

**BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY AND IRAN
A PERFORMANCE
1872-1979**

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ABSTRACT

Drawing inspiration from scholars employing the performance metaphor in various disciplines including international relations, sociology, history and anthropology, this thesis is a study of what Raymond Cohen terms diplomacy's "theatrical side". Using empirical research of official correspondence, private papers, published memoirs, cabinet proceedings and newspaper reports, the thesis conducts a study of Goffmanian "impression management" in the context of British foreign policy toward Iran from 1872 to 1979. It identifies a number of impressions – desired images of the British state, or ideas of its intentions toward Iran – that British officials in a performance "team" and acting in "state selfhood", fostered as a means of securing the country's political, military and economic interests. Within these impressions, the thesis also explored theatricalised diplomacy in the context of many 'techniques of performance', including costume, direction, stage-props, script, and performativity, all concepts drawn from theoretical literature engaging with the performance metaphor. Where possible, contemporaneous images have also been utilised in order to augment the analysis. In doing so this thesis seeks to shed light on *how* Britain exercised foreign policy in Iran, questioning whether or not the notion of theatricalised diplomacy was effective in furthering foreign policy.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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INTRODUCTION

SETTING THE SCENE

Lady Louise Loraine once remarked that the business of British diplomatic relations with Iran was much “like a play”.⁶³ Her lead actor was of course husband Sir Percy Loraine, a talented diplomat, tasked by Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon with reversing Britain’s loss of prestige and influence in Iran after the collapse of the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919.⁶⁴ As a representative of a nation victorious yet exhausted by its struggle in the First World War, Sir Percy was unable to call upon the customary British use of military might or finance when facing a new force in Iranian politics. Without the Treasury stipends and the battalions of regular British troops that had been present in Persia during the war, Loraine was left to marshal the little resources at his disposal, including “his own personality”,⁶⁵ his “dominating presence, his stern manner...steely blue eyes”,⁶⁶ and even his top hat, all in order to further British foreign policy in the country.⁶⁷ Such methods were called upon to manifest a mirage of British resolve and strength to compete with Reza Khan, an overbearing and ambitious soldier turned statesman bent on centralising Iranian government control at the expense of British influence.

It is fitting that Lady Loraine should liken diplomacy to a play, for in the opinion of international relations (I.R.) scholar Raymond Cohen, diplomacy is a practice significantly influenced by its “theatrical side”,⁶⁸ one punctuated by performance, costume, direction, props, script, setting and an audience.⁶⁹ Diplomacy also features the extensive use of “extra-linguistic forms of communication”, which Cohen argues, are “capable of transmitting” a “subtle and complex range of political messages” that are “central to the conduct of international relations” and by extension the furtherance of foreign policy.⁷⁰ More importantly “servants of the state” involved in this verbal and nonverbal dialogue are always “sensitive to the impression they make on observers”, since their every word, gesture, and even sometimes their choice of clothing, is “perceived to be significant” and representative of their state and its foreign policy.⁷¹ Indeed they are rarely, if ever, free from scrutiny. For instance if a diplomat has so much as a common cold, they may find it difficult to cancel an engagement for fear of their absence being misinterpreted as an insult one state to another. The same scrutiny applies to heads of state, and in certain circumstances to officials at most levels of government.⁷² According to Cohen, such persistent scrutiny at the hands of an audience composed of members of another government or its public,

⁶³ Gordon Waterfield, *Professional Diplomat, Sir Percy Loraine of Kirkcubright Bt. 1880-1961*, (London: John Murray, 1973), p. 95.

⁶⁴ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 52.

⁶⁵ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 94.

⁶⁶ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 95.

⁶⁷ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 119.

⁶⁸ Raymond Cohen, ‘Diplomacy as theatre’, in *Diplomacy Three-volume Set* eds., Christer Jönsson and Richard Langhorne, (Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc., 2004) pp. 264-277, (p. 267).

⁶⁹ Raymond Cohen, *Theatre of Power, the art of diplomatic signalling*, (London: Longman Group U.K. Limited, 1987).

⁷⁰ Cohen, ‘Diplomacy as theatre’, p. 264 & p. 267.

⁷¹ Cohen, Cohen, *Theatre of Power*, Introduction.

⁷² Cohen, *Theatre of Power*, p. 20.

precipitates self-conscious and purposeful behaviour within the practice of diplomacy, much akin to a theatrical performance.

The main inspiration behind Cohen's assessment of theatricalised diplomacy in international relations was sociologist Erving Goffman. His seminal work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, pioneered the subject of 'dramaturgical sociology', the analysis of social life and human interaction using the metaphor of the stage. In Goffman's world, we are all performers who consciously or unconsciously manipulate desired "impressions" of self, using verbal and non-verbal communication, setting, and the use of stages – front and back, to perform and prepare for performances respectively.⁷³ This thesis follows in Cohen's footsteps, proposing a study of diplomacy through the prism of performance. Specifically it studies the history of British foreign policy toward Iran, carrying out empirical research within a theoretical framework constructed from Cohen's concept of "diplomacy as theatre" and Goffman's "dramaturgical sociology", along with other theoretical texts that have utilised the performance metaphor from various disciplines including history, sociology, anthropology, and I.R. With the assistance of this theoretical framework, the thesis seeks to identify what 'techniques of performance' British officials entertained in support for their impression management. This analysis is organised into three studies from the period 1872 and 1979 and culminates in a comparative examination of Britain's fostered impressions and connected techniques of performance throughout one hundred years of Anglo-Iranian relations.

GAP IN THE EXISTING RESEARCH

In adopting such a framework the thesis builds upon the work of a number of I.R. specialists and historians working on interstate relations and the culture of diplomacy, along with reference to the performance metaphor.⁷⁴ Whilst many of these studies have focussed on Europe, Africa, and the Far East, to the author's knowledge, there has been no effort to utilise notions of performance within a historical study of British foreign policy in Middle East or Iran. Naoko Shimazu, who utilises the performance metaphor in an assessment of the Bandung Conference of 1955, does refer to the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, however, this was done as part of a broader assessment of non-aligned states and world leaders.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, diplomatic historians focussing on Iran or Anglo-Iranian relations have largely retained very conventional methods of research. Through such an approach, first-rate

⁷³ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, (New York: Anchor, 1959), p. 4.

⁷⁴ See Christian Goeschel, 'Staging Friendship: Mussolini and Hitler in Germany in 1937', *The Historical Journal*, (2016), pp. 1-24, Catherine M. Cole, *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission, Stages of Transition*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), Frank Schimmelfennig, 'Goffman Meets IR: Dramaturgical Action in International Community', *International Review of Sociology*, 3 (2004), pp. 417-437, Erik Ringmar, 'Performing International Systems: Two East-Asian Alternatives to the Westphalian Order', *International Organisation*, 66 (2012), pp. 1-25, & Rebecca, Adler-Nissen, 'Diplomacy as Impression Management: Strategic Face-Work and Post-Colonial Embarrassment', McGill University (2012), pp. 1-44.

⁷⁵ Naoko Shimazu, 'Diplomacy as Theatre': Recasting the Bandung Conference of 1955 as Cultural History', *Asia Research Institute*, 164 (2011) pp. 1-19.

historians assessing Anglo-Iranian relations including Firuz Kazemzadeh,⁷⁶ Rose Greaves,⁷⁷ Edward Ingram,⁷⁸ Archibald Paton Thornton,⁷⁹ and Houshang Sabahi,⁸⁰ have been able to emphatically tell us *what* British foreign policy was with respect to Iran, and *why* British governments pursued such policies in the context of geopolitics. In the case of Iran, such historians contend that British foreign policy was often shaped by the overarching needs of imperial defence, and the perennial Anglo-Russian strategic and economic struggle for supremacy in Central Asia and the Middle East, both before and after the revolutions of 1917. Meanwhile, texts focusing on more recent Anglo-Iranian diplomatic history, including that of Edward Posnett,⁸¹ and Nance Kittner,⁸² have shown that as the 20th century progressed, British commercial needs began to supersede political and strategic interests in Iran, though the latter never diminished entirely. Even with the loss of imperial possessions and her position of global pre-eminence along with it, Britain's foreign policy toward Iran retained a strategic element in the context of the ideological, political and commercial Cold War competition between the capitalist 'Free World' and the communist Eastern Bloc.

The efforts of these aforementioned diplomatic historians have largely utilised traditional analyses of official correspondence, along with private papers, memoirs and where necessary, press publications, to ascertain what senior government officials communicated to one another at the Foreign Office and to a lesser extent in cabinet, in other government departments, and in parliament. Furthermore, there was considerable focus on what Foreign Secretaries said to Iranian diplomats in London, and more importantly, attention to the information that British diplomats were instructed to convey to senior Iranian government officials in Tehran. Although these approaches are often interesting and exhaustively detailed, they lack a deep and multi-layered appreciation for *how* Britain attempted to further its foreign policy aims in Iran. Traditional approaches have tended to answer this question by making reference to the use of economic and military policy levers, that is to say military interventions, treaties, expanded consular networks, financial loans or commercial concessions, which were used to increase influence in Iran and to incentivise or deter the country from pursuing policies inimical to British interests. Connectedly, a close analysis of the content and semantical meaning of official correspondence has very often been undertaken, unpicking how diplomats and statesmen used direct or ambiguous language, to pursue foreign policy aims.

⁷⁶ Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia: 1864-1914*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968).

⁷⁷ For classic examples see Rose L. Greaves, 'British policy in Persia, 1892-1903-I', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 28 (1965), pp. 34-60 & Greaves, Rose L., 'British policy in Persia, 1892-1903-II', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 28 (1965), pp. 284-307.

⁷⁸ Meanwhile for Ingram see Edward Ingram, *Britain's Persian Connection, 1798-1828, Prelude to the Great Game in Asia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), Edward Ingram, *The Beginning of the Great Game in Asia 1828-1834*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

⁷⁹ Archibald Paton Thornton, 'British Policy in Persia, 1850-1890', *The English Historical Review*, 69 (1954) pp. 554-579 & Archibald Paton Thornton, 'The Reopening of the 'Central Asian Question', 1864-9', *History* 41 (1965), pp. 122-136.

⁸⁰ Houshang Sabahi, *British Policy in Persia 1918-1925*, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1990).

⁸¹ Edward Posnett, 'Treating His Imperial Majesty's Warts: British Policy towards Iran 1977-79', *Iranian Studies*, 45 (2012) pp. 119-137.

⁸² Nance F. Kittner, *Issues in Anglo-Persian Diplomatic Relations, 1921-1933*, PhD Diss., SOAS, (1980), pp. 1-315.

According to Cohen, such an approach is deficient, in that it overlooks many other important features of international relations and diplomacy. Although interpretation of the language and semantics of official correspondence still forms the backbone of this thesis, such documentation is also interpreted differently, with a focus on those theatricalised features of diplomacy that one “might otherwise overlook”, or consign to a footnote as an interesting anecdote.⁸³ This includes assessments of paralinguistic communication techniques used in face to face interactions between British and Iranian officials, such as body language, facial expressions, tone and pitch. Furthermore, this thesis observes how British officials made use of urban space, the interior or exterior of buildings, and everyday items such as clothing or means of transport, in diplomatic relations with Iran. Connectedly it reinterprets the use of political, economic or military policy levers in the context of their communicative and presentational function in international relations. By this I mean government decisions on matters that had material consequences including for instance, waiving debt or giving recognition to a new government, but which also served to transmit a message in the context of interstate relations. Finally the thesis analyses the ceremonial aspects of diplomacy including official visits that featured heavily choreographed and symbolic expressions of interstate relations, in audiences, welcoming receptions, processions, military manoeuvres or reviews, and tours of significant or symbolic political, cultural and commercial sites of interest.

Only the late Denis Wright made any attempt to undertake a study of modern Anglo-Iranian relations with regular reference to these overlooked or unfortunately footnoted aspects of diplomacy.⁸⁴ Wright’s two engrossing books, *The English Amongst the Persians* and *The Persians Amongst the English* thus form the non-theoretical backbone of this thesis. With a vast array of sources Wright covers issues from the role of British doctors and missionaries, to the expansion of telegraphic communication in Iran. There is also an appreciation for the general ebb and flow of Anglo-Iranian relations, and most importantly, a closer look at diplomacy’s theatrical side including dramatic personal interactions between British diplomats and their Persian counterparts with emphasis on costume, ceremony and symbolism. In particular Wright’s assessment of Nasir al-Din Shah’s visit in 1873 constituted a crucial springboard from which to explore that particular event with a more theoretical toolkit. Although Wright’s works have proven an inspiration to this thesis, they were ultimately too descriptive in content, meriting a more analytical approach.

One scholarly effort that has attempted to use the performance metaphor in a study of Anglo-Iranian relations is that of Mohammad Taghi Nezam-Mafi, whose comparative literary study of 17th and 19th century relations borrowed the concept of “theatricality” from New Historicist Stephen Greenblatt.⁸⁵

⁸³ Cohen, ‘Diplomacy as theatre’, p. 268.

⁸⁴ Denis Wright, *The Persians Amongst the English*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1985) & Dennis Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1977).

⁸⁵ Mohammad Taghi Nezam-Mafi, *Persian Recreations: Theatricality in Anglo-Persian Diplomatic History, 1599-1828*, (PhD diss., Boston University, 1986), pp. 1-269, & Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning, From More to Shakespeare*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980).

Broadly speaking Nezam-Mafi posited that British diplomatic encounters with Iran during the 17th and 19th centuries were theatrical performances, characterised by British diplomats masquerading as Persians in custom, costume and in grandeur, largesse and pedantic adherence to protocol. They were actors, acting to advance British foreign policy. British diplomats also had to *self-fashion*; since to assert British authority in Persia meant in a sense to become what they perceived to be “Persian”, or indeed to outdo the Persian in being Persian.⁸⁶ Although part of the initial inspiration for this project, Nezam-Mafi’s piece ultimately proved to be a poor application of the performance metaphor. For instance, there was a failure to utilise any archival material on Anglo-Iranian relations beyond a handful of memoirs and fictional texts, fatally undermining a fuller understanding of the culture of British diplomacy. Connectedly there were seemingly rather optimistic if not speculative personality assessments of 17th to 19th century British and English diplomats. Finally there was too much concentration on Renaissance history and culture, which proved difficult to transpose onto a study of later 19th and 20th century diplomatic relations.

Meanwhile, other more cultural history-based works of the Middle Eastern include Gerald MacLean’s early modern study of English visitors to the Ottoman Empire in the 16th to early 18th centuries. His close textual analysis of the travel accounts of several English travellers to the Orient provides an entertaining introduction to British perceptions of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁷ Moreover, according to Palmira Brummett, there is also “an element of theatricality inherent” to MacLean’s text.⁸⁸ Such theatricality was, however, in no way systematic, instead it was more a symptom of the book’s structure which presented the Englishmen as if they were partaking in a series of dramas and travel tales. As such, I argue that there is a clear gap in the research, meriting an empirical study of British foreign policy in Iran based on a more systematic application of the performance metaphor. Specifically, this thesis thus contributes to the study of Anglo-Iranian relations, to British foreign policy and imperial history, to diplomatic history and culture of diplomacy approach, and to the discipline of I.R. Aside from the innovative study of *how* British foreign policy worked in Persia, the archival research alone has contributed some very rich and thorough accounts of relatively neglected periods of Anglo-Iranian relations. Only Denis Wright has deigned to study the state visit of Nasir al-Din Shah in any detail, and this thesis delves much deeper than he, especially in the context of press reports and the illumination of contemporaneous images of the visit. Meanwhile, with respect to the second case study, Loraine’s private papers have been used more extensively in this study than in other works assessing interwar Anglo-Iranian relations. Images from the British minister’s own photograph albums of his time in Iran also represent a truly unique and unpublished find. Finally regarding the 1970s, there has been no monograph on the history of Anglo-Iranian relations or British policy toward Iran during the final years of the Pahlavi regime, despite the declassification of many government documents. This thesis therefore

⁸⁶ Nezam-Mafi, *Recreations*, p. 139.

⁸⁷ Gerald MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

⁸⁸ Palmira Brummett, review of *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720*, by Gerald MacLean, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. xxi + 2657.

also contributes to our understanding of Britain's role within the unfolding revolution in a conventional sense.

THEORETICAL INSPIRATIONS

ERVING GOFFMAN

From a purely theoretical perspective, the main inspiration which underpins this thesis and its utilisation of the concept of impression management, is Erving Goffman, the “Godfather of dramaturgy”,⁸⁹ and one of the “first...social scientists to turn to the theatre for a framework with which to interpret non-theatrical behaviour” in everyday life.⁹⁰ Goffman was “arguably the most original American theorist of the second half of the 20th century”⁹¹ and one of the first thinkers to turn to the theatre as a means of interpreting the ostensibly non-theatrical world. Meanwhile, the broad title ‘theorist’ is both illustrative and intriguing. It applies in that it places no disciplinary boundary on Goffman who was extremely hard to pin down. Was he a sociologist, a symbolic interactionist, an anthropologist, an ethnologist, a formalist or phenomenological, Machiavellian, existentialist, realist, empiricist postmodernist or as one author suggests, simply a “writer”?⁹² To a certain extent it does not matter which, since scholars appropriate and use those aspects of Goffman’s work that best suit their particular needs.⁹³

Despite publishing twelve books and some twenty eight essays in thirty years however,⁹⁴ Goffman was “not theoretically ambitious”, leaving no “fully-fledged explanatory and predictive theory”.⁹⁵ He was both respected and rebuked for this approach which proved hard to pigeonhole and to replicate.⁹⁶ Furthermore, despite lacking a systematic methodological approach, and failing to theorise on a grand scale, Goffman did at the same time engage in systematic observational work which supported his deeply challenging theoretical perceptions of social interactions. With a “flair for sardonic witticism and ironic observation”,⁹⁷ Goffman also reached out beyond academia to the general public with a method of analysis which perhaps persuades as much as proves his assertions.⁹⁸ Moreover although he often approached complex and challenging concepts with a mass of technical terms, he makes great efforts to render his work comprehensible, with clear definitions invariably illustrated with easily digestible examples. Dennis Brissett and Charles Edgely assert that Goffman’s approach was ultimately a “kind of field anthropology with deep anthropological roots” which began with his dissertation ‘Communications Conduct in an Island Community’, which involved the lengthy observation of a crofting community on

⁸⁹ Denis Brissett, and Charles Edgely, eds. *Life as Theatre: A Dramaturgical Sourcebook*, (New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, 2005) p. 1.

⁹⁰ H. Bial and R. Schechner, eds., *The Performance Studies Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 57.

⁹¹ Peter Kivisto and Dan Pittman, ‘Goffman’s Dramaturgical Sociology’, in Peter Kivisto ed. *Illuminating Social Life, Classical and Contemporary Theatre Revisited*, (Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc., 2013), pp. 297-313, (p. 298).

⁹² A. Branaman, C. Lemert, eds. *The Goffman Reader*, (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997) p. xiv & G. Smith, *Erving Goffman*, (London: Routledge, 2006) p. 3.

⁹³ Branaman, A., *The Goffman Reader*, p. xliv.

⁹⁴ Branman, A., *The Goffman Reader*, p. xliv.

⁹⁵ G. Smith, *Erving Goffman* p. 1.

⁹⁶ Branaman, A., *The Goffman Reader*, p. x.

⁹⁷ Smith, *Erving Goffman*, p. 3.

⁹⁸ Brissett, *Life as Theatre*, p. 39.

the Shetland Islands.⁹⁹ Building upon his PhD, Goffman's, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* was a book that “breathed new life into the ancient ‘all the world’s a stage metaphor’ and “inaugurated Goffman’s reputation as a sociologist of international stature.”¹⁰⁰

Goffman splits his book into six themed chapters which build upon various concepts explored in his dissertation consisting of the performance, the team, the region and region behaviour, discrepant roles, communication out of character, and finally the arts of impression management. The methodological framework of this thesis borrows many of these concepts utilised in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, and in each instance, an explanation is provided in the text so as to reduce the necessity of an elongated introductory section. Three of Goffman’s concepts crucial to the overall methodology are, however, worth referring to immediately. As previously discussed, this thesis is a study of impression management, a concept Goffman pioneered in the 1950s, brought to life with a customarily amusing anecdote in *The Presentation of Self*. Goffman cites the case of Mr Preedy, an English holidaymaker on a beach in Spain who commits a series of acts and behaviours in order to control the “extensive impressions” he thought he was giving off, that is to say ideas about who and what sort of man Mr Preedy was. For instance, after sitting on the beach for a few minutes, Mr Preedy decided to “institute a little parade, the parade of the Ideal Preedy”. Thus, “by devious handlings he gave any who wanted to look a chance to see the title of his book – a Spanish translation of Homer, classic thus, but not daring, cosmopolitan too”. Mr Preedy subsequently paraded other impressions of himself, including “Kindly Preedy”, or “Carefree Preedy”.¹⁰¹ Through this anecdote, Goffman stresses the point that people perform in that they attempt to give off a certain image of themselves. Furthermore, on many occasions an:

...individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain.¹⁰²

Within the context of this thesis, one can think of Britain as akin Mr Preedy, attempting to impress Iran with certain images of self, in order to “evoke” a response conducive to furthering British foreign policy. Secondly, another of Goffman’s concepts that forms a central plank of the theoretical framework, is that of teams and team impressions. Importantly, Goffman notes that performances are most often conducted in a binary oppositional team dynamic, involving a “team impression”. The term ‘team’ refers “to any set of individuals who cooperate in staging” a performance or fostering an impression, though the errant teammates might disrupt a joint impression.¹⁰³ In this thesis I identify British officials and their Iranian counterparts as part of two opposing national performance teams, with my primary focus being on Britain’s performance team. In the analysis this team is composed primarily of Britain’s foreign policy

⁹⁹ Brissett, *Life as Theatre*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁰ Smith, *Erving Goffman*, p. 42.

¹⁰¹ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 5.

¹⁰² Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 6.

¹⁰³ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 77-82.

officials, either at Tehran or in Britain. Other government officials could, however, be co-opted into Britain's performance team if needed, as a means of furthering foreign policy. So too could non-government actors such as journalists, B.B.C. correspondents and even members of the public. Importantly, it was ultimately Britain's Iranian audience that helped to shape who was in Britain's performance team. As we shall have cause to see, the B.B.C. was one such institution which was seen as part of Britain's official government performance team in the eyes of the Iranian government during the 1970s. When the B.B.C. exercised its editorial independence, this caused serious problems with the Iranian government who perceived it to be at least under semi-official British government control. Neither Raymond Cohen, nor Rebecca Adler-Nissen, another notable I.R. specialist who has used a Goffmanian approach in a study of Scandinavian foreign policy, deigned to use impressions in the manner of Mr Preedy, nor did they contemplate the role of teams.¹⁰⁴ In utilising such concepts, the thesis is able shed far greater light on *how* Britain pursued its foreign policy objectives in Iran. Finally this approach also makes for a richer comparative analysis in the concluding section.

RAYMOND COHEN

The second major methodological inspiration for this thesis is the work of Raymond Cohen, a "leading scholar in the field of diplomacy" during the 1990s and early 2000s.¹⁰⁵ According to Alan James, Cohen's use of the performance metaphor in his "path-breaking" *Theatre of Power*, was "perceptive, subtle and presented without jargon of any kind". It thus provided a simple yet compelling explanation for the importance of "extra-linguistic forms of communication" in diplomatic relations including body language and facial expressions, the use of buildings, uniforms, and military deployments. Importantly this took place in the context of the communicative function of buildings etc., as stage-props or pieces of setting, used by states and state actors to regulate their diplomatic relations.¹⁰⁶ Cohen's concise yet detailed account is a perfect demonstration of the importance of the performance metaphor in diplomacy. As in the case of Goffman, the concepts drawn from Cohen for use in the main body of the text are given explanations within the text, rendering a detailed discussion here less necessary. The most crucial components of the methodological framework drawn from Cohen do need some fleshing out however. Firstly, an important point raised by Cohen is that "diplomatic communication is bound, almost by definition, to seek cross-cultural comprehensibility". Furthermore, he goes on to say that a "nonverbal communication is useless if it cannot be understood by one's audience".¹⁰⁷ Given these realities, I concur with Ivor B. Neumann and Adler-Nissen in that diplomacy can be seen as a "third culture" with universally recognised means of communication across the globe.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, international relations including Anglo-Iranian diplomatic relations, were regulated by a mutually intelligible language, which had:

¹⁰⁴ Rebecca Adler-Nissen, 'Diplomacy as Impression Management', p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ Alan James, 'Diplomacy', *Review of International Studies*, 19 (1993), pp. 91-100, (p. 96).

¹⁰⁶ James, 'Diplomacy', p. 96.

¹⁰⁷ Cohen, 'Diplomacy as theatre', p. 265.

¹⁰⁸ Adler-Nissen, 'Diplomacy', p. 21 & Ivor B. Neumann, 'To Be a Diplomat' *International Studies Perspectives*, 6 (2005), p. 72-93.

... established norms about how to behave, including tacit knowledge on the correct use of handshakes, how to use family photos, how to exchange gifts, how to discuss in the margins of the meeting, how to dress etc.¹⁰⁹

I contend that British diplomats and other state actors, used language, both verbal and nonverbal, that was part of a globally recognised international relations communication system, employed to intimate British intentions and policies toward, and opinions of Iran. It was also used to materially assist Britain in achieving its foreign policy objectives in Iran and elsewhere. A second connected concept that is central to Cohen's argument as to the theoretical framework of the thesis centres on that representative role of diplomats who were almost always making an "impression" on observers from opposing states, since their every word and action was "perceived to be significant".¹¹⁰ Thus, the diplomat must suffer with their illness at some formal function or event lest their absence be taken as a snub toward another state. The same observing mechanisms applied to heads of state, and in certain circumstances officials at most levels of government.¹¹¹ Such persistent scrutiny at the hands of an audience composed of members of another government or its public, precipitated the need for self-conscious and purposeful behaviour. This is what propelled Cohen to study diplomacy in the context of performance. This notion of embodiment of the nation in a representative's and a sovereign's personhood is also attested to by Johannes Paulmann,¹¹² David Motadel,¹¹³ and Alisher Faizullaev all of whom noted that diplomats have a "diplomatic self" which "absorbs" and reflects a "state selfhood".¹¹⁴ Such a representative feature was arguably given expression in the Vienna Convention of 1961, in which a diplomat's task was first and foremost "representing" one's home state.¹¹⁵

TECHNIQUES OF PERFORMANCE

Finally, the concepts touched upon in the context diplomatic representativeness by scholars such Paulmann, Motadel, and Faizullaev join a whole host of others drawn from a variety of works using the performance metaphor, including that of Goffman and Cohen. Similarly, much use is made of James E. Combs and his study of drama in politics. Combs' concepts of political processions and festivals infused with a sense of reification and ritual have been especially poignant to parts of this thesis.¹¹⁶ So too has Naoko Shimazu's assessment of crowds, buildings and space, in diplomacy¹¹⁷ and Christian Goeschel's concept of 'staged' political friendship derived from a study of the relationship between Mussolini and

¹⁰⁹ Adler-Nisen, 'Diplomacy,' p. 22.

¹¹⁰ Cohen, *Theatre of Power*, Introduction.

¹¹¹ Cohen, *Theatre of Power*, p. 20.

¹¹² Johannes Paulmann, 'Searching for a "Royal International": The Mechanics of Monarchical Relations in Nineteenth-Century Europe', in Geyer and Paulmann (eds.), *Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society, and Politics the 1840s to the First World War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) pp. 145-176 (p. 159-160, p. 175-176).

¹¹³ David Motadel, 'Qajar Shahs in Imperial Germany', *Past and Present*, 213 (2011), pp. 191-235 (p. 195).

¹¹⁴ Alisher Faizullaev, 'Diplomacy and Self', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 17 (2006) pp. 497-522 (p. 500).

¹¹⁵ 'Vienna Convention of 1961' <http://untreaty.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf> [accessed: 3.2.16].

¹¹⁶ James E. Combs, *Dimensions of Political Drama*, (Santa Monica: Goodyear Publishing Company: 1980), p. 19.

¹¹⁷ Shimazu, 'Diplomacy... Theatre', p. 6-7.

Hitler.¹¹⁸ Judith Butler's work on gender and performativity also features,¹¹⁹ as does Victor Turner's ideas on rites of passage.¹²⁰ All of these concepts and many more, are placed into the category of 'techniques of performance', tools or methods that British officials used to complement fostered impressions toward Iran in the context of furthering foreign policy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the preceding appreciation of theory and methodology, it is worth reiterating the nature of the project. It is an archival based assessment of British foreign policy in Iran from 1872 to 1979, featuring a study of impression. By impression management I mean attempts by British officials – operating in a performance “team” and often in state selfhoods – to formulate and express desired images of the British state, or ideas of the government's intentions toward Iran, as a means of securing the country's political, military and economic interests. The research questions connected to this accordingly, what impressions did Britain foster in Persia to further its foreign policy? Why were these impressions fostered? What techniques of performance complemented these impressions? To what extent were these impression and techniques of performance effective in furthering British foreign policy aims? Finally, how did Orientalism feature in Britain's impression management and connected techniques of performance?

CASE STUDIES

These questions are asked of case studies selected at fifty year increments from 1872 to 1979. These are as follows, (1) The state visit of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar, 1872-1874, (2) Sir Percy Loraine and the Rise of Reza Khan, 1922-1926 and finally (3) The Collapse of the Pahlavi Dynasty, 1974-1979. Primarily, the case studies were chosen due to their importance in Anglo-Iranian relations, though the fifty year intervals also leave the structure chronologically neat. Specifically the visit of Nasir al-Din Shah was important due to it being the first time a Persian monarch set foot on British soil, thus representing a fascinating instance of cultural collision in a country experiencing a fascination for the exotic East and the Oriental Other, at the same time as an Oriental monarch was harbouring a lust for knowing about a rich and powerful Occident.¹²¹ More importantly, all of the case studies represent moments in which the conventional power trajectories of Britain and Iran were changing within the context of two major conflicts, the Great Game in Asia, and later the Cold War. Two World Wars had also played their part, mostly serving to diminish British power and influence. Britain and Iran also experienced social as well

¹¹⁸ Goeschel, 'Staging Friendship', p. 4 & p. 9.

¹¹⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 33, p. 44 & p. 89 & Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, 40 (1988), pp. 519-531 (p. 527).

¹²⁰ Victor Turner, 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage', in Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster and Meredith Little, eds., *Betwixt and Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*, (La Salle: Open Court Publishing, 1987), pp. 3-23 (p. 4-6).

¹²¹ John M. Mackenzie, 'Empire and Metropolitan Cultures' in Porter, Andrew, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume 3, The Nineteenth Century*, (UK, Oxford University Press: 1999), pp. 270-292, (p. 277).

as economic and political upheavals from 1872 to a century later. In 1873 Britain was at the zenith as a World Power, dwarfing a country that she had no need of greater political cooperation or increased commerce with. By contrast during the years of the second case study, there Reza Khan represented a newly emergent Persian source of power that was prepared to do much more to assert its independence than in the days of the Qajar dynasty. Moreover, this was a time when Britain had major interests in southern Persia, which she was compelled to protect from a relatively weak position and a post-war disinclination to become re-embroiled in Iranian internal affairs. Finally, during the third case study Britain was a shadow of her former imperial self, and was facing considerable economic uncertainties during the 1970s. Iran in 1974 was, by contrast, at the apogee of Pahlavi power and prestige following the Oil Embargo and subsequent economic boom. Such contrasts provide for a robust comparative analysis of the case studies in the concluding sections of this thesis, in which there is an assessment of the different policies Britain pursued, and the impressions and techniques of performance utilised in their support.

INTRODUCTION TO PRIMARY SOURCES

The primary source material for this thesis derives almost exclusively from British sources, complemented by a handful of exceptionally useful Persian translated sources including the diaries of Asadollah Alam, the Shah's Court Minister from 1967 until two years prior to the revolution.¹²² Equally useful were the diaries of Pahlavi Iran's last ambassador to Britain, Parviz Radji.¹²³ Finally Nasir al-Din Shah's translated travelogues from 1873 have been consulted. Although censored, they still shed some light on some of the Shah's views of Britain and Queen Victoria.¹²⁴ Due to a paucity of Persian sources, along with deficiencies in Persian language, it was felt that a study of Anglo-Iranian relations focussing on both Iran and Britain was not possible. As such, when gauging the efficacy of British impression management, only tentative answers can be proffered, based on British documents including a Cabinet Office post-mortem report on British policy toward Iran before and during the Iranian Revolution. Furthermore, Loraine's former Counsellor Harold Nicolson, gave robust assessments of Reza Khan, Persia and Britain, on his former chief's departure. Additional secondary source material also provides valuable information about the trajectories and directions Iran and Britain went in the years following each case study. Meanwhile, the archival backbone of the thesis centres on official documentation and private papers held at the National Archives in Kew. This constitutes the bulk of the archival material for the second and third case studies, including Loraine's private papers, and the majority of declassified files from 1970s, though quite a few folios have been retained by the F.C.O., clearly due to their sensitive contents. The official correspondence, mostly emanating from the Foreign Office and later the F.C.O., is best suited to providing context and also shedding light on the more formal verbal and written

¹²² Asadollah Alam, trans. by Alinaghi Alikhani and Nicholas Vincent, *The Shah and I, The Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court, 1969-1977*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1991).

