

Iran's Intelligence Apparatus from Past to Present: Institutional Process and Political Handicaps

HAKKI UYGUR

National Intelligence Academy, Türkiye

ORCID No: 0000-0002-6833-0431

ABSTRACT *The Iranian intelligence apparatus acquired an institutional structure in the modern period, particularly under the rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. It was associated with the renowned SAVAK and underwent substantial transformations following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Notwithstanding the initial reservations of certain revolutionary leaders, notably Ruhollah Khomeini, it re-emerged as a formidable ministry in 1984. Since the 2000s, with the reinforcement of the IRGC within the country and its growing importance in all strategic sectors, from energy to communication, parallel structures have begun to emerge in the field of intelligence. This situation stems from the internal power struggle and represents a significant source of vulnerability and potential leaks, as later acknowledged by former intelligence directors. This article will provide a concise overview of the historical milestones of the Iranian intelligence apparatus up until 1979, followed by an examination of the debates that took place during the post-revolutionary restructuring of the security bureaucracy. In this context, the structure and activities of the Ministry of Intelligence will be compared with those of similar institutions in other countries. Finally, the issues that have arisen as a result of the competition between the intelligence agencies of the IRGC and other intelligence organizations will be discussed.*

Keywords: Iran's Intelligence Apparatus, Iran, SAVAK, IRGC

Insight Turkey 2024

Vol. 26 / No. 4 / pp. 203-227

Introduction

This article examines the impact of political dynamics on the evolution of Iran's intelligence apparatus, tracing its transformation from the establishment of the Bureau for Intelligence and Security of the State (SAVAK) during the Pahlavi era to the creation and development of the Ministry of Intelligence (VAJA) after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. By focusing on the relationship between political power and intelligence operations, the study reveals how shifting political contexts have shaped the structure, priorities, and effectiveness of these institutions.

The research question guiding this study centers on how political dynamics have influenced the organizational evolution and strategic focus of Iran's intelligence institutions. The article argues that political interference and the prioritization of regime security over broader national interests have not only hindered the operational efficiency of these organizations but also contributed to recurring vulnerabilities, such as intelligence leaks, sabotage, and internal dissent. These challenges reflect a persistent failure to balance ideological loyalty with professional and technical effectiveness.

The analysis focuses on critical junctures in Iranian history, including the centralization of intelligence under SAVAK during Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's reign and its eventual downfall due to over-politicization and public backlash. The study then explores the post-revolutionary period, where VAJA emerged as the dominant intelligence body, yet faced significant competition from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) intelligence organization. This rivalry has often diluted the coherence and effectiveness of intelligence operations, especially in addressing external threats such as espionage and sabotage.

The article employs a historical methodology, relying on primary and secondary sources, including government documents, memoirs, and scholarly analyses. It also incorporates key case studies, such as the repressive tactics of SAVAK, the "chain murders" of the 1990s, and the ongoing shadow war with Israel, to illustrate the broader implications of political interference in intelligence. By examining these issues, the study sheds light on the enduring challenges faced by Iran's intelligence apparatus and how political dynamics continue to shape its evolution.

The Emergence of Intelligence in Modern Iran

It is a commonly held view within the relevant academic field that there was no organized intelligence structure in Qajar Iran. In the latter half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, given the general instability and state collapse that

characterized the final period of the Qajar dynasty, this observation can be considered to be largely accurate. However, this does not indicate that the central administration lacked a widespread network of informants among various tribesmen, the local gendarmerie force, and the clergy, who had become a political class in the late 19th century, as evidenced by numerous chronicles from the period.¹ Despite the absence of a professional and institutional structure in accordance with contemporary standards, it is documented that during the tenure of Naser al-Din Shah and under the direction of his Chief Minister, Mirza Taqi Khan (also known as Amir Kabir), an intelligence team designated as *Munhiyan-e Amir* was established within the Nazmiyya Organization. This team was responsible for monitoring the operations of state institutions and the activities of foreign embassies. It is argued that Amir Kabir's activities were particularly directed against the Russian and British Embassies and that those in contact with them were reluctant to accept bribes. It has been argued that these groups prevented numerous assassinations and acts of terrorism. Furthermore, due to the unusually skilled manner in which information was collected, it has been jokingly suggested that Amir Kabir could only have obtained such secret information through a genie.²

In the aftermath of Amir Kabir's death, the Police Department (*Nazmiyya*), which underwent a restructuring in the latter years of Naser al-Din Shah's reign, was led by an Austrian citizen named Count De Mont Forte from 1878 to 1892. In this period, efforts were made to create a structure that could adapt to modern developments. During the reign of Naser al-Din Shah, another organization named the Khafiyehnegaran group was established whose function was intelligence and counter-espionage. The primary objective of this unit was to thwart assassination attempts and terrorist activities targeting state officials, with a particular focus on the Shah. Group members typically assumed the guise of unassuming professions, such as maids, cleaners, and chefs, and refrained from disclosing their true identities. Furthermore, it is documented that Swedish advisors played a pivotal role in the development of the Nazmiyya Organization and the secret police structure until the ascension of Reza Shah to power. The work of these groups reached its peak during the Constitutional Monarchy.³

It is well known that during this period, the country was divided between spheres of influence held by Tsarist Russia and Britain. Moreover, the country's

Despite the absence of a professional and institutional structure it is documented that during the tenure of Naser al-Din Shah and under the direction of his Chief Minister, Mirza Taqi Khan an intelligence team designated as *Munhiyan-e Amir* was established within the Nazmiyya Organization

Given the considerable opposition he faced, from a diverse range of sources, Reza Shah, drawing on his background in the military, was able to establish a robust police and espionage network, in addition to the regular army

military institutions and even its finance resources were shared between foreign countries and private companies, including the East India Company and Reuters.⁴ It may therefore be assumed that foreign elements in the country, which competed with each other and sometimes entered into changing alliance relations, also engaged in intelligence activities. In particular, the intense competition over commodities such as tobacco, carpets, and subsequently, oil and customs revenues would have had a significant impact on these intelligence activities. Indeed, it can be argued that the distrust of Westerners that emerged among Iranians in

the modern period was shaped by the effects of foreign activities during this period.⁵

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution created a new opportunity for Britain, which had to share its influence over Iran with the Russians. Indeed, in the subsequent years, London proceeded to consolidate its influence over Iran. Conversely, Colonel Reza Khan, who entered Tehran in 1921 with the Cossack Brigade of 3,000 men under his command to suppress the internal disturbances that broke out in 1921 and who subsequently assumed the surname Pahlavi, demonstrated that a new and pivotal era in Iranian history had commenced.

