

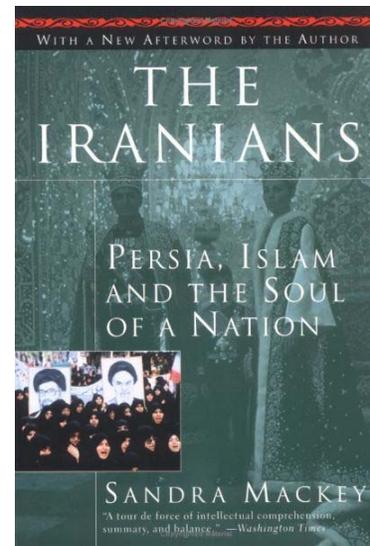
#1325 America as Media-Persia, II – Toward the Iran Hostage Crisis: 1925-1979, The Time of the Pahlavi Dynasty, which aspired to be looked upon as a revival of the Persian kingship from the times of Cyrus the Great

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.

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 order to resurrect pre-Islamic Iran and uplift the concept of Persian kingship, Reza Shah fertilized the deeply planted idea that the Arabs had humiliated Iran in the seventh century and plowed up images of ignorant camel herders (the Arabs) compelling the highly civilized Iranians to accept a new religion (Islam). He fed it all with a systematic resuscitation of Zoroastrian symbols, congenial to the spirit of denying the relevance of Islam. Reza Shah, in essence, attached the might of the new Iran straight to the cloak tails of Cyrus the Great as if thirteen hundred years of Islam and a national identity shaped by Shiism never existed.

Drawing inspirations from Persepolis and Susa, the architects of the many new buildings rising in Tehran and other cities followed designs and repeated decorations of the Achaemenians. They are still visible. The police headquarters and the Central Bank (see the picture on the *right*) in Tehran recreate the architectural style of Persepolis. Reza Shah then had every schoolchild in Iran learn by memory extracts from the Shahnameh that emphasized Iran's Persian past and its dependence on kingly rule. A new calendar replaced the Islamic version with a modernized



Bank Markazi (Central Bank), Tehran, Iran

form of the ancient Zoroastrian calendar. The names of the months changed from Arabic to Persian. Cities also dropped their Arabic names. When the order went out for people to take family names in order to simplify government administration, Reza Shah let it be known that Iranian rather than Arabic or Islamic names were preferred. As a result, the politically astute chose names of ancient kings and heroes of pre-Islamic Iran. So pervasive did this glorification of the pre-Islamic past become that even Bayer aspirin chose to advertise its product through an appeal to Achaemenian symbols.

*Daniel 2:31-32 (KJV) Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32 This image's **HEAD WAS OF FINE GOLD** [Babylon], **HIS BREAST AND HIS ARMS OF SILVER** [Media-Persia], **HIS BELLY AND HIS THIGHS OF BRASS** [Alexander the Great's Greece],*

*Daniel 2:39 (KJV) And after thee shall arise **ANOTHER KINGDOM INFERIOR TO THEE** [Media-Persia], and another **THIRD KINGDOM OF BRASS** [Alexander the Great's Greece], which shall bear rule over all the earth.*



Achaemenian-style reliefs on a modern building around Ferdosi Square, Tehran

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