¹²³ Parviz C. Radji, *In the Service of the Peacock Throne*, (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1983).

¹²⁴ J.W., Redhouse, trans., *The Diary of H.M. the Shah of Persia during his tour through Europe in A.D.1873*, (London: J. Murray, 1874).

interactions between British officials and their Iranian counterparts. One thing that differs from the 1870s to 1970s, is the sheer density of material in the latter period, added to be very extensive “Briefs” and “Speaking Notes” produced by the F.C.O. for directing their government colleagues on what to say or do in the presence of Iranian government officials.

Meanwhile, private papers and published memoirs and biographies offer colourful prose, anecdotes and more importantly, descriptions of theatricalised diplomacy. Loraine, and two of his colleagues Sir Gladwyn Jebb and Harold Nicolson proved invaluable in this context, as did Gordon Waterfield and Jacob Lees-Milne who wrote the biographies of Loraine and Nicolson respectively. As to the visit of 1873, Foreign Office files again feature as do newspaper articles which provided incredible detail, following the Shah’s every move. Furthermore, Queen Victoria’s journals provide touching and revealing accounts of her time with the Shah. Finally, where possible, a selection of contemporaneous images have been displayed in the thesis, drawn from various sources including Loraine’s own photograph album, and the Victorian era press publications including the *Illustrated London News*. These images are not given a thorough or theorised analysis, instead they merely serve as accurate visual reminders of that which the protagonists of this performance based study of diplomacy would have seen. They do, however, often highlight the techniques of performance that British officials attempted to use in Britain’s fostered impressions.

THESIS STRUCTURE

There are three main chapters to this thesis, each corresponding to the case studies. Within each chapter a particular moment of significance is assessed with a thickly descriptive approach, involving efforts to identify and discuss British impressions and techniques of performance. Subsequently, the identified impressions and techniques are assessed in an extrapolated form for every year that each case study encompasses. Each chapter is followed by conclusions summarising the impressions fostered, the techniques used and connectedly the fate of Britain’s foreign policy aims in relation to its theatrical efforts to pursue their achievement. A final section seeks to bring this all together by comparing the continuities and contrasts within Britain’s one hundred years of foreign policy and performance in Persia.

CHAPTER

I

THE STATE VISIT OF

NASIR AL-DIN SHAH QAJAR

1872-1874

INTRODUCTION

Then visit Europe: knock up the Great Bear:
Drop in upon the Lion in his lair:
With ears on the *qui vive*, eyes opened wide,
Say little, see all, and on every side.
Judge not by what they say, but what you see,
And let your judgement guide your policy.
NASR-ED-DIN groaned, but bowed his head to fate,
Donned diamond aigrette and coat of state;
Took leave of all his wives, and, with a sigh;
A Shah of Diamonds flashed on Europe's eye!¹²⁵

This opening analysis chapter focusses on the first visit of a Persian head of state to Great Britain, a seminal moment in Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations. As part of a his European tour in 1873, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar spent seventeen days in the Britain,¹²⁶ lavishly entertained and feted by the Royal Family, the government and its municipal corporations, the provincial nobility, business elite, and even the commoners of the kingdom. Denis Wright thought “the Shah’s first European tour breached the isolation of centuries”, ushering in a period of “closer contact with the Western world” which brought “new ideas” and objects into Persia – from constitutionalism to tutus and zoos.¹²⁷ Moreover, 1873 set a precedent which led to further visits until the collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty just over a hundred years later. According to I.R. scholar Erik Goldstein such state visits constitute excellent opportunities for countries to signal mutual intentions, using powerful symbolic and ceremonial techniques to further foreign policy aims.¹²⁸ This chapter identifies two main impressions which Britain sought to foster during the state visit to assist its foreign policy aims in Persia; World Power Vitality and Overt Cordiality. Furthermore, within Britain’s fostered impressions this chapter identifies certain themes. Two are identified in the context of Overt Cordiality; Civic and Public Welcome and Court Splendour. Meanwhile, regarding World Power Vitality another two themes feature; Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity and Military Might. In terms of structure, these impressions, themes and the foreign policy aims they complemented, are first studied in the context of a specific moment within the state visit,

¹²⁵ ‘The Cat, the Bear, and the Lion’, *Punch Historical Archive*, 21 June 1873.

¹²⁶ From the 18th of June to the 5th of July.

¹²⁷ Wright, *Persians*, p. 121-135.

¹²⁸ Erik Goldstein, ‘The Politics of the State Visit’, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 3 (2008), pp. 153-178.

namely the Shah's trip to Manchester. Both civic and public welcome and commercial and capitalist Prosperity are studied exclusively in the context of this event, the former centring on the welcome laid on by the Corporation of Manchester (C.o.M.) and the latter focussing on Nasir al-Din's tour of Mancunian commerce and industry. Subsequently, the impression of overt cordiality is studied within the context of the state visit beyond the city of Manchester, centring on the Court Splendour facilitated by the British Royal Family. This section also elaborates on the broader subject of state visits, the characteristics of Britain's constitutional monarchy, and the nature of British and Persian policy toward one another. Lastly, the final section covers World Power Vitality and Military Might by focusing on three events during the visit; the trip to the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, the display of the Royal Navy at Spithead, and finally the Military Review of Britain's Household Troops at Windsor. I look upon these moments as separate 'performances' of each impression and theme.

MANCHESTER **'A PROFUSION OF BUNTING'**

At just after two in the afternoon of the 27th of June 1873, in dull "Manchester-like" weather,¹²⁹ His Imperial Majesty (H.I.M.) arrived at the provincial metropolis of Manchester at its London Road Station, one of the city's most congested transport hubs.¹³⁰ The "usually gloomy looking station was scarcely to be recognised",¹³¹ having been turned instead into a "fancy bazaar, half conservatory" with banners and national flags including the Persian standard, hanging from the girders below the glass roof.¹³² The overall "spectacle" was "one of considerable grandeur"¹³³ with a "profusion of bunting",¹³⁴ and a tiered stand covered "by bright draperies" and "innumerable stands of choice flowers".¹³⁵ These were also complemented by the Victorian obsession for blooming rhododendrons which lined the station platform.¹³⁶ Prominent local businessman and railwayman Sir Edward Watkin, had "personally superintended the fitting up" of the station,¹³⁷ in readiness for the several thousand excitable and well-dressed men and women who filed in.¹³⁸

¹²⁹ 'The Shah at Manchester', *Leeds Mercury*, 28 June 1873.

¹³⁰ 'London Road (Manchester) Station', *Manchester Times*, 21 Oct. 1865.

¹³¹ *Leeds Mercury*, 28 June.

¹³² 'The Shah in Manchester', *Guardian*, 28 June 1873 & 'Visit of the Shah to Manchester', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 28 June 1873.

¹³³ *Sheffield Daily*, 28 June.

¹³⁴ *Guardian*, 28 June.

¹³⁵ 'The Shah of Persia', *Times*, 28 June 1873.

¹³⁶ Clive L. Justice, 'The Victorian Rhododendron Story', *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society*, 53 (1999)

<<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v53n3/v53n3-justice.htm>> [accessed: 9.5.16].

¹³⁷ 'The Shah in Manchester', *The Bradford Observer*, 28 June 1873 & *Guardian*, 28 June.

¹³⁸ *Bradford Observer*, 28 June & *Sheffield Daily*, 28 June.

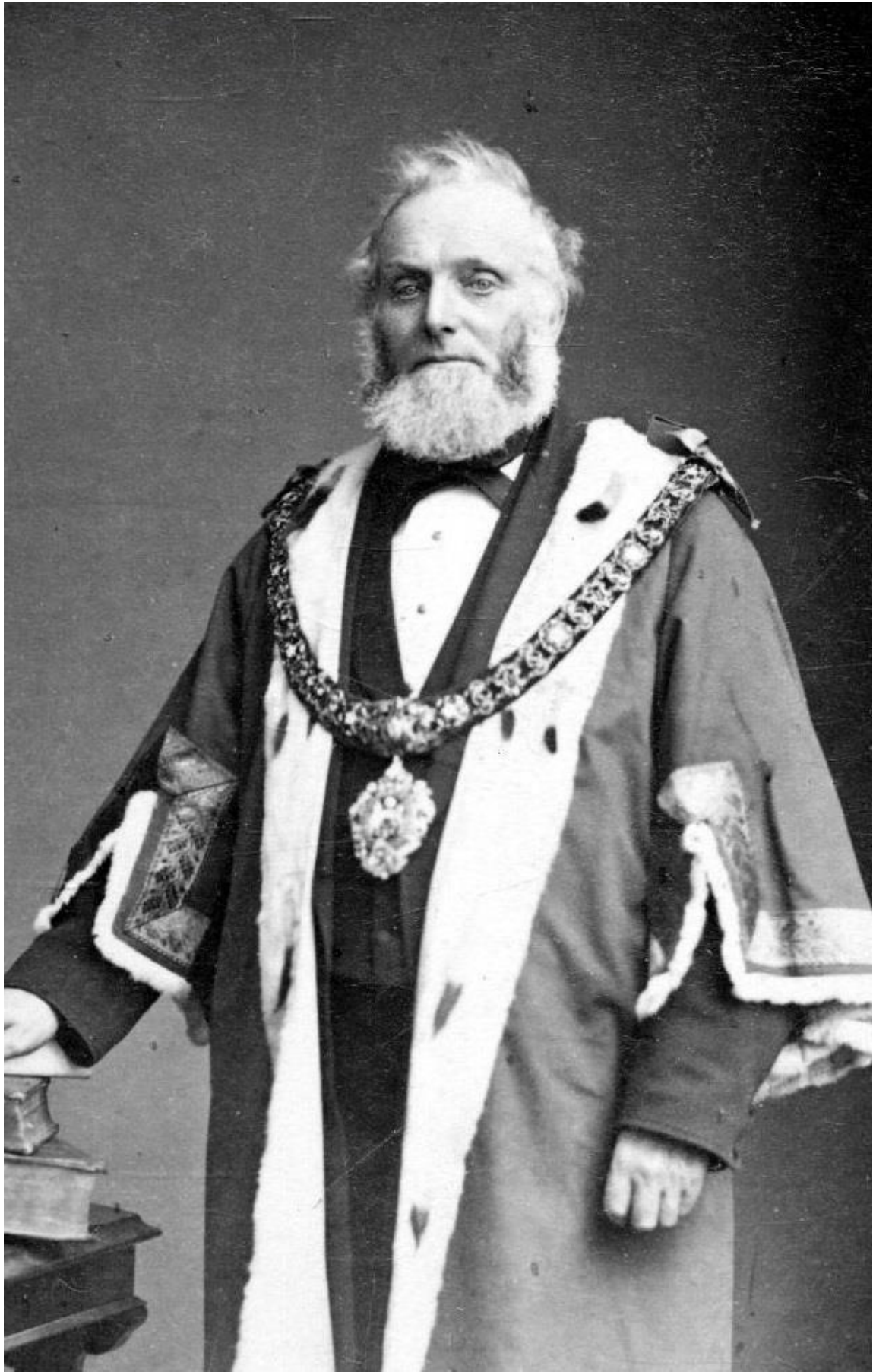


Fig. 1: Mayor William Booth in his robes (*Manchester Local Image Collection M.L.I.C.*, 1873).

The C.o.M.'s special Reception Committee also joined the scene, including the Mayor, the Town Clerk, and a number of notables and city councillors.¹³⁹ The Mayor, "his Worship" William Booth wore his "grand chain of office" and scarlet gown with ermine trim (Fig. 1), whilst the councillors donned official purple robes.¹⁴⁰ The civic authorities were accompanied by a cavalry escort, a band, and a guard of honour composed of troops from the 3rd Manchester Volunteers, and the 101st Royal Bengal Fusiliers in "bright scarlet" coats.¹⁴¹ When His Majesty alighted, the Mayor went forth to greet him amid loud cheering.¹⁴² Simultaneously the soldiers presented arms and a military band struck up the Persian National Air. Such was the excitement, that even the respectable middle class Mancunians in the station "lost their self-possession" in "their anxiety to obtain a glimpse" of the Oriental potentate.¹⁴³ Around ten minutes later the whole party entered awaiting carriages after confronting another "promiscuous vortex" of people, some of whom broke through the police cordon and "wildly mobbed the Shah".¹⁴⁴

In these opening moments one observes a highly orchestrated British performance of Overt Cordiality that had taken considerable preparation, and which used what Goffman terms impersonal "front" and also "personal front". The former features "setting, involving furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props" to a performance.¹⁴⁵ Meanwhile, personal front helps to identify and mark individual performers in the context of "rank; clothing, sex, age...size and looks; posture, speech patterns, facial expressions" and "bodily gestures". These were all used on a grand scale to foster Overt Cordiality and Civic and Public Welcome during that moment in Manchester.¹⁴⁶ The performance also featured a series of dense ritualised acts which "reified" Anglo-Persian relations in symbolic form. According to James Combs, "political ritual" features a process which brings about reification as "expressive action, highly symbolic and structured", saying "what cannot be said in any other way".¹⁴⁷ Raymond Cohen argues similarly when he notes that state visits "conjure up a mythical world in which the nature of a relationship is enacted in the form of a pageant and ritual".¹⁴⁸ The 'nature' of Anglo-Persian relations could have been expressed in more conventional terms, however, the symbolic celebration and enactment of these relations served to amplify their nature – or the nature that Britain desired to amplify – to a degree impossible with mere diplomatic correspondence. As to the 'nature' of Anglo-Persian relations, it centred largely on warmth and cordiality, complementing a key and constant British policy toward Persia; the maintenance of friendly relations.

¹³⁹ *Guardian*, 28 June.

¹⁴⁰ *Bradford Observer*, 28 June.

¹⁴¹ *Bradford Observer*, 28 June.

¹⁴² *Guardian*, 28 June.

¹⁴³ *Guardian*, 28 June.

¹⁴⁴ 'The Shah at Crewe and Manchester', *Daily News*, 28 June 1873.

¹⁴⁵ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 22.

¹⁴⁶ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 24-5.

¹⁴⁷ James E. Combs, *Dimensions of Political Drama*, (Santa Monica: Goodyear Publishing Company, 1980), p. 19.

¹⁴⁸ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 149.

OVERT CORDIALITY CIVIC AND PUBLIC WELCOME

Through this ritual enactment of Anglo-Persian relations in Manchester, the wider British government sought to foster an amplified impression of Overt Cordiality which would help to maintain friendly relations. In turn, this would potentially increase Britain's political influence in Iran at the expense of other powers, most notably Russia. Connectedly, Overt Cordiality supported Britain's main strategic foreign policy aim in Persia; ensuring the country's sovereignty and independence, often through the legitimisation and support for the Qajar dynasty. In Manchester this impression was also espoused with emphasis on Civic and Public Welcome, featuring efforts from Manchester's civic authorities and its citizens. Regarding the strategies involved in this ritualised impression management, it is first worth noting that Britain had willingly accommodated the Shah's desire to visit Manchester. Whilst at St. Petersburg with His Majesty, the Tehran legation counsellor Ronald Thomson had noted the Persian monarch's desire to visit provincial cities including Manchester.¹⁴⁹ The municipal C.o.M. and its elected council were consequently informed by Her Majesty's Government (H.M.G.) of its impending role in the reception. Correspondence will have emanated from the Lord Chamberlain's Office under Viscount Sydney and the Foreign Office under Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, the two principal officials coordinating efforts, ensuring that local corporations made the "necessary arrangements" for a courteous welcome.¹⁵⁰ To Goffman and Cohen these two officials were jointly assuming the overall role of director and "*metteur-en-scène*", maintaining the smoothness of a performance, whilst determining which performers, state-props and settings were to be used.¹⁵¹ The C.o.M. responded by making immediate preparations, acting in almost complete unity with British government plans for the visit. It is apt to use the term 'almost', since the Corporation was also using the performance for another purpose; to promote itself and Manchester to a local audience.

Simon Gunn argues that during the Victorian period, the visible nature of ceremonial occasions such as processions in cities including Manchester, offered a "special opportunity for the symbolic display" of civic authority to a massed citizen audience.¹⁵² According to Gunn, such processional civic displays had been in decline in the early years of the 19th century, until Queen Victoria visited the industrial cities in 1851.¹⁵³ These were the first visits of their kind by a reigning monarch, and also the first used by the C.o.M. for the specific purpose of civic display and the extolment of Liberalism, which dominated Mancunian politics for much of the 19th century, until a Tory revival in 1868.¹⁵⁴ Gunn, furthermore, argues that the visit of 1851 was viewed quite differently by the government vis-à-vis the Corporation.

¹⁴⁹ FO60/358, St. Petersburg [sic], Ronald Thomson to Edmund Hammond, 28 May 1873.

¹⁵⁰ 'At a meeting of the Dover Town Council', *Morning Post*, 6 June 1873, & 'The Forthcoming Visit of the Shah', *Dover Express*, 13 June 1873.

¹⁵¹ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 97-98 & Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 114-115.

¹⁵² Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City, 1840-1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 163.

¹⁵³ Gunn, *Public*, p. 164-5.

¹⁵⁴ Gunn, *Public*, p. 167 & Alan Kidd, *Manchester, a history*, (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd., 2006) p. 172-174.

The former saw it as a way to promote the Queen, whilst the latter used it to project the city's "regional role as the capital of the cotton industry",¹⁵⁵ and to emphasise their democratic mandate.¹⁵⁶ It was also an early attempt to dignify corporate life by celebrating the city with a procession through streets "festooned with flags", with a central role played by the Mayor and the counsellors wearing their ceremonial robes for the first time.¹⁵⁷ There was no doubt a degree of exceptionalism in the Shah's visit to Manchester, and a concurrent celebration of the Corporation's civic power. This, however, merely complemented the goals of the British government. Indeed, Manchester was chosen by the Shah *because* of a degree of exceptionalism emanating from the city's commercial prosperity, which the British government also wished to emphasise. Thus, although the C.o.M. was as Goffman puts it, exploiting "their presence in the front region in order to stage their own show",¹⁵⁸ Britain's performance team exhibited considerable "dramaturgical loyalty" in that all members were acting to further the government's foreign policy aims.¹⁵⁹ This included the press which largely parroted the government's line in Manchester and elsewhere. Indeed, local and national papers were in a "frenzy" over the whole affair, ratcheting up the suspense and excitement.¹⁶⁰ The newspapermen in this case at least, had not engaged in their frequent habit of damaging Britain's foreign relations with "sneering descriptions" of foreign states including Russia.¹⁶¹

Meanwhile, the council prepared a suitably grand "show" of welcome which catered both to their desire for civic celebration, and the foreign policy needs of Whitehall.¹⁶² The first step was for the council to form a "sub-committee" in early June to "make arrangements for the reception of the Shah".¹⁶³ This centred on a procession, blending the notion of festival and solemn civic ceremony. Manchester was thus to be transformed from a busy manufacturing metropolis into a setting that was simultaneously festive and formal, in order to welcome and celebrate Anglo-Persian relations, and to legitimise Nasir al-Din's kingship. Consequently, the committee made sure the Town Hall had been "tastefully decorated",¹⁶⁴ with "crimson satin" carpet up the stairs, bordered by "immense ferns".¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, by June the 12th an address of welcome laden with rhetorical dictums about the warmth of Anglo-Persian relations had been drafted.¹⁶⁶ This presented a textual dimension to the visit to be delivered in ritualised form within the Town Hall, a setting chosen due to its civic status and because it "ranked among the best classic edifices in the kingdom" (Fig. 2).¹⁶⁷ Meanwhile, like Mr Watkin at the station, Richard

¹⁵⁵ Gunn, *Public*, p. 165.

¹⁵⁶ Gunn, *Public*, p. 168.

¹⁵⁷ Gunn, *Public*, p. 165-6.

¹⁵⁸ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 214.

¹⁵⁹ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 214.

¹⁶⁰ 'The Shah's Visit', *Sunday Times*, 6 July 1873.

¹⁶¹ Paul M., Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences upon British External Policy, 1865-1980* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1981) p. 54.

¹⁶² *Guardian*, 28 June.

¹⁶³ 'Manchester City Council', *Guardian*, 12 June 1873.

¹⁶⁴ *Daily News*, 28 June.

¹⁶⁵ *Guardian*, 28 June. Ferns were another Victorian obsession (Peter D. A. Boyd, 'Pteridomania – the Victorian passion for ferns', *Antique Collecting*, 28 (1993) <<http://www.peterboyd.com/pteridomania.htm>> [accessed: 10.5.16].

¹⁶⁶ 'The Shah of Persia', *Times*, 12 June 1873.

¹⁶⁷ 'The Architecture of Manchester', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 1 June 1861.

Haworth, senior partner at the mills of Messrs. Haworth and Co., made sure to decorate his establishment with flags “hung from nearly every window” and bits of coloured paper surmounted to cotton looms.¹⁶⁸ After appeals from the Mayor, smaller businesses and members of the public had also taken it upon themselves to add to the festiveness,¹⁶⁹ so much so that the *Manchester Guardian* thought:

It would be impossible...to enter into details as to the appearance of particular thoroughfares. It may be enough to say that every street through which the procession passed...wore a holiday appearance. There was...every...kind of decoration suited to the occasion – in one word the whole display was in the highest degree creditable to the public spirit of our citizens.¹⁷⁰

Regarding further preparation, the committee had also determined the streets to be used, informing both local and national papers around a week before the Shah’s arrival.¹⁷¹ This allowed businesses along the route to set up complementary decorations. The committee had also instructed the police to provide a cordon, and to divert traffic to side streets,¹⁷² “no small inconvenience” in the “busiest of all provincial towns”.¹⁷³ Crucially, this allowed the other major component of Civic and Public Welcome to coalesce; the crowd. Elements of this were drawn from all over Greater Manchester, clustering along the marked route. A *Daily News* correspondent noted its vastness stating:

...never have I seen one so dense...as that which lined the streets of Manchester...Wherever one looked one saw the same interminable sea of eager close-packed faces...Every window was full... People stood on sills, on balconies...on hoardings, on the scaffolding of houses being built, on the edge of signboards; they hung from lamp-posts, stanchions – everything, indeed, that afforded a handgrip. No throng like the Manchester one has the Shah seen since he entered Europe, and it is not likely that he will ever see its equal.¹⁷⁴

The hands of the various factories in the manufacturing districts had also been given temporary leave of absence, and they flocked to see the procession in their “hundreds of thousands”.¹⁷⁵ This scene carried on in the mills of Mr Haworth, with faces at the windows and a large crowd of workers in the yard, mostly consisting of women and girls. Lastly, as at the London Road Station, the committee had directly facilitated a spectating audience in the Town Hall, with floor space made available for “a numerous company admitted by ticket”.¹⁷⁶ During the execution of the procession the impact of this stage-managed mass audience of Mancunians was palpable. They became living stage-props amplifying the importance of the scene with their numbers. In her work on the symbolic aspects of the 1955 Bandung Conference of non-aligned countries, Naoko Shimazu argues that large crowds in the city gave

¹⁶⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, 28 June.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Manchester City Council’, *Guardian*, 3 July 1873.

¹⁷⁰ *Guardian*, 28 June.

¹⁷¹ *Leeds Mercury*, 28 June.

¹⁷² *Bradford Observer*, 28 June.

¹⁷³ *Times*, 28 June.

¹⁷⁴ *Daily News*, 28 June.

¹⁷⁵ *Times*, 28 June.

¹⁷⁶ *Guardian*, 28 June.

“credence to the whole event”.¹⁷⁷ A similar phenomenon took place in Manchester where the crowd was thought to have been the “most imposing of all street decorations”.¹⁷⁸ The Mancunian mass also acted as a multitudinous member of Britain’s performance team by dint of nationality, implicitly impressing Overt Cordiality and Public Welcome through their use of nonverbal and verbal communication such as cheering and waving.¹⁷⁹



Fig. 2: Manchester’s old Town Hall, Cross St. (M.L.I.C., 1875).

In a sense the crowd was acting in what Alisher Faizullaev terms a “state selfhood”, representing the country through their combined and cordial personhoods, much as diplomats do in a personal or singular context.¹⁸⁰ This impression of Overt Cordiality was moreover infused with ritual, an idea inferred by Combs’ work on political drama. Combs suggests that “political ritual” often takes the form of festival and procession, which involve “the structure and trappings of theatre”, such as props and costume.¹⁸¹ Processions involve a “small group of elite celebrants” passing before an audience “on some

¹⁷⁷ Shimazu, ‘Diplomacy... Theatre’, p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ *Guardian*, 28 June.

¹⁷⁹ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 24-25.

¹⁸⁰ Faizullaev, ‘Diplomacy and Self’, p. 500.

¹⁸¹ Combs, *Dimensions*, p. 19 & p. 23.

designed route” to serve as a “dramatic reminder” of a political concept or relationship.¹⁸² Meanwhile, festivals “increase social integration by creating joy in fellowship” and furthering the unity of a group.¹⁸³ In Manchester the committee combined both festival and procession, as a means of reifying the cordial nature of Anglo-Iranian relations. In the London Road Station for instance, the scene was made festive with the extensive decorations, juxtaposed by the civic seriousness of the regally costumed Reception Committee. Furthermore, the loud cheering and the physical heaving of the crowd toward the Shah immediately upon the Mayor’s historic greeting evoked the integratory festive joy that Combs alludes to, ostensibly furthering Anglo-Persian unity. Admittedly the exuberance became a little too boisterous, but it was reported that H.I.M. seemed only a “little tickled by the eagerness of the worthy souls” who swamped his party.¹⁸⁴

The route of the procession itself had more to do with World Power Vitality, however, in the context of Overt Cordiality it served to provide the Shah with a constant stream of spectators, many of whom engaged in welcoming nonverbal and verbal communication. Indeed, on the way to the Town Hall the procession passed through a “vast multitude” of Mancunians of all classes, young and old, men and women, all “overflowing with good humour”.¹⁸⁵ If such spectators were not cheering from the “window, balcony, and footway and even from the housetops” along the route,¹⁸⁶ they were waving their greetings, partaking in a ubiquitous Victorian gesture of nonverbal communication.¹⁸⁷ The women specifically waved their handkerchiefs “in the most vigorous manner”, a particular demonstration of approval in Georgian and Victorian society.¹⁸⁸ Such communicative acts also celebrated the visit, serving as another dramatic reminder of Anglo-Persian cordiality and unity. Waving and cheering was, moreover, apparently ubiquitous, belying the reality of an industrial metropolis intersected by wealth, class, ethnicity and politics.¹⁸⁹ From a city that had been the “focus of industrial unrest” during the era of the Chartists,¹⁹⁰ Manchester had softened into a state of dignified Victorian respectability. Its working-class citizens could, however, still express their discontent with ongoing poverty and poor labour relations.¹⁹¹ The Tories were also experiencing a revival in the city in the late 1860s, facilitated by anti-Catholic working class Protestant voters, whose zeal for Queen, country and church sometimes turned violent when encountering Manchester’s large Irish population.¹⁹² The press largely failed to pick up on these currents in their descriptions of the visit, suggesting that they had been momentarily forgotten by a

¹⁸² Combs, *Dimensions*, p. 27.

¹⁸³ Combs, *Dimensions*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁴ *Daily News*, 28 June.

¹⁸⁵ *Times*, 28 June.

¹⁸⁶ *Guardian*, 28 June.

¹⁸⁷ Michael Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1975), p. 7 & p. 222, Shimazu, ‘Diplomacy... Theatre’, p. 287.

¹⁸⁸ ‘Waving of Handkerchiefs’, *Morning Post*, 1 Sept. 1820.

¹⁸⁹ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 34-37 & p. 119-124.

¹⁹⁰ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 93-97, & Paul A. Pickering, *Chartism and the Chartists in Manchester and Salford*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995), p. 59-73.

¹⁹¹ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 167-169.

¹⁹² Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 172-174.

population wrapped up in the moment, much like in London where people went “Shah mad”.¹⁹³ Furthermore, although there was reference to class, it was largely positive in tone, with surprising praise for the conduct of the “rougher element” of Manchester.¹⁹⁴ This was despite the vortex outside the station where citizens had nonetheless acted without “evil meaning”.¹⁹⁵ The Mayor also had no complaints about the conduct of the city’s “working population for their quiet, respectable and peaceable demeanour”.¹⁹⁶ The happy crowd, the festiveness and the civic seriousness, continued in the Town Hall where the Corporation ritually delivered its address. H.I.M. entered on a “crimson carpet”, and headed to a canopied dais where he sat on a “veritable throne” of scarlet velvet with gold trim.¹⁹⁷ Sir Joseph Heron, the Town Clerk, then came forward and delivered the address which directly impressed Overt Cordiality by stating that:

We, the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens of the city of Manchester...respectfully offer to your Majesty a cordial and hearty welcome on your visit...We approach...with profound respect to express the deep feelings of satisfaction which we in common with all classes of our fellow-countrymen experience at the presence of your Majesty...and for the purpose of offering our sincere congratulations upon the occasion of the visit of your Majesty to our beloved Sovereign Victoria.¹⁹⁸

The Shah, bowed and replied through Sir Henry Rawlinson, his *mehmandar* or welcoming officer, stating that he was “extremely gratified by the marks of interest...evinced by the Mayor” and the Corporation.¹⁹⁹ Finally Mr Booth “enclosed the address in a cover of purple velvet and handed it to His Majesty”, to loud cheering.²⁰⁰ Subsequently, the procession headed to Mr Haworth’s mills amid a continued conveyor belt of convivial Mancunians.²⁰¹ Mr Haworth’s own preparatory enthusiasm has already been mentioned, however, his employees also added to the festive joy by clapping and shouting in anticipation. As the procession drew nearer the “fervour of excitement increased in intensity” until “positive screams” were heard as the “glistening” procession entered the courtyard (Fig. 3).²⁰²

¹⁹³ ‘London has gone Shah mad’, *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 26 June 1873.

¹⁹⁴ *Sheffield Daily*, 28 June.

¹⁹⁵ *Gunn, Public*, p. 164-5, & *Daily News*, 28 June.

¹⁹⁶ *Guardian*, 3 July.

¹⁹⁷ *Times*, 28 June.

¹⁹⁸ *Times*, 28 June.

¹⁹⁹ *Guardian*, 28 June.

²⁰⁰ *Guardian*, 28 June.

²⁰¹ *Guardian*, 28 June.

²⁰² *Guardian*, 28 June.

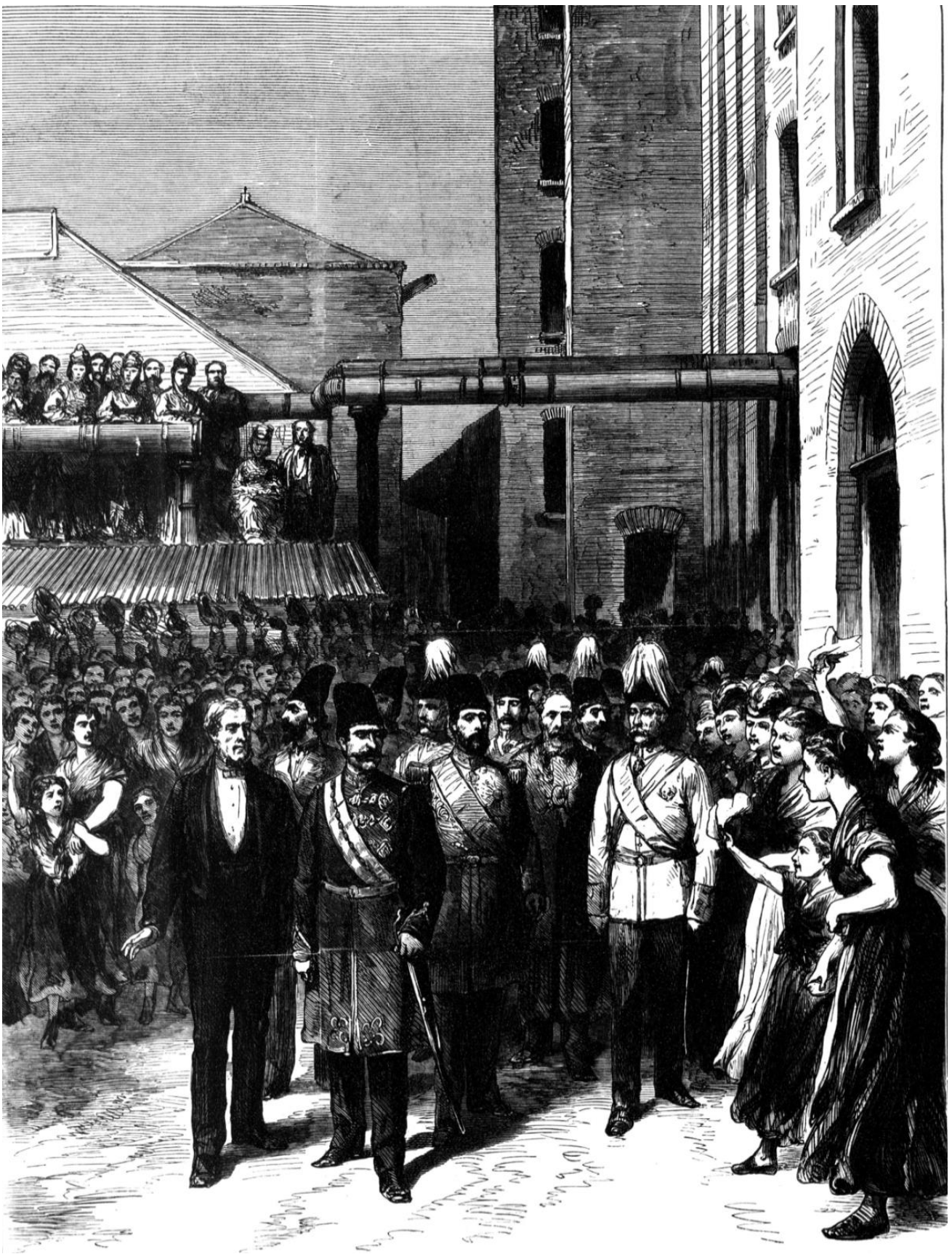


Fig. 3: Mr Richard Haworth welcomes the Shah ('Our Illustrations', *Graphic*, 5 July 1873).