Reza Shah and the Iranian Intelligence

Reza Shah is regarded as the architect of the modern Iranian state in many respects. While the radical approach that later shaped the basis of the official ideology is not an accurate representation, the country was facing significant challenges at the time of his ascension to power. At the outset of his tenure, he sought to stabilize the country by maintaining close ties with the British. By suppressing separatist or maverick governments in various regions remote from the center, he was able to establish a national education, security, and health network within 20 years. Furthermore, he sought to marginalize the political elite, who were perceived as being too closely aligned with both the British and the Russians. Many politicians who had initially supported him were subsequently imprisoned on various allegations and some of them died in jail. When Reza Shah's balancing policies required him to approach Nazi Germany, he was forced to pay the price with the joint British-Russian invasion. Although he officially declared his neutrality in the war, the two powers occupying the country from the south and the north forced him to abdicate in favor of his son.⁶

Upon assuming power, Reza Shah identified the formation of a robust military as a priority objective. To achieve this objective, he introduced compulsory military service in 1926 and established a regular army of 100,000 men. He attempted to establish an administration that was loyal to him and elevate the status of military service by providing exclusive clubs, generous remuneration, and affordable land to members of the military, particularly those in command.⁷ In light of the prevailing dynamics of domestic politics, he was able to achieve these goals to a significant extent. However, when the first genuine foreign threat was encountered, it became evident that these measures were inadequate for ensuring the security of the country and even the personal security of the shah.

Given the considerable opposition he faced, from a diverse range of sources including clergymen, tribal leaders, constitutional elites, and foreign spies, Reza Shah, drawing on his background in the military, was able to establish a robust police and espionage network, in addition to the regular army. In this context, he proceeded to reinforce the Nazmiyya Organization, which had remained under the guidance of Swedish advisors since the Qajar period. He also established the Political Police, also known as the “Collateral Administration” (*Adare-ye Taminat*), to consolidate his power. The organization was led by Mohammad Hossein Khan, a Cossack officer of a similar background, who is referred to in Persian sources as “Ayrom.”⁸ The Political Police soon became the most prominent unit within the entire police service. Ayrom established a comprehensive structure, encompassing all ministries and state administrations, and with the assistance of numerous informants, this administration evolved into a prominent intelligence agency. As a result of Ayrom’s actions, individuals such as Sardar Asad, Timurtash, and Nusretud Dovle Firuz were removed from political life and suffered significant consequences.

It has been documented that Ayrom held a profound admiration for the German secret police, the Gestapo, and undertook multiple visits to Germany with the express intention of studying their operational methodologies.⁹ Additionally, Persian sources indicate that during the final years of Reza Shah’s tenure, a contingent of French instructors arrived in Iran to instruct Iranian police officers in the use of French-translated instructional materials. However, they departed the country following the onset of hostilities. As Hossein Fardoust, author of *The Rise and Fall of the Pahlavi Dynasty*, notes, these French officers were the founders of Iranian military intelligence.¹⁰ It is, however, noted that these training programs were not conducted in a regular and disciplined manner. The intelligence activities and training programs conducted during the Reza Shah era were largely confined to the interior of the country, with no intelligence activities being carried out outside the country. It should be noted, however, that this is not the case in all instances, as information was also obtained through a limited number of embassies. It may be surmised that these

were not of significant intelligence value and were largely confined to press and diplomatic circles.

In examining the intelligence apparatus of the period, Iranian scholars identify the lack of robust intelligence capabilities as a primary factor contributing to the precipitous collapse of the Shah's army against Britain and Russia in 1941. Indeed, an article based on the sources of the Iranian Ministry of Defence reveals that Reza Shah, enraged at a field agent who sent a telegram to the center in September 1922 about the separatist Sheikh Khazal incident in an unencrypted and unclassified manner, was astonished to discover the absence of a cryptographic system. In the aftermath of the incident, the Shah took action to alter the situation, distributing notebooks containing unique codes that could be utilized by spies in the provinces to facilitate confidential communication. Telegraph offices were informed of a specific code for private and secret correspondence, making it possible to send secret telegrams with four or five-digit codes linked to the Ministry of War. However, the fact that telegraph offices did not accept incomprehensible and insinuating telegrams from ordinary people was an indication, as the authors realized, that the correspondence of ordinary people was also kept under control.¹¹

The intelligence activities conducted by the armed forces were also not in a favorable situation. Despite the absence of substantial intelligence operations, it was evident that a considerable number of leaks had occurred to foreign entities. In response to this, a series of internal regulations and announcements were continuously disseminated, underscoring the necessity for vigilance against potential counter-espionage threats. For example, a directive issued in 1935 cited a significant intelligence leak that occurred in 1929 and warned that the Soviet Union, in particular, had access to sensitive military information. This regulation, which stipulates that the intelligence departments within the state should be entrusted to reliable individuals, also demonstrates that even in the final years of Reza Shah's rule, there was still no systematic and regular counterintelligence organization in place within the country.¹²

The intelligence weakness in Iran also had ramifications for the newly established Republic of Türkiye. Foreign intelligence agents capitalized on the power vacuum in Iran, exploiting the shared border with Türkiye to incite Kurdish tribes. For instance, a report from the Turkish intelligence service from the period in question states that, in the summer of 1926, an Italian spy, disguised as an academic, traveling from Tehran to Urumiyeh, obtained a visa from the Turkish consulate there and proceeded to Van, where he was apprehended. It was subsequently established that this individual, in possession of both Italian and British passports, was engaged in espionage activities targeting the military organization in Eastern Anatolia and the conditions of the Kurds. The aforementioned spy, found to be in possession of currency and passports from

various countries, as well as notes from British officials in India, was transported to Tabriz following his prosecution. However, the Iranian authorities were unable to provide a credible explanation for the incident.¹³

Reza Shah was acutely aware of the deficiencies in the state's intelligence apparatus and took the initiative to issue directives to the northern troops, urging them to enhance their vigilance, particularly in light of Russia's military activities in the region. In the period preceding World War II, he prohibited military officials from accepting invitations and attending receptions hosted by foreign diplomatic missions, particularly those of Britain and Russia.¹⁴ In 1938, the Shah issued an edict to prevent the leakage of sensitive military information to hostile foreign powers. Nevertheless, as will become evident shortly, these endeavors did not achieve the anticipated outcomes. Given their considerable influence over the country over the previous two centuries, it was relatively straightforward for Britain and Russia to invade Iran. This may have been facilitated by the intelligence they possessed. They did not meet with any serious resistance. Despite the Shah's success in maintaining internal stability and suppressing various political groups, including separatist movements, the civilian and military administration structures, which Reza Shah had struggled to establish for nearly two decades, proved to be inherently fragile, particularly in the context of external pressures. A similar fate would later befall his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The intelligence and military structures he had invested heavily in for many years, particularly SAVAK, proved ineffective in the face of the popular uprising. This ultimately led Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to end his life in exile, as had his father Reza Shah, and the last Qajar Shah Ahmad.

The Shah was confronted with a challenging situation, initially in the context of foreign occupation and subsequently in the context of the strengthening of domestic opposition

Lingering Effects of a Ghost: SAVAK

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was only 22 years old when he assumed power following the overthrow of his father by Britain and Russia in 1941. Over the following four decades, he established the fundamental tenets of his rule upon resisting the challenges his father had faced and striving to avoid a similar fate. Following World War II, Iran rapidly became a focal point of tension between the victorious powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The latter was reluctant to withdraw from the northern territories it had occupied. In such circumstances, the Shah was confronted with a challenging situation, initially in the context of foreign occupation and subsequently in the context

From 1953 to 1979, Iran was an “island of stability” in a vast region, forming a crucial alliance with the U.S. in opposition to adversarial forces such as the Soviet Union and Arab nationalism

of the strengthening of domestic opposition. It was only following the 1953 coup d'état in Iran, also known as Operation Ajax, that he felt truly empowered.¹⁵ The young Shah, who had previously silenced his opponents within the country with the U.S. and British-led coup d'état, began to act more freely in foreign policy due to factors such as the increase in oil prices and the decline in Britain's global influence. Conversely, the overthrow of the Mossadegh administration saw not only the liberal nationalist factions but also their ally, the communist-oriented Tudeh Party, rendered impotent. Ultimately, this resulted in the consolidation of the clergy's position, which relied on traditional organizational structures rather than modern political movements.

