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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

Iran

Doc # 82

- Armed

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S-34,467/DB-3

1 NOV 1977

Background Paper for the Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Iranian Military Organization (U)

1. (U) PURPOSE: In preparation for the Shah's upcoming visit to the U.S., the Secretary of Defense has requested information on the Armed Forces of Iran.

2. ~~(S/NOPORN)~~ POINTS OF MAJOR INTEREST:

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: APR 21 2016

a. ~~(S)~~ Ground Forces:

The 280,000-man Imperial Iranian Ground Forces (IIGF) consists of three armored divisions, three infantry divisions, one separate infantry brigade, one airborne brigade, one special forces brigade and an aviation command. The Imperial Guard, which is subordinate to the Supreme Commander's Staff rather than the IIGF, is composed of an Infantry Guard Division and a separate ceremonial Guard Brigade. In early 1977, an additional armored division and airborne brigade were deactivated due to budgetary constraints. Even though it has received most of its aircraft (31 prop aircraft and 700 helicopters), the Army Aviation Command (IAA) is still in the formative stages. The IIGF's military capabilities have improved considerably during the past year but remain handicapped by large personnel turnover, erratic logistical support, including dependency on foreign suppliers for spare parts, and a lack of trained maintenance personnel. Even with these problems, however, the IIGF could still deter any ground attack from any of its border countries except the Soviet Union.

b. ~~(S)~~ Air Force:

The Imperial Iranian Air Force, with a personnel strength of approximately 110,000, is a modern, jet-equipped, tactical force, which has grown to become one of the largest in the Middle East. It can probably defeat any other regional air force except that of Israel and possible Turkey. Although the IIAF inventory contains some of the most sophisticated equipment available, the lack of adequately trained personnel in technical fields, and a poor logistics system, preclude

Office of the Secretary of Defense 5 U.S.C. 552
Chief, RIDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 21 Apr 2016 Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: X Deny in Full:
Declassify in Part:
Reason: 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(3); 10 USC. 424
MDR: 15 M-0284

Classified by: DIA (DB)
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY: 2
DECLASSIFY ON: 31 Dec 2007

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optimal use of that equipment and limit overall IIAF capabilities. Without substantial foreign technical assistance, the IIAF could probably not sustain full-scale operations for longer than a week. The aircraft currently in the inventory include 407 fighters/fighter-bombers, primarily F-4s, F-5s, and F-14s, 87 transports, 40 helicopters, 37 trainers/utility, and 36 special purpose.

c. ~~(S)~~ Navy:

The 32,000-man Imperial Iranian Navy is the major naval force in the Persian Gulf. It is capable of limited defense of the Iranian coastline and has increased its surveillance capabilities through the establishment of patrols from the Straits of Hormuz into the Gulf of Oman. It has an amphibious capability for beaching and tank landing operations and does have a moderate repair ship capability. Of its total inventory of 82 ships, 3 are guided missile destroyers and 4 are guided missile frigates. The IIN also operates the largest hovercraft force in the free world, with fourteen in its fleet.

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3. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ EXPECTED DEVELOPMENTS:

a. ~~(S)~~ IIGF:

Mobility and firepower will increase with the addition of new model Chieftain tanks and the integration of IIAA aircraft into combat aviation units. Increasing quantities of TOW and Dragon Missiles will improve anti-tank capabilities. Activation of two additional armored divisions and an air-mobile division is possible in 1983.

b. ~~(S)~~ IIAF:

The air force will continue its expansion and modernization program for at least the next 10 years; as fighter aircraft deliveries level off, the shortfall of qualified pilots will gradually catch up, permitting the activation of additional operational fighter squadrons.

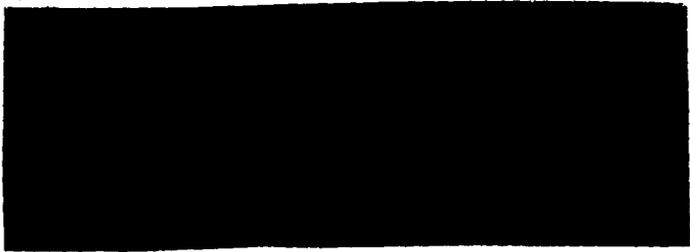
c. ~~(S)~~ IIN:

The navy will now enter into a decade where ship deliveries will outstrip the acquisition of trained crew members to such an extent that previously qualified crewmen will have to be spread thinly throughout the fleet, resulting in a temporary drop in fleet readiness through the near and mid-term.

4. (U) RECOMMENDATION: None.

PREPARED BY: 

1 Enclosure
Politico-Military Prognosis
~~(S/NOFORN)~~ (1 cy)


OSD 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(3); 10 U.S.C. 424
5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)()