Amid the waving of handkerchiefs one woman “looking ready to faint” was even said to have exclaimed “the diamonds. Oh! the diamonds”.²⁰³ This spontaneous festive joy was rounded off by a piece of pure theatre directed by Mr Haworth. During the inspection of the mill’s machinery he made a signal, and the loud reverberations halted as “the shuttles were stopped in an instant”. Subsequently, “all the women and girls” came “forward with bright paper flags to the edges of the gangway” and “burst” into song for His Majesty, whilst “waving little flags”.²⁰⁴

WORLD POWER VITALITY **COMMERCIAL AND CAPITALIST PROSPERITY**

Alongside Overt Cordiality, Manchester also helped to foster World Power Vitality, with emphasis on Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity. This featured a tour of Manchester’s wealth and innovation that would hopefully facilitate Persian efforts to reform along British lines, thereby assisting the primary strategic policy of maintaining Qajar independence. Connectedly, World Power Vitality was supportive of Britain’s aim to increase influence at the Qajar Court at the expense of Tsarist Russia. If Britain could demonstrate the economic pedigree of Manchester vis-à-vis cities in Russia, its voice might carry greater weight. As to the strategies involved in fostering World Power Vitality, it has already been noted that the Shah wished to see Manchester, a request the British government readily acquiesced to. In his reply to the Corporation’s address Nasir al-Din provided his reasons for visiting, stating that Manchester’s “commercial prosperity had been known to him since his early days” and that he had come to “witness it with his own eyes”.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, the British were of the opinion that Persia’s reformist chief minister – the Sadr-i Azam Mirza Husain Khan Mushir al-Daula – had wanted to visit Britain so that his monarch might observe and replicate Britain’s economic achievements.²⁰⁶

Connectedly, Rawlinson thought it would be useful for the Persians to observe the “teeming industry” of Britain’s “great centres of population”. These “striking scenes” he thought, might encourage them to reform, though the chances of success were “exceedingly doubtful” in view of Persia’s vastly different “social and moral system”. Britain could thus “only hope that the bread having been cast upon the waters” would at length, “be found”.²⁰⁷ In 1873 there was plenty of bread for Britain to cast about for displaying its power, much of it economic as opposed to military. Indeed, press reports on the Shah’s visit often favoured economic power projection over military display, with the exception of anything involving the navy. For instance the *Examiner*, a paper known for its radicalism,²⁰⁸ lamented the fact that “Mahommedans”, having finally learnt “to put more faith in the modern...industrial spirit”, were being

²⁰³ *Guardian*, 28 June.

²⁰⁴ *Times*, 28 June.

²⁰⁵ *Times*, 28 June.

²⁰⁶ FO60/358, Tehran, Thomson to Foreign Office, 17 April 1873.

²⁰⁷ Sir H.C. Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East; a series of papers on the political geographical condition of Central Asia*, (London: J. Murray, 1875), p. 132.

²⁰⁸ Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England 1855-1914*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield Pub. Inc., 1976), p. 90 & H.R. Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers, Chapters in the History of Journalism, Vol. II*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1887), p. 289-291.

confronted by militarism in Europe when they should be observing “road-making, house-building” and “machine-construction”. To the paper displaying “big battalions” was a “vulgar” Russian-style despotism, bearing no “connection with a nation’s prosperity”. As such it “would be by far the better to keep our redcoats entirely out of sight”, in favour of displaying economic achievements.²⁰⁹ The more conservative *Morning Post* agreed in that “England’s greatness” was to be found in the “well-ordered industry of the vast cotton mills” of Manchester.²¹⁰ This pursuit of prosperity was furthermore, complemented by a “predilection for peace at any price”, starkly contrasting with Russia’s supposedly warlike countenance.²¹¹

Putting aside this rose-tinted assessment, one can stop to consider how powerful Britain’s actually was during this period According to historian Eric Hobsbawm the Industrial Revolution heralded Britain’s elevation “to a position of global influence and power unparalleled by any state...before or since”.²¹² Paul Kennedy argues that such power was facilitated by defeat of the French in 1815, which gifted British merchants the “lion’s share in maritime trade”. This in turn, added stimulus to the Industrial Revolution which had been bubbling in Britain since around 1760. Industrialisation meanwhile reinforced Britain’s ascendance in commerce, finance, shipping, and naval warfare, rendering Britain the only “World Power”. By 1873 she was still “in a class of her own”, controlling 32 percent of the world’s manufacturing capacity, along with a 25 percent share of world trade.²¹³ Russia meanwhile, had only started to experiment with industrialisation in the 1840s, a piecemeal process which was also often facilitated by British manpower and machinery.²¹⁴ It was not until the 1880s that Russia, finally free of serfdom and with sufficient urban growth, could begin to build industrial momentum.²¹⁵

Hobsbawm also argues that the Industrial Revolution was uniquely associated with cotton, a substance which was vital to the growth of the “new and revolutionary city of Manchester” during the mid-Victorian period. The Industrial Revolution was not solely about cotton, but it was the “pacemaker”, providing a major market for newly produced British machinery.²¹⁶ The importance of cotton was also underlined by the large size of this lucrative global industry. In the 1830s, cotton textiles made up 50 percent of British exports, with shipping and overseas trade generally dependent on this one industry alone.²¹⁷ In that same decade, 90 percent of the cotton industry was concentrated in Lancashire. Consequently Manchester, the principal city of the county, became the “world’s central market for the sale of cotton products”.²¹⁸ The great changes this status wrought on the population, on social order, and

²⁰⁹ ‘Political and Social’, *Examiner*, 7 June 1873.

²¹⁰ ‘The Shah of PERSIA leaves England to-day’, *Morning Post*, 5 July 1873.

²¹¹ ‘The Shah of Persia is now fairly launched on’, *Times*, 26 May 1873.

²¹² Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry & Empire, An Economic History of Britain since 1750*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968) p. 1.

²¹³ Kennedy, *Realities*, p. 18- 22.

²¹⁴ Peter N. Stearns, ‘Britain and the Spread of the Industrial Revolution’, in C. J. Barlett ed. *Britain Pre-eminent*, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1969) pp. 7-31 (p. 13-15).

²¹⁵ W.O. Henderson, *The Industrial Revolution on the Continent: Germany, France, Russia, 1800-1914*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966), p. 211-221.

²¹⁶ Hobsbawm, *Industry*, p. 40.

²¹⁷ Hobsbawm, *Industry*, p. 51.

²¹⁸ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 13 & p. 20.

the urban environment, made Manchester the “shock city” of its age.²¹⁹ Known as ‘Cottonopolis’,²²⁰ Manchester attracted a constant stream of visitors eager to see a new industrial city.²²¹ With its dense back-to-back terraced housing, punctuated by six storey commercial warehouses, “gasworks, canal wharves, timber yards, saw-mills, foundries, ironworks” and cotton mills in “forest of arrogant chimneys belching smoke”, it was the “very essence of industrialism”.²²² Although interest lessened after 1850, the city continued to attract urban tourists well into the second half of the century,²²³ by which time Manchester had matured into a provincial metropolis with a population of just under 460,000 people.²²⁴

By 1873, the city’s global reputation was still warranted, especially in the context of the cotton industry, which had become “highly specialised”, producing and distributing the globe’s “finest” cotton yarns.²²⁵ The economic benefit derived from this industry also made Manchester a major centre for banking, insurance, transport and the manufacture of machinery.²²⁶ Such was the reach and reputation of the city, that it was felt in Persia with “Manchester goods” arriving via Trebizond and Tabriz by the 1830s.²²⁷ Charles Issawi also notes that during the 19th century Iran’s trade saw a “sharp rise in textile imports, particularly cotton”, accounting for two thirds of total imports by 1850.²²⁸ Some of this came via Bushire, the Persian Gulf headquarters of the East India Company, or via Tabriz where several European firms “were importing British manufactures from Manchester” in the 1850s and 1860s.²²⁹ Seeing the deleterious effect of this process on Persia’s own handicrafts, the Qajar government even tried to counter with the construction of a cotton mill near Tehran. A British diplomat at the time reported that it was “probably the accounts of Manchester industry” which led to this largely unsuccessful Persian experiment.²³⁰ The city thus represented a hefty hunk of familiar bread to throw onto a Persian pond. According to Shimazu diplomatic performances often turn physical spaces including cities into theatrical stages of symbolic significance. This phenomenon took place during the Bandung Conference, when post-colonial African and Asian independence was celebrated along with nationalist pride in the new Republic of Indonesia. Bandung was chosen specifically, both as a modern and European city, and a former home to many of those involved in the Indonesian independence movement.²³¹ Similarly Cohen draws on Goffman in arguing that “setting” involving “furniture, décor, physical layout” and “scenery” – can serve to amplify a political performance.²³² It thus appears plain why the government was happy to

²¹⁹ Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities: Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Middlesbrough, Melbourne, London*, (London: Odhams Press, 1963), p. 86.

²²⁰ *Berkshire Chronicle*, 29 May, 1830.

²²¹ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 14, *Gunn, Public*, p. 36.

²²² Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 15-18.

²²³ *Gunn, Public*, p. 36-38.

²²⁴ *Gunn, Public*, p. 12.

²²⁵ *Gunn, Public*, p. 109.

²²⁶ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 101.

²²⁷ Wright, *English*, p. 96.

²²⁸ Charles Issawi, ‘European Economic Penetration, 1872-1921’, in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly and Charles Melville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 590-607, (p. 597).

²²⁹ Anette Ittig, ‘Ziegler’s Sultanabad carpet enterprise’, *Iranian Studies*, 25 (1992) pp. 103-135 & Gad G. Gilbar, ‘The Persian Economy in the Mid-19th Century’, *Die Welt des Islam*, 19 (1979) pp. 177-211, (p. 199-201).

²³⁰ Gilbar, ‘Persian Economy’, p. 199-200.

²³¹ Shimazu, ‘Diplomacy...Theatre’, p. 7.

²³² Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 22, Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 118.

accept the Shah's request to visit Manchester. "Nowhere" the *Leeds Mercury* wrote, "could His Majesty have "gleaned more of the industrial power of England than in Greater Manchester".²³³ As a symbol of the Industrial Revolution the city was eminently suited to serve as a setting to emphasis World Power Vitality and Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity. As previously noted, the Corporation determined which streets the procession would use in this context.



Fig. 4: The Manchester Royal Infirmary in Piccadilly (*M.L.I.C.*, 1859).

The sub-committee also determined which buildings the Shah was to visit. Buildings, according to Cohen, also feature in political theatre in that their construction and location have "expressive intent", reflecting the values or claims of a community.²³⁴ Furthermore, Goffman notes how they can be utilised in performances as part of a team's "front" operating as of "expressive" pieces of setting.²³⁵ During the height of Manchester's rapid industrialisation the city was not known for its aesthetic beauty, indeed, according to the famous Richard Cobden Manchester was the "shabbiest city in Europe" despite its wealth.²³⁶ Amidst the manufacturing megaliths there was poverty, filth and industrial waste.²³⁷

²³³ *Leeds Mercury*, 28 June.

²³⁴ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 128.

²³⁵ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 22.

²³⁶ *Gunn, Public*, p. 40.

²³⁷ *Gunn, Public*, p. 40 & Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 39-43.



Fig. 5: St. Ann's Square from both angles (*M.L.I.C.*, 1878).



Already by 1860 change was, however, well underway due to both private and publicly funded efforts to monumentalise, and moralise the city and its civic spaces.²³⁸ The *Manchester Courier* noted in June of 1861 that although there was “smoke everywhere”, Manchester was becoming a “more interesting city to walk...than London”, due to its grand architecture.²³⁹ The sub-committee endeavoured to make sure the

²³⁸ Gunn, *Public*, p. 51-52, & John J. Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester, An Architectural History*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 96-126.

²³⁹ *Manchester Courier*, 1 June.

processional route provided a glimpse of both this new monumental Manchester, and the manufacturing districts that made the construction of its new urban monuments possible.²⁴⁰ It was also keen to highlight the city's role as a site of "distribution, exchange and consumption", as well as production.²⁴¹ The first part of the procession was thus "calculated" to give "a very fair general impression" of Manchester's city centre.²⁴² From the station the procession headed down Piccadilly which had been redesigned twice in the 1830s and 1850s, when it was both widened and monumentalised with an esplanade and statues of political giants including Lord Wellington.²⁴³

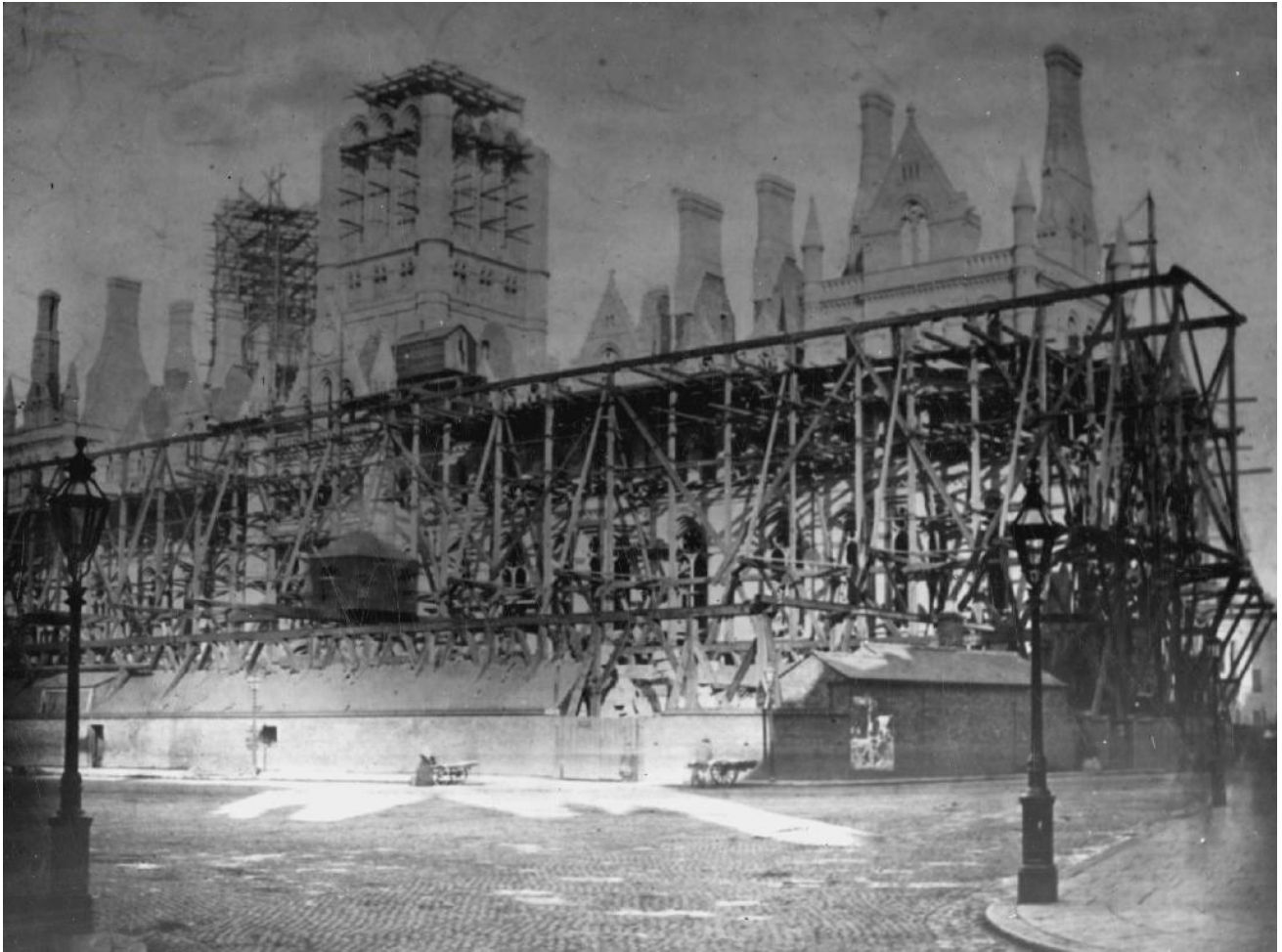


Fig. 6: The unfinished Town Hall on Albert Square (M.L.I.C., 1875).

The area was also home to the colonnaded Royal Infirmary, an elegant and functional structure which captured the eye of visitors as they entered the city centre (Fig. 4).²⁴⁴ Here the committee could directly bring to bear the expressive intent of the Corporation underlining central Manchester's majestic maturity, made possible from the proceeds of its economy.²⁴⁵ From Piccadilly the procession headed down Market

²⁴⁰ *Bradford Observer*, 28 June.

²⁴¹ *Gunn, Public*, p. 37, Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 101.

²⁴² *Guardian*, 28 June.

²⁴³ *Manchester Courier*, 1 June.

²⁴⁴ *Gunn, Public*, p. 51.

²⁴⁵ *Gunn, Public*, p. 54.

Street, which had been made into a grand boulevard in the 1860s to rival London's West End.²⁴⁶ The procession thence turned left onto St. Ann's Square (Fig. 5), proceeding to the corner of King Street. This was the heart of Manchester's retail quarter where the wealthy middle class cavorted about the streets teeming with shops, offices, warehouses and other "noble business premises".²⁴⁷ Expressive intent here was implicitly in the hands of the many retailers and proprietors, yet their desire for architectural grandeur to increase profits, was co-opted by the committee to highlight Mancunian prosperity.

Meanwhile, at the Town Hall on Cross Street the procession paused for the ritual delivery of the Corporation's address. Here Sir Heron extolled the C.o.M's representation of a "great manufacturing district", and in doing so assisted the impression of World Power Vitality with an emphasis on Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity.²⁴⁸ It was to this manufacturing district that attention now turned, with the procession first parading on a planned journey that would enable His Majesty to "see most of the business streets of Manchester". The *Times* claimed that the buildings on these streets were "not excelled by any in the kingdom" in "regards their height and magnitude".²⁴⁹ The procession thus headed along Cross St., through Albert Square for a rapid tour of the Corporation's newest attempt to dignify the city with a civic centre and a new Town Hall under construction (Fig. 6).²⁵⁰ Next the party traversed Mount Street, Deansgate, Liverpool Road, Water Street, and Regent Road in Salford where the Egerton Mills of Haworth and Co. were situated.²⁵¹ Deansgate and the surrounding streets on the edge of the commercial core were known for being "devoted to trade and manufacture", as well as to housing.²⁵² The Corporation had also inaugurated a widening programme in 1869, which was still underway when the Persian procession swept through.²⁵³ Meanwhile, those streets adjacent to the River Irwell were more exclusively associated with silk manufacturing, saw and cotton mills, chemical, dye, engineering and paper works.²⁵⁴ It was here that the crowd also acted most prominently as living stage-props, augmenting World Power Vitality through their extent. Furthermore, this mass of Mancunians was spilling forth from the mills and factories along the Irwell where "the sheer size and shape of some of these grimy leviathans of industry were inescapable" (Fig. 7).²⁵⁵ These functional multi-storey buildings were also a manifestation of mechanised modernity, which "dominated their environment in a manner unprecedented".²⁵⁶

²⁴⁶ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 54 & *Gunn, Public*, p. 47.

²⁴⁷ *Times*, 28 June, *Gunn, Public*, p. 75.

²⁴⁸ The Shah replied that he hoped "to be able to direct the energies of his people in the same industrial direction which made this city so great and prosperous", (*Times*, 28 June).

²⁴⁹ *Times*, 28 June.

²⁵⁰ *Gunn, Public*, p. 51 & *Times*, 28 June.

²⁵¹ *Times*, 28 June.

²⁵² 'The Census in the Slums: No. IV Our Observer in Deansgate', *Guardian*, 5 April 1871.

²⁵³ Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester*, p. 119.

²⁵⁴ Hugh Miller, *First Impressions of England and its People*, (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers: 1882), p. 62.

²⁵⁵ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 18.

²⁵⁶ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 18.



Fig. 7: A mill on the River Irwell (*M.L.I.C.*, 1860).

After utilising the exterior expressiveness of such structures to impress World Power Vitality, the committee next took the Shah into the belly of one of these brick beasts. Much like the rest of the processional route, the mills of Messrs. Haworth and Co. had been specially selected by the committee. They were some of “the largest” in the city, built at the close of the American Civil War.²⁵⁷ At less than a decade old they were thus “acknowledged to be the best possible representative specimens of the great cotton industry of Manchester in its fullest development”.²⁵⁸ Nasir al-Din went through the mills’ narrow pathways to observe this specimen, looking at “the cotton in all stages from preparation of the raw material to the weaving”.²⁵⁹ Machines were opened up for inspection in each room, including those in the weaving shed where a thousand cotton looms, “detestably noisy” in their industrious revolutions, were propelled by 1,050 horsepower steam engines (Fig. 8).²⁶⁰ Such was the noise that the H.I.M. had to place his hands over his ears,²⁶¹ before he left the looms to look over the finished textiles, some bearing Persian script and another showing his portrait.²⁶²

²⁵⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, 28 June.

²⁵⁸ *Daily News*, 28 June.

²⁵⁹ *Times*, 28 June.

²⁶⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, 28 June & *Guardian*, 28 June.

²⁶¹ *Daily News*, 28 June.

²⁶² *Guardian*, 28 June.



Fig. 8: The Shah inspecting the looms ('The Shah of Persia', *I.L.N.*, 5 July 1873).



Fig. 9: Watt's Warehouse (*M.L.I.C.*, 1866).

Due to the determination to ensure that every part of the procession was useful for presenting Mancunian prosperity, the return route selected was by way of Egerton Street, Chester Road, Great Bridgewater Street, Oxford Street and Portland Street.²⁶³ Here along the Rochdale Canal and the River Medlock were more factories, gas works, and other sites of industry including the “great engine works” of Messrs. Sharp, Stew and Co., which had dragged two steam locomotives onto the street for the Shah’s passing.²⁶⁴ Meanwhile, Portland Street was home to the last great symbol of Manchester’s economic prosperity; its warehouses. Alan Kidd has questioned Manchester’s reputation as a “factory town” arguing instead, that it was more a “warehouse town” which reflected the city’s status as the global market for cotton goods that were displayed and distributed from its warehouses.²⁶⁵ From the mid-19th century these structures assumed “gigantic” and majestic and Italianate proportions, turning Manchester into a 19th century Florence with the most “most spectacular” manifestation being represented by the palazzo style Watt’s Warehouse opened in 1858 (Fig. 9).²⁶⁶ After driving past this ornate hulk Nasir al-Din returned to the London Road Station, marking the end of his brief three hour sojourn.²⁶⁷

BEYOND MANCHESTER

OVERT CORDIALITY

COURT SPLENDOUR

Many of the dramatic techniques prevalent in Manchester were evident throughout the Shah’s state visit, indeed, from start to finish the Persians were peppered with well-prepared ritual processions and festive celebrations of Anglo-Persian cordiality. Aside from Civic and Public Welcome, I argue that such cordiality featured high levels of Court Splendour involving the Royal Family being used to welcome H.I.M. in a regal fashion. This section explores the use of the Royal Family during the state visit of Nasir al-Din, whilst also highlighting the political importance of 19th century monarchical state visits, the nature of social status and sovereignty in Britain, and the changing condition of royal ceremonial during the mid-Victorian period. Furthermore, there is discussion of British perceptions of the Persian ‘other’ and more importantly an appreciation for British policy toward the Persia and vice versa. All of these factors are relevant in that they influenced the state visit and served to regulate Britain’s impression of Overt Cordiality.

David Motadel asserts that European state visits had growing “political significance” during the 19th century, due in part to increased political stability following the Napoleonic Wars. Monarchs consequently travelled more, and in doing so “represented, and even personified their respective nations on the international stage”.²⁶⁸ This notion of royal personification, also posited by Johannes Paulmann in

²⁶³ *Daily News*, 28 June.

²⁶⁴ *Daily News*, 28 June.

²⁶⁵ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 17.

²⁶⁶ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 104-105 & Gunn, *Public*, p. 42 & Miller, *First Impressions*, p. 61.

²⁶⁷ *Guardian*, 28 June.

²⁶⁸ David Motadel, ‘Qajar Shahs in Imperial Germany’, *Past and Present*, 213 (2011), pp. 191-235, (p. 195).

his study of 19th century European royal relations,²⁶⁹ closely resembles the aforementioned concept of a “state selfhood” assumed by diplomats and even citizens of a state. Cohen refers to a similar idea revolving around the “leader as a signalman” who intimates his or her state’s intentions towards another through embodied actions and verbal utterances.²⁷⁰ Connectedly Motadel argues that state visits involving representative monarchs and members of royal families converted international relations into a “signal system” which uses ceremonial practices as “instruments” to indicate intentions or the nature of relations between states.²⁷¹

I argue that the British government used the Royal Family from Queen Victoria through to more minor members of the Houses of Hanover and of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, as such instruments, and as signalmen and women and personifications of Great Britain, as a means of facilitating friendlier relations with Persia and to increase influence at the Qajar court. Through this signalling role the Royal Family also legitimised the Qajar dynasty. Such legitimisation had been a consistently important aspect of Britain’s primary policy of maintaining Persian independence, facilitated historically through the use of political, financial and military resources in support of Fath Ali and Mohammad Shah.²⁷² The latter’s son and successor Nasir al-Din also benefitted from British officials raising funds in Azerbaijan to facilitate his return to Tehran in 1848.²⁷³ Indeed, British and Russian officials had “acted cordially together, having but one aim, to establish and support...the authority of Nasir al-Din” and his dynasty.²⁷⁴ Moreover the British had used their Royal Family in this legitimising capacity, with written communications from King William IV and later Queen Victoria to their “brother” monarchs Mohammad and Nasir al-Din.²⁷⁵

Accepting the Persian government’s request to visit Britain was an extension of this legitimisation, which furthermore, complemented another of the Shah’s personal motivations for journeying to Europe and Britain – the recognition of his own sovereignty. In his study of Qajar state visits to imperial Germany, Motadel argues that such excursions were part of a growing number undertaken by non-European monarchs during the mid-to-late 19th century in response to the threat posed by European imperialism. He notes that a royal reception offered “non-European rulers the opportunity to present themselves on the same level as European monarchs”. Furthermore, “involvement with the rituals and ceremonials of a state visit gave expression” to an Oriental “monarch’s dynastic legitimacy and their country’s national sovereignty” as well as “symbolically” levelling the “asymmetric power” between non-European and

²⁶⁹ Johannes Paulmann, “Searching for a “Royal International”: The Mechanics of Monarchical Relations in Nineteenth-Century Europe”, in Geyer and Paulmann eds., *Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 145-76, (p. 159-160 & p. 175-176).

²⁷⁰ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 44-46.

²⁷¹ Motadel, ‘Shahs’, p. 195-196.

²⁷² See Ingram, *Persian Connection*, p. 93, p. 115-119, p. 154, p. 168, p. 295 & p. 300-303, Ingram, *Beginning*, p. 16 & p. 182-184 & Malcolm Yapp ‘The Control of the Persian Mission, 1822-1836’, *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 7 (1959), pp.162-79.

²⁷³ FO60/140, Tabriz, Richard Stevens to Foreign Secretary Viscount Palmerston, 26 Sept. 1848.

²⁷⁴ FO248/128, Lt. Colonel Farrant to Palmerston, 9 Sept. 1848.

²⁷⁵ FO60/33, Letter from King William IV to Shah, 14 Jan.1833, FO248/72, Letter King William IV to Shah, 31 July 1834 & FO60/578, Queen Victoria to Mortimer Durand, 7 June 1896.

European polities.²⁷⁶ Drawing on anthropologist Clifford Geertz, Motadel argues that state visits offered “recognition”, and a way for non-European monarchs to enter into the European system of international relations by “spreading” their royal and national “scent”.²⁷⁷ In coming to Europe and to Britain, Nasir al-Din was spreading his own saffron scent, seeking to legitimise his dynasty and the Persian nation.²⁷⁸

The British government was content to acquiesce to this aspiration, using the overarching strategy of splendid royal welcome and acceptance. Thus, the Royal Family welcomed and temporarily accepted Nasir al-Din and his dynasty into British royal society, and into the “fraternity” of European monarchies which formed an ‘interdynastic’ aristocratic international community.²⁷⁹ Drawing from the work of Judith Butler, I argue that this acceptance also featured British facilitation of the Shah’s performative “enactment” of his membership of the fraternity and aristocratic society.²⁸⁰ H.I.M. was thus constantly attended by representatives or members of the Royal Family who utilised verbal and nonverbal communication to treat him with all necessary deferential courtesy. He stayed at royal residences, from where he sallied forth in royal means of transport to attend receptions at splendid royal settings, or prominent entertainments in the Royal or State Box. The Shah also took part in festive processions and sacred royal rituals which affirmed his status and celebrated Anglo-Persian dynastic unity.

Indeed, the Shah was in almost every way treated as a European monarch, though one with the added allure of an exotic Oriental ruler.²⁸¹ According to David Cannadine, such treatment was reflective of 19th century Victorian culture which held that social status, and not race, was the guiding principle of elite relations, both within the empire and beyond its borders with respect to perceptions of the Oriental other. This principle underpinned the British attitude to Nasir al-Din and his aspiration for legitimisation.²⁸² Connectedly, with respect to the condition of British society and its royal ritual traditions, Cannadine argues that 19th century Britain was characterised by a rigidly gradated and unequal society that “extended in a great chain of being from the monarch at the top to the humblest subject at the bottom”.²⁸³ Atop of this chain in 1873 was Victoria, ‘by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the faith’ and last of the Hanoverian dynasty which had reigned since 1714. She was ruler of the globe’s only ‘World Power’ in terms of economic productivity and naval potency, as well as territorial extent, with possessions stretching over nearly eight million

²⁷⁶ Motadel, ‘Shahs’, p. 194.

²⁷⁷ Motadel, ‘Shahs’, p. 194 & p. 234-235 & Clifford Geertz, ‘Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power’, in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1983), p. 125.

²⁷⁸ Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.: 1997), p. 26-427.

²⁷⁹ Paulmann, ‘Searching’, p. 145 & p. 148.

²⁷⁹ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, (New York: Oxford University Press 2001), p. 9.

See also Martin E. Malia, *Russia under Western Eyes, From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 38.

²⁸⁰ Butler, *Gender*, p. 33, p. 44 & p. 89.

²⁸¹ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 425.

²⁸² Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, p. 8-9.