From 1953 onward, a confluence of factors, including robust political backing from the United States and the United Kingdom, rising oil prices, and a relatively stable domestic political environment, enabled the Shah to resume his father's legacy with a renewed and accelerated pace of comprehensive modernization and developmental policies. On one hand, the Shah implemented ambitious economic and sociological development plans, such as the “White Revolution,” which he believed would transform the country's misfortune. On the other hand, he initiated a program of large-scale arms purchases that would later be followed by other actors in the region. To circumvent the misfortune that befell his father, who paid a significant price for the insufficiency of the Iranian army, Shah Mohammad Reza initiated comprehensive measures in the military and security realms. It was after this process that the Iranian army, which had been wholly subsumed under U.S. influence from the 1960s onward and commenced the acquisition of modern weaponry, rapidly evolved into a regional gendarmerie and intervened in the region on behalf of the Western alliance.¹⁶ Indeed, at the time of its overthrow in early 1979, the Shah's army was one of the most technologically sophisticated and highly trained military forces in the world. Its entire senior command staff had been educated and trained in the U.S. or Iran by American military instructors.

The Shah was keen to construct one of the most formidable armies in the world and was acutely aware of the pivotal role that an intelligence apparatus could play in bolstering his domestic authority. Subsequently, he established an intelligence organization, which became a source of fear and anxiety for decades to come, intending to deploy it mainly against his internal opponents. He effectively subordinated the organization to his authority. The establishment of SAVAK in 1957 was driven by three primary objectives: the suppression of oppo-

sition, the surveillance of social groups to prevent any threat to the monarchy, and the control of media activities throughout the country. Concurrently, in accordance with the prevailing spirit of the period, SAVAK was also deployed as a police force, with members of the organization assuming responsibility for the apprehension, interrogation, and torture of political figures. This contributed to the organization becoming an object of both fear and hatred among significant portions of the population in a relatively short period.¹⁷

Given its status as one of the geographies where the Cold War first emerged, it was to be expected that Iran would feel the most threatened by the USSR in the aftermath of the coup. Indeed, one of the principal motivations behind the 1953 coup, at least insofar as the financial cost of Mossadegh's nationalization of oil is concerned, was the fear that Iran might become a Soviet satellite through the Tudeh Party, the longest-standing communist party in the region. In light of this threat, the Shah promptly outlawed the party and ordered the arrest of all its members following the coup.¹⁸ The Shah was not the only one aware of the Soviet threat. The British government, which had played a pivotal role in the political developments of the country over the previous century, also took action in the period following the coup. To this end, it mobilized its intelligence-propaganda organization, which had been established in the aftermath of the war. The Information Research Department (IRD) of the British Foreign Office was established in 1948 with the principal objective of "countering communist propaganda, discrediting the USSR, and promoting British values at home and abroad."¹⁹ To achieve this goal, the department was to collaborate with individuals and organizations that shared similar objectives in all regions of the globe.²⁰ One area of potential collaboration between Britain and Iran was the USSR. In particular, between 1956 and 1968, the two countries engaged in extensive cooperation, particularly in the realms of propaganda and disinformation. Hassan Pakravan, who was the Deputy Head of SAVAK with responsibility for foreign operations, was an influential figure in this context.²¹

SAVAK's activities were not always strictly related to soft power carried out through the press and cultural activities and were not always undertaken with the support of the UK. Yet, if any country exerted greater influence over the organization than the UK, it was the U.S., which historian Braedon McGhee has identified as the country that "created, managed and funded SAVAK." Indeed, the initial formation of SAVAK was intended to mirror the structure of the U.S. intelligence apparatus. However, the Shah was not amenable to the duality of the FBI and CIA, and thus the organization was established as a unified entity.²² It has been postulated that the Shah's decision was informed by the precedent set by the National Security Service (MAH), the predecessor of the National Intelligence Organisation in Türkiye.²³ The inaugural head of the SAVAK was General Teymur Bakhtiar, who was compelled to leave the

The Iranian Ministry of Defense reported that scientist Muhsin Fakhrizadeh, one of the key figures in Iran's nuclear program, died as a result of a terrorist attack in the Abserd district of Tehran province in 2020.

IRAN STATE TELEVISION



country in the early 1960s due to irreconcilable differences with the Shah. He subsequently perished in a suspicious hunting accident in 1970. With the establishment of SAVAK, the relevant personnel of G2, the intelligence branch previously established within the army, and the martial law administration were transferred to the organization. In light of the aforementioned circumstances, it is unsurprising that SAVAK was led by military personnel and that all of its directors were of military origin. However, the national police, under the command of General Mehdiqoli Alavi Moqaddam, did not transfer the documents and information in its possession to SAVAK, despite the controversy surrounding the establishment of the latter. Consequently, it is argued that the national police continued to operate independently of SAVAK.²⁴

From 1953 to 1979, Iran was an “island of stability” in a vast region, forming a crucial alliance with the U.S. in opposition to adversarial forces such as the Soviet Union and Arab nationalism. On occasion, the human rights violations perpetrated by SAVAK prompted Western human rights organizations to characterize Iran as “the worst country in the world.” Nevertheless, this did not deter U.S. President Jimmy Carter from undertaking a visit to Tehran on New Year’s Eve 1978.

Following its inception, SAVAK initially intensified its repression of the primary opposition party, the Tudeh. With the approval of the U.S., it subsequently employed its repressive tactics against it. A considerable number of middle-class members of the party were dismissed from their posts, arrested, and subjected to intense torture. Torture rapidly became a hallmark of SAVAK’s modus operandi.²⁵ The government employed a range of strategies to influence public opinion and discredit the Tudeh Party, including accusations

that the party was involved in the 1953 coup. These actions were part of a broader effort to suppress the Tudeh and limit its ability to influence public discourse. Indeed, the Party was ultimately unable to withstand these considerable pressures and was forced to retreat from mainstream Iranian political life. Nevertheless, this did not signify the conclusion of the Shah and SAVAK's activities.

