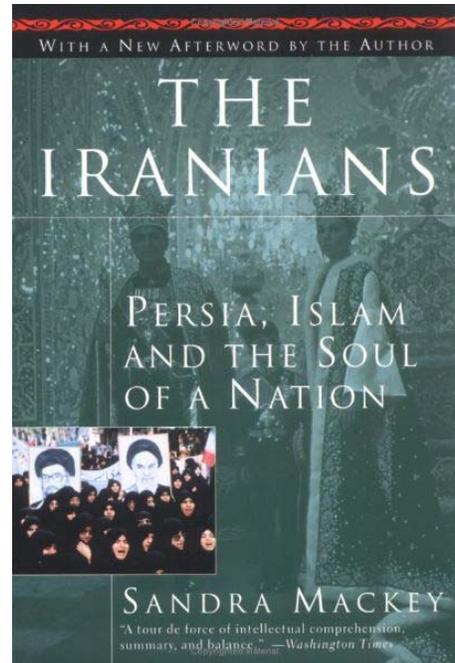


#1324 America as Media-Persia, II – Toward the Iran Hostage Crisis: 1925-1979, The Time of the Pahlavi Dynasty, which held Islam responsible for a backwards Iran and desired to modernize Iran in a glorified image of ancient Persia at the time of the Achaemenid Empire begun by Cyrus the Great

Here is an excerpt from the book *The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation*, by Sandra Mackey, © 1996, about the dramatic changes that occurred in Iran after Reza Shah came to power:

In pursuit of rapid modernization, Reza Shah came to rule Iran as the all-powerful despot characteristic of the centuries-old institution of Persian kingship. By the early 1930's, the Shah's personal vision of the Iranian nation required the sacrifice of all traditional organizations and groups on the altar of the state. In an age when Mussolini of Italy and Franco of Spain clasped their iron hands on their own countries, Reza Shah qualified as a Persian Fascist, pulverizing the elements of Iranian society group by group to ensure the omnipotence of the state. **Yet his supreme goal was a modern, powerful Iran grounded in secular society fashioned on Western models. Holding Islam responsible for the major failings of society,** which he saw as a lack of a modern educational system and outmoded legal system, the seclusion of women, and the passive acceptance of fate, the Pahlavi Shah intended to do no less than cut the knot between church and state tied by Ismail [Ishmael]. It was for this reason that the institutions of Shia Islam bore

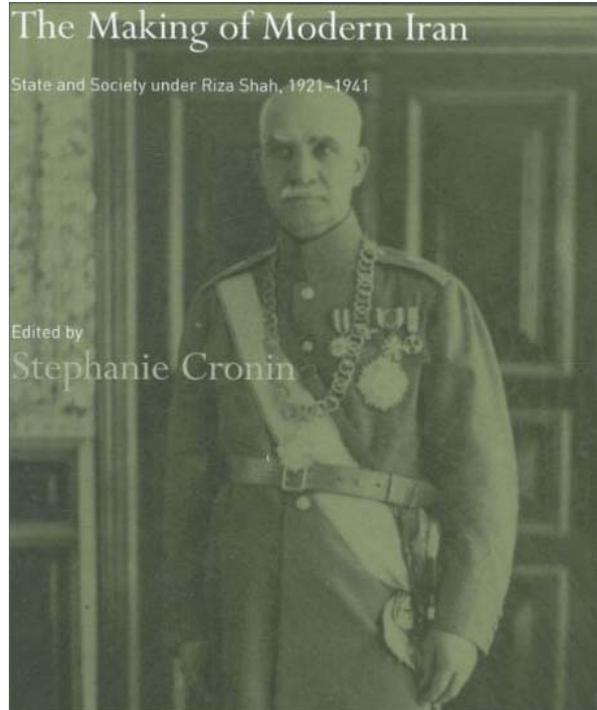


the brunt of the Pahlavi reforms. The Pahlavi Shah painted the religious leaders as symbols of the old, impotent Iran while he painted himself as the great deliverer of the nation. **He desired to free Iran from the influence of Islam, but Iran could not be simply disengaged from Islamic traditionalism.** Since Islam is at once a religion, a state, and a way of life, Reza Shah needed to create an alternative definition of Iranian culture. The ideology of modernization wearing its coat of Western education and Western technology would not do because it threatened to undermine Reza Shah's own authority rooted in the tradition of Iranian kingship. **So while hanging on to the West for education and technology, Reza Shah decided to bypass Islam by connecting the nation of**

modern Iran to a glorified image of ancient Persia. To this end, he summoned the impotent nation once more to the great days of Iranian history, to the age of the Achaemenian kings – Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes.

Key Understanding: *Westernizing Iran in the image of Cyrus the Great's Media-Persia.* The rise of the Pahlavi Dynasty created an Iran in which the state was attempting to Westernize while simultaneously attempting to mold its image after the great Persian Dynasty of Cyrus the Great, which necessitated the attempt to undermine the influence of the religion of Islam in Iran.

*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 #1324–Doc 1, about Reza Shah Pahlavi, who ruled Iran from 1925-1941.

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