²⁸³ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, p. 4.

square miles, containing a population of over two hundred and thirty million souls.²⁸⁴ As an embodiment of the British Empire hosting receptions in the imperial capital and “centre of the world’s trade and finance”, how could she not provide for an impressive and splendid performance for a Persian potentate?²⁸⁵

Well, despite such power there were issues when contemplating the provision of such a performance. For a start, the empire’s very success sometimes made its elites less disposed to the ostentatious display that often characterised splendid ceremony on the continent. Cannadine writes that as the preeminent “policeman of the world”, Britain could afford to evince disinterest for “trivial” ceremonial one-upmanship.²⁸⁶ Furthermore, since Victorians self-identified as the “leaders of civilisation”,²⁸⁷ they “prided themselves” on the avoidance of “show, extravagance, ceremonial and ostentation”.²⁸⁸ It was for this reason Cannadine argues, that London was so “ill-suited” as a “setting for grand royal ceremonial” compared to Paris and St. Petersburg. In those cities “grand buildings and splendid thoroughfares” served as “monuments to the power of...the monarchy”, meanwhile, in London buildings were more often representative of the “wealth of the *private* individual” who was proud to be “free” and indisposed to despotism.²⁸⁹

Such extolment of freedom also partially explains the “limited” nature of monarchical rule in Britain, embodied in its Bill of Rights of 1689.²⁹⁰ The Glorious Revolution had precipitated the bill which “severely limited the powers of the sovereign”, creating Britain’s constitutional monarchy in which Parliament was paramount.²⁹¹ Prior to the bill the English had also disposed of a king’s head before embracing republicanism in the Interregnum from 1649 to 1660.²⁹² Despite the Restoration, republicanism never fully disappeared, consequently Philip Ziegler notes that there “were clearly limits to the reverence which the English felt towards their divinely anointed rulers”, especially with respect to the Hanoverians who were often pilloried by press and parliament for their conduct and cost.²⁹³ Furthermore, attempts to ceremonially celebrate the monarchy had according to Cannadine largely descended into a “farce and fiasco” in the early 19th century.²⁹⁴ It was within this context that Queen Victoria eschewed

²⁸⁴ ‘Population of the British Empire’, *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 30 July 1874.

²⁸⁵ Freda Harcourt, ‘The Sultan, and the Viceroy: A Victorian State Occasion’, *The London Journal*, 5 (1979), pp. 35-56 (p. 35).

²⁸⁶ David, Cannadine, ‘The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the “Invention of Tradition”, c.1820–1977’, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 101-164 (p. 112).

²⁸⁷ Ronald Robinson, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1982) p. 1.

²⁸⁸ Cannadine, ‘Monarchy’, p. 112.

²⁸⁹ Cannadine, ‘Monarchy’, p. 113-114.

²⁹⁰ Vernon Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 3-5.

²⁹¹ Bogdanor, *Monarchy and Constitution*, p. 6.

²⁹² David Starkey, *Crown & Country, The Kings & Queens of England: A History*, (London: Harper Press, 2011), p. 340-359.

²⁹³ Philip Ziegler, *Crown and People*, (New York: Random House, 1978), p. 17 & Cannadine, ‘Monarchy’, p. 111 & p. 117.

²⁹⁴ Cannadine, ‘Monarchy’, p. 117-118.

ostentatious ceremony,²⁹⁵ though she meddled in politics and generally wielded considerable informal power, which sometimes contributed to press and public irritation.²⁹⁶

William Kuhn contests Cannadine's grimmer assessment of royal unpopularity, arguing instead, that perceptions of the monarchy during the Hanoverian period oscillated between ridicule and reverence.²⁹⁷ Such a view is echoed by Ziegler who thought Queen Victoria was largely known by her subjects as a popular figure.²⁹⁸ The Queen's husband the Prince Consort Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha also helped to precipitate a more popular image of royal impartiality and "middle-class domesticity".²⁹⁹ Shortly prior to the Shah's visit, however, the balance had tipped in favour of irreverence, with Hanoverian unpopularity reaching its height after the death of Albert in 1861. During the Queen's grief-stricken "seclusion" during the 1860s and early 1870s the press lost sympathy, criticising her royal retirement. Meanwhile, republican groups proliferated through the efforts of anti-monarchists including Charles Dilke.³⁰⁰

The Queen's bereaved incapacity was, moreover, compounded by the conduct of her eldest son Bertie,³⁰¹ a profligate gambler and a womaniser with a propensity for political unprofessionalism.³⁰² The liberal administrations of Derby and Gladstone, a reverent monarchist himself, responded to royal unpopularity by trying to draw the Queen back into public life.³⁰³ Connectedly, there was an attempt to redeem the Prince of Wales with an increased role in royal ceremonial.³⁰⁴ As a consequence the Queen did ceremonially open Parliament in 1866 and 1867.³⁰⁵ She was also compelled to play a modest role during the visit of Sultan Abdulaziz I of the Ottoman Empire, lest her absence inflict damage on the monarchy and on Anglo-Ottoman relations.³⁰⁶ The Prince of Wales had also provided a "sterling service" as the Queen's deputy.³⁰⁷ Dynastic unpopularity only receded temporarily, however, with renewed criticism encouraged by the collapse of imperial France abroad, and economic depression at home.³⁰⁸ Ironically it was the near-death of the Queen's errant eldest in 1872 that led to royal redemption.³⁰⁹ Gladstone capitalised on sympathetic press accounts of the Queen leaving her seclusion to tend to her son at Sandringham by arranging for a public procession and a ceremonial "Thanksgiving" in St. Paul's

²⁹⁵ William M. Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism, The Transformation of the British Monarchy, 1861-1914*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), p. 47.

²⁹⁶ Cannadine, 'Monarchy', p. 111 & Ziegler, *Crown*, p. 17.

²⁹⁷ Kuhn, *Royalism*, p. 7-8 & p. 15-18.

²⁹⁸ Ziegler, *Crown*, p. 19.

²⁹⁹ Kuhn, *Royalism*, p. 35.

³⁰⁰ Cannadine, 'Monarchy', p. 118-119, Sidney Lee, *Queen Victoria: A Biography*, (London: Elder Smith, 1904), p. 355-361. & Christopher Hibbert, *Queen Victoria: A Personal History*, (London: Harper Collins, 2000), p. 307-314.

³⁰¹ Albert Edward, Prince of Wales.

³⁰² Kuhn, *Royalism*, p. 43 & Antony Taylor, 'An aristocratic monarchy and popular republicanism 1830-1940', in Andrzej Olechnowicz, ed., *The Monarchy and the British Nation, 1780 to the Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 188-223 (p. 206-207).

³⁰³ Freda Harcourt, 'Gladstone, monarchism and the 'new' imperialism, 1868-1874', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 14 (1985), pp. 20-51 (p. 22-25).

³⁰⁴ Kuhn, *Royalism*, p. 36.

³⁰⁵ Harcourt, 'Sultan', p. 36-37 & Harcourt, 'Gladstone', p. 24.

³⁰⁶ Harcourt, 'Sultan', p. 36-38.

³⁰⁷ Harcourt, 'Sultan', p. 37.

³⁰⁸ Harcourt, 'Gladstone', p. 66.

³⁰⁹ The Prince of Wales had contracted pneumonia.

Cathedral on the Prince's recovery. The Prime Minister had to compel her attendance but the consequent effect was palpable in the immediate decline of Dilke and republicanism.³¹⁰ Kuhn argues that the festive procession and service held in February of 1872, was a "turning point in the history of the British monarchy", with public ceremonial used on an increasing scale thereafter.³¹¹

The realised need for more royal display during the brief republican crisis formed the domestic backdrop to the Shah's reception, influencing both the purpose of the visit, and the press reaction. For instance one can detect only hints of previously widespread press criticism of the Royal Family. For example the *Examiner* still heaped scorn on "the public" in whose "soul" there "still exists a miserable shred" of "the old world idea" whereby the monarch was seen as the "shepherd of the people" still inflicting its occasional presence on the nation. Moreover the "chief facts" accounting for this outdated deference was not patriotism, but instead "the vague sensation of being in a crowd, together with the more definite sensation of swallowing intoxicating liquors".³¹² This rhetoric was rare, however, heavily outweighed by acclamation for the visit and Nasir al-Din himself, despite some criticism of Oriental despotism and the backwardness of Persians generally.³¹³ More importantly there was also pride in the conduct of the Royal Family from the both the national and the provincial press, both of which were dominated by the Liberal Party in mid-19th century Britain.³¹⁴

Meanwhile, regarding purpose, it is evident that state visits including those of the Sultan and the Shah were not solely centred on foreign policymaking. Much like in Manchester, there was a dual purpose at play in that Gladstone was using the visits "to promote the monarchy" in public as a splendid and symbolic source of societal unity.³¹⁵ As in Cottonopolis these two purposes were mutually complementary, whilst also coinciding with public and press notions of royal duty. Newspapers were for instance, critical of the Queen when it became known that a prospective visit from Tsar Alexander II in 1867 had been abandoned because she refused to meet him in person in London.³¹⁶ In disappointment the *Times* wrote that there was:

...one function of Royalty upon the due performance of which both the real and the imaginary influences of the crown depend for their permanence. The Sovereign must appear frequently in public, must exercise a splendid hospitality, must be the visible head of English society.³¹⁷

Although the secondary purpose of the visit was important, one cannot lose sight of the primary motivation for entertaining the Shah; the furtherance of British foreign policy. Additionally Qajar aims

³¹⁰ Harcourt, 'Gladstone', p. 30-33 & Kuhn, *Royalism*, p. 38-47.

³¹¹ Kuhn, *Royalism*, p. 47.

³¹² 'The Shah of Persia', *Examiner*, 21 June 1873 & *Examiner*, 7 June.

³¹³ *Sunday Times*, 6 July 1873 & *Times*, 'NUSSER', 17 June.

³¹⁴ Kennedy, *Realities*, p. 52 & Lee, *Origins...Press*, p. 131-133.

³¹⁵ Harcourt, 'Gladstone', p. 24.

³¹⁶ Harcourt, 'Sultan', p. 37-38.

³¹⁷ 'London, Tuesday, June 11, 1867', *Times*, 11 June 1867.

played an influential role, not least because the Persians themselves had instigated the visit. It was in mid-August of 1872, when Ronald Thomson informed Lord Edmund Hammond,³¹⁸ the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the Sadr-i Azam had declared his sovereign's intention to tour Europe including Great Britain sometime in 1873. In less than a fortnight Hammond replied using verbal written communication to impress Overt Cordiality by instructing Thomson to "say that it will give Her Majesty great pleasure to make the acquaintance of H.I.M."³¹⁹ The reasoning behind Britain's rapid acquiescence had much to do with foreign policy in Persia and the East. First and foremost refusal would have alienated the Shah, potentially damaging Anglo-Persian relations. Furthermore, at this juncture there was increased Russian military activity in Central Asia culminating in the capture of Khiva on the 10th of June 1873.³²⁰ Re-emphasising friendly relations with a regional player at such times of uncertainty was a sound policy.

That being said the visit was accepted on a Persian premise that went beyond British notions of mere cordiality. As previously noted Mirza Husain Khan was keen to use the visit to increase Anglo-Persian cooperation and to acquire public or private capital. Nasir al-Din had elevated his reformist Minister of Foreign Affairs to the position of Sadr-i Azam in November of 1871, sanctioning the aspirations of a statesman who sought to modernise a Persia he saw as economically, politically and militarily backward.³²¹ With internal development would hopefully come external stability in the form of recognition of sovereignty, and British support against Russian encroachment.³²² Once promoted Husain Khan pursued these aims by encouraging his monarch to tour Europe to observe Western achievements, whilst tasking his minister in London with tempting established firms to invest in Persia. Such efforts proved fruitless thus he turned his attentions to riskier propositions including Baron Julius de Reuter, a naturalised British entrepreneur of German Jewish origin. With the use of a sweetener Reuter secured a phenomenal concession in July of 1872, giving him "the complete and exclusive control of the whole industrial resources" of Persia for seventy years, including rail, mining, irrigation, road building, banking and tax collection.³²³

The British government played no part in the negotiations, though Rawlinson thought there was something "heroic" in the "idea of sacrificing" national pride and "almost" independence, to resuscitate one's "fallen country".³²⁴ Sir Henry, however, thought "the scheme was hardly practical" due to that sacrifice.³²⁵ Criticism meanwhile came in the shape of domestic indignation and Russian displeasure,

³¹⁸ Thomson was awaiting the arrival of his brother, the new British minister to Tehran, William Tylour Thomson.

³¹⁹ FO248/277, Foreign Office, Hammond to Ronald Thomson, 26 Aug. 1872.

³²⁰ 'The Fall of Khiva', *Times*, 30 June 1873.

³²¹ Shaul Bakhash, *Iranian Monarchy, Bureaucracy & Reform Under the Qajars: 1858-1896*, (London: Ithica Press, 1978), p. 29-53 p. 77-120 & p. 205-212, Nikkie Keddie, 'Iran Under the Late Qajars, 1848-1922', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, p. 183-187, & Rose Greaves, 'Iranian Relations with Great Britain and British India 1798-1921', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 374-425 (p. 400-401).

³²² Russia was identified as the greatest long-term threat to Persia (Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 112).

³²³ Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p. 125.

³²⁴ Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p. 126.

³²⁵ Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p. 126.

which did not bode well for Reuter who requested British government support in September of 1872.³²⁶ The Foreign Office was not impressed by Reuter, due in part to his Jewish heritage and his ambitious and risky attitude to business which was seen as a little unbecoming of a British gentleman. Furthermore it was British government policy to allow potential investors to bear the risk of their ventures. The government was there merely to nurture a global environment in which such risks could be entertained.³²⁷ Consequently the Gladstone administration informed Reuter that they would not “bind themselves officially to protect” his interests.³²⁸ As the concession hit obstacles in the form of local opposition championed by the Russian legation, Husain Khan used funds from Reuter to facilitate the Shah’s trip to Europe.³²⁹ This was to assist four aims; firstly the Shah’s longstanding curiosity for Europe would be satisfied.³³⁰ Secondly Husain Khan would facilitate observations of European modernity as a means of bolstering the Shah’s tentative interest in reform.³³¹ Thirdly the visit to Britain would help to secure Reuter’s concession, whilst possibly attracting more British capital. Finally Husain Khan wanted to extract a new British guarantee of territorial integrity.³³² Nasir al-Din himself provided two similar reasons for his European visit beyond legitimisation. Firstly there was a need to acquire knowledge from the continent that might benefit Persia, and secondly the visit would facilitate a meeting with “the great kings of Europe for the consolidation of good relations and the enhancement of friendship and mutual cooperation”.³³³ Moreover out of all of Europe’s nations, it was Britain that the Shah had most wanted to increase cooperation with. Indeed, he had harboured a desire for a strategic Anglo-Persian alliance since Sir Justin Sheil’s tenure as British representative in the earliest years of his reign.³³⁴

The major motivation for pursuing this course of action was the threat posed by Tsarist Russia, which had pushed into Central Asia with increasing pace in the 1840s and through to the 1860s.³³⁵ Aside from intermittent protest and Anglo-Russian negotiation coupled with intimations of friendship toward Persia, the British government did little to arrest Russian expansion. It also ignored the Shah’s requests for closer relations involving British military advisers and financial support from the late 1850s and throughout the 1860s.³³⁶ By 1872 Britain’s attitude remained unchanged. Indeed, despite having an interest in closer relations the government was decidedly against supporting ventures like the Reuter concession, mostly due to Russian government indignation involving a tacit accusation that the

³²⁶ He wrote to Granville arguing that he was doing both Persia and Britain a service of great value. (Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 109-110).

³²⁷ John S. Gailbraith, ‘British policy on railways in Persia, 1870-1900’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 25 (1989), pp. 480-505 (p. 486-487).

³²⁸ FO60/405, Viscount Enfield to M. Julius de Reuter, 15 Oct. 1872.

³²⁹ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 111.

³³⁰ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 424-427, Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 112.

³³¹ Keddie, ‘Late Qajars’, p. 188.

³³² Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 112 & Bakhash, *Iranian Monarchy*, p. 114.

³³³ Motadel, ‘Shahs’, p. 193.

³³⁴ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 369.

³³⁵ Greaves, ‘Relations’, p. 394-398 & Thornton, ‘British Policy’, p. 556.

³³⁶ See John Lowe Duthie, ‘Pressures from within the “forward” group in the India Office during Gladstone’s First Ministry’, *Journal of Asian History*, 15 (1981) pp. 36-72, A.P. Thornton, ‘The Reopening’, pp. 122-136, Thornton, ‘British Policy’, p. 556-559, Greaves, ‘Relations’, p. 398-99 & Wright, *Persians*, p. 119-120.

concession had been an attempt to upset the balance of power in Persia.³³⁷ For the same reason Britain was also disinclined to propose a new guarantee of sovereignty.³³⁸

This reaction had thus much to do with the ‘Great Game’ and the ‘Central Asian Question’ – the response to Tsarist Russia as she pursued her “manifest destiny”³³⁹ by expanding southwest toward British India via Central Asian and potentially Persia from the early 1800s to 1907.³⁴⁰ As part of that primary objective of supporting Qajar sovereignty, Britain thus sought to prevent Russia from pursuing her destiny in the Shah’s ‘Guarded Domains’.³⁴¹ In 1834, this had resulted in a successful request for cooperation from Russia to “secure the integrity and independence of Persia” using a British military mission to bring about the smooth accession of Mohammad Shah.³⁴² This call for cooperative support for Persian integrity was repeated successfully in 1838,³⁴³ 1844,³⁴⁴ and on the 1848 accession of Nasir al-Din, though it met with failure in 1860 and 1865, when Britain unsuccessfully sought clarification following Russian expansion into the Central Asian khanates.³⁴⁵ Integrity and independence meant that Persia was to act as a buffer state preventing imperial conflict and contiguity. This did not stop intermittent and sometimes aggressive interventions from both parties, but a combination of Persian pluckiness and Anglo-Russian restraint did manage to shield most of the Shah’s lands from partition or disintegration.³⁴⁶ As a means of ensuring Russian reserve Britain pursued a policy of curtailing actions and statements on its own part and Persia’s, which might provoke a recurrence of Russian aggression and expansionism.³⁴⁷ Twice the Tsar had gone to war with the Qajars between 1804 and 1828, permanently annexing a considerable swathe of territory in the north of Persia.³⁴⁸ Furthermore, despite accepting Persia’s independence, Russia wanted her in a state of weakness entailing political and economic domination over the country’s remaining northern provinces.³⁴⁹

In 1873, it was thought “inexpedient” to alter the status quo in Persia with respect to Russia’s position.³⁵⁰ Rawlinson put it bluntly, noting that Britain was “content” to “occupy a subordinate position to Russia at Tehran”,³⁵¹ a position linked to Britain’s wider policy of non-intervention or “masterly inactivity”.³⁵²

³³⁷ Wright, *Persians*, p. 131, Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 117 & Gailbraith, ‘railways’, p. 483-9.

³³⁸ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 116.

³³⁹ Sir H.C. Rawlinson, ‘Memorandum on the Central Asian Question July 1868’, in Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p. 277.

³⁴⁰ Ingram, *The Beginning*, p. 17.

³⁴¹ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 423.

³⁴² FO249/30, Campbell to Chairman East India Company, n.d. est. Jan 1835. See also Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 33, Ingram, *The Beginning*, p. 192-193 & p. 207 & Greaves, ‘Relations’, p. 390-392.

³⁴³ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 33.

³⁴⁴ Thornton, ‘Reopening’, p. 122.

³⁴⁵ Thornton, ‘Reopening’, p. 131.

³⁴⁶ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 420-423.

³⁴⁷ FO248/277, Government of India to Argyll, 19 Jan. 1872 & Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 24.

³⁴⁸ Ingram, *Persian Connection*, p. 279 & Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 5-6.

³⁴⁹ Bakhash, *Iranian Monarchy*, p. 207.

³⁵⁰ Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p. 131.

³⁵¹ Rawlinson, ‘Memorandum’, p. 288.

³⁵² The term “masterly inactivity” was heavily associated with Viceroy Sir John Lawrence (1864-1869), who favoured defence of the empire on the Indus River. (Rose Greaves, ‘Themes in British policy Towards Persia in its relation to Indian frontier defence, 1798-1914’, *Asian Affairs*, 22 (1991) pp. 35-45, (p. 38-41). & Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game, On Secret Service in High Asia*, (London: John Murray, 2006), p. 6).

Certain factions in both the British administrations in Calcutta and London did advocate forward policies in Persia and Afghanistan, including Rawlinson who wrote extensively on British strategy in the east.³⁵³ Ultimately, however, forward policies were disregarded on the grounds of expense and the potential for reactive or accelerated Russian expansion.³⁵⁴ Similarly Kennedy argues that “appeasement”, usually associated with Neville Chamberlain, was actually a tradition established in the mid-19th century. Due to British imperial overextension, Victorian appeasement was expounded by the Liberals who wanted to avoid unnecessary military conflict in favour of negotiated compromise.³⁵⁵

Naturally this limited Britain’s ability to support Persia more vigorously. During the visit in 1873 this aversion to Reuter and rocking the Russian boat was manifest in the British government’s conscious effort to ignore the businessman’s attempts to see the Shah.³⁵⁶ In terms of the wider performance, the isolation of Reuter was symptomatic of another strategy at play throughout the visit including in Manchester, one which centred on the need to perform for Persia without committing to her. There were to be no British attempts to facilitate increased trade, political or military cooperation. Instead the visit was to increase cordiality and influence solely through display. If Persia chose to respond favourably to demonstrations of friendship and power that was to be welcomed, provided closer Anglo-Persian cooperation was not required. Britain thus had to perform its fostered impressions strategically, displaying enough Overt Cordiality to satisfy the Persian need for closer relations, without actually committing to them beyond words and symbolic acts. That Britain had to do this at all does, however, demonstrate the degree of leverage that Persia possessed. Nasir al-Din was in a position strong enough to secure invitations from both Russia and Britain since neither wished to alienate Persia. Moreover, Britain accepted the request knowing full well that the Shah and his chief minister were trying to secure tangible changes in the relationship. Motadel claims that later Qajar monarchs including Muzaffar al-Din had to “struggle” far more to visit European courts, which more accurately reflected the power imbalance between Persia and Europe.³⁵⁷ Connectedly Muzaffar al-Din’s trip to Britain in 1902 was not as popular with the press, nor was he feted so fulsomely by the British government.³⁵⁸ In 1873, however, the nation was awash with curiosity and enthusiasm, whilst the government were altogether more accommodating, though still unwilling to entertain greater commitments.³⁵⁹

In terms of the direct impact of this unwillingness on Britain’s performance, it is apparent that more emphasis was put on the *display* of Overt Cordiality and its connected themes. In both a royal and civic

³⁵³ See Duthie, ‘forward group’ p. 36-72 & John Lowe Duthie, ‘Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson and the art of great gamesmanship’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, (1983) pp. 253-274. A short biography of Rawlinson is also contained in Duthie, ‘forward group’, p. 39.

³⁵⁴ Bakhash, *Iranian Monarchy*, p. 208 & Rawlinson, ‘Memorandum’, p. 291.

³⁵⁵ Paul Kennedy, ‘The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy 1865-1939’, *British Journal of International Studies*, 2 (1976), pp. 195-215 (p. 195-201).

³⁵⁶ FO60/358, Foreign Office, Hammond to Gladstone, 29 May 1873 & Wright, *Persians*, p. 131.

³⁵⁷ Motadel, ‘Shahs’, p. 234.

³⁵⁸ Wright, *Persians*, p. 175-183.

³⁵⁹ Wright, *Persians*, p. 134.

context Nasir al-Din was thus treated deferentially and feted with as much festival, celebration, procession, decoration and royal attention as possible, arguably serving as compensation for a lack of increased political cooperation. Indeed, H.I.M. was pelted with so much procession and pomp that he was often left fatigued, precipitating problems with punctuality.³⁶⁰ Connectedly it could be said that the Shah sometimes enjoyed heightened levels of deference, courtesy and hospitality, in part due to Orientalist stereotypes held by the British with respect to Persian culture.

Popularised a great deal by the critique of Edward Said, Orientalism centres on the Western production of knowledge of the 'Orient', along with Western perceptions that 'othered' or otherised a distinct (and often negative) East. This otherised entity was replete with particular political, cultural, economic, social and religious customs that were seemingly essentialised, fixed in time and inferior to those of the dynamic West.³⁶¹ Although Said neglected to discuss Qajar Persia,³⁶² one can identify a possible feature of British Orientalism in Persia, revolving around the perception that its inhabitants were as Rawlinson puts it, "fond of display" with a strong attachment to "outward forms".³⁶³ Like other "Oriental" courts in India and Afghanistan, it was thus "the eye" that "must be addressed rather than the reason".³⁶⁴ Such apparent fondness was also linked to a perceived predilection for ceremonial, circumstance, etiquette, pomp, protocol and the proper appreciation for rank and authority.³⁶⁵ This conception of Persian identity stretched at least as far back as the ostentatious diplomatic mission of Sir John Malcolm in 1801, in which he justified his expensive and "impressive diplomatic display,"³⁶⁶ by citing a Persian official who thought:

All ranks in Persia are brought up to admire show and parade; and they are more likely to act from the dictates of imagination and vanity, than of reason and judgement. Their character was well drawn by Mohamed Nubbee Khan, the late (Persian) ambassador in India. "If you wish my countrymen to understand, speak to their eyes, not their ears".³⁶⁷

Wherever possible the British pandered to this perception as part of their impression of Overt Cordiality, rolling out the red carpet for the Shah with the most prestigious performers, the finest stage-props and settings. There were also more negative Orientalist stereotypes evident in British perceptions of Persia. The *Graphic* illustrated magazine, for instance, stated that at their worst Persians were "cruel, vindictive, treacherous and avaricious, without faith, friendship, gratitude or honour".³⁶⁸ Such views were harboured

³⁶⁰ Instances of lateness can be found in: 'The Shah of Persia', *Times*, 24 June 1873, *Times*, 28 June, *Leeds Mercury*, 28 June & Motadel, 'Shahs', p. 229.

³⁶¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 1-5 & p. 31-49.

³⁶² Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing, The Orientalists and their Enemies*, (London: Penguin Books, 2007), p. 282.

³⁶³ Rawlinson, 'Memorandum', p. 297.

³⁶⁴ Rawlinson, 'Memorandum', p. 298.

³⁶⁵ John MacDonald Kinneir, *A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire Accompanied by a Map*, (London: John Murray, 1813), p. 28.

³⁶⁶ Wright, *English*, p. 4 & Mohammad Taghi Nezam-Mafi, 'Persian Recreations: Theatricality in Anglo-Persian Diplomatic History, 1599-1828', (PhD Diss., *Boston University*, 1986) pp. 1-269 (p. 139).

³⁶⁷ Sir John Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia*, (London: J. Murray, 1845) p. 247.

³⁶⁸ 'The Progress of His Majesty Nusser-ood-Deen Shah...From Tehran to Great Britain', *Graphic*, 2 July 1873. The quote is taken from Kinneir, British minister in Persia from 1826-1830 (Kinneir, *Memoir*, p. 22).

by officials and journalists, though there were also more positive views of Persian hospitality and adversity in the face of a harsh unforgiving homeland.³⁶⁹ The Shah escaped much of the criticism, since it was directed at Persians in general, whom he apparently transcended. Such established preconceptions combined with the need for display over policy, leading to intense efforts to impress Overt Cordiality with Court Splendour. Such a strategy was also given impetus by Gladstone's desire for increased royal display for domestic purposes. These factors combined to make for a reception that was on an "extensive scale", ³⁷⁰ a fact first evident in detailed preparations that probed every possible Persian expectation. Hammond for instance wrote to Thomson in May 1873, showing palpable concern over necessary accommodation for perceived Oriental customs. There "is a rumour" he wrote:

...that the Shah proposes to bring three wives...Will he expect them to be lodged in Buckingham Palace...? Are they to be shut up and invisible except to female eyes? Is the Shah particular about...food, or will he eat everything...? Does he drink wine, or does he like other Persians, prefer spirits and that of the strong kind? I conclude he brings his own tobacco pipes. Does he sleep on the floor or use a regular four poster, does he sit on chairs...or on the floor?³⁷¹

The British also fretted over the different versions of the anthem – the Persian National Air – especially composed for the Shah by Alfred Jean-Baptiste Lemaire in 1872. More importantly the Lord Chamberlain's Office wished to know Nasir al-Din's opinion of his proposed programme, precipitating a request for Mirza Malkam Khan to sound out his sovereign.³⁷² Khan was Persia's new diplomatic minister to Britain, and an attendant of His Majesty throughout his European tour.³⁷³

There was also much curiosity as to how competently Russia had handled her guests. The press regularly compared the Shah's receptions across Europe,³⁷⁴ and such behaviour was also part of official thinking reflected in Hammond's desire to know the "precedents" of the Russian reception.³⁷⁵ Thomson was consequently compelled to write a memorandum on his journey through Russia providing all relevant information on the hosting, habits, and the prospective programme.³⁷⁶ Much to the relief of all concerned, Thomson reported that no women of the Qajar court would be arriving.³⁷⁷ As to the anthem, Thomson thought it best to adopt the same version favoured by the Russians. Regarding cuisine and refreshment Thomson consulted one of the Shah's personal physicians, Dr Tholozan, along with Malkam Khan. He subsequently asserted that the Shah would not:

³⁶⁹ Kinneir, *Memoir*, p. 23.

³⁷⁰ *Dover Express*, 13 June.

³⁷¹ FO60/358, Foreign Office, Hammond to R. Thomson, 19 May 1873.

³⁷² FO60/358, St. James's Palace, Comptroller of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, Spencer Ponsonby to Hammond, 21 May 1873 & FO60/358, Foreign Office, Hammond to R. Thomson, 21 May 1873.

³⁷³ Motadel, 'Shahs', p. 199.

³⁷⁴ See *Times*, 26 May & 'The Shah of Persia', *Times*, 31 May 1873.

³⁷⁵ Members of the Royal Household also went out to Berlin to meet members of the Shah's suite for further clarification (Wright, *Persians*, p. 124).

³⁷⁶ FO60/358, Foreign Office, Hammond to R. Thomson, 22 May 1873.

³⁷⁷ Only one of Nasir al-Din Shah's numerous wives came with him to Russia. Her "presence" had "caused considerable inconvenience" as she "had to be kept out of sight", very difficult in the context of curious crowds.

...make any objections respecting food – but it would be advisable to avoid...pork...He drinks wine but only small quantities and not spirits...They almost all drink wine...at breakfast and dinner. He has his own tobacco and pipes...His bedroom should be the same as would be furnished for any other sovereign visiting Buckingham Palace. In Persia he...as a rule sleeps on the floor and sits on the floor too...but since he has been in Europe, he has dined at table and sits and sleeps as Europeans do. If there is any access to the garden from the rooms intended for the Shah's use, he will be greatly pleased for he and all Persians are miserable if they cannot pass a considerable part of their time in the open air.³⁷⁸

He also reported that Nasir al-Din enjoyed dining on the floor, with a fondness for “Peshawar or Lombard” rice and cut pieces of lamb or fowl. Additionally he liked a variety of fruit and refreshments,³⁷⁹ and to wash and relax in a Turkish bath. Throughout the tour many of these stipulations were adhered to, including a concocted bath using hot bricks.³⁸⁰ The Shah's very first private dinner was also “served on the floor”, whilst he had room adjacent to the palace gardens from which he “sallied forth as soon as left to himself”.³⁸¹ As to Thomson's Russian reportage, he went into great detail recording the decoration at receptions, the rank of dignitaries sent to welcome H.I.M., the number and nature of ships furnished for transport, the salutes given, the costume of attendants, the plate used at dinner, and even the wines quaffed.³⁸²

There were, however, limits to Britain's accommodative attitude, for instance the Queen's Private Secretary Henry Ponsonby wrote to Hammond on the 22nd of May, saying that “in fact the Shah must go up & down stairs and submit to the indignity of a coachman turning his back upon him like the rest of the world”.³⁸³ Hammond agreed, sensibly pointing to the existence of “steps...in every town in England”. Moreover he thought it likely that the Shah was “quite prepared to accommodate himself to the habits of barbarian life under the specious garb of civilisation”.³⁸⁴ Furthermore, some of this preparatory dialogue also slipped into backstage “derogation” of the Persian audience that was inconsistent with Overt Cordiality.³⁸⁵ Hammond's very use of the term “barbarian” was palpably self-depreciating, inversely indicating Persian incivility. News had also been trickling in from Europe which left British officials concerned about this very subject. In early June Sydney wrote to Henry Ponsonby worried that the Shah's manners were “not over polite”, evidenced by rudely keeping the German Empress waiting several times in Berlin.³⁸⁶ Incidentally, there was some truth to the accusations regarding his treatment of the Empress Augusta. Motadel sheds light on this by utilising the Shah's uncensored travelogues, which indicate that Nasir al-Din regularly tried to “escape her clutches” because

³⁷⁸ FO60/358, St. Petersburg, R. Thomson to Hammond, 25 May 1873.

³⁷⁹ This included a “pickles at all meals” along with “melons, water melons, cucumbers, oranges, mandarins, and prunes vert”. (The Royal Archives, HH1/91 Kanne to Master of the Household, Sir Thomas Biddulph, 4 June 1873, in Wright, *Persians*, p. 124).

³⁸⁰ R. Cripps, Inspector Buckingham Palace to S. Ponsonby, 7 June 1873 in Vera Watson, *A Queen at Home, An Intimate Account of the Social and Domestic Life of Queen Victoria's Court*, (London: W.H. Allen, 1952), p. 220.

³⁸¹ Sir Frederick Ponsonby, *Side Lights on Queen Victoria*, (London: Sears Publishing Inc., 1930), p. 123.