Apart from the UK and the U.S., the State of Israel and its foreign intelligence service, Mossad, have enjoyed the closest institutional relationship with the Shah's secret police

While the police, armed forces, and the gendarmerie played a significant role in the suppression and elimination of internal dissidents, SAVAK, which at its peak employed 7,000 individuals and had over 20,000 informers, wielded considerable influence with the Shah. While ostensibly accountable to the Prime Minister, the organization de facto received its directives directly from the Shah starting in 1957. Administratively, SAVAK was structured into eight sections.²⁶ The initial organizational structure was a direct reporting relationship between the director and the Shah. The 2nd section was responsible for foreign operations, which entailed the coordination of foreign intelligence with the CIA and Mossad. The 3rd section was the domestic security section, which was the most prominent component of the organization. The 7th section was the covert operations section in the Middle East, in which Mossad was actively involved, as former SAVAK member Alimardan Azimpour has attested. The remaining two sections were responsible for covert training and centralized registration. The latter function was particularly significant in that it maintained a comprehensive record of all individuals who had been targeted by the organization, regardless of the specific nature of their involvement.²⁷ Having completed its first test against the Tudeh Party, the organization promptly initiated surveillance of all political movements within Iran. To fulfill this function, the 3rd department, which was responsible for internal security, was subdivided into four principal branches. The initial branch was responsible for monitoring opposition groups, including the Tudeh Party and the National Front, which constituted the social base of the Mossadeghists. The 2nd branch was responsible for conducting covert activities through the Iranian media with the objective of influencing public opinion. The 3rd branch was responsible for maintaining records pertaining to internal security interests, while the 4th branch was tasked with conducting covert, specialized operations, including vaccination and indoctrination.²⁸ In 1976 alone, between 25,000 and 100,000 political arrests or detentions were reported to have taken place across the country as a result of the repressive behavior of SAVAK, which was granted considerable powers and immunity, including special military powers. Furthermore, SAVAK's influence extended to the judicial system, where political prisoners were denied a fair trial. The organization had access

In the context of the upheaval that followed the revolution, the revolutionary forces, who had not relied on the security apparatus of the previous regime, initiated the formation of local security committees as a preliminary measure

to all telephone calls in the country and was uncompromising toward its own members, preparing a list of personnel to be held accountable in the future.²⁹ However, the 9th branch, which had custody of the archives and documents of SAVAK, was unable to destroy them during the revolution. Consequently, they fell into the hands of the revolutionary groups.

Apart from the UK and the U.S., the State of Israel and its foreign intelligence service, Mossad, have enjoyed the closest institutional relationship with the Shah's secret police. They have been active in both training and joint operations. Indeed, this relationship can be traced back to the years preceding the establishment of the organization, when the 2nd branch of the army conducted intelligence operations in collaboration with the U.S. Following the dismissal and exile of the inaugural SAVAK Director, Teymur Bakhtiar, in 1965 by Shah Pahlavi on charges of conspiracy against him, numerous CIA agents and trainers within SAVAK were also expelled from the country and subsequently replaced by Mossad agents. The documents indicate that SAVAK's success in infiltrating domestic opposition groups was a direct consequence of operations assisted by Mossad. Furthermore, Israel undertook a number of operations in Arab countries with the assistance of the agency. In line with Israel's periphery doctrine, close collaboration was forged against neighboring Arab countries.³⁰ The collaboration between SAVAK and Mossad persisted until the revolution in 1979.

From the mid-1970s onward, the Shah's SAVAK intelligence agency initiated a campaign targeting dissident student organizations abroad, leftist and Islamist organizations such as the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI), and traditional structures led by the clergy. In this context, 250,000 individuals were taken to trial, 80,000 were imposed a fine, and thousands were convicted. Nevertheless, the methods employed by SAVAK, which were sometimes criticized and even ridiculed by Western counterparts, proved insufficient in silencing political opponents. Conversely, one of the primary demands of the opposition during the period preceding the revolution was the dissolution of SAVAK. The reputation of the agency was so poor during this period that incidents such as the deaths of Ali Shariati and Khomeini's eldest son Mostafa, as well as the Rex Cinema fire in Abadan, were attributed to the organization. It is notable that the Iranian people, during the revolution, demonstrated a general acceptance of the veracity of these allegations. The suspension or restriction of certain practices employed by SAVAK during this period, undertaken by

the Shah to mitigate U.S. criticism of human rights and to pacify domestic dissidents, ultimately proved ineffective and contributed to the acceleration of the process leading to the 1979 revolution. The Shah's final recourse, the arrest of SAVAK Director Nassiri, similarly failed to produce the desired result. He appointed Shahpur Bakhtiar as Prime Minister, who demanded the closure of the agency to protect the regime. This situation constituted an exceptional case study of the predicament of an intelligence organization that had become politicized and transformed into a regime protector.

Islamic Republic: Holy State, Islamic Intelligence

In the context of the upheaval that followed the revolution, the revolutionary forces, who had not relied on the security apparatus of the previous regime, initiated the formation of local security committees as a preliminary measure. These committees were constituted at the neighborhood level and comprised volunteers equipped with weapons procured from military facilities. Mohammad Reza Mahdavi Kani, a prominent revolutionary cleric who was closely associated with Khomeini and later served as Prime Minister for a brief period, led these committees. Theoretically operating under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior, these groups were responsible for providing security in their respective regions and for conducting intelligence activities. The principal objective of these committees was to identify individuals with connections to the former regime. As might be anticipated, these structures, which were characterized by disparate political perspectives and a lack of professional discipline, soon gave rise to discord within the administration and played an instrumental role in the resignation of the interim government.³¹

Some sources indicate that the initial post-revolutionary effort to create a formal intelligence apparatus was the National Intelligence and Security Organisation (*Sazeman-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar* or SAVAMA), established in 1979-1980. However, information regarding this entity is limited.³² This organization, established based on SAVAK, employed similar methodologies and sought to prioritize foreign intelligence. Led by General Hossein Fardoust, a former supporter of the Shah, it comprised members who had not been involved in serious criminal activities.³³ Indeed, the general amnesty announced by Khomeini in Nowruz 1980 included members of the Shah's secret police from SAVAK. The primary objective was to capitalize on the expertise of these individuals in a context of political instability, particularly in confronting leftist groups that advocated for the dissolution of the military. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which began to take shape around the same time, concentrated its efforts on domestic security. The force played an instrumental role in the neutralization of opposition groups seeking to exert control over the nascent regime, particularly those advocating for separatism.³⁴ The prevention of the

coup attempt by newly formed security units in July 1980, which was orchestrated by members of the Shah's air force, reinforced the regime's perception of the threat posed by internal opposition. This resulted in the establishment of new intelligence units that were characterized by a lack of organization. The conflict between those opposed to the new regime, led by the People's Mojahedin Organization under the leadership of Massoud Rajavi, and the clerics loyal to Khomeini, who had rallied around the Islamic Republic, intensified. Subsequently, the inaugural President, Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, was compelled to flee the country as the crisis reached its zenith, and was succeeded by Mohammad Ali Rajai. In 1981, Rajai established the Prime Minister's Intelligence Office to eliminate the strife and unify the groups working in the field of intelligence under one roof. Despite Rajai's success in uniting numerous groups under the auspices of this office, some entities, particularly the IRGC and the Committees, capitalized on the prevailing climate, shaped by the Iraq War, to eschew integration and instead pursue intelligence operations autonomously.³⁵

In August 1983, as the war with Iraq entered a certain routine and the internal power struggle largely ceased, the Islamic Consultative Assembly (*Majlis*) passed a law and approved the establishment of the Ministry of Intelligence (*Vezerat-e Ettela'at*). In accordance with the legislation, three entities that had been engaged in intelligence and security operations for four years were to be consolidated under the purview of this Ministry. These included the Prime Minister's Intelligence Office, the Revolutionary Guard's Intelligence, and the Committees. At this juncture, Khomeini is purported to have voiced his objection to the establishment of a powerful ministry, citing factors such as the unfavorable public perception of SAVAK and the enduring opposition to the intelligence agency. However, he is said to have reconsidered his position, particularly in light of the bomb attack in the center of Tehran at the end of 1982, which resulted in the deaths of 83 individuals and injuries to 800 others.³⁶ In this way, the Intelligence Agency was transformed into a Ministry, an unprecedented development in the world, and was firmly asserting its place in the political system of the new Iran.

