

**#1328 America as Media-Persia, II – Toward the Iran Hostage Crisis: 1925-1979, The Time of the Pahlavi Dynasty, which included the fall of Reza Shah, the father, in 1941 during World War II, and the ascension to the throne of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the son**

**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:

Through the 1930's, in his foreign policy, Reza Shah had applied the time-honored technique of protecting Iran's territorial integrity by balancing powerful predators. As the Kajars had juggled Turkey, Britain, and Russia, using one as a third party against the others, Reza Shah checked Britain and Stalin's Soviet Union as World War II exploded by calling in Germany as that third force. Because of Nazi ideology and the military force Adolf Hitler released on Europe in 1939, it proved to be the wrong country at the wrong time. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, Reza Shah's carefully constructed tripod collapsed. Suddenly the Shah's railroad through Iran became the lifeline for Allied supplies to Russia. Just as in World War I, when Iran's enemies joined forces, Iranian neutrality meant nothing as the vice of the new Anglo-Russian alliance closed in on Iran.

On August 25, 1941, the British and the Soviets joined together to close in on the capital of the Shah that refused to become the vassal of the larger powers. His navy was wiped out by the Allies, his railway confiscated, his army disbanded. He refused to be the head of an occupied nation. The British and the Soviets decided that the Shah's son, the 22-year-old Mohammed Reza, known as a weak playboy, should take the throne. He could be replaced if he refused to do as he was told.



From 1941-1945, the new Shah of Iran watched in the wings as his country struggled with the grim product of wartime occupation of British and Soviet troops. When the war at last ended, the Shah then had to struggle with the Cold War. For the first decade of his rule, he survived as much as he ruled. He gingerly moved from year to year. He did not have an assertive character.

He was born on October 26, 1919, the second baby of twins. It was his twin sister who proved to have the stronger personality.

The youthful Shah was politically smart enough, however, to realize that after World War II his country might simply be divided and taken over by Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Consequently, he began to court the United States, which seemed to favor an independent post-war Iran. Once again American advisers began to flood into the country along with an increase in U.S. military forces. During the war, on December 1, 1943, an important meeting of the Allied leaders – Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt – was held in Tehran to chart the continued course of the conflict. At this meeting Roosevelt spoke out in favor of Iranian post-war independence.



A picture of the young Mohammed Reza Pahlavi as Shah of Iran.



The Shah of Iran saluting Winston Churchill on the occasion of Churchill's 69<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Tripartite Conference of Tehran, November 28 – December 1, 1943. On the far left is Ali Soheili, serving his second term as Prime Minister of Iran.

**Isaiah 44:28 (KJV) [Thus saith the Lord] *THAT SAITH OF CYRUS, HE IS MY SHEPHERD, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.***

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