³⁸² FO60/358, St. Petersburg, R. Thomson Memorandum, 25 May 1873.

³⁸³ FO60/358, St. James's Palace, S. Ponsonby to Hammond, 22 May 1873.

³⁸⁴ FO60/358, St. James's Palace, S. Ponsonby to Hammond, 22 May 1873.

³⁸⁵ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 170.

³⁸⁶ Royal Archives AQ17/133, John Townshend, 1st Earl Sydney to Henry Ponsonby, 9 June 1873 in Wright, *Persians*, p. 124.

she was an old “crone” who waffled “incessantly”.³⁸⁷ Augusta was also not only noblewoman the Shah had something to say about. Indeed, according to Motadel he was also impolite about other German aristocratic wives in conduct and comment, with a penchant for remarking – sometimes publically – about how “ugly”, “old” and “dirty” they were.³⁸⁸ Worse was to follow a week later when Ponsonby thought it necessary to warn the Queen that:

...by all accounts, His Majesty is very uncivilised...Mr Gladstone hears accounts of him which makes him very unwilling to encourage the House of Commons in doing more to honour him than they have been in the habit of showing to European Sovereigns.³⁸⁹

He also made mention of the Shah sacrificing cocks, “wiping his wet hands on the coat-tails of the gentleman next to him”, failing to use cutlery, drinking tea from the pot, scooping food out of his mouth or throwing it under the table. Failing that a hand might fall onto desirable dishes, damsels or dames. Indeed, the British Ambassador in Berlin said His Majesty might even “put an arm around the Her Majesty’s chair at dinners”.³⁹⁰ Gladstone thus wrote to Granville on the 12th of June, asking whether or not:

...after the loathsome account of the Shah...can anything be done to give the wretch a hint as to his behaviour. Could not a very mild paragraph be made to appear...on European & Eastern manners...copied into the English newspapers? Keeping back O. Russell’s dispatch from the Queen will not diminish her annoyance if the conduct at Berlin is repeated in London.³⁹¹

Such an insulting term used for the sovereign of a supposed friend of Britain is striking. Goffman notes that derogation of this sort often compensates “for the loss of self-respect that may occur when” an inferior “audience must be accorded accommodative face-to-face treatment”.³⁹² It could be argued that Gladstone was galled at having to go to such lengths to satisfy the uncivilised sovereign of a “second-rate Oriental power”.³⁹³ The Prime Minister’s specific view of Persians is unclear, however, he was critical of “Mahometanism” and Persia’s neighbour, home to the “unspeakable Turk”.³⁹⁴ It is therefore likely, that he would not have held the Persians in particularly high regard. However, due to Nasir al-Din’s undeniable status, and also the strategic importance of Persia, the Shah had to be treated deferentially.

³⁸⁷ David Motadel, ‘The German Other: Nasir al-Din Shah’s Perceptions of Difference and Gender during his Visits to Germany, 1873-89’, *Iranian Studies*, 4 (2011), pp. 563-579 p. 574-576.

³⁸⁸ Motadel, ‘German Other’, p. 575-576.

³⁸⁹ Wright, *Persians*, p. 125.

³⁹⁰ Russell to Granville, 7 June 1873, in Watson, *Queen at Home*, p. 221-222 & Hibbert, *Victoria*, p. 346-7.

³⁹¹ Gladstone to Granville, 12 June 1873, in Agatha Ramm, ed., *The Political Correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville, 1868-1876, Vol. II*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 384.

³⁹² Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 170.

³⁹³ Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p.vi.

³⁹⁴ W.E. Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, (New York: Lovell Adam, Wesson & Company, 1876), p. 10 & Sir Philip Magnus, *Gladstone: A Biography*, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1954), p. 463.

Fortunately the *Times* later reported that the Shah had “in the very short period which had elapsed since his visit to St. Petersburg and Berlin...made very considerable advances in the adoption of European manners and observances”, which put British officials at ease.³⁹⁵ Meanwhile, secondary source literature from scholars such as Motadel and Abbas Amanat argue that the Shah merely observed cultural differences and adapted accordingly, though with occasional difficulties over table manners, punctuality, how to treat the opposite sex and how to respond to crowds with more open displays of acknowledgement.³⁹⁶ Despite this, quite incredibly, Henry Ponsonby had made sure that “a few detectives had been infiltrated among the servants at Buckingham Palace...with a view to prevent possible pilfering”. According to Wright around thirty items went astray including cutlery and one gold service plate and sauce boat.³⁹⁷ None of this information was made known to the Persians and had they been aware of it, the impression of Overt Cordiality would likely have been compromised, causing damage to relations. With many preparations thus in hand and derogation firmly backstage, the British could initiate the execution of a splendid reception not on British soil but in Belgium, the Shah’s last stop before Britain. Thus, in Brussels representatives of the Queen welcomed H.I.M. with deferential nonverbal and verbal communication. First on the 11th of June Lord Granville thus wrote to the Sadr-i Azam with the “honour to acquaint” him that:

...the Queen has been pleased to appoint Major General Sir Henry Rawlinson, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath...formally accredited to the Shah as His Majesty’s Envoy and who will take the high office of a Member of the Council of India...to convey...Her Majesty’s satisfaction on His Majesty’s...visit to England, and to accompany His Majesty...to Ostend where vessels of Her Majesty’s Navy will...receive His Majesty and his suite and convey them to Dover...Rawlinson will be attended by Colonel [Sir Arnold] Kemball, Major, [Owen Tudor] Burne and Captain Grey, who...will assist him in endeavouring to make His Majesty’s visit to England agreeable...³⁹⁸

Three days later this “Special Mission” was conducted into the presence of His Majesty, at which point Rawlinson addressed the Shah “appropriately”,³⁹⁹ and in Persian stating:

...that the Queen congratulated him on his visit to Europe, and was happy that he was about to come to England where he would be welcomed by herself and her people. She trusted that his sojourn in her dominions would be...agreeable. Relations of amity had long existed between England and Persia. It would be her endeavour to preserve such relations, and she hoped that the objects of his Imperial Majesty had in leaving his country...would be accomplished...⁴⁰⁰

Rawlinson, whom the Shah called “Laransun Sahib”,⁴⁰¹ also stated that he “felt exceedingly honoured...at having been selected” as *mehmandar* on account of his “personal friendship” with the Persian monarch dating back to 1858, when serving as the British envoy.⁴⁰² He had also featured that

³⁹⁵ ‘The Visit of the Shah’, *Times*, 19 June 1873.

³⁹⁶ Motadel, ‘Shahs’, p. 214-217 Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 426-428.

³⁹⁷ Wright, *Persians*, p. 125.

³⁹⁸ FO60/258, Foreign Office, Granville to the Sadr-i Azam, 11 June 1873.

³⁹⁹ Sir Owen Tudor Burne, *Memories*, (London: E. Arnold, 1907), p. 151-153.

⁴⁰⁰ *Times*, 18 June.

⁴⁰¹ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 132.

⁴⁰² ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 18 June 1873.

recurrent theme of longstanding Anglo-Persian amity, ever used by the British government to stress Overt Cordiality. In broader terms the despatch of such a *mehmandar* was a demonstration of the British adherence to the Qajar custom of *esteqbal*, the welcoming reception for visiting dignitaries whereby the host ceremonially escorts guests through different locations to their final destination with a military escort and suitably high-ranking officials.⁴⁰³ This welcoming ceremony constituted a “gesture of salutation” and an “inconvenience display” which according to Cohen involves “putting oneself out for the benefit of the guest” by going to greater lengths to escort and welcome them.⁴⁰⁴ The selection of Rawlinson as the key performer at this juncture was also calculated to reinforce the gesture and to increase the warmth of this royally organised and peculiarly Persianesque welcome. It was in April of 1873 Granville had proposed that Rawlinson “act as *mehmandar*” utilising his knowledge of Persian culture to welcome H.I.M.⁴⁰⁵ Granville was also keen to stress personal links between the Shah and Rawlinson, who was also a decorated official.⁴⁰⁶ Following this first meeting at around 7:30 a.m. on the morning of the 18th of June, the Shah and his retinue of around ninety politicians, related royal princes, and servants were taken aboard four “beautiful” navy paddle steamers at Ostend.⁴⁰⁷ Sir Henry, in “diplomatic costume” of navy blue, white and gold braid, led the way aboard His Majesty’s designated transport the H.M.S. *Vigilant*, by bowing and “salaaming” in deference.⁴⁰⁸

Once out to sea, the *Vigilant* joined the bulk of the Royal Navy’s Channel Squadron, eleven ironclads in all. The presence of such an escort was not merely a matter of security; instead it served a symbolic function highlighting the importance with which the British government perceived His Persian’s Majesty’s visit. The ships of the Channel Squadron thus acted as stage-props impressing Overt Cordiality, a strategy that was to be repeated throughout the visit. This does not, however, presuppose that escorts could not also display World Power Vitality. On the contrary it is clear that the British government also wanted to demonstrate the navy’s destructive capabilities. Moreover this mirrored a strategy successfully employed in 1867. During that earlier visit of the Sultan, the British government had identified and used their best pieces settings and stage-props, displaying commercial and naval power to compensate for the unrivalled monarchical monumentality of Paris or St. Petersburg.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰³ British diplomats in Persia had readily accepted this custom in Persia from the early 19th century (Wright, *English*, p. 33-34). See also James M. Gustafson, ‘Qajar Ambitions in the Great Game: Notes on the Embassy of ‘Abbas Qoli Khan to the Amir Bokhara, 1844’, *Iranian Studies*, 46 (2013), pp. 535-553 (p. 542).

⁴⁰⁴ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 98.

⁴⁰⁵ FO60/358, Foreign Office, Hammond to Capt. Lynch, 18 April 1873.

⁴⁰⁶ Rawlinson’s fellow Special Reception members were also carefully chosen, both Persian speakers with Oriental expertise (FO60/358, Letter to Rawlinson, 7 May 1873).

⁴⁰⁷ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 10 June 1873.

⁴⁰⁸ *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June.

⁴⁰⁹ Harcourt, ‘Sultan’, p. 44 & p. 49.

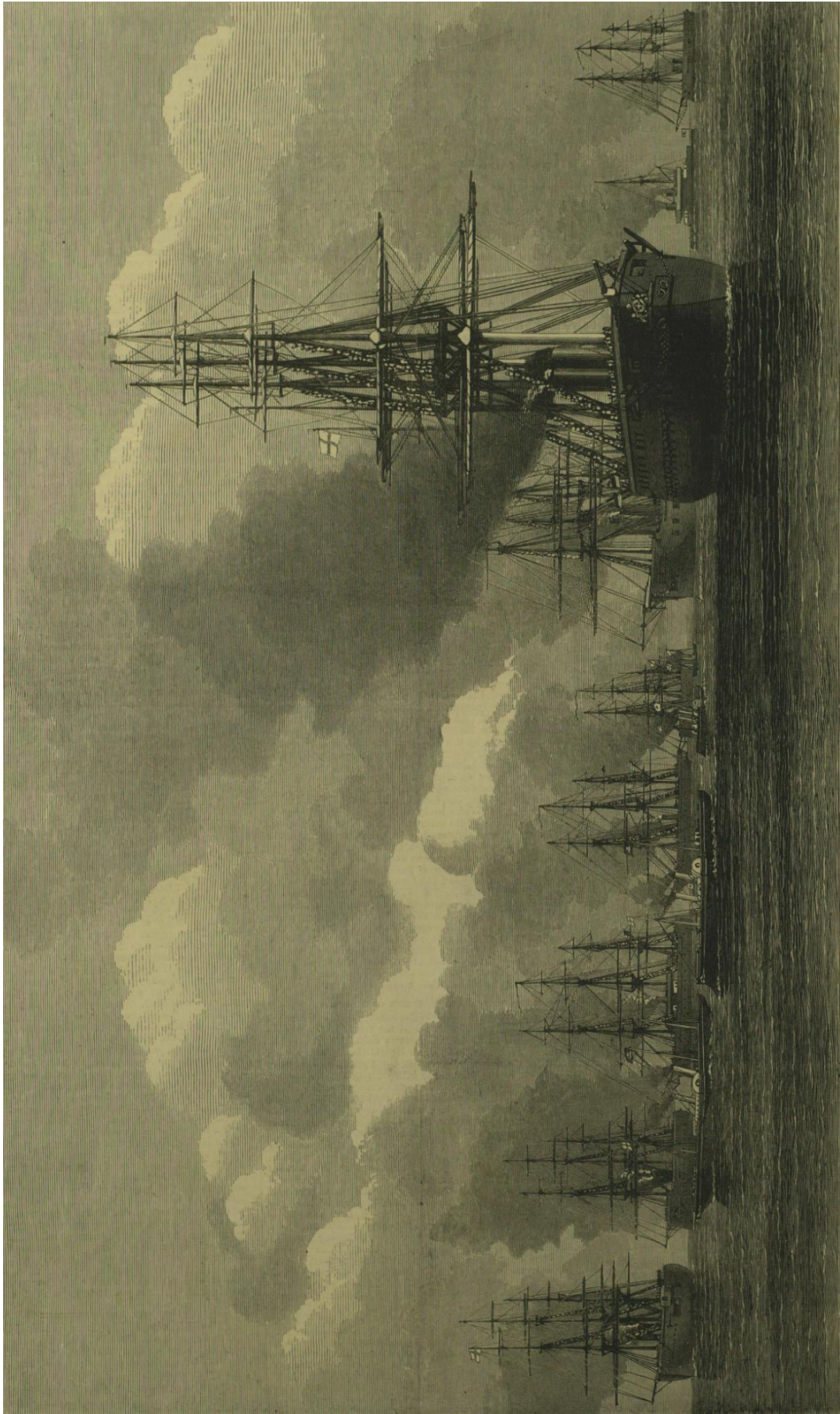


Fig. 10. The Channel Squadron escorting the Shah to Dover (*J.L.N.*, 28 June).

The presence of the Royal Family or its representatives when engaging with such stage-props and settings, however, served to bind the monarchy to both public and private monuments to British power. Connectedly through this technique London was also transformed into a suitable setting for a royal State Visit, despite its lack of “machinery for ceremonial display”.⁴¹⁰ Court Splendour could thus feature elements associated with other identified themes, merely through a royal presence. With respect to this strategy on the arrival of the Shah, Thomson wrote to Hammond advocating a show of British strength in response to Russia’s miserly despatch of three “small and old vessels” to convey Nasir al-Din across the Caspian.⁴¹¹ Thomson thought it would “be desirable” if Britain instead sent the same number of steamers and also a “number of large men of war to convoy him”. He thought this:

...would produce a strong...impression upon the Shah’s mind on his first reaching England and first impressions are not unimportant. It has always been an article of belief with every Persian that there is but one maritime power and that is England, and it would be a pity to neglect anything that could be sure to seem to confirm them is that belief.⁴¹²

Sydney quickly instructed the Admiralty to make the arrangements,⁴¹³ and instead of old steamers the navy sent four modern steamers including H.M.S. *Vigilant*, launched in 1871.⁴¹⁴ Meanwhile, five miles out to sea “the vanguard of the finest fleet in the world met” the Shah, introducing him to the “power and the special genius” of Britain.⁴¹⁵ In particular the navy were keen display their “strange-looking monster”⁴¹⁶ the H.M.S. *Devastation*, which steamed close to the *Vigilant* firing “two rounds from her immense guns”.⁴¹⁷ The display of Military Might, which conveyed “peculiar impression of power”,⁴¹⁸ subsequently continued when the “great spars and yards” of the Channel Squadron emerged “through the haze” like “phantom ships” to escort the flotilla for the remainder of the journey (Fig. 10).⁴¹⁹

Upon reaching Dover more explicit mechanisms for displaying Court Splendour could be employed. The port, “well used to Royal receptions”,⁴²⁰ had thus been transformed into a setting fit for a ritualised festival with decorations much akin to those in Manchester. The difference centred on the role of royalty, evidenced by the preparations in which “Court officials and Government and Municipal authorities had” both “vied with each other” to “render the reception as successful as possible”.⁴²¹ Together Crown and Corporation arranged for the delivery of “immense rolls of crimson cloth, waggon loads of evergreen” and “flags”, that were sent to the reception areas on Admiralty Pier, the railway station and the Lord

⁴¹⁰ Harcourt, ‘Sultan’, p. 35.

⁴¹¹ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 17.

⁴¹² FO60/358, St. Petersburg, Thomson to Hammond, 28 May 1873.

⁴¹³ ADM116/13, Admiral Mundy to Naval Secretary Robert Hall, 7 June 1873.

⁴¹⁴ *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June.

⁴¹⁵ ‘The Shah is at length our guest’, *Times*, 19 June 1873.

⁴¹⁶ ‘Arrival of the Shah’, *Illustrated London News*, 21 June 1873 (*ILLN.* hereafter).

⁴¹⁷ ‘The Shah’s Visit from Ostend to Dover’, *Graphic*, 28 June 1873 & *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June.

⁴¹⁸ *Times*, ‘Shah’, 19 June.

⁴¹⁹ ‘Arrival of the Shah’, *Dover Express*, 20 June 1873.

⁴²⁰ *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June.

⁴²¹ *Dover Express*, 20 June.

Warden Hotel.⁴²² There was also a guard of honour, a band and tiered seating for ticketholders to watch the Shah's ceremonial hundred yard walk to a waiting train.⁴²³ Moreover, adding pomp to the civic and festive scene was the presence of significant members of the Royal Family including the Queen's second son Alfred, the twenty-nine year old the Duke of Edinburgh,⁴²⁴ and Prince Arthur, the Queen's twenty-three year old third son.⁴²⁵ #

The two Royal Princes subsequently acted as signalmen and embodiments of Britain, using their front including costume, verbal and nonverbal communication to set Court Splendour in motion. At around half one in the afternoon they descended onto Admiralty Pier, Alfred in the uniform of a captain of Her Majesty's Navy, Arthur in his Rifle Brigade regimentals. Each also sported their blue "Garter riband and star, with other stars and decorations". The Princes were joined by twenty or so officials whose social rank and complementary costume also added to the splendour.⁴²⁶ This included Viscount Sydney, sporting his Order of the Bath with red ribbon and star, and the large gold "Chamberlain's key", and Lord Granville who wore the "blue and red of his Cinque Port Wardenship". The *Times* reflecting on that British dislike for extravagance, thought the display impressive though in an understated way with "neat, handsome and well-fitting" uniforms that would vie with the "Asiatic pomp" of the Persians.⁴²⁷

Of further significance was the fact that "it had been intended at first that the Prince of Wales should also meet the Shah at Dover", however, it was eventually thought "to be most fitting that at each stage of his journey Nasir al-Din should be welcomed by some high personage".⁴²⁸ After Rawlinson, Alfred and Arthur constituted the next logical progression whilst the Prince of Wales "representing the Queen", would await "the imperial guest in the capital".⁴²⁹ Finally the Shah would then see Her Majesty at Windsor. In this context the British were using Royal Family to maintain a sense of mystification. Goffman contends that "mystification", a concept that draws inspiration from Kenneth Burke and Charles Cooley, is a strategy whereby "social distance" between performers and the audience is controlled to generate and sustain a sense of "awe".⁴³⁰ By ensuring that the Shah had to travel into the eventual presence of Her Majesty, the British government maintained the dignity and also the dominance of the British Crown in the eyes of a Persian audience that would experience a sense of awe. Paradoxically the use of progressively more senior members of the Royal Family was a form of controlled demystification, aimed at increasing Anglo-Persian dynastic intimacy and friendship.

⁴²² 'The Shah of Persia', *Times*, 17 June 1873.

⁴²³ *Times*, 'Visit', 19 June.

⁴²⁴ Lee, *Victoria*, p. 159.

⁴²⁵ Lee, *Victoria*, p. 206.

⁴²⁶ *Times*, 'Visit', 19 June.

⁴²⁷ *Times*, 'Visit', 19 June.

⁴²⁸ 'The Shah of Persia', *Morning Post*, 19 June 1873.

⁴²⁹ *Morning Post*, 19 June.

⁴³⁰ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 67-68.

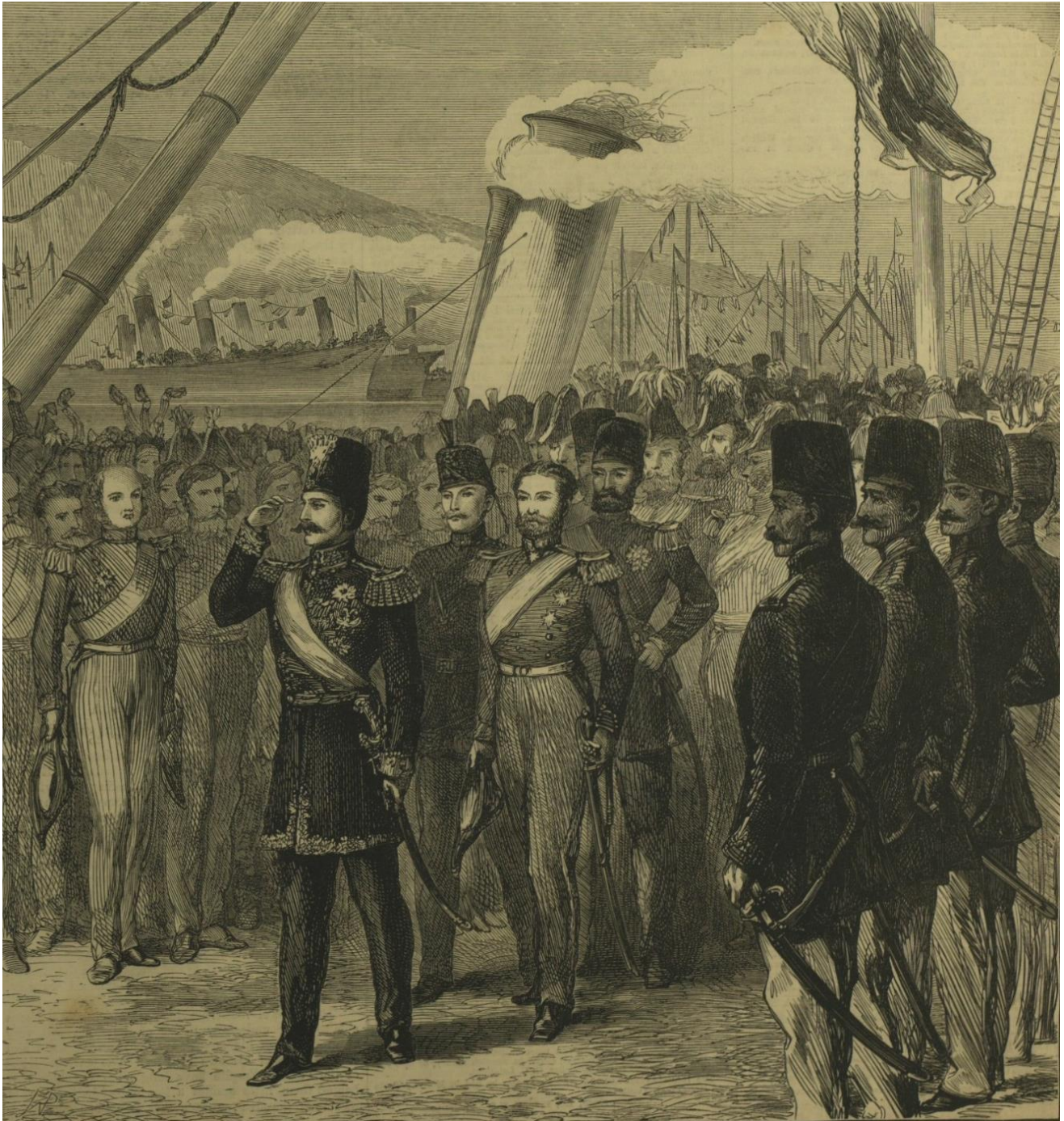


Fig. 11. The Shah comes ashore with the royal sons behind (*I.L.N.*, 28 June).

The strategy also bears similarity to another of Goffman's concepts, that of "realigning actions" in which a performance team simultaneously decrease social distance and increase intimacy, in order to benefit "wider goals".⁴³¹ Through this process temporary Anglo-Persian parity was progressively precipitated as the Shah was welcomed as an equal into the royal community, complementing Britain's wider foreign policy goals in Persia. The first act of demystification thus took place in Dover at around half two in the afternoon when Alfred and Arthur went aboard the *Vigilant*.

⁴³¹ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 199.

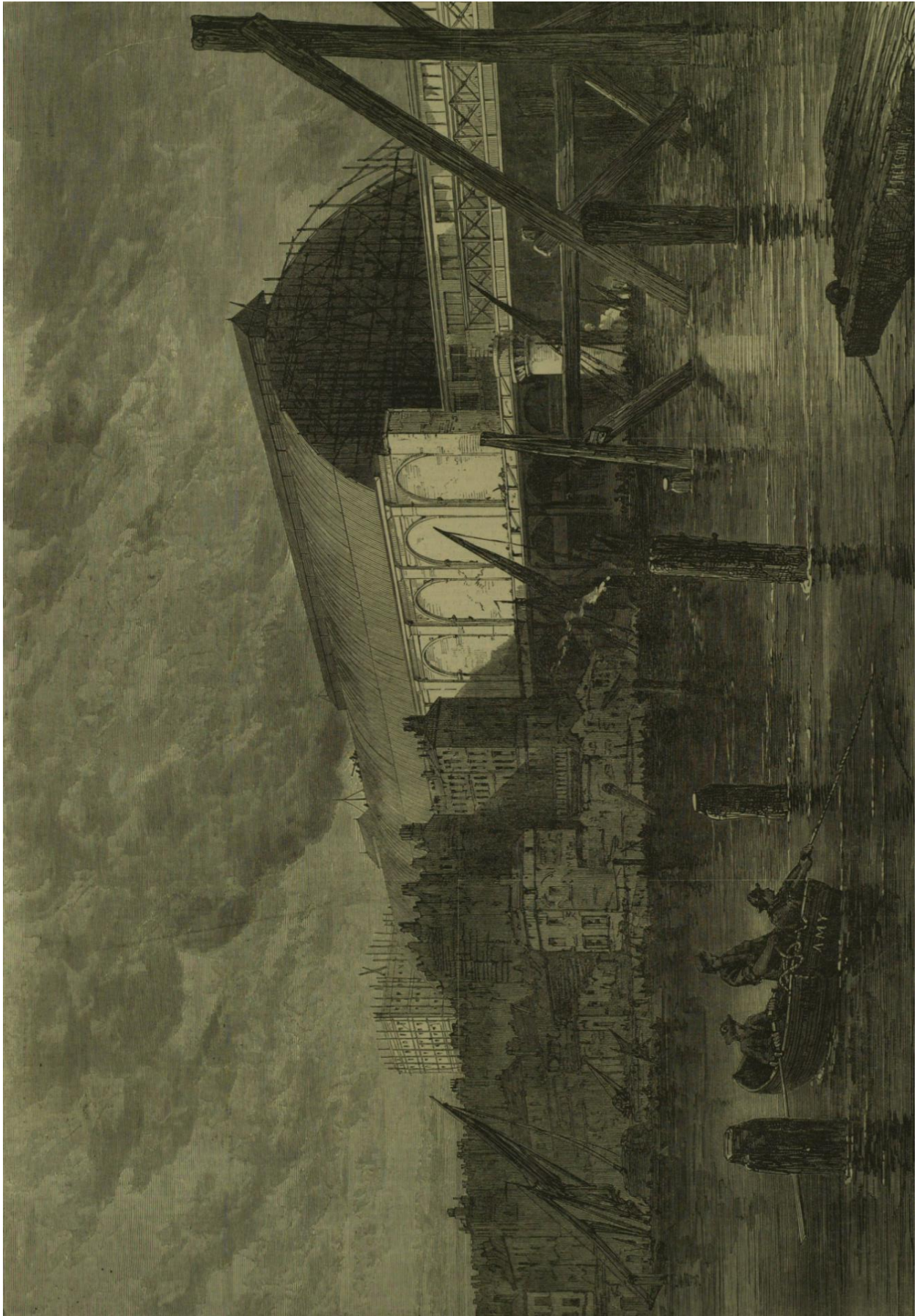


Fig. 12. Charing Cross Station's exterior ('The Charing-Cross Railway', *ILLN.*, 13 Feb.1864).

Here they and verbally greeted H.I.M., before deferentially allowing the Shah to lead the assembly off the ship via a red baize gangway to saluting soldiers, the “mighty boom” of cannon fire, the crowd’s cheering and the peal of the Persian anthem (Fig. 11).⁴³² Lesser officials subsequently “led the way, stepping backward in true courtly style”, conducting their “exalted guest” to the train. Arthur and Alfred walked first behind, and then “by the Shah’s side” bearing themselves “with the ease and dignity of perfect breeding”.⁴³³ In this dignified yet festive moment of first contact the royal signalling sons thus reified the unity and cordiality of two symbolically equal dynasties. Court Splendour meanwhile, continued in the context of transportation with a “solid oak” “Royal saloon” built by the London and North Western Railway company (L.N.W.R.).⁴³⁴ The saloon, with a “very gorgeous” interior, was reserved exclusively for the Royal Family or its guests.⁴³⁵

At around quarter past six the royal train subsequently entered Charing Cross Station where British government once more played to the country’s national strengths, using setting in conjunction with sartorially attired sons of the sovereign.⁴³⁶ Indeed, in receiving the Shah at Charing Cross the Royal Family had enveloped itself in one of London’s many monuments to private power, and to a structure with considerable expressive intent.⁴³⁷ Constructed in 1864 Charing Cross station was an imposing expression of “Victorian technology”,⁴³⁸ with its “magnificent” main edifice of “iron and glass” (Fig. 12).⁴³⁹ Meanwhile, the connected hotel was “one of the finest buildings” in London, with a roof styled after the Louvre.⁴⁴⁰ There was also a royal connection in that Charing Cross had “for centuries been the entry” to “court, and government” emanating from the Tudor era cluster of royal structures and stately grounds around Westminster, Whitehall and St. James’s Palace.⁴⁴¹ As at Dover and later Manchester, the station had been transformed into a festive setting by the South Eastern Railway company (S.E.R.),⁴⁴² with the two west platforms also partitioned off for the royal suites.⁴⁴³

Meanwhile, beyond the partition there was tiered seating for seven hundred.⁴⁴⁴ The “Royal platform” itself was “draped in scarlet cloth” and decorated with “wreaths, laurels, evergreens, and flowers”. Furthermore, the archway that led to the partitioned platform had a “trophy of flags, of which the Royal arms and the crown of Persia formed the centrepiece”.⁴⁴⁵

⁴³² ‘Visit of the Shah’, *I.L.N.*, 28 June 1873 & *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June.

⁴³³ *Dover Express*, 20 June.

⁴³⁴ ‘The Queen’s Royal Carriage’, *I.L.N.*, 7 Sept. 1861.

⁴³⁵ There was also “delicious fruit sent by the Queen” as refreshments for the journey on board (*Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June).

⁴³⁶ *Morning Post*, 19 June.

⁴³⁷ Cannadine, ‘Monarchy’, p. 113.

⁴³⁸ Liza Picard, *Victorian London: The Life of a City 1840-1870*, (London: Orion, 2006), p. 43-44.

⁴³⁹ ‘The Charing-Cross Railway’, *I.L.N.*, 13 Feb. 1864.

⁴⁴⁰ ‘The Charing-Cross Hotel and Railway-Station’, *I.L.N.*, 11 June 1864.

⁴⁴¹ Judith Flanders, *The Victorian City: Everyday Life in Dickens’ London*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2012), p. 268 & Edna Healey, *The Queen’s House, A Social History of Buckingham Palace*, (London: Michael Joseph, 1997), p. 1-2.

⁴⁴² *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June.

⁴⁴³ *I.L.N.*, 28 June.

⁴⁴⁴ *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June.

⁴⁴⁵ *I.L.N.*, 28 June.



Fig. 13. The Duke of Cambridge in his formal British Army uniform, painted by Frank Holl, 1882 (*Royal Collection Trust*).