The Ministry established by Mohammed Rayshahri, who died in 2022, originating from the Haqqani Madrasah and is the son-in-law of the famous Ayatollah Meshkini, was not welcomed by the IRGC from the start. It is unclear how the IRGC, itself a ministry at the time, responded to the establishment of the new organization, which it perceived as a competitor. Nevertheless, it has been postulated that the IRGC was instrumental in the decision not to incorporate the term "National Security" into the title of the recently constituted Ministry of Intelligence. Such an action would have precluded the Ministry of Intelligence from directly influencing events and would have maintained its dependency on the IRGC.³⁷ On the other hand, it was assumed that middle and lower-ranking SAVAK members, who were exempted from capital punish-

ment and imprisonment through amnesty, would be of use in the new ministry during wartime. The fundamental challenges for the new ministry were threefold: firstly, the terrorist and assassination attacks, which were largely organized by the People's Mojahedin Organization; secondly, the Iraq War; and thirdly, the security threats posed by the regime's opponents, who had begun to organize abroad.³⁸

Following the dissolution of the USSR, Iran, largely free from the traditional Russian threat, sought to deepen its relations with Moscow in several strategic areas, particularly in the fields of nuclear and military technologies

The 1990's and the Ministry of Intelligence

Following the conclusion of the Iraq War in 1988, the Islamic Republic, liberated from the considerable constraints imposed by the conflict, initiated a process of neutralizing the political and security challenges it deemed less significant. In this context, there was an increase in the number of assassination attempts against former high-ranking Iranian officials and politicians residing in Germany and France. The assassination of former Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar in Paris in August 1991 and the assassination of prominent Kurdish separatist leader Sadegh Sharafkandi and his entourage at the Mykonos restaurant in Berlin in September 1992 were presented in the Western press as operations conducted by the Iranian Intelligence Ministry.³⁹ Similarly, the bombings of Israeli targets in Argentina in 1992 and 1994 were attributed to the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence, in addition to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Another significant development in the 1990s was the expansion of intelligence and security cooperation between Iran and Russia. Following the dissolution of the USSR, Iran, largely free from the traditional Russian threat, sought to deepen its relations with Moscow in several strategic areas, particularly in the fields of nuclear and military technologies. In this regard, Iran's relations with the Russian SVR, which was established as the successor of the renowned KGB, have undergone significant developments. While the Russian service expanded its training activities in Iran, it also provided Iran with a plethora of sophisticated devices utilized in signal intelligence, thereby enhancing Iran's capabilities.⁴⁰

Another significant incident during this period in which the Ministry of Intelligence played a prominent role was the so-called "chain murders" (*qatl-ha-ye zanjirayei*), a scandal that caused an uproar within Iran. In 1998, a series of homicides targeting prominent political and intellectual figures, including

The extent of the Supreme Leader's authority over the Ministry, which exceeds that of the President, came to the fore during the tenure of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

investigative units, as directed by Khamenei. The perpetrators of the killings were believed to be a group led by Deputy Minister Saeed Emami. Emami and 15 other members of the Ministry were apprehended and subsequently subjected to legal proceedings. During the judicial proceedings, it was revealed that Saeed Emami had committed suicide while incarcerated.⁴¹

This was the preliminary, though not the final, case of the security apparatus deeming that Khatami lacked sufficient commitment to the ideals of the revolution and was allowing the opposition to the revolution to gain ground. Saeed Hajjarian, a prominent figure in reformist politics and a former director of the Intelligence Ministry, survived an assassination attempt in 2000. He was confined to a wheelchair. In 1999, several generals, including Qassem Soleimani, who would later become prominent figures, issued a statement expressing opposition to Khatami. These developments demonstrated the extent to which the Ministry of Intelligence and the IRGC, which had increased its influence in the country over time, were involved in domestic issues and exhibited ideological behavior. The events of September 11 provided the domestic political opportunity sought by the security bureaucracy, which often compared Khatami's policies of "dialogue between civilizations" (*goftegy-e temeddunha*) and "reduction of tensions" (*taneshzudayi*) with Mikhail Gorbachev's slogans of perestroika and glasnost. The invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan by the U.S. prompted Iran to adopt a more vigilant stance. The political space available to reformist and moderate politicians has been, if not entirely eliminated, then significantly constrained.

Structure of the Ministry of Intelligence

From the inception of the Ministry of Intelligence, it was stipulated that all ministers should be selected from among the clergy and should possess the capacity to issue a *fatwa* when necessary, as well as the qualifications to exercise *ijtihad*. Consequently, all prospective candidates, from Mohammad Reyshahri to Esmail Khatib, were selected from among the clergy. While the Ministers of Intelligence, like the Ministers of the Interior, Defense and Foreign Affairs, were not directly selected by the Supreme Leader. Instead, they were chosen

from among those who would not be vetoed by him. The extent of the Supreme Leader's authority over the Ministry, which exceeds that of the President, came to the fore during the tenure of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Ahmadinejad demanded the resignation of then-Intelligence Minister Heydar Moslehi on the grounds that his close adviser, brother-in-law and former ministry official Rahim Mashaei had been bugged by the Ministry, but Moslehi remained in office with Khamenei's approval. This provoked Ahmadinejad's reaction and led to his absence from office for two weeks. It resembles the SAVAK-Shah relationship mentioned in the previous paragraphs. Although ostensibly accountable to the Prime Minister, SAVAK maintained direct communication with the Shah and disseminated information to the Prime Minister only when it deemed it appropriate to do so. This situation remains unchanged to this day. The unique relationship between the Minister appointed by the President and the Supreme Leader was evident in the developments of both the Khatami and the Ahmadinejad periods. Additionally, in contrast to the circumstances prevailing during the Shah's tenure, the fact that the Ministry of Intelligence is at times engaged in political and professional competition with the IRGC has served to further complicate the situation. The following sections will examine some of the implications of this situation.

The Ministry of Intelligence has several primary areas of responsibility. The Ministry's main aim is counter-espionage, which entails monitoring and neutralizing the activities of foreign intelligence services operating within the country. This includes the identification and disruption of hostile organizations such as the CIA and Mossad. Additionally, the Ministry engages in the surveillance and suppression of domestic opposition. While the judiciary is primarily responsible for this process, there have been instances, such as the "chain murders" incident, in which Ministry employees have exceeded their authority and directly engaged in illegal actions. The term "internal dissent" encompasses both the activities of opposition groups based in Tehran and the actions of ethnic and separatist organizations. It is frequently reported in the press that the Ministry is engaged in a continuous program of operations against designated terrorist organizations, particularly in border regions. Another area of the Ministry is the Foreign Operations Directorate. Despite the existence of information in various Persian-language sources indicating the existence of additional technical departments, such as those responsible for training, research, archives, personnel, and budget, it is not possible to verify these with certainty.⁴²

It is estimated that the Ministry has around 30,000 employees.⁴³ In accordance with Article 12 of the Iranian Constitution, members of the Ministry of Intelligence are prohibited from engaging in any form of political affiliation. Two methods of recruitment are employed for those seeking to join the Ministry. The initial method of recruitment is an examination organized by Imam Mu-

The intensification of the Iran-Israel shadow wars in 2024 highlights the necessity to acknowledge that Israel is not only targeting senior IRGC commanders outside of Iran but is also targeting those within the country

ment indicated that approximately 300 students were admitted to undergraduate programs in the field of social sciences, while approximately 60 students were admitted to master's programs. It is notable that all of the students who were accepted were male.⁴⁴ The second method of recruitment is the reference system. It is possible to become a candidate with the backing of a reference from members of the Ministry. Candidates are initially referred to health centers in their respective provinces. Upon successful completion of this stage, they are then required to submit an application to the designated test center in Hamedan. This entails a series of interviews conducted by members of the ministry, the outcome of which is a prerequisite for admission.

Candidates who are successful in the interviews, which encompass a range of political and cultural issues, in addition to passing a security investigation, are entitled to enroll at Baqir University. Upon graduation, individuals are employed in the offices of the Ministry in various provinces or at the central level. Salaries vary according to the department in question. According to the profile study published by the U.S. Congress, the requirements for candidates are as follows: "Being an Iranian citizen – though, according to the aforementioned study, the ministry can also employ non-Iranians in special cases, being a Muslim, believing in Velayat-e Faqih and the Islamic Republic, having physical and mental health with the approval of the Ministry's doctors, not being in contact with other government institutions, graduating with an average of 12 out of 20 for social sciences and 14 for sciences, and being at most 22 years old for a bachelor's degree and 27 years old for a master's degree."

Like the Minister's staff, the Minister himself should have several qualifications that set him apart from other Ministers. According to the law passed by the Iranian Majlis in 1983, the minister must have the following characteristics: qualified to practice jurisprudence, not be a member of any political party or group, have personal prestige and reputation, and be knowledgeable and experienced in political and administrative affairs.⁴⁵ The requirement for the minister to be a cleric was expressed by the founders as the need to obtain

hammad Baqir University on behalf of the Ministry. The university accepts three times as many applicants as the Ministry, subjects them to rigorous training and examinations, and conducts a comprehensive security investigation. As part of the requirements, it is asserted that the physical tests are not as arduous as those conducted by other military institutions and that a state of good health is deemed sufficient. In 2012, a document on student recruit-

fatwas on a case-by-case basis. Although there is no precise data, this situation, which has lasted for about 40 years, may have led to a concentration of people of clerical origin in the Ministry.

Alternative Intelligence: IRGC Intelligence Organization and Disruptive Competition

The 2000s were, on the one hand, a period in which the hardliners, who took advantage of the post-9/11 international environment to strengthen their position at home, completely dominated Iran with the Ahmadinejad government. On the other hand, it was during these years that the country's nuclear activities became increasingly on the agenda of Western countries. During this period, Ahmadinejad, who did not fully trust the intelligence ministry and found it challenging to dismiss the minister, initially sought to collaborate with the IRGC. However, he subsequently had a dispute with this organization and did not refrain from publicly referring to them as "smuggler brothers." Indeed, at this juncture, the IRGC was no longer apprehensive about confronting any political figure except Khamenei. As evidenced by the leaked audio recording, they had amassed sufficient influence to the point of being unafraid of rebuking the country's Foreign Minister, Javad Zarif.⁴⁶ Zarif's resignation, prompted by his divergence of opinion from the renowned IRGC commander Qassem Soleimani, was not accepted by Khamenei for political reasons.

It is evident that the IRGC's sole base was not the smuggling activities that were mentioned by Ahmadinejad, nor was it the power in the Ministry of Petroleum that was seized by former commanders such as Rostam Qasemi, who held their positions as ministers. The IRGC, which had gained considerable influence within the security apparatus, was also engaged in a significant power struggle with the Ministry of Intelligence. Incidents such as the assassination of former Deputy Minister Said Hajjarian represent merely the tip of the iceberg of a broader and intense inter-institutional conflict. As a consequence of this internal conflict, the IRGC initiated a process of expansion and consolidation of its internal intelligence apparatus. Hossein Taeb, who served as the head of the IRGC's Intelligence Service between 2009 and 2022 and was dismissed after a succession of sabotage and assassinations in the country, has been held responsible for the assassinations of prominent figures such as Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and Colonel Hassan Sayyad Khodaei. In the subsequent period, a recording of Taeb's voice revealed the extensive corruption of the IRGC. This indicated that the organization not only competed with the Ministry but also experienced serious internal divisions.

The establishment of parallel intelligence organizations, although in line with the IRGC's efforts to gain political influence from parliament to key ministries,

had unforeseen consequences. Ahmedinijad's assertion that the individual appointed to oversee the Israel Desk was, in fact, an Israeli agent, raises questions as to whether he was acting alone and whether he was truly unassociated with any other parties. In a statement referencing the illicit transfer of 55,000 pages of documents from the Turkuzabad region in trucks with over 20 agents, Ahmadinejad asserted that this was not an isolated incident. He further alleged that documents stored in a safe within the Aerospace Organisation Unit of the Ministry of Defense were also stolen through forced entry via the roof.⁴⁷ The Iranian authorities, who initially denied the incident, subsequently announced that Jalal Haji Zavar, an employee of the Defense Ministry, had been executed for espionage on behalf of the CIA. His wife was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment.

Ahmadinejad was not the only high-ranking official to allege that the CIA and Mossad had infiltrated Iranian institutions and conducted significant operations within the country. In a statement released in 2021, former Minister of Intelligence Ali Yunousi asserted, "The Mossad has penetrated the country to such an extent that the authorities should fear for their lives." What renders Yunousi's statement pertinent to this article is that the former Minister underscored that this was due to the existence of competing intelligence structures operating in parallel. Yunousi's explicit assertion that "the reason for this situation is the creation of parallel intelligence structures and the weakening of the Ministry of Intelligence" illuminates the extent to which both the ministry and the politicians supporting the Ministry are discontented with the prevailing circumstances.⁴⁸ The primary target of these allegations is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which continues to serve as the preeminent military, security, and even economic structure in the country. Conversely, the Revolutionary Guards are producing intelligence-themed series such as *Gando* to restore their tainted reputation among the general public. Notably, the series' primary focus is not on the Ministry of Intelligence, but rather on the IRGC Intelligence Organization.

In conclusion, the intensification of the Iran-Israel shadow wars in 2024 highlights the necessity to acknowledge that Israel is not only targeting senior IRGC commanders outside of Iran but is also targeting those within the country. In this context, the death of Hamas leader Haniyeh in Tehran while under the protection of the IRGC, the death of almost all of its command echelon, especially its leader Hassan Nasrallah, as a result of Israeli attacks, and the heavy losses suffered by the Hezbollah organization, which has organic relations with the IRGC, in September 2024 reveal a significant intelligence weakness in Iran. It is not possible to conclude with certainty whether this situation is a result of the alternative organizations Yunousi referenced or if there are other contributing factors. Nevertheless, both statements by Ahmadinejad and Yunousi indicate that tensions and even implicit conflicts within the institu-

tions in question contributed to the aforementioned intelligence failures. Such discourses are not solely articulated by former officials or reformist politicians; the assertion by the conservative former IRGC Commander Mohsen Rezaei that “the country is facing wide security pollution” serves to corroborate this assessment.