This frequently used decorative feature further emphasised dynastic parity and unity. Adding to the importance was also the presence of a hundred Coldstream Guardsmen of the elite Brigade of Guards, a unit of the Household Troops.⁴⁴⁶ Finally there was a selection of royals, in which status, communication and costume were again brought to bear. Indeed, on most occasions during the visit in which the Royal Family was present, “Full Dress” uniform was obligated.⁴⁴⁷ The thirty-two year old Prince of Wales thus wore the uniform of a British Army general with white feather plumed bicorn, and scarlet and gold braided tunic dotted with awards and orders including the Garter Star. Albert was joined by the Duke of Cambridge similarly costumed in his capacity as Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief (Fig. 13). Other royals included Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and the Duke of Teck,⁴⁴⁸ all in “brilliant” attire.⁴⁴⁹

At around quarter past six this sartorial selection of royals, repeated the welcoming ceremony at Dover as the Shah exited the saloon carriage. The Prince of Wales representing his mother, monarch and nation, led the proceedings, conversing with H.I.M. who in turn responded with the “liveliest pleasure and interest”.⁴⁵⁰ The Shah was subsequently “escorted” to “Royal state carriages” which would convey him in a ritual procession to Buckingham Palace (Fig. 14).⁴⁵¹ Such transportation was another manifestation of Court Splendour, with the use of “magnificent horses in splendid trappings and servants in gorgeous liveries”, surrounded by a squadron of the elite Royal Horse Guards, the “Blues”, in burnished helmets and breastplates.⁴⁵² Shortly after entering the carriages the procession headed out of the station amid the roaring masses into a scene marred only by typical British weather (Fig. 15). Rapt in attention despite the rain, more Household Troops of the Grenadier Guards lined the “thronged” route of the procession across the Strand, past Trafalgar Square, down Whitehall, through Horse Guards, past St. James’s Park and along the Mall to Buckingham Palace.⁴⁵³ As in Manchester this processional route was selected, prepared and policed. Moreover whilst the crowd complemented Public Welcome by clustering in Trafalgar Square, St. James’s Park and at the Duke of York Monument, the buildings emphasised Court Splendour or Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁶ *I.L.N.*, 28 June.

⁴⁴⁷ LC5/258, ‘Programme – Visit of His Majesty the Shah’, n.d.

⁴⁴⁸ Husband to Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge, the Queen’s first cousin (Lee, *Victoria*, p. 368).

⁴⁴⁹ *Morning Post*, 19 June.

⁴⁵⁰ *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June.

⁴⁵¹ *Morning Post*, 19 June.

⁴⁵² *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June & *I.L.N.*, 28 June.

⁴⁵³ *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June.

⁴⁵⁴ *Times*, ‘Visit’, 19 June & *Times*, ‘Shah’, 19 June.



Fig. 14. The scene in Charing Cross (*I.L.N.*, 28 June).



Fig. 15. The Shah leaving Charing Cross Station (*J.L.N.*, 28 June).

Despite the relative ceremonial unsuitability of London, there had also been attempts to monumentalise the city's royal reception area. In the first quarter of the century the famous Regency architect John Nash had demolished the King's Mews, along with some undesirable houses just north of the Strand, in readiness for a "vista" up to Whitehall, with space for the new National Gallery and public square.⁴⁵⁵ Architects William Wilkins and Charles Barry continued the work following Nash's death in 1835, completing the gallery three years later and Trafalgar Square by 1850, replete with its large granite fountains, a bronze of King George IV and Nelson's Column.⁴⁵⁶ Nash had also played a significant role in the renovation work around St. James's Park, beautifying the park and widening the Mall in 1825, in order to accommodate an improved carriage drive to Buckingham House.⁴⁵⁷

He was also responsible for the "lofty" four-storey white stucco mansions of Carlton House Terrace along the Mall, which was slowly becoming a royal ceremonial thoroughfare. The terrace meanwhile, was situated next to existent royal structures on the processional route including the Prince of Wales's residence at Marlborough House, an 18th century red brick and "ornamented" stone structure designed by Sir Christopher Wren.⁴⁵⁸ Meanwhile, next to the Prince's home was St. James's Palace, the senior Royal Residence with a "beautiful Tudor gateway" evoking its historic 16th century origins.⁴⁵⁹ It was the newest Royal Residence that, however, constituted Shah's final destination at the eastern extremity of the Mall. Buckingham Palace was also the last major renovation project undertaken by Nash by which he transformed what was a stately home, into a setting more befitting of the British Royal Family. Constructed between 1825 and 1837, with further work undertaken in 1850 by Edward Blore, the palace was another attempt to increase the capital's previously poor capacity for royal display (Fig. 16). Before the project's completion Terence Davis argues, "no English monarch had ever possessed a great London palace".⁴⁶⁰ Finally taken up as a royal residence in 1837, the new palace went some way to rectifying this deficiency.⁴⁶¹ The new west façade was a perfect example of "simple yet regal splendour",⁴⁶² whilst the fifty acre garden had "the smoothest, greenest, and softest grass turf" in the country.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁵ Flanders, *Victorian*, p. 270.

⁴⁵⁶ 'Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery', in *Survey of London: Volume 20, St Martin-in-The-Fields, Pt III: Trafalgar Square and Neighbourhood*, ed. G.H. Gater and F.R. Hiorns (London, 1940), pp. 15-18. <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol20/pt3/pp15-18>> [accessed: 8.10.16].

⁴⁵⁷ Healey, *Queen's*, p. 93-94 & Terence Davis, *John Nash, The Prince Regent's Architect*, (London: Country Life Limited, 1966), p. 81.

⁴⁵⁸ Edward Walford, 'Carlton House', in *Old and New London: Volume 4* (London, 1878), pp. 86-99. <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol4/pp86-99>> [accessed: 8.9.16] & Mima-Nixon, *Royal Palaces & Gardens*, (London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1916), p. 26.

⁴⁵⁹ R.S. Rait, *Royal Palaces of England*, (London: Constable & Company Ltd., 1911), p. 247, p. 267 & p. 279-286.

⁴⁶⁰ Davis, *Nash*, p. 93.

⁴⁶¹ Edward Walford, 'Westminster: Buckingham Palace', in *Old and New London: Volume 4* (London, 1878), pp. 61-74. <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol4/pp61-74>> [accessed: 8.10.16] & Lee, *Victoria*, p. 69.

⁴⁶² H. Clifford Smith, 'Buckingham Palace', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 101 (1953), pp. 451-464, (p. 458).

⁴⁶³ 'The Gardens at Buckingham Palace', *The Ladies Treasury*, 2 Aug. 1869.



Fig. 16. The east facade of Buckingham Palace in 1859
(‘Old Pictures of London in Victoria Era’, 2013).

The most splendid parts of the palace were, however, the “striking and dignified” State Rooms, filled with “magnificent furniture, china, clocks” and paintings.⁴⁶⁴ Although the palace was not without its problems, including cost and its corroding Caen stonework,⁴⁶⁵ the Queen was happy to make the palace her prestigious London residence.⁴⁶⁶ She was also “glad” to “place apartments in Buckingham Palace at His Majesty’s disposal”.⁴⁶⁷ Both the gesture of housing H.I.M. in the palace, and the features of that piece of setting were thus further demonstrations of Court Splendour.

His Majesty reached his temporary residence after another ceremonial display in the quadrangle replete with scarlet and gold uniformed veterans of the Yeomen of the Guard, the monarch’s personal bodyguard formed in 1485 colloquially known as the Beefeaters.⁴⁶⁸ They were joined by a further assembly of royal officials who conducted the Shah and the Royal Princes to the State Rooms via the Grand Staircase, an opulent white marbled double flight of steps with a gilt bronze balustrade that was “probably the finest...example of applied metalwork of the Regency period”.⁴⁶⁹ The ceremonial welcome finally ended in the Bow Drawing Room with its “deep blue scagliola” columns, “magnificent” chandeliers, and large bay windows overlooking the palace grounds.⁴⁷⁰ Of the whole reception thus far the *Times* wrote tellingly that although the:

...Royal Family appreciate simplicity in their ordinary life, the traditional splendour of the Court on great occasions is such as well beseems an old and long-settled Monarchy. The equipages, the horses, the uniforms and liveries, will bear comparison even with Eastern splendour, and nowhere will the Shah have been welcomed with a more brilliant display.⁴⁷¹

This was but the first day of the Shah’s residence at Buckingham Palace, which subsequently served as a splendid piece of setting to performatively legitimise his dynasty by receiving dignitaries and . The British government had also requested that the Shah stay in the palace during the “season”,⁴⁷² so that he might enjoy the capital’s busiest period for aristocratic engagements including balls, dinner and garden parties and artistic performances.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁴ Smith, ‘Buckingham’, p. 458 & Davis, *Nash*, p. 96.

⁴⁶⁵ Smith, ‘Buckingham’, p. 457.

⁴⁶⁶ Healey, *Queen’s*, p. 100-123.

⁴⁶⁷ FO248/277, Foreign Office, Hammond to Thomson, 11 Dec. 1872.

⁴⁶⁸ Reginald Hennell, *The History of the King’s Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard*, (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1904), p. 10 & p. 28-29.

⁴⁶⁹ Smith, ‘Buckingham’, p. 459.

⁴⁷⁰ Smith, ‘Buckingham’, p. 462.

⁴⁷¹ *Times*, ‘Shah’, 19 June.

⁴⁷² Parliament’s session before the summer recess.

⁴⁷³ FO248/277, Hammond to Thomson, 11 Dec. 1872 & Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles, Society Etiquette and the Season*, (London: Croom Helm, 1973) p. 21.

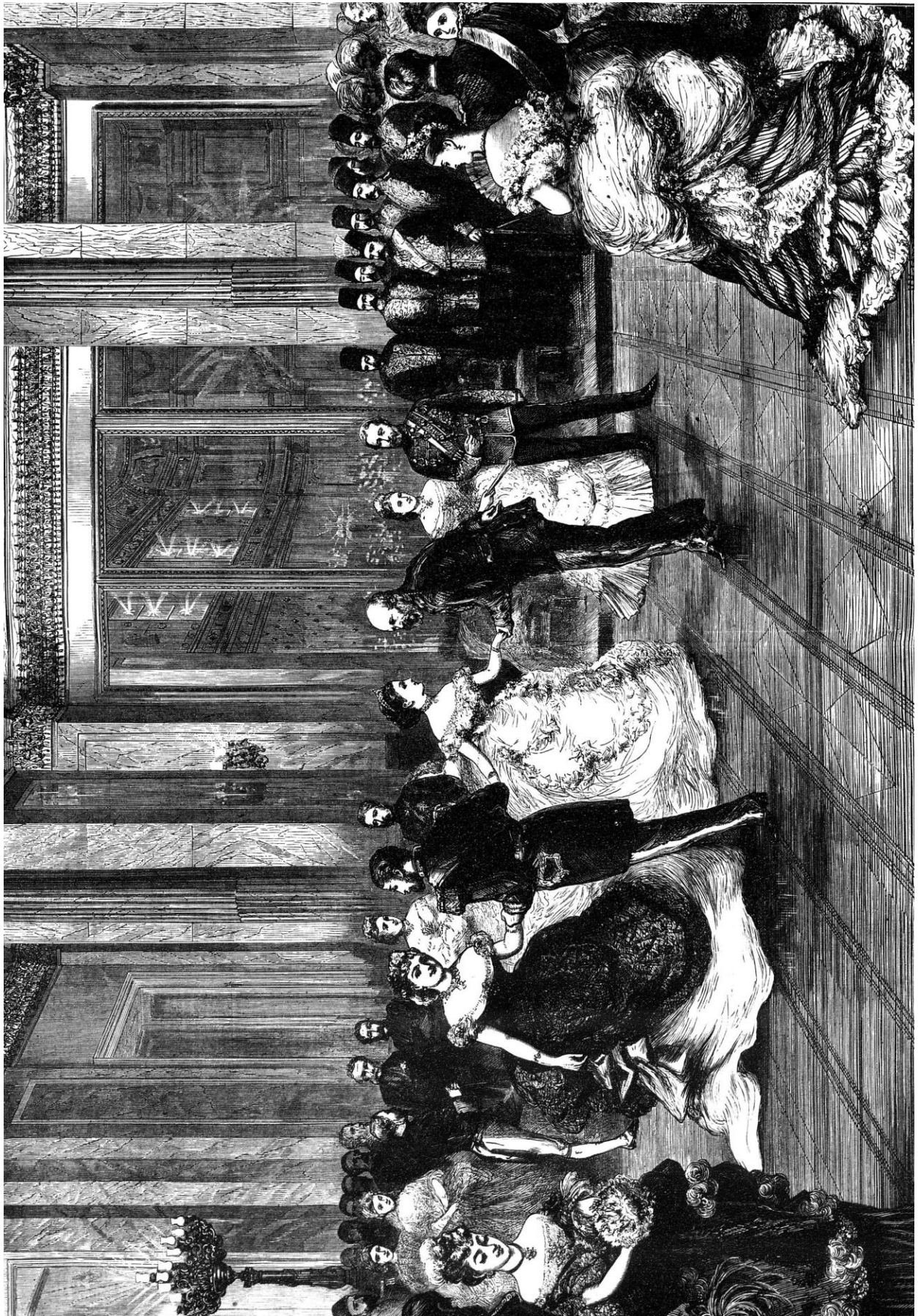


Fig. 17. The State Ball ('State Ball at Buckingham Palace', *Graphic*, 28 June 1873).

Such a move was designed to demonstrate acceptance and to facilitate a performative series of acts through which the Shah would become – temporarily at least – part of British aristocratic society through enactment.⁴⁷⁴ Thus on the 19th of June, H.I.M. engaged in a typical habit of the European nobility; the social call. The Shah first visited the Prince of Wales and his wife Princess Alexandra of Denmark.⁴⁷⁵ He “next drove in succession to Clarence House, to visit the Duke of Edinburgh; to Gloucester House, to call upon the Duke of Cambridge; and to Kensington Palace to pay his respects to the Duke and Duchess of Teck”.⁴⁷⁶ The Diplomatic Corps also assembled for the Shah,⁴⁷⁷ whilst there were further introductions to various noblemen, politicians and deputations from municipal Corporations and religious organisations.⁴⁷⁸

According to Leonore Davidoff social calls and introductions were the low cost currency of upper class Victorian society, whilst, balls and dinners were more expensive and prestigious events held for important guests.⁴⁷⁹ As part of his performative acceptance into this society, the Shah attended such events, including a special State Dinner held at Marlborough House in “brilliant and distinguished company” on the evening of the 19th.⁴⁸⁰ Furthermore, he attended three balls, including one immediately following dinner at Marlborough House. This was held at next door Stafford House, known for its entertaining proprietors, the Sutherlands.⁴⁸¹ The Duke had arranged for the ball to be on the “scale of...utmost splendour” at the “express wish” of the Prince of Wales.⁴⁸² This was subsequently surpassed by a State Ball held at the “command of the Queen” at Buckingham Palace on the 25th of June.⁴⁸³ For that occasion the palace was strikingly illuminated in red and white light, and guarded by Grenadiers, Beefeaters, and the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms,⁴⁸⁴ another richly costumed component of the Queen’s bodyguard, used only on special occasions.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁷⁴ Judith Butler, ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory’, *Theatre Journal*, 40 (1988), pp. 519-531 (p. 527).

⁴⁷⁵ ‘The Shah in London’, *Daily News*, 20 June 1873.

⁴⁷⁶ *Daily News*, 20 June.

⁴⁷⁷ *Daily News*, 20 June.

⁴⁷⁸ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 25 June 1873, ‘The Right Hon. B. Disraeli had an audience of the Shah this morning’, *Morning Post*, 2 July 1873 & ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 2 July 1873.

⁴⁷⁹ Davidoff, *The Best*, p. 46-47.

⁴⁸⁰ *Daily News*, 20 June.

⁴⁸¹ E. Beresford Chancellor, *The Private Palaces of London, Past and Present*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1908), p. 347.

⁴⁸² ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 20 June 1873.

⁴⁸³ ‘State Ball’, *Daily News*, 26 June 1873.

⁴⁸⁴ ‘The Shah in England’, *Daily News*, 26 June 1873.

⁴⁸⁵ ‘The Gentlemen-At-Arms on duty at Buckingham Palace’, *I.L.N.*, 9 June 1866.



Fig. 18. The Shah in the Royal Box at the Royal Italian Opera (*J.L.N.*, 5 July 1873).

The Royals Princes, the Princess of Wales, Princess Louise,⁴⁸⁶ the Duke and Duchess of Teck, Prince Christian and his wife Princess Helena,⁴⁸⁷ joined other members of the nobility in a glitter of pearls, diamonds and gold lace.⁴⁸⁸ The party converged on the 123-ft. Ball Room, “reserved for the most important State functions” (Fig. 17),⁴⁸⁹ and decorated on this occasion with hundreds of pots of roses.⁴⁹⁰ In the festive setting, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Arthur also donned “full Highland costume” and danced the “Scotch reel” before H.I.M.⁴⁹¹ Besides balls the Shah was invited to partake in other popular activities of the ‘season’ including theatrical, operatic and orchestral performances.⁴⁹² For instance on the evening of the 21st the Shah went to the Royal Italian Opera in Covent Garden, a favourite pastime of the Queen.⁴⁹³ Here he was joined by the sovereign’s sons and daughters including Prince Leopold, the Queen’s youngest. The Shah led the party in a “gorgeous” procession with the Princess of Wales on his arm, through the beautifully decorated Floral Hall before taking a central position in the State Box to watch Hamlet and Faust (Fig. 18).⁴⁹⁴

The trip to Convent Garden meanwhile, had been the first of several artistic entertainments selected and prepared by the Prince of Wales. Prior to the Shah’s arrival, the Prince even formed a special entertainment planning “committee” involving his brother Alfred, the Duke of Sutherland and Viscount Sydney.⁴⁹⁵ The second entertainment was a “grand concert” at the Royal Albert Hall attended on the 23rd.⁴⁹⁶ As per committee recommendations, the Shah and the ever-present Royal Princes used the “Queen’s Box” to view the orchestra, which performed on a raised dais deferentially “bordered by the Persian colours”.⁴⁹⁷ Legitimation of the Shah was thus facilitated by his centralised position in the hall, amidst the eight thousand strong crowd which afforded him “loud acclamations”.⁴⁹⁸ Although not a Royal palace, strong connections to the structure also bound it to the monarchy. The hall, only finished in 1871, was initially the conception of the Prince Consort, and it was subsequently built as a memorial to him.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁸⁶ The Queen’s sixth child. (Lee, *Victoria*, p. 187).

⁴⁸⁷ The Queen’s fifth child. (Lee, *Victoria*, p. 172).

⁴⁸⁸ *Daily News*, ‘State’, 26 June.

⁴⁸⁹ Smith, ‘Buckingham’, p. 463.

⁴⁹⁰ ‘Floral Decorations at Buckingham Palace’, *Morning Post*, 27 June 1873 & ‘Buckingham Palace’, *Graphic*, 25 June 1887.

⁴⁹¹ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 28 June 1873.

⁴⁹² Davidoff, *The Best*, p. 74.

⁴⁹³ Lee, *Victoria*, p. 89.

⁴⁹⁴ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 23 June 1873.

⁴⁹⁵ *Times*, 10 June.

⁴⁹⁶ *Times*, 24 June.

⁴⁹⁷ *Times*, 24 June.

⁴⁹⁸ *Times*, 24 June.

⁴⁹⁹ Amery, *Victorian Buildings*, p. 88 & Lee, *Victoria*, p. 380.

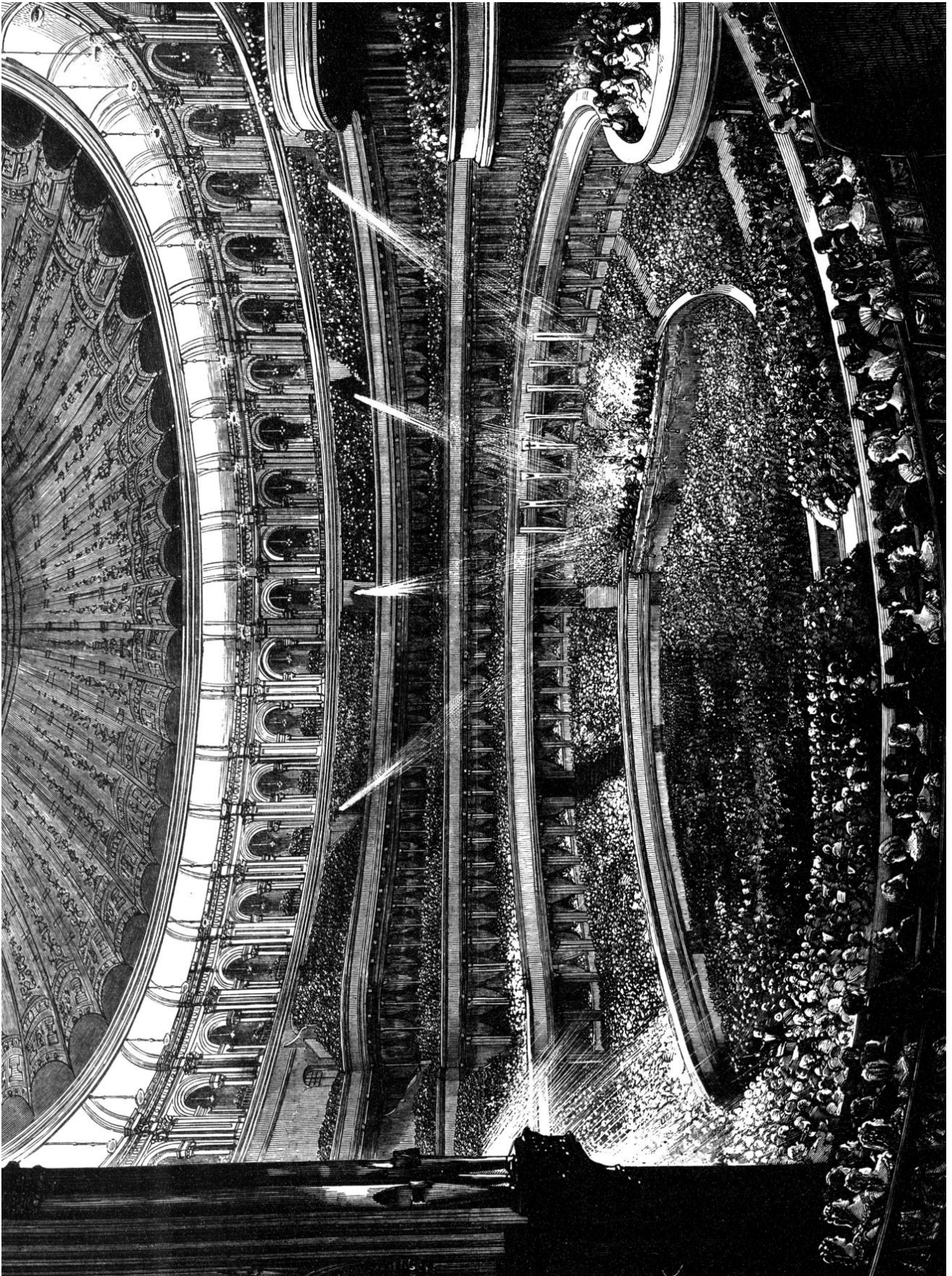


Fig. 19. The interior of the Albert Hall during the Shah's visit (*Graphic*, 2 July).

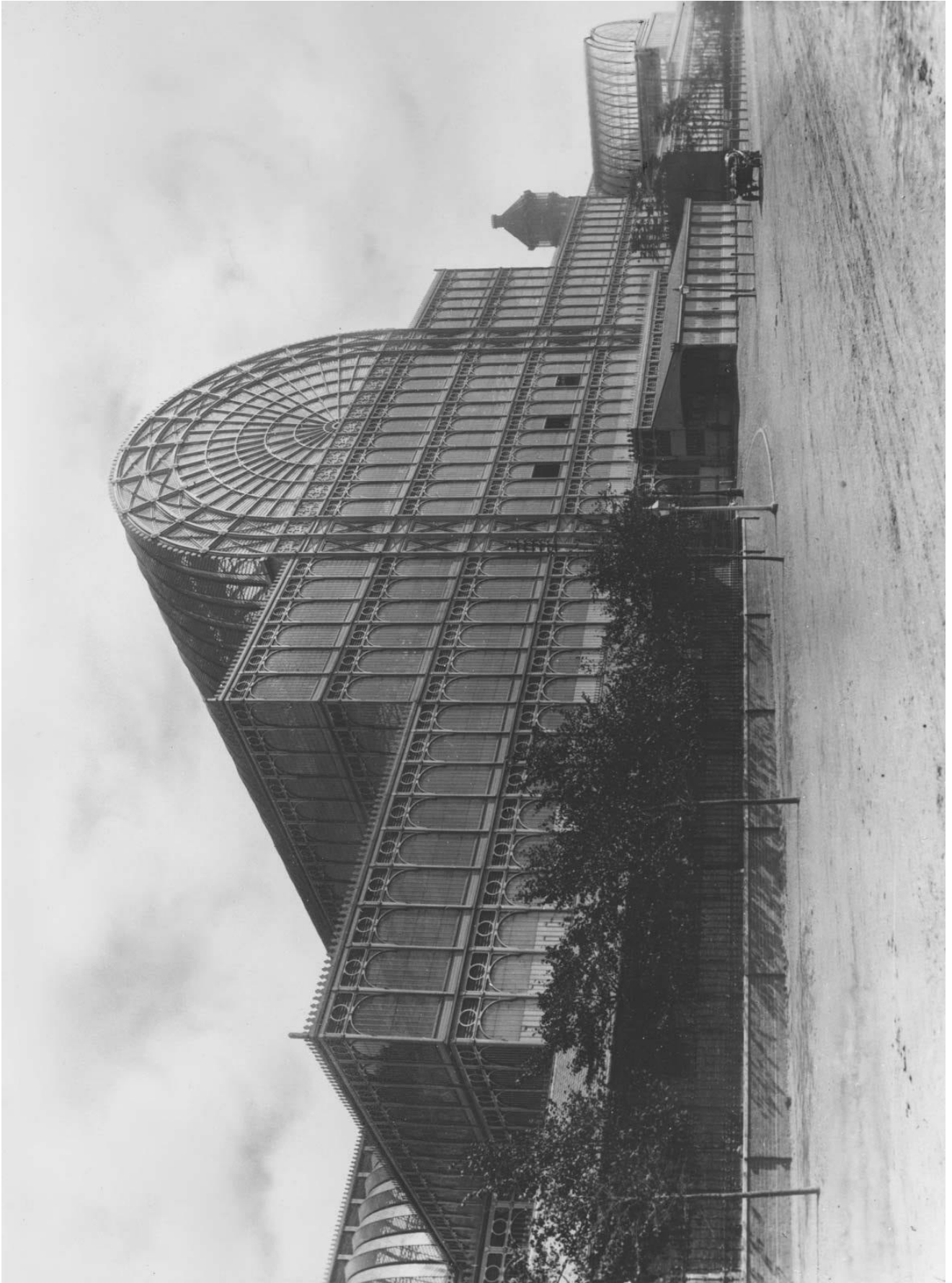


Fig. 20. The exterior of the Crystal Palace, 1888, ('Old Pictures of London in the Victorian Era', 2013).

The vast auditorium and the imposing interior of this “remarkable” redbrick Roman inspired behemoth also added to Court Splendour, and more broadly, to World Power Vitality (Fig. 19).⁵⁰⁰ A third event meanwhile, was at another site patronised by Prince Albert – the Crystal Palace, the “eighth wonder of the world” and site of the world famous Great Exhibition of 1851.⁵⁰¹ The Shah visited on the 30th of June, to attend a “grand fete” incorporating a considerable coating of Court Splendour, as well performative enactment of royal status. Driving past the modern and “marvellous edifice” of glass and iron (Fig. 20),⁵⁰² the Shah again took the Princess of Wales on his arm and led the Royal party along “red cloth between living walls of spectators” until they reached the Royal Box.⁵⁰³ In the box itself setting and state-props were also manipulated to evoke unity and dynastic legitimacy, rendering the Shah comparable in status to his fellow sovereign. Specifically the “Shah had the advantage of any of the Royal visitors who have previously been entertained at the Crystal Palace in that for him a real throne had been erected where a Royal Box used to be”.⁵⁰⁴ To accentuate this new royal stage, the floor was lowered, with stairs placed below “three chairs of state” of crimson and gold.⁵⁰⁵ Whilst the Shah sat centrally he was flanked by the Princess of Wales on the left, with other Royals fanning out to each side (Fig. 21).⁵⁰⁶ From the new throne area, the Shah observed Handel’s orchestra, a show of gymnastics, and a firework display.⁵⁰⁷

Another smaller yet persistent performative act evoking Court Splendour was the Shah’s escorted transportation which often also involved royal attendance. Nasir al-Din’s entry to London has already been noted in this context, however, further examples were evident. For instance on the 21st the Shah and the Royal Princes took eight simple yet elegant black and gold phaetons popularised by Queen Victoria and her uncle George IV, from Buckingham Palace to Woolwich. They were escorted by the Queen’s Bays the 2nd Dragoon Guards, and 7th Queen’s Own Hussars.⁵⁰⁸ Similarly on the 25th, before touring the River Thames and the West India Docks, the Shah was escorted to the wharf at the Tower of London by Beefeaters and Coldstream Guards. Here he joined aforementioned Princes, Princesses and others aboard an “elegantly fitted up” steamer.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁰ ‘The Royal Albert Hall, *Times*, 29 March, 1871, & Gavin Stamp and Colin Amery, *Victorian Buildings of London, 1837-1887, An Illustrated Guide*, (London: The Architectural Press, 1980), p. 88-90, ‘Opening of the Royal Albert Hall: Arrival of the Queen’, *ILLN.*, 8 April 1871.

⁵⁰¹ Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 9.

⁵⁰² Peter Berlyn and Charles Fowler, *The Crystal Palace, Its Architectural History and Constructive Marvels*, (London: James Gilbert Paternoster Row, 1851), p. 1.

⁵⁰³ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 1 July 1873.

⁵⁰⁴ ‘Grand Fete to the Shah at the Crystal Palace’, *Daily News*, 1 July 1873.

⁵⁰⁵ *Daily News*, 1 July 1873.

⁵⁰⁶ *Times*, 1 July 1873.

⁵⁰⁷ *Times*, 1 July 1873.

⁵⁰⁸ *Times*, 23 June & Cannadine, ‘Monarchy’, p. 112.

⁵⁰⁹ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 26 June 1873.

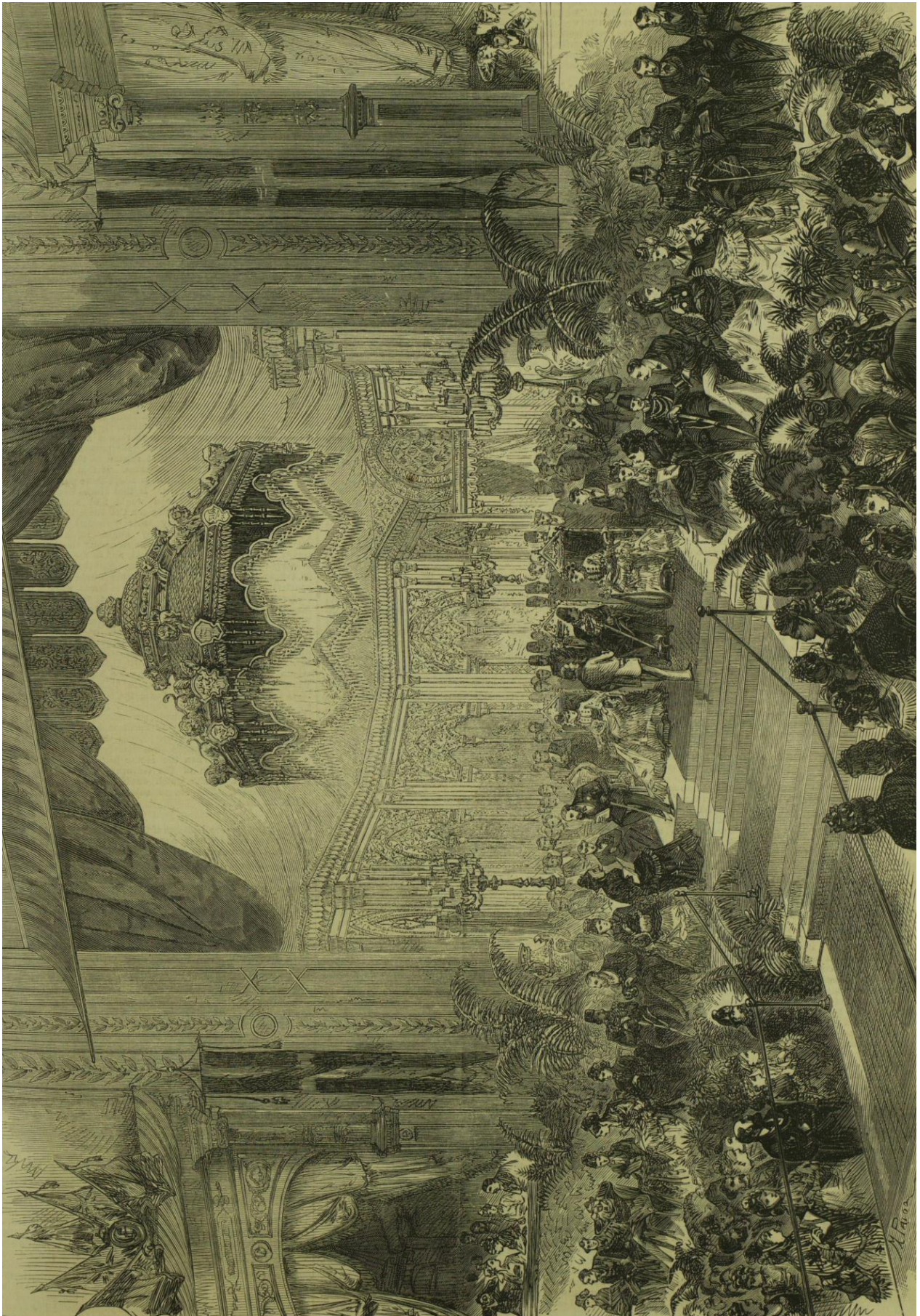


Fig. 21. The Shah in the Crystal Palace ('Parliamentary Summary', *I.L.N.*, 12 July 1873).

Incidentally through visits to sites including the West India Dock, and the Crystal Palace the Royal Family could also persistently bind itself to alternative sources of British strength that emphasised Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity.⁵¹⁰ All such instances of Court Splendour – receptions, dinners, balls, concerts, palaces, processions and royal regalia – would, however, have been meaningless had not the Shah seen Her Majesty in person. An audience with her was absolutely necessary in order to end the process of royal demystification, and to facilitate a fuller sense of dynastic equality. This required the acquiescence of Her Majesty which was not a foregone conclusion. Despite entertaining the Sultan, she had relayed her negative opinions on the prospect of future visits from foreign sovereigns, telling Gladstone that previous Prime Ministers:

...strongly felt that, as a lady, *without a husband*, with all the weight of Government thrown upon, with weakened health, *quite incapable* of bearing the *fatigues* of representation, she could not be expected to entertain Princes as formerly. Consequently she *cannot invite* them.⁵¹¹

If Gladstone insisted on inviting foreign royals to come “for their own amusement” she icily continued, then “*let* the Government buy a house, which may be called a Palace” for the purposes of maintaining and entertaining them.⁵¹² Although Her Majesty’s mood had lightened by 1873, the Prime Minister still had to “comfort” her about the potential visit of yet another Oriental sovereign.⁵¹³ Gladstone’s necessary effort to persuade his weary sovereign is demonstrative of the leverage that the Persian government had and also the importance of state visits in the context of British foreign policy formulation.

Having overcome the Queen’s objections, Gladstone also wanted to further legitimise the Shah’s sovereignty by making him a member – a “Stranger Knight” – of the Most Noble Order of the Garter. The Order dating back to the reign of Edward III, served to increase the “power and fame” of the Crown by binding it to a select number of knights in an exclusive chivalric and military community drawn from the English and to a lesser extent the European nobility.⁵¹⁴ In the late 18th and early 19th century the Order was then expanded to further unite “British aristocrats and foreign royalty” from Europe.⁵¹⁵ Thus during the reign of Victoria, rulers of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Prussia, Portugal, Russia, and Sardinia constituted many of its Stranger Knights.⁵¹⁶ The head of the Order and her progeny were also deeply entwined through matrimonial and familial ties to many of the royals on

⁵¹⁰ *Times*, 26 June.

⁵¹¹ Victoria to Gladstone, 31 May 1869, in George Earle Buckle ed., *The Letters of Queen Victoria, Vol. IV, 1862-1869*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 600-601.

⁵¹² Victoria to Gladstone, 31 May 1869, in Buckle., *Letters*. p. 600-601

⁵¹³ Gladstone to Granville, 13 April 1873, in Ramm, ed. *Correspondence*, p. 380 & Hibbert, *Victoria*, p. 349.

⁵¹⁴ George Frederick Beltz, *Memorials of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*, (London: William Pickering, 1841), p.xxv-cxlvii.

⁵¹⁵ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, p. 21 & p. 87-88.

⁵¹⁶ ‘The Order of the Garter’, *ILLN.*, 9 Aug.1851 & ‘Investiture of the King of Prussia with the Order of the Garter’, *ILLN.*, 23 March 1861 & ‘Investiture of the King of Denmark with the Order of the Garter’, *ILLN.*, 20 May 1865.

the continent who members of the order.⁵¹⁷ As such Garter was a physical embodiment of the fraternity that Nasir al-Din desired “recognition” from.⁵¹⁸

As an Order theoretically exclusive to Christians the Shah’s membership, however, presented problems. Previously exceptions had been made for just two monarchs; the first was Sultan Abdulmecid I who received the Order in 1856 on account of the Anglo-Ottoman alliance during the Crimean War.⁵¹⁹ Subsequently, Abdulmecid’s successor Abuldaziz had insisted on the Garter during his visit in 1867, a demand the government acquiesced to in the interests of securing continued Anglo-Ottoman cordiality. The Queen had “reluctantly accepted” though she wanted to confer the Order of the Star of India which was “more suited” to non-Christians.⁵²⁰ She was of the same opinion in 1873 stating that she did “not at all like giving the Garter to the Shah”.⁵²¹ Although Gladstone was “reluctant” himself,⁵²² both he and the Prince of Wales thought it was necessary to award the Garter,⁵²³ not least because the Tsar had previously awarded the Shah with Russia’s highest honour, the Order of St. Andrew.⁵²⁴ Refusal would thus have risked gifting Russia the advantage. The Queen gave her assent some five days before Nasir al-Din’s trip to Windsor on the 20th, though she left a sting in the tail by making a fuss over status.⁵²⁵ Specifically the sovereign objected to the Persian monarch’s fuller appellation of Shahanshah which corresponded to “His Imperial Majesty” which was superior to her own title. Equality was one thing, but semantic superiority could not be countenanced, thus she made sure the official programme only read “His Majesty the Shah”.⁵²⁶

Despite the semantic spat, “His Majesty’s” ritualised investiture was the subject of “extensive preparations”.⁵²⁷ For instance the Royal Household, Lord Granville, and the Great Western Railway Company (G.W.R) “combined in endeavouring to render the journey from Buckingham Palace to Windsor Castle a splendid pageant” and a festive procession celebrating dynastic unity and parity with all the “regal elegance that characterised the reception of foreign sovereigns at the Court of Queen Victoria”.⁵²⁸ Shortly before one o’clock in the afternoon plans were put into execution when twelve carriages escorted by a detachment of 7th Hussars delivered H.I.M. to Paddington Station. Much like Charing Cross and the London Road, Paddington had been spatially organised and decorated.⁵²⁹ The Shah was also given use of the Queen’s special entrance and waiting room for her many trips to Windsor

⁵¹⁷ John van der Kiste, *Queen Victoria’s Children*, (Stroud: The History Press, 2009), p. 162-168.

⁵¹⁸ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 425-7.

⁵¹⁹ Harcourt, ‘Sultan’, p. 53.

⁵²⁰ *Queen Victoria’s Journals*, Entry, 17 July 1867 <<http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/home.do>> [accessed: 20.10.16].

⁵²¹ PRO30/29/31, Balmoral, H. Ponsonby to Granville, 2 June 1873.

⁵²² ‘Cabinet’, 7 June 1874 in H.C.G., Matthew, ed. *The Gladstone Diaries: Volume 8: July 1871-December 1874: With Cabinet Minutes and Prime-ministerial Correspondence*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 336-7.

⁵²³ Hibbert, *Victoria*, p. 347-348.

⁵²⁴ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 113.

⁵²⁵ PRO30/29/31, Balmoral, H. Ponsonby to Granville, 15 June 1873.

⁵²⁶ H. Ponsonby to Sydney, 31 May 1873, in Watson, *Queen at Home*, p. 218-219, Hibbert, *Victoria*, p. 347 & LC5/258, ‘Programme – Visit of His Majesty the Shah’, n.d.

⁵²⁷ *Times*, 21 June.

⁵²⁸ *Times*, 21 June.

⁵²⁹ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Morning Post*, 21 June 1873.

with its plush furniture flanked by “choice flowers”.⁵³⁰ After a brief repose, H.I.M. passed a guard of honour composed of Grenadiers along with the ever-present multitudes of “loudly” cheering Londoners, whereupon he entered the Queen’s saloon carriage.⁵³¹ The train arrived at Windsor after a forty-minute journey, its occupants confronted by similar decorative and welcoming techniques in the station including large British and Persian standards hanging “side by side” from the “topmost point of the hoisting crane”.⁵³² Here the Shah was also given a “cordial greeting” by Corporation and Court officials and Princes Arthur and Leopold. Grenadiers and Life Guards saluted as the Persian National Air peeled out, before the procession passed through the streets of New Windsor, a settlement that had been deeply associated with the monarchy since the construction of the adjacent Royal Castle in the days of William the Conqueror.⁵³³

Unsurprisingly, the town had been made “as gay as possible” for the Shah, who was also given a cordial greeting by the inhabitants.⁵³⁴ The castle was subsequently approached via the ceremonial Long Walk, the straight carriageway through Windsor Great Park constructed during the reign of Charles II.⁵³⁵ Royal connections to the Windsor were older still, as the castle there had been home to English warrior kings since the 11th century. It was also the ceremonial headquarters of the Order of the Garter which was founded there in 1348.⁵³⁶ During the Hanoverian period, George III in particular enjoyed residing at the castle, though it was close to a “state of absolute ruin” upon his death, demonstrative of the frequent deficiencies of British royal splendour.⁵³⁷ Much like London, major architectural and decorative upgrades had been undertaken during the reigns George IV and William IV, who lived and died at the newly restored residence,⁵³⁸ and following the Queen’s accession, it also became one of her favoured homes.⁵³⁹ As the procession entered this symbol of monarchical longevity through the imposing mock-medieval King George IV’s Gate, a 21-gun salute was fired by the Royal Horse Artillery. The carriages then came to a halt in the quadrangle at the Sovereign’s Entrance to the Private Apartments.⁵⁴⁰ Here a guard of Beefeaters flanked the Queen who was wearing “smart morning dress” with her “large pearls”, her Garter ribbon and star. She was joined by royal officials, along with Princess Helena and her husband, and Princesses Louise and Beatrice, Victoria’s youngest daughter.⁵⁴¹ Despite the evident pomp and Court Splendour, there was another manifestation of British royal understatement in that Her Majesty’s outfit was modest compared to the Shah’s attire which featured a coat “covered with very fine jewels”

⁵³⁰ *Times*, 21 June.

⁵³¹ *Morning Post*, 21 June.

⁵³² ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Daily News*, 21 June 1873.

⁵³³ *I.L.N.*, 28 June, *Morning Post*, 21 June & Rait, *Royal Palaces*, p. 79.

⁵³⁴ *Times*, 21 June & *Morning Post*, 21 June.

⁵³⁵ Rait, *Royal Palaces*, p. 151 & p. 159.

⁵³⁶ Rait, *Royal Palaces*, p. 86-141.

⁵³⁷ Rait, *Royal Palaces*, p. 163.

⁵³⁸ Derek Linstrum, *Sir Jeffry Wyattville: Architect to the King*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) p. 163-200.

⁵³⁹ Linstrum, *Sir Jeffry Wyattville*, p. 163-166.

⁵⁴⁰ *Times*, 21 June & ‘Windsor Castle’, *I.L.N.*, 10 Oct. 1846.

⁵⁴¹ *Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873.

including “enormous rubies as buttons” along with his famous bejewelled astrakhan cap, sword, “sword belt & epaulettes made entirely of diamonds” (Fig. 22).⁵⁴²

With her performance imminent the Queen had become “nervous & agitated” in anticipation, adding to existent backstage reservations regarding the investiture, royal status and Nasir al-Din’s character.⁵⁴³ However, when her moment on the frontstage beckoned such thoughts were banished, as the Queen fully took on her role as a sovereign instrument of the British state, using verbal and nonverbal communication to impress Overt Cordiality and to signal dynastic unity and parity. In doing so she also exercised “dramaturgical discipline” whereby performers “suppress” private opinions and avoid “unmeant gestures” that might disrupt a desired impression.⁵⁴⁴ Thus, as H.I.M. and the Royal Princes exited the carriage to the much-repeated Persian anthem, Her Majesty “stepped forward & gave him” her “hand” expressing “great satisfaction at making the Shah’s acquaintance” (Fig. 23).⁵⁴⁵ She then conducted him up the velvet carpeted Royal Staircase, with its pervading “air of richness”, entering the White Drawing Room, a “noble” apartment evoking Court Splendour with its “richly gilded” plasterwork, furniture and ornaments.⁵⁴⁶ Only royals and select officials entered the room for introductions, before the ritual investiture ceremony took place. The Queen, noting how “absurd” the scene “must have looked”, then “asked” H.I.M. to “sit down” on a chair in the middle of the room.⁵⁴⁷ Feeling “very shy”, Her Majesty then took the Garter diamond star, badge and blue ribbon from Lord Granville, and “helped by Arthur & Leopold...put it over the Shah’s shoulder”. In return His Majesty held the Queen’s hand and “put it to his lips”, to which she replied with a salute to “his cheek”,⁵⁴⁸ before the ever-present Sadr-i Azam pinned the star of the order on his sovereign’s coat.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴² *Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873.

⁵⁴³ Her Majesty was also celebrating her Accession Day (*Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873).

⁵⁴⁴ Goffman *Presentation*, p. 216-18.

⁵⁴⁵ *Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873.

⁵⁴⁶ ‘The Queen’s Staircase, Windsor’, *J.L.N.*, 10 Feb.1855 & ‘The White Drawing Room’, *J.L.N.*, 6 April 1850.

⁵⁴⁷ *Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873.

⁵⁴⁸ Wright, *Persians*, p. 128.

⁵⁴⁹ *Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873.



Fig. 22. The Shah's diamond encrusted coat and scimitar (W. & D. Downey, 1873).



Fig. 23. The Queen greeting the Shah at Windsor Castle, (*I.L.N.*, 28 June).

These nonverbal gestures, known as the “*osculum pacis*”, the kiss of peace and “favour and brotherhood”, had been part of the investiture ceremony since its inception.⁵⁵⁰ They were also widespread at investitures across medieval Europe, reifying “friendship” and brotherly unity whilst paradoxically emphasising vassalage with the subordinate “demonstrating the newly-forged alliance and bond by placing his hands in those of his senior”.⁵⁵¹

Though a “simple” ceremony “all over in a matter of minutes”, the ritual investiture had been conducted with considerable gravitas. It had also taken place at the headquarters of the Order, though not with the full regalia and ceremony. By contrast the Shah had received the Order of St. Andrew and the Order of the Black Eagle, the highest awards in Russia and Germany respectively, with no ritual or ceremony. Indeed, the regalia for both Orders had simply been “brought” to His Majesty and handed over by representatives of the two emperors.⁵⁵² It is clear that the Garter ceremony was perceived to be more significant by Nasir al-Din himself, noting in his diary that the Queen decorated him “with her own hand”, which he received with the “utmost respect”. Unlike his descriptions of the other investitures, the Shah also relayed the medieval history of the Garter including its inception at Windsor, and the limit on its membership involving only “English Princes, and foreign Sovereigns”.⁵⁵³ This perception of exclusivity was also complemented by the historic pedigree of the Order which was over two hundred and fifty years older than the Russian and German awards.⁵⁵⁴

One can also argue that the Shah had also undergone a rather painless “rite of passage” which gave him new status as a member of one of the most famous and exclusive orders of chivalry in Europe. It was anthropologists Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner who largely popularised the notion of ‘rites of passage’, identifying three phases by which a ritual subject moves from one “state” to another. First comes “separation” entailing “detachment of an individual or group” from a position in a social structure. This is followed by the “margin” or liminal stage of transition, where the “ritual subject” becomes “ambiguous” whilst passing through a realm or threshold, before the subject is then “consummated” or re-assimilated into a new “stable state” with clearly defined rights, status and obligations.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁰ Elias Ashmole, *The Institution, Laws & Ceremonies of the most Noble Order of the Garter*, (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1971), p. 15, p. 35 & p. 561.

⁵⁵¹ Dusan Zupka, *Ritual and Symbolic Communication in Medieval Hungary under the Arpad Dynasty (1000-1301)*, (BRILL, 2016), p. 145. See also Philip Grierson trans., F. L. Ganshof, *Feudalism*, (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 78.

⁵⁵² Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 43 & p. 91.

⁵⁵³ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 148-149.

⁵⁵⁴ ‘The Russian Order of St. Andrew’, *Times*, 10 Sept.1840 & ‘The Prussian orders of knighthood and the dates of their foundation’, *Times*, 15 Nov. 1838.

⁵⁵⁵ Turner, ‘Betwixt and Between’, p. 4-6.



Fig. 24. The Queen wearing the sash of the Order of the Sun (W. & D. Downey, 1876).

This process, often involving hardship and humiliation, cannot be directly applied to the Shah's own rite of passage. He did, however, undergo a separation of sorts in that he was kept from the Queen's company until such time as he had been invested with sufficient status and membership of an exclusive group. Meanwhile, Combs drawing from the work of Orrin Klapp, argues that such "rites of passage" afford an occasion for a new member to "touch" the group they have just joined, often an emotionally powerful event. This provides much sought after "approval" and "confirmation". Paradoxically, for those directing, the ritual the rite of passage "dramatizes" their "power over" the new member.⁵⁵⁶ In the case of the Shah, his position in the European fraternity of monarchs was confirmed and legitimised, as was his special relationship of equality with the British Royal Family, the most prestigious dynasty in Europe. In controlling the ritual with its implications of vassalage, the British government had also symbolically exerted power over H.I.M., underlining Britain's superiority. One must note, however, that this was largely a symbolic affair; there was no obligation for Her Majesty to help her fellow knight in the face of Russian aggression. This would have been difficult, since Tsar Alexander II had also been a member of the order since 1867.⁵⁵⁷

Immediately after the investiture H.I.M. also awarded Queen Victoria two Qajar honours; the "Sovereign's Order", or the "Order of my own Portrait",⁵⁵⁸ which was "never before bestowed on any women".⁵⁵⁹ As per the name, the order featured a miniature of Nasir al-Din's likeness set in "magnificent diamonds". Secondly the Shah awarded the Order of Sun, only given to queens and empresses in those European states Nasir al-Din had already visited (Fig. 24). Although there was no gesture by way of kissing, His Majesty placed the "pink watered silk ribbon" of the Order of the Sun over the Queen's shoulder himself, in a performative and self-legitimising act.⁵⁶⁰ In conferring an order on the monarch of the world's foremost power the Shah tempered the notion of vassalage, turning the ritual into one that was more centred on "balanced reciprocity" which emphasised dynastic parity.⁵⁶¹ Such parity was subsequently complemented by the informality which pervaded the conduct of the two monarchs when in each other's company. Thus when the party retired for luncheon, the fifty-four year old Queen chatted amicably through the Sadr-i Azam, with the "very animated" forty-two year old Shah.⁵⁶² Being "thankful all had gone off so well", the Queen then took leave of His Majesty in the Tapestry Room around quarter to four.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁶ Combs, *Dimensions*, p. 21.

⁵⁵⁷ 'The Emperor of Russia, K.G.', *Times*, 14 Aug.1867.

⁵⁵⁸ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 149.

⁵⁵⁹ *Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873.

⁵⁶⁰ *Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873.

⁵⁶¹ Michel Panoff, 'Marcel Mauss's "The Gift" Revisited', *Man*, 5 (1970), pp. 60-70. (p. 62). See also Orrin E., Klapp, *Collective Search for Identity*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), p. 121 & Marcel Mauss, *The Gift, The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, (London: Routledge, 1990), p.xi.

⁵⁶² *Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873.

⁵⁶³ *Victoria*, Entry, 20 June 1873.

This was also not the last occasion for the new reciprocal relationship of equals to blossom. His Majesty was actually privileged to have the company of his fellow sovereign and Garter Knight a three further times. On the first, Nasir al-Din returned to Windsor on the 24th for the Military Review. Here the Queen again “took” his arm at the castle, before the pair together inspected the troops. There was seemingly a growing rapport between the monarchs, with the Shah turning to look and smile at Her Majesty,⁵⁶⁴ who returned the salutation on the parade ground.⁵⁶⁵ More importantly on this occasion the Queen had been conscious of her costume, writing in her journal that “round my neck...I wore the order of the Portrait of the Shah, which I arranged to show outside as much as I could”.⁵⁶⁶ This act further facilitated a sense of dynastic unity and cordiality, whilst also legitimising His Majesty’s kingship. Two days earlier the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh were similarly conscious of costume, wearing on their “neck[s] a diamond-set portrait of the Shah, presented by His Majesty”.⁵⁶⁷ According to Ali Behdad, Nasir al-Din Shah used such photographs to “empower himself”, as an embodiment of “quintessential monarchical power”, which the Royal Family were willing to uphold for the purposes of cementing Anglo-Persian friendship.⁵⁶⁸ Similarly Cohen argues that “identification with an ideology or culture” by donning another’s costume, is the “sincerest form of flattery”.⁵⁶⁹ Wearing the likeness of H.I.M. represented a reinforced form of such flattery.

Meanwhile, upon leaving Windsor after the review, the Queen again took the Shah’s “arm & went down with him to the door”, and in doing so committed another ‘gesture of salutation’. According to Cohen such gestures need not be on a grand scale as was apparent with the ironclad escort from Belgium. Instead, the act of conducting a guest to the door could serve well enough. In this context it is perhaps telling that in the first meeting of the monarchs Her Majesty had come down to greet the Shah, however, on taking leave of one another, she had only gone so far as the Tapestry Room adjacent to the Green Drawing Room. On this second occasion she conducted him both to and from the Sovereign’s Entrance. Incidentally she also recalled how Nasir al-Din “pressed” her “hand & put each of his on” her “shoulders, like a sort of blessing”, which she thought “kind & gracious & full of dignity”.⁵⁷⁰

On the third meeting of the sovereigns on the 29th, the Shah engaged in another performative act of British high society by attending a Royal Garden Party held in “his honour” at Chiswick (Fig. 25).⁵⁷¹ The Prince of Wales had been laying on the event since 1865,⁵⁷² after he began renting the Palladian style Chiswick House and its “charming grounds” from the Cavenidsh family.⁵⁷³ All senior Royals were there

⁵⁶⁴ *Victoria*, Entry, 24 June 1873.

⁵⁶⁵ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 169.

⁵⁶⁶ Entry, 24 June 1873.

⁵⁶⁷ *Times*, 24 June.

⁵⁶⁸ Ali Behdad, ‘The powerful art of Qajar photography: orientalism and (self)-orientalising in nineteenth-century Iran’, *Iranian Studies*, 34 (2001), pp. 141-151 (p. 151).

⁵⁶⁹ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 81.

⁵⁷⁰ *Victoria*, Entry, 24 June 1873.

⁵⁷¹ Davidoff, *The Best*, p. 61 & p. 65 & ‘Garden Party at Chiswick’, *Morning Post*, 30 June 1873.

⁵⁷² ‘Royal Garden Party at Chiswick’, *The Standard*, 1 Sept. 1865.

⁵⁷³ ‘Historic, Neglected, Chiswick House’, *I.L.N.*, 26 July 1947.

including the Queen who had come to London especially for the occasion.⁵⁷⁴ Her Majesty conversed with His Majesty in the Victoria Tent, before he ceremonially planted a tree in the grounds. On leaving, she again “took his arm & walked”, remarking that she “hoped he would also plant one at Windsor”.⁵⁷⁵ Finally the last occasion on which the Shah shared the Queen’s company was a farewell audience at Windsor on the 2nd of July. Once again the Queen used costume as a form of flattery, making sure to “put on his portrait, & blue ribbon...wearing it round my neck & the other order over my shoulder”.⁵⁷⁶ She also wore the Koh-i-Noor, the magnificent “Mountain of Light” diamond contained in a brooch. Princesses Louise and Beatrice were also there in “smart” attire with a sufficient assembly of Beefeaters.⁵⁷⁷ As on previous occasions, the Queen received His Majesty at the Sovereign’s Entrance before the pair walked through the Private Apartments, Her Majesty enquiring personally about the Shah’s activities. She then conducted His Majesty to the State Apartments for a further show of Court Splendour, including in the “gothic” Dining Room with its “sophisticated and expensive” furnishings,⁵⁷⁸ and “beautiful” views of the castle grounds.⁵⁷⁹

She also showed His Majesty the North Gallery, full of trophies, ornaments and weapons from a myriad of nations including the vanquished Tipu Sultan, ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore, which Britain had annexed at the end of the 18th century.⁵⁸⁰ This was the moment that Queen Victoria gestured to her Koh-i-Noor brooch, which the Shah stooped to peer at with great interest.⁵⁸¹ The Shah’s curiosity was sparked by the history of the costly gemstone which had been seized from the Mughal Empire by Persia’s famous 18th century ruler Nadir Shah. After the collapse of his dynasty it changed hands several times before 1849, whereupon it was given to the Royal Family by the East India Company following the conquest of the Punjab.⁵⁸² The display of this item was thus pregnant with meaning, with further context provided by its display in the vicinity of the spoils of war taken from the Tipu Sultan. On the one hand the Queen was simply showing the Shah some of the splendid possessions of the Royal Family, which rivalled those of European monarchs.⁵⁸³ Connectedly she was displaying a gemstone of personal significance to a Persian monarch.⁵⁸⁴ On the other hand the seized stone also reified her role as an Oriental as well as a European ruler. Moreover, Danielle Kinsey argues that the use of the Koh-i-Noor, recut with British “science and machinery” in 1852, was an embodiment of the empire’s civilising mission and a “symbol of conquest” celebrating British domination of the East.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁷⁴ *Morning Post*, 30 June & ‘Movements of the Shah’, *Daily News*, 30 June 1873.

⁵⁷⁵ *Victoria*, Entry, 28 June 1873.

⁵⁷⁶ Entry, 28 June 1873.

⁵⁷⁷ *Victoria*, Entry, 2 July 1873.

⁵⁷⁸ Geoffrey de Bellaigue and Pat Kirkham, ‘George IV and the Furnishing of Windsor Castle’, *Furniture History*, 8 (1972), pp. 1-34 (p. 14-15).

⁵⁷⁹ *Victoria*, Entry, 2 July 1873.

⁵⁸⁰ *Victoria*, Entry, 2 July 1873.

⁵⁸¹ *Victoria*, Entry, 2 July 1873.

⁵⁸² Satwinder Kaur, ‘Koh-i-Noor “Mountain of Light”’, *International Journal of Science and Research*, 3 (2014), pp. 729-732

⁵⁸³ Danielle C. Kinsey, ‘Koh-i-Noor: Empire, Diamonds, and the Performance of British Material Culture’, *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), pp. 391-419, (p. 397).

⁵⁸⁴ *Daily News*, 2 July.

⁵⁸⁵ Kinsey, ‘Koh-i-Noor’, p. 392 & p. 395-397.

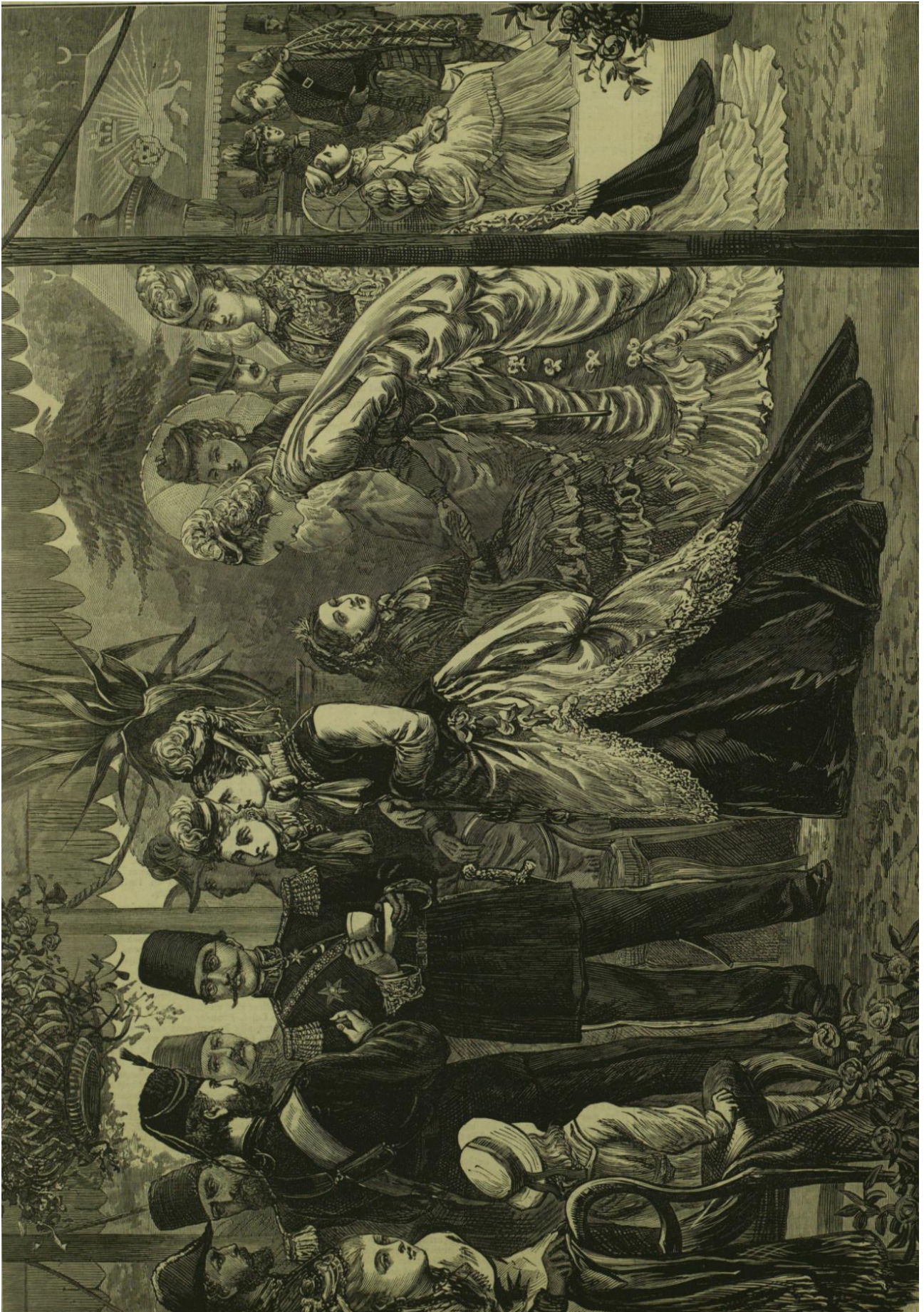


Fig. 25. The Shah performing at Chiswick (*I.L.N.*, 12 July).

This was quite possibly how the stone was perceived by imperial officials including the Marquis of Dalhousie, Governor-General of India at the time of its acquisition.⁵⁸⁶ As such its display for the Shah was ambiguous, a characteristic which according to Cohen, represents a key factor in diplomatic contact using nonverbal communication and costume.⁵⁸⁷ One might argue that by using the Koh-i-Noor with other spoils of war as stage-props, the British government was trying to concurrently impress World Power Vitality, with a hint of British military and political potency. Such a dual-purpose display of Court Splendour and World Power Vitality was seemingly apparent in many of the incidents involving the Royal Family already discussed, with powerful architectural pieces of setting and elite military escorts. Tempering this assessment of British imperial posturing was the Queen's personal dislike for wearing the Koh-i-Noor on the grounds that it constituted an imperial expansion that she herself "opposed".⁵⁸⁸ That being said her reluctant donning of the diamond also underscored the representative and signalling status of the Queen who had to act first and foremost as the imperial head of state, not a private individual. Ambiguity aside, Victoria had also developed somewhat of a fondness for her fellow monarch, belying a sense of superiority and instead highlighting a more sincere relationship of equality and cordiality. Indeed, after a luncheon Her Majesty escorted Nasir al-Din down the Royal Staircase for a last time, allowing him to kiss her hand and take one of her signed photographs in an act that further cemented their balanced reciprocity.⁵⁸⁹ The two subsequently also exchanged more photographs and wrote to one another before the Shah had even left the country.⁵⁹⁰ Victoria also later reflected that the Shah's visit remained a "pleasant & interesting encounter".⁵⁹¹

WORLD POWER VITALITY **MILITARY MIGHT**

This final section of analysis returns to the second impression of World Power Vitality, focussing on the theme of Military Might. This involved the British government putting its army, navy and military infrastructure on display to complement two foreign policy aims in Persia. First it would potentially assist in the maintenance of Qajar independence, in that Persia might reform and emulate British methods of military organisation. Such emulation would not necessarily help Persia to physically fend off a far superior power such as Russia. Nor did Britain wish to militarily assist any Persian irredentism in the direction of Central Asia, Baluchistan or Afghanistan. On the contrary, the British thought that Persian expansion was a threat to regional stability.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁶ Kinsey, 'Koh-i-Noor', p. 396.

⁵⁸⁷ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 19.

⁵⁸⁸ R. Fulford, ed., *Darling Child: Private Correspondence of Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess of Prussia, 1871-1878*, (London: M. Evans and Company, 1976), p. 111.

⁵⁸⁹ Entry, 2 July 1873.