Conclusion

The intelligence mechanism, which had an institutional history of nearly a century in Iran, transformed a professional structure during the second Pahlavi period (1939-1979). This transformation was spearheaded by SAVAK, which became one of the world’s most renowned secret services. However, the organization’s positioning as the protective power of the dynasty and the regime, rather than the general interests of the country, did not yield favorable outcomes for either the organization or the regime, although this was not initially apparent. Notwithstanding the organization’s use of repressive methods, the country experienced one of the most chaotic periods in recent history, resulting in significant material and moral losses due to the revolution and the eight-year war in Iraq.

The absolute security failure of Pahlavi Iran in the form of SAVAK, which was established at the height of the Cold War and maintained close structural and operational relations with Western intelligence agencies, including the U.S., the UK, and Mossad, offers valuable insights into the relationship between politics and intelligence agencies. Despite its considerable financial resources, unequivocal political support, and technical and political assistance from influential international actors, the collapse of the internal security apparatus, which constituted the primary focus of its activities, ultimately led to the regime’s downfall. The comparable fate of numerous renowned “Mukhabarat” regimes during the Arab Revolutions illustrates the necessity for intelligence agencies to delineate their areas of responsibility and operational guidelines in alignment with national security objectives to ensure long-term stability.

Despite the revolutionary leaders’ assertion that they were establishing a new era of progress and even overthrowing the 2,500-year-old monarchy, the new regime established in 1979 inherited problematic approaches to security-po-

The absolute security failure of Pahlavi Iran in the form of SAVAK, which was established at the height of the Cold War and maintained close structural and operational relations with Western intelligence agencies, including the U.S., the UK, and Mossad, offers valuable insights into the relationship between politics and intelligence agencies

The actions of the intelligence institution, which has deviated from its core mandate and concentrated its resources on political and ideological matters, have had a detrimental impact on Iran's security over the past seven decades

litical relations. Although of great symbolic significance, not only did the former SAVAK members individually adapt to the new situation, but the organization that had faced demands to close down became an even more comprehensive ministry. As has become evident over time, the appointment of a mujtahid at the helm of the organization did not facilitate the attainment of a more robust and efficacious structural

configuration. In this context, Hossein Ali Montazeri, who was subsequently dismissed by Khomeini at the end of the 1980s, compared the security bureaucracy and prisons of the two periods and emphasized that they were in a worse state. This was an early warning that was not heeded by the administration.

The Ministry of Intelligence, the primary intelligence apparatus of the Islamic Republic, became increasingly politicized, leading to the commission of extrajudicial mass killings against those who opposed the regime in the 1990s. In the subsequent decade, it began to lose influence, with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) assuming a more prominent role. The IRGC, reflecting their considerable political, military, and economic power in the field of intelligence, probably unwittingly caused significant intelligence and security gaps as a result of their internal power struggle. Subsequently, the country's security image has been significantly compromised by a series of sabotage, assassinations, and attacks, the majority of which have been attributed to Mossad. Furthermore, considerable losses have been recorded, including those of nuclear facilities, military officials, and scientists. In particular, the conflict with Israel, which intensified in 2024, and the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Iran represented the pinnacle of Israel's domestic actions over the past decade. The technological cooperation with China and Russia, which has been deepening over the last decade to overcome the intelligence and military inadequacies that the country is aware of, has thus far failed to yield the desired results.

Consequently, in practice, the intelligence apparatus, which reported to the Shah instead of the Prime Minister during the Pahlavi period and to the Supreme Leader instead of the President during the Islamic Republic, failed to maintain the requisite distance from politics. In both periods, the intelligence apparatus prioritized the security of the regime over the broader concept of national security. This resulted in the failure of SAVAK, which had substantial financial resources, to analyze the underlying causes of the country's strategic problems and to identify effective solutions. While repressive police measures appeared to be effective in the short term, the brutal tactics employed by the

organization ultimately contributed to the eruption and acceleration of a major popular revolution. Similarly, the Ministry of Intelligence, which was institutionalized after 1983, has on occasion assassinated intellectuals whom it considered to be opponents of the regime, while on other occasions taking a stance against the President of the country. It is evident that the actions of the intelligence institution, which has deviated from its core mandate and concentrated its resources on political and ideological matters, have had a detrimental impact on Iran's security over the past seven decades. Indeed, the recent instances of intelligence infiltration, assassination, and sabotage have been explicitly acknowledged by senior executives themselves. ■

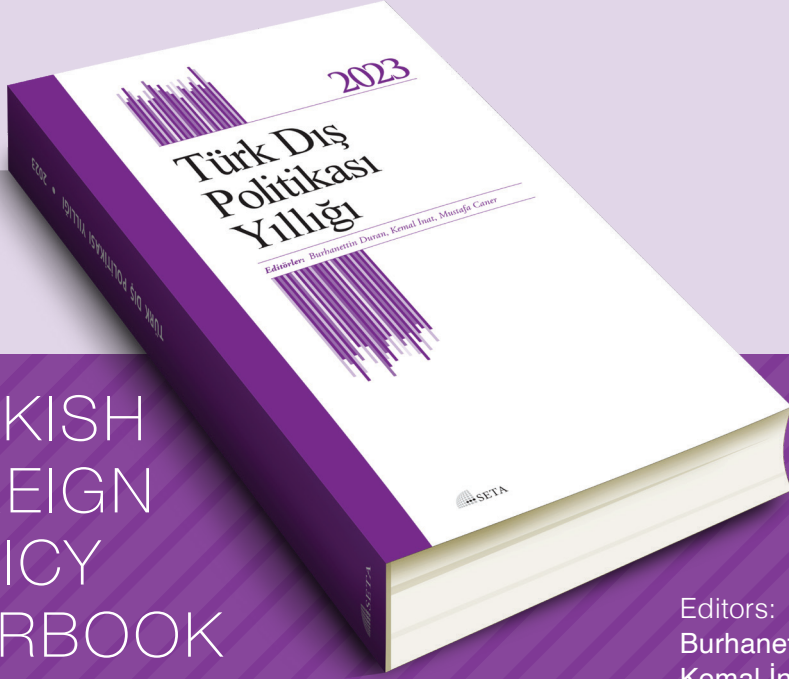
Endnotes

1. Ahmet Çirakoğlu and Hüdayi Sayın, "Modern Devletin Oluşumunda Polis Gücü: İran'da Polis Gücünün Gelişimi ve Dönüşümü," *İnsan ve Toplum*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (2021), p. 37.
2. Reza Aboutorabi, "Sazman-e Jasosi va Zed-e Jasosi-ye Amir Kabir," *Mo'assese-ye Motale'at-e Tarikh-e Mo'aser-e Iran*, (October 19, 2015).
3. "Nam-e Vezarat-e Ettela'at dar Ahd-e Qajariyye," *Mashregh News*, (April 30, 2011), retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://shorturl.at/s6yFO>.
4. William L. Cleveland, *Modern Ortadoğu Tarihi*, translated by Mehmet Harmancı, (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2008), p. 130.
5. At this point, the widespread belief that the British are involved in everything can be seen in the expression "It's British work." This phrase, which appears in Iraj Pezeshkzad's famous novel *My Uncle Napoleon*, later became the title of British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw's book about Iran.
6. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 165.
7. Cleveland, *Modern Ortadoğu Tarihi*, p. 210.
8. "Mohammad-Hossein Ayrom, Sarlashgari ke Sar-e Reza Shah Kolah Gozasht!" *The Center of Historical Documents Survey*, (May 2, 2023), retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://historydocuments.ir/?page=post&id=3797>.
9. "Mohammad-Hossein Ayrom, Sarlashgari ke Sar-e Reza Shah Kolah Gozasht!" *The Center of Historical Documents Survey*, (May 2, 2023), retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://historydocuments.ir/?page=post&id=3797>.
10. Hossein Fardoust, *Zohur va Soqut-e Saltanat-e Pahlavi*, 6th ed., (Tehran: Mo'assese-ye Motale'at va Pazhouhesh-haye Siasi, 1994), p. 80.
11. Javad Haghgoo and Hosein Molaei, "Investigating the Reasons for the Failure of the First Pahlavi Intelligence Organization in the Confrontation with England and Russia Relying on the Documents of the Ministry of Defense," *Journal of Historical Study of War*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2024), p. 74.
12. Haghgoo and Molaei, "Investigating the Reasons for the Failure of the First Pahlavi Intelligence Organization in the Confrontation with England and Russia Relying on the Documents of the Ministry of Defense," p. 74.
13. Ersin Müezzinoğlu and Hüseyin Karamelikli, *1927 İran Azerbaycanı İstihbarat Raporu ve Analizi*, (Ankara: İmaj Yayınevi, 2018).
14. Müezzinoğlu and Karamelikli, *1927 İran Azerbaycanı İstihbarat Raporu ve Analizi*.
15. Although the coup was successful from an operational and political standpoint, in the medium term, it accelerated the process leading to a popular revolution instead of democratic politics and had a toxic effect on the relations between the U.S. and the U.K. with Iran. The confessions of U.S. officials 50

years after the coup demonstrate this situation. For more detailed information, see, Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, p. 274.

16. Cleveland, *Modern Ortadoğu Tarihi*, p. 468.
17. Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, p. 419.
18. Yasmine Mather, "Iran's Tudeh Party: A History of Compromises and Betrayals," *Critique*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (November 2011), pp. 612-613.
19. Andrew Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda, 1945-53: The Information Research Department*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).
20. Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda, 1945-53: The Information Research Department*.
21. Darius Wainwright, "Equal Partners? The Information Research Department, SAVAK and the Dissemination of Anti-communist Propaganda in Iran, 1956-68," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (December 2017), pp. 404-424.
22. "How CIA, Mossad Helped Form SAVAK," *Islamic Revolution Documents Center*, (November 11, 2016) retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://irdc.ir/en/news/26/how-cia-mossad-helped-form-savak>.
23. Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah*, (London: University of California Press, 2009), p. 381.
24. Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah*, p. 383.
25. Braedon McGhee, "The Double-Edged Sword: Examining the Contradictory Nature of SAVAK and the U.S.-Iran Clidency Relationship," *History in the Making*, Vol. 16, No. 6 (2023), pp. 31-74.
26. Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah*, p. 382.
27. Mark J. Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 154.
28. The National Front, "A Portion of the Secrets of the Security Organization, SAVAK," (1971).
29. "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," *IRI Center*, retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qau-V9-0-vc>.
30. Abbas William Samii, "The Shah's Lebanon Policy: The Role of SAVAK," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1997), pp. 66-91.
31. "The Iranian Security Apparatus," *Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management*, (July 2024), retrieved November 3, 2024, from https://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/book_the_iranian_security_apparatus_posch_web.pdf, p. 18.
32. Carl Anthony Wege, "Iranian Intelligence Organizations," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1997), pp. 287-298.
33. "The Iranian Security Apparatus," *Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management*, (July 2024), retrieved November 3, 2024, from https://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/book_the_iranian_security_apparatus_posch_web.pdf, p. 19.
34. The uprisings in the Kurdish region were suppressed after prolonged efforts, and the experience gained here proved to be quite useful in the later stages of the IDMO.
35. Prominent guards, such as IRGC Minister Mohsen Rafiqdoost, had realized very early on the political-military power they held and had no intention of relinquishing any part of it. Indeed, from the mid-1980s onwards, they were organizing election campaigns with the aim of establishing dominance in the Parliament.
36. Masoud Azar, "'Projhe-ye Nofooz' dar Dastgah-e Amniyati-ye Iran; Aya Vazir-e Ettela'at Bayad 'Mojtahed' Bashad?," *BBC News Farsi*, (August 3, 2024), retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://shorturl.at/weVku>.
37. "The Iranian Security Apparatus," *Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management*, (2024), retrieved November 3, 2024, from https://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/book_the_iranian_security_apparatus_posch_web.pdf, p. 24.

38. "Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security: A Profile," *Federal Research Division Library of Congress*, (December 2012), retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://irp.fas.org/world/iran/mois-loc.pdf>, p. 9.
39. "Germany/Iran: Details of the Assassination of four Kurdish Politicians in 1992 at the Mykonos Restaurant in Berlin," *Refworld*, (November 16, 1999), retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://web.archive.org/20230529095740/https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad824c.html>.
40. Wege, "Iranian Intelligence Organizations."
41. "12 Salegi Mo'ammay-e Marg-e Saeed Emami ba 'Darou-ye Nezafat,'" *Ensaf News*, (June 31, 2020), retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://rb.gy/wt5yso>.
42. "The Islamic Republic of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security," *Varzesh 11*, (August 22, 2011), retrieved from <http://www.varzesh11.blogfa.com/cat-417.aspx>. As cited in Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security: A Profile. The reliability of this reference is questionable; however, the information in this report from this blog is widely distributed on other blogs as well.
43. Cyrus Maximus, "The Ministry of Intelligence and Security," *Iran Channel*, (September 2010), retrieved from <http://iranchannel.org/archives/357>.
44. "Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security: A Profile," *Federal Research Division Library of Congress*, (December 2012), retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://irp.fas.org/world/iran/mois-loc.pdf>, p. 25.
45. "Qanoun Ta'yin Zavabet va Sharayet-e Vazir-e Ettela'at," *Islamic Parliament Research Center (IPRC)*, retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/90739>.
46. Muhammet Kurşun, "İran Cumhurbaşkanı Ruhani'ye Göre Zarif'in Ses Kaydı Viyana'daki Görüşmeleri Sabote Etmek İçin Sızdırıldı," *Anadolu Ajansı*, (April 28, 2021), retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/iran-cumhurbaskani-ruhaniye-gore-zarifin-ses-kaydi-viyanadaki-gorusmeleri-sabote-etmek-icin-sizdirildi/2223104>.
47. "Gozareshi az Efshagari-ha-ye Ahmadinejad; Mas'oul-e Zed-e Jasousi-ye Vezarat-e Ettela'at, Jasous-e Esra'il Bood," *Iran International*, retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://youtu.be/wJ-e11lgyzA?feature=shared>.
48. "Ekhtar Ali Younesi Nesbat be Nofooz-e Mossad dar Iran," *Aparat*, retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://www.aparat.com/v/v07i79k>.



TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY YEARBOOK 2023

Editors:
Burhanettin Duran
Kemal İnat
Mustafa Caner