⁵⁹⁰ *Victoria*, Entry, 3 July 1873.

⁵⁹¹ *Victoria*, Entry, 11 July 1873.

⁵⁹² Peter John Brobst, 'Sir Frederick Goldsmid and the containment of Persia, 1863-1873', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 33 (1997), pp. 197-215 (p. 212).

Reform might, however, improve the “precarious” nature of central government control over Persia’s often unruly provinces, both in a political and pecuniary context.⁵⁹³ Although Nasir al-Din’s reign was remembered for relative stability compared to those of other Qajar monarchs, it still faced serious economic, political and military difficulties. For instance in 1861 the Persian army was left “virtually” non-existent after defeat at the hands of the Turkomans of Marv.⁵⁹⁴ This left the country largely reliant on its irregular cavalry, a force drawn from tribal and provincial elites who exchanged service for autonomy and reduced taxation. Such a situation exacerbated the centrifugal tendencies of Persia’s political system, robbing reformers like Husain Khan of income and impetus.⁵⁹⁵ Britain did not expect the country to become a democratic constitutional monarchy, but there was a hope that centralisation facilitated by sufficiently strong internal security would stimulate Persia’s economy and increase its tax revenue. This would go some way toward arresting an array of problems including a “bankrupt treasury”, government corruption,⁵⁹⁶ excessive provincial independence and “political decrepitude” coupled with economic stagnation, famine and “widespread destitution” all amounting to what Rawlinson “almost termed a national atrophy”.⁵⁹⁷

If the country could escape its atrophic condition, Russia would find it harder to dominate a “strong independent...self-governed”⁵⁹⁸ and more economically prosperous Persia. Connectedly she would constitute a better buffer state. As with economic reforms, however, any emulation of British military methods was only expected to “bear fruit” – if at all – over a lengthy period of time.⁵⁹⁹ Nor would this process be assisted by the British in any meaningful sense, due to the policy of avoiding ruffled Russian feathers. This was evidenced in 1868, when the Shah redoubled efforts to acquire British officers, arms and equipment, along with assistance to form a naval flotilla on the Persian Gulf. Rawlinson expressed support for such ventures, urging British India to use her own resources in order to make a “favourable impression” on Persia which “would very much strengthen” British “influence at Court”.⁶⁰⁰ The Government of India, however, had “great doubts as to the expediency of the suggested employment of Indo-British Officers in the Persian Army”. The use of such officers Calcutta argued, would not strengthen Persia, instead it would demonstrate her weakness and reliance on a foreign power. Moreover British Indian officials argued that given:

...present relations with Russia, we should view with great suspicion the admission of a number of the Officers of the Russian army to the command of Persian troops. A similar proceeding on our part would probably call forth a strong remonstrance from the Cabinet of St. Petersburg.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹³ Shaul Bakhash, ‘Center-Periphery Relations in Nineteenth-Century Iran’, *Iranian Studies*, XIV (1981) pp. 29-51, (p. 29) & Reza, A., Sheikholeslami, *The Structure of central authority in Qajar Iran: 1871-1896*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), p. 17.

⁵⁹⁴ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 166.

⁵⁹⁵ Stephanie Cronin, ‘Building a new army: military reform in Qajar Iran’, in Roxane Farmanfarma, ed., *War and Peace in Qajar Persia: Implications Past and Present*, (US: Routledge, 2008), pp. 47-88, (p. 61-63 & p. 67).

⁵⁹⁶ Bakhash, ‘Center-Periphery’, p. 38 & Keddie, ‘Late Qajars’, p. 186.

⁵⁹⁷ Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p. 135-36.

⁵⁹⁸ ‘Address for Correspondence’, Earl of Carnarvon, *HL Deb.* 14 July 1873, *vol 217 cc290-301*.

⁵⁹⁹ Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p. 138.

⁶⁰⁰ Rawlinson, ‘Memorandum’, p. 299-300 & Duthie, ‘forward group’, p. 40-41.

⁶⁰¹ FO248/277, Government of India, Foreign Department to Argyll, 19 Jan.1872.

Lastly it was felt that the presence of Persian naval vessels on the Gulf would be a nuisance to British interests with coastal Arab Sheikdoms.⁶⁰² Although Calcutta's views carried the day in London, contemplating a state visit without *any* military display was unthinkable, not least because all state visits of the time featured military demonstration.⁶⁰³ Furthermore, the Persian government could ostensibly still benefit from observing and subsequently emulating British military practices. More importantly, although Britain supported status quo in Persia she was not prepared to concede the field to Russia entirely. She thus sought to use military display as a means of increasing influence at the Qajar court by demonstrating parity or supremacy over her European rivals. The *Sunday Times* summed this strategy up, stating that the government aimed to show "Persia that England is powerful and well disposed, and that she is the power" to revere not Russia.⁶⁰⁴ This arguably constituted the main reason for displaying what Military Might Britain could muster, since there was little faith in Persia's ability to affect wide-scale reform. Meanwhile, propelling British thinking was the ever present belief in the Persian proclivity for "show and parade" in both a military and political ceremonial setting.⁶⁰⁵

Connectedly, I argue that to encourage Qajar reform and more importantly to increase British prestige and influence in Persia, the British government used their armed forces in a strategy identified by Robert Art as "swaggering". To swagger is to utilise military "exercises and national demonstrations" in order to appear "more powerful", "to be taken seriously by others in the councils of international decision-making" and to "enhance the nation's image". In Art's opinion swaggering is also an "egoistic" act, serving to increase national pride.⁶⁰⁶ Such a definition applies in this instance, in that Britain's military displays were also for the benefit of a domestic audience, providing a reassuring spectacle of British imperial power.⁶⁰⁷ It thus featured a similar dual audience that was also present with displays of the Royal Family, and the C.o.M. Furthermore, there was another even larger audience that the British government were considering when utilising its military during the visit; Britain's global competition. The *Sunday Times* summarised this tripartite audience, stating that army and navy demonstrations were "intended to reassure our own country of its strength and to impress not only the Persian monarch...but the world at large with the fighting power of England".⁶⁰⁸ This included Russia, whose Crown Prince, or Tsarevitch, was in London visiting the Prince of Wales to secure a marriage and political union between Alfred and Tsar Alexander II's daughter Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna.⁶⁰⁹ The Russian heir and his wife accompanied the Royal Family and the Shah on most if not all of their engagements during the visit, and

⁶⁰² Greaves, 'Relations', p. 398-99.

⁶⁰³ Motadel, 'Shahs', p. 218.

⁶⁰⁴ *Sunday Times*, 06 July.

⁶⁰⁵ Malcolm, *Sketches*, p. 6.

⁶⁰⁶ Robert J. Art, 'To What Ends Military Power?', *International Security*, 4 (1980), pp. 3-35 (p. 11).

⁶⁰⁷ *Sunday Times*, 06 July.

⁶⁰⁸ 'By this time the Shah of Persia', *Sunday Times*, 29 June 1873.

⁶⁰⁹ Lee, *Victoria*, p. 431.

despite the peaceful nature of his visit, it was still Britain's "business to make him understand the probable consequences of any attempt on the part of Russia to cross the frontiers of British India".⁶¹⁰

Swaggering for the Tsar and Shah started as soon as the Channel Squadron met the *Vigilant* off the Belgian coast, with the use of some of the country's most powerful stage-props, its "tremendous" ironclad "engines of destruction".⁶¹¹ Furthermore, the constant presence of sizeable military escorts from elite, and also regular and volunteer units on every reception and entertainment laid on for the Persians was a further small-scale demonstration of Military Might. There was, however, the aforementioned degree of scepticism regarding the efficacy of rolling out Britain's redcoats. This was reflective of two factors, the first centring on very real numerical discrepancies. The British Army in 1873 numbered less than two hundred thousand, with under half that number on home deployment.⁶¹² Russia meanwhile, could field over a million men.⁶¹³

Secondly, there was a lingering mid-Victorian "paradox" of anti-militarism and jingoism that featured pride for economic achievements and for the Royal Navy, juxtaposed by suspicion of the Regular Army as an instrument of domestic tyranny at home and an ineffective force abroad.⁶¹⁴ Indeed, although able to inflict thumping defeats on non-European powers including Persia in the War of 1856,⁶¹⁵ the British Army had been in a state of partial "decay" since Waterloo, which led to considerable deficiencies of organisation, weaponry and logistics when fighting a major European power like Russia during the Crimean War. Though victorious in that conflict, the army had to face the Indian Mutiny soon after, stretching Britain's already scattered armed forces.⁶¹⁶ Moreover Prussia, the other emerging military power, was proving to be far more proficient at fielding increasingly large numbers of well-trained regulars and reservists. Such advances had facilitated the formation of the German Empire in 1871, after the humbling of Denmark, Austria and France in three wars over a six year period from 1864.⁶¹⁷ Britain had maintained a position of neutrality during this tumultuous period, however, her ability to intervene on the continent was questionable given the army's condition and its colonial duties.⁶¹⁸ As a consequence various attempts were made to improve the British Army throughout the 1860s, culminating in the Cardwell Reforms from 1868-1874.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁰ *Sunday Times*, 29 June.

⁶¹¹ 'The Shah of Persia', *Times*, 7 June 1873.

⁶¹² Bourne, *The Foreign*, p. 6 & Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian army, 1868-1902*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 4.

⁶¹³ 'The Russian Army', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 Nov. 1870.

⁶¹⁴ Patricia Morton, 'Another Victorian Paradox: Anti-Militarism in a Jingoistic Society', *Historical Reflections*, 8 (1981) pp. 169-189 (p. 169-170 & p. 178).

⁶¹⁵ J. F. Standish, 'The Persian War of 1856-1857', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 3 (1996) pp. 18-45.

⁶¹⁶ Correlli Barnett, *Britain and Her Army, 1509-1970*, (London: Allen Lane, 1970), p. 274, p. 279-292.

⁶¹⁷ Barnett, *Britain*, p. 294-295 & p. 302-303.

⁶¹⁸ Bourne, *The Foreign*, p. 108 & Barnett, *Britain*, p. 298.

⁶¹⁹ Barnett, *Britain*, p. 291-310.

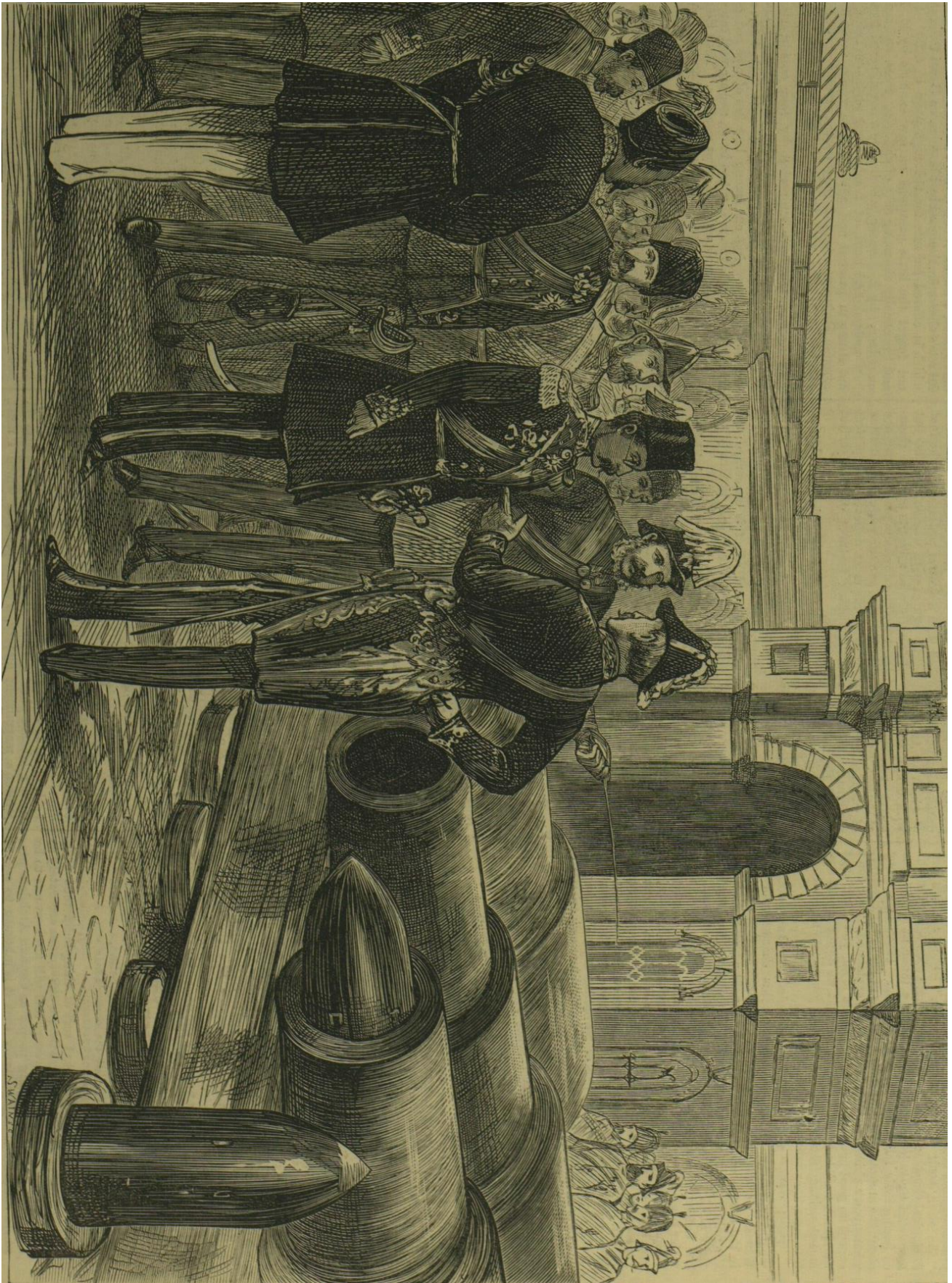


Fig. 26. The Shah inspecting four 'Woolwich Infants' (*I.L.N.*, 28 June).

These efforts were complemented by a concurrent increase in imperial sentiment, seeping into support for the army both in its ability to quell uncivilised natives, and in its compact yet competent domestic demonstrations.⁶²⁰ During the visit of the Shah the British government tapped into this competency and compactness to highlight its perceived strengths in military modernity and proficiency, despite numerical inferiority. Thus, after the powerful escort of ironclads from Ostend, the next manifestation of Military Might was a trip to the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, a place H.I.M. had also expressed an interest in visiting.⁶²¹ There had been a military presence at Woolwich since the early 16th century when Henry VIII built a royal dock with an adjacent artillery depot. By 1696 the site witnessed the introduction of armament manufacturing facilities and by 1805 it had been renamed the Royal Arsenal due becoming the main centre for British artillery production.⁶²² In 1873 Woolwich was still the “home” of British artillery,⁶²³ responsible for much of the research, development and production of army and navy arms and munitions from an eight hundred acre industrial site with nearly 5,000 workmen.⁶²⁴ The *Times* felt that Britain could be “proud” of its “national workshop” which had “no equal in Europe”, not even the Krupp works at Essen.⁶²⁵ It thus represented a setting that could evoke Military Might concurrently with Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity, through the “whir of multitudinous wheels spinning about and above you, the clamour of pistons, lathes, shafts...and the measured pulsation” of machinery methodically churning out breech pieces, bullets and bayonets.⁶²⁶

Upon arrival at this dramatic setting on the late morning of the 21st, the Shah first drove through “acres of dismounted guns” in the grounds of the complex, demonstrating Britain’s capacity to churn out a vast quantity of military hardware.⁶²⁷ He then entered several foundries and warehouses to observe various stages of artillery production, highlighting Britain’s cutting-edge capacity for industrialised weapon production. The Shah was thus shown weighty “white hot” solid iron bars for gun barrels coiled like locks of hair, along with large trunnion machines boring into “massive” cannon breech pieces with excess metal falling away like peeled apple skin.⁶²⁸ There followed a climactic display of the furnaces in which the Arsenal authorities had already manipulated its searing stage-props for maximum dramatic effect, arranging for them to be “at their glowing height” at the moment of the Shah’s tour.⁶²⁹ Thus when “the great furnace flew open” it disclosed:

⁶²⁰ John M. MacKenzie, *Popular imperialism and the military, 1850-1950*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 1-4 & Barnett, *Britain*, p. 310-313 & p. 318.

⁶²¹ FO60/358, Thomson to Hammond, 28 May 1873.

⁶²² O.F.G. Hogg, *The Royal Arsenal: its background, origin and subsequent history, Vol. I*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p.xiii.

⁶²³ ‘The Shah in England’, *Daily News*, 23 June.

⁶²⁴ Hogg, *The Royal Arsenal, Vol. II*, p. 1289-1292.

⁶²⁵ *Times*, 23 June.

⁶²⁶ ‘A Ramble through the Royal Arsenal’, *Sunday Times*, 21 April 1878.

⁶²⁷ *Daily News*, 23 June.

⁶²⁸ *Daily News*, 23 June.

⁶²⁹ The Shah was almost an hour late.

...a lambent interior of fiercely beautiful white heat...and slowly from out the heart of the burning fiery furnace came a great square block of white hot steel. This mass, weighing close upon 30 tons and intended for...a 35-ton gun, was moved on to the great anvil, above which hung...the ponderous Nasmyth's hammer.⁶³⁰ At a signal this fell on the glowing block...with a heavy pounding...that conveyed the idea of mighty power...and there flew from it on all sides a bright cataract of sparks.⁶³¹

Furthermore, the workmen in this intense scene “toiled in the fierce heat...as if they were absolutely fire-proof”,⁶³² and in their strong “physique” and fearless comportment they acted as living stage-props who “conveyed a very satisfactory impression of the British workman”.⁶³³ The *Daily News* thought this performance had captured the Shah's imagination like no other, leaving him transfixed, “gazing earnestly and silently upon the scene, utterly regardless of the fierce heat which furnace and forge radiated”.⁶³⁴ Following this scorching scene, His Majesty was shown the result of the whole process in the shape of four finished “Woolwich Infants”, giant 35-ton guns built for the nation's latest capital ships (Fig. 26).⁶³⁵ Meanwhile, to round the event off Nasir al-Din attended a review of military units using weaponry produced at Woolwich. The *Morning Post* effused that it was:

...doubtful if, even when...in Germany, the Shah...has ever witnessed a more magnificent military spectacle than that which was arranged at Woolwich Common...Highly extolled as is the Prussian artillery, those who have had practical experience in both countries are fain to acknowledge that English guns and English gunners are, at least, a match for those of Kaiser Wilhelm.⁶³⁶

The second land based demonstration of Military Might was a Review held at Windsor Great Park on the 24th of June. Displaying soldiery as a means of swaggering is probably as old as warfare itself, however, it was the Hanoverians who “made military reviews an important part of their public appearances” in Britain.⁶³⁷ Reviews were particularly popular during the reign of George III and during the Regency of the future King George IV, coinciding with the British Army's greatest triumphs of the Peninsular War under Lord Wellington. Given George III's affinity for Windsor, the castle's park became a centre for such displays, with a “Grand Review” held there as early as 1800.⁶³⁸ Queen Victoria meanwhile, saw her first military displays in the castle grounds as sovereign shortly after acceding to the throne in 1837, with others following at fairly regular intervals.⁶³⁹

Such reviews were, moreover, somewhat of a staple during state visits by foreign sovereigns, with contingents of Britain's most prestigious Household Troops often used as living stage-props to celebrate the country's military prowess. The Household Troops had a notable history dating back to the English

⁶³⁰ John Nasmyth was the British inventor of the steam-hammer. His particular piece in Woolwich was “the largest in the world”. (‘The Czar's Visit to England’, *ILLN.*, 30 May 1874).

⁶³¹ *Daily News*, 23 June.

⁶³² *Daily News*, 23 June.

⁶³³ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Morning Post*, 23 June 1873.

⁶³⁴ *Daily News*, 23 June.

⁶³⁵ *Morning Post*, 23 June & ‘The Woolwich Infant School’, *ILLN.*, 27 June 1874.

⁶³⁶ *Morning Post*, 23 June.

⁶³⁷ Michael Schaich and Andreas Gestrich eds., *The Hanoverian Succession, Dynastic Politics and Monarchical Culture*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p. 14-15.

⁶³⁸ ‘Grand Review at Windsor’, *Times*, 18 July 1800.

⁶³⁹ She held another in 1839, 1844 & 1855 (Lee, *Victoria*, p. 70, p. 109, p. 156).

Civil War, with its four initial regiments drawn from each opposing side to form the cadre of the British Army following the Restoration in 1660.⁶⁴⁰ At the same time the selected regiments – the Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, the Life Guards and the Royal Horse Guards, became “extra-ordinary guard” of the sovereign.⁶⁴¹ Together the Brigade of Guards and the Household Cavalry also served as frontline elite formations with a long list of battle honours.⁶⁴² On the 25th the Household Troops formed a large segment of the “flower” of Britain’s army that was assembled along a half mile front.⁶⁴³ On the extreme right were the “gallant gunners” of the Royal Horse Artillery, in blue tunics with a “glitter of gold braid and bright harness”.⁶⁴⁴ They were joined by the “burnished helmets” and “plumes” of the Blues and the 1st and 2nd Life Guards, with troopers in “scarlet tunics...sitting square and solid on their massive black chargers”.⁶⁴⁵ Next came six battalions of the Brigade of Guards,⁶⁴⁶ all in their “towering bearskins” worn to commemorate victory over Napoleon’s Imperial Guard at Waterloo.⁶⁴⁷ These were joined by the “stalwart” 93rd Sutherland Highlanders who “stemmed and drove back”⁶⁴⁸ a Russian cavalry charge in line formation at the Battle of Balaclava in 1854.⁶⁴⁹ Other units included the 6th Dragoons, part of the Union Brigade that had swept through Napoleon’s lines in a glorious yet ultimately calamitous charge in 1815.⁶⁵⁰ Finally there were three detachments of Hussars, including the 13th, who had ridden with Lord Cardigan into “the valley of death” at the Battle of Balaclava in 1854.⁶⁵¹

This force of famous and “picked soldiers”,⁶⁵² commanded by prestigious veterans of the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny campaigns,⁶⁵³ awaited the Shah in “perfect order” with Persian and British standards flapping heavily in the wind.⁶⁵⁴ Upon arrival, the Shah first rode down the lines inspecting the troops, before returning to a saluting point to watch the whole force march past at various paces to military marching tunes. Although they were “but tens as to the thousands” that His Majesty “witnessed on the Parade-ground of St. Petersburg and Tempelhofer Field of Berlin”, the British troops arrayed were, the *Daily News* claimed, “quite as good cannon fodder as ever obeyed Czar or Kaiser”.⁶⁵⁵ First came the artillery, followed by the Household Cavalry, swords in hand, “splendid in the extreme”.⁶⁵⁶ The rest of the cavalry followed in equally fine fettle before the infantry marched past including the Guards, “excelled by no soldiers in Europe”.⁶⁵⁷ Finally the small force conducted manoeuvres for the Shah, with

⁶⁴⁰ David Chandler ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 49.

⁶⁴¹ Julian Paget ed., *The Coldstream Guards 1650-2000, Second to None*, (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2000), p. 8.

⁶⁴² ‘The Shah in England’, *Daily News*, 25 June 1873 & Barnett, *Britain*, p. 259-271.

⁶⁴³ *Times*, 25 June.

⁶⁴⁴ *Daily News*, 25 June.

⁶⁴⁵ *Daily News*, 25 June.

⁶⁴⁶ *Times*, 25 June.

⁶⁴⁷ ‘The Grenadier Guards’, *Times*, 18 June 1860.

⁶⁴⁸ *Daily News*, 25 June.

⁶⁴⁹ Hew Strachan, ‘Scotland’s Military Identity’, 82 (2006), pp. 315-332 (p. 326).

⁶⁵⁰ *Daily News*, 25 June.

⁶⁵¹ *Daily News*, 25 June.

⁶⁵² *Times*, 25 June.

⁶⁵³ *Daily News*, 25 June.

⁶⁵⁴ *Times*, 25 June.

⁶⁵⁵ *Daily News*, 25 June.

⁶⁵⁶ *Daily News*, 25 June.

⁶⁵⁷ *Daily News*, 25 June.

the Rifle Brigade “throwing out a firing line of skirmishers”, using the cover and trees and smoke from their musket fire to mask their advance. The regular battalions followed in line formation, before halting to fire a volley. The climax and conclusion to the review then came with a succession of cavalry charges toward the saluting point.⁶⁵⁸

The last and most important demonstration of Military Might came the day prior to the Review at Windsor, when H.I.M. observed a “very large gathering” of the Royal Navy at Spithead off Portsmouth.⁶⁵⁹ Such naval inspections had been taking place at Portsmouth since the reign of Henry V,⁶⁶⁰ with the greatest period of popularity again occurring during the Hanoverian period,⁶⁶¹ when the British became pioneers of the practice.⁶⁶² It was also during the reign of George III that Britain became the globe’s foremost maritime power.⁶⁶³ Despite a French challenge to naval mastery in the 1860s, followed by a period of relative parsimony beginning in the 1870s, the Royal Navy still reigned supreme during the Persian sovereign’s sojourn, engaging in “unprecedented” levels of technological experimentation in capital ship design.⁶⁶⁴ Britain could thus bring to bear its most prestigious military source of power, using its ironclad battleships as potent swaggering stage-props. Similarly Jan R ger notes that when not in combat these embodiments of “national strength”⁶⁶⁵ were also effective as part of a “theatrical display of monarchical and national power”, visibly binding the monarchy to the nation’s mightiest military assets.⁶⁶⁶ Queen Victoria had been no stranger to such ritualistic reviews, having witnessed several prior to 1873, including a number held at other state visits.⁶⁶⁷

Similarly there was also a domestic audience to consider, with “grumblers and alarmists” at home harbouring doubts about the navy’s capabilities. It was hoped that the naval gathering would “silence” such criticism, whilst concurrently impressing the Qajars and Britain’s European competitors.⁶⁶⁸ The Persians themselves also expected an impressive naval display and were indulged to complement the impression of Overt Cordiality. Indeed, since Britain held a similar naval display for the Sultan, there was no desire to make the Shah “feel hurt” by a comparatively diminished spectacle.⁶⁶⁹ The decision was also partly compelled by the need for an impressive response to Russia’s Grand Review of its army for the Shah.⁶⁷⁰ Consequently the Admiralty were “fully impressed with the grave importance” of the occasion.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁵⁸ *Times*, 25 June.

⁶⁵⁹ ‘QUESTIONS’, Mr Goschen, *HC Deb.* 06 June 1873, *vol 216* *cc547-8*.

⁶⁶⁰ H. P. Mead., ‘Great Naval Reviews’, *Royal United Service Institution*, 80 (1935), pp. 237-245 (p. 238).

⁶⁶¹ F.D. Arnold-Forster, ‘Royal Navy Reviews at Spithead’, *Royal United Services Institution*, 98 (1953), pp. 177-183.

⁶⁶² Michael Markowitz, ‘Fleet Naval Reviews: A Short History’, *Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 11 (2015), pp. 1-8 (p. 3).

⁶⁶³ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and fall of British naval mastery*, (London: Allen Lane, 1976), p. 98 & p. 178.

⁶⁶⁴ Robert Gardiner, ed., *Conway’s All the World’s Fighting Ships, 1860-1905*, (London: Conway Maritime Press Ltd., 1997), p. 1.

⁶⁶⁵ ‘QUESTIONS’, Mr. Baillie Cochrane, *HC Deb.* 06 June 1873, *vol 216* *cc547-8*.

⁶⁶⁶ Jan R ger, *The Great Naval Game, Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 17.

⁶⁶⁷ Dates included 1845, 1853 and 1867. (Lee, *Victoria*, p. 164, p. 236 & p. 384).

⁶⁶⁸ ‘The Fleet at Spithead’, *Times*, 23 June 1873.

⁶⁶⁹ FO60/358, Thomson to Hammond, 28 May 1873.

⁶⁷⁰ FO60/358, Thomson to Hammond, 28 May 1873.

⁶⁷¹ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 5 June 1873.

They had consequently assembled a fleet of over fifty ships,⁶⁷² including a large contingent of ironclads which were “more than equal to all the Navies...of all European nations and America combined”.⁶⁷³ Unlike the Military Review at Windsor, Britain could actually assemble a numerically impressive force at sea.

First, however, the Shah was shown some of the navy’s wooden-hulled heritage in harbour with salutes from three-decker ships of the line including the famous H.M.S. *Victory* launched in 1765, and the *Donegal* built only in 1858, two years before she was rendered obsolete by the revolutionary ironclad H.M.S. *Warrior*.⁶⁷⁴ Further ships present included three of the navy’s “magnificent” *Euphrates*-class troop ships, used to convey over a thousand soldiers apiece to any theatre of war.⁶⁷⁵ His Majesty, aboard the “magnificent” mahogany and teak Royal steam yacht the *Victoria & Albert* then left Portsmouth, soon catching site of the assembly at Spithead.⁶⁷⁶ Here the Persian potentate was provided with a “remarkable illustration of the progress” in naval design and production made during the thirteen years which had elapsed since the country’s first ironclad appeared in 1860.⁶⁷⁷ Thus in three neat lines stretching two miles across, almost every type of warship was arrayed for inspection. After an initial “thunder” of a salute the Royal yacht first traversed the line of twenty one smaller craft,⁶⁷⁸ including nine of the navy’s “iron mastless” *Ant*-class craft, looking decidedly “unpleasant” to any potential enemy.⁶⁷⁹ These were joined by quicker and more seaworthy masted vessels from the *Ariel*-class built from 1870-1873.⁶⁸⁰

Together these vessels represented the broader category of the “gunboat”, which was crucial for two major imperial strategies of the period; coastal defence at home and policing of informal empire abroad.⁶⁸¹ Following another royal salute that seemed to “shake...the whole sea”,⁶⁸² the *Victoria & Albert* turned down the line containing the “most formidable portion” of the Squadron,⁶⁸³ its modern turret ships including the “revolutionary” H.M.S. *Devastation* (Fig. 27).⁶⁸⁴ Launched in 1871 she was the first ever twin-screw “mastless, sea-going turret ship” powered by steam alone, establishing “the basic form of the battleship until they ceased to be built”.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁷² ADM116/13, ‘Position of the Fleet at Spithead’, 23 June 1873.

⁶⁷³ *Times*, 5 June 1873.

⁶⁷⁴ ‘The Shah in England’, *Daily News*, 24 June 1873.

⁶⁷⁵ *Times*, 10 June & ‘Her Majesty’s Troopship Euphrates’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 May 1867.

⁶⁷⁶ ‘Her Majesty’s New Yacht “Victoria and Albert”’, *I.L.N.*, 18 Aug 1855.

⁶⁷⁷ *Times*, ‘Spithead’, 23 June.

⁶⁷⁸ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Morning Post*, 24 June 1873.

⁶⁷⁹ *Morning Post*, 24 June & Gardiner, *Fighting Ships*, p. 107.

⁶⁸⁰ Gardiner, *Fighting Ships*, p. 111.

⁶⁸¹ Antony Preston & John Major, *Send a Gunboat! A study of Gunboat and its role in British policy, 1854-1904*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1967), p. 3 & p. 32-36.

⁶⁸² *Morning Post*, 24 June.

⁶⁸³ *Daily News*, 24 June.

⁶⁸⁴ Gardiner, *Fighting Ships*, p. 23.

⁶⁸⁵ Stanley Sandler, *Battleships: An Illustrated History of Their Impact*, (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2004) p. 39. See also ‘H.M.S. *Devastation*’, *I.L.N.*, 22 July 1871.



Fig. 27. H.M.S. *Devastation* firing at Spithead, painting by Edward William Cooke 1875 (*Royal Museums Greenwich*).

Ominously low in the water compared to most other ships of the period, the *Devastation* was an “impregnable” vessel with “bastions upon a fighting coalmine”⁶⁸⁶ featuring four Woolwich Infants housed in two revolving turrets, surrounded by 12-inch thick armour.⁶⁸⁷ She was surrounded by other pioneering turret ships including all four of the brand new *Cyclops*-class, “ugly” yet dangerous.⁶⁸⁸ These in turn were joined by the *Glatton* and the *Hotspur*, “great grey slugs” both launched in 1871, the former slugging shells weighing 600-lb.,⁶⁸⁹ and the latter designed to ram opposing ships with a “sharp” 10-ft. iron projection.⁶⁹⁰ There were also some of the earliest examples of experimental turreted craft, including the *Royal Sovereign* converted from a wooden ship of the line in 1862, and the *Prince Albert*, the country’s first iron turret ship completed in 1866.⁶⁹¹ Subsequently, His Majesty observed the Squadron’s ocean-going masted capital ships that provided another cross section of naval development. This assortment of sail and steam, some with up to two dozen high calibre guns, included *Warrior*’s sisters-ship the *Black Prince*, the oldest yet “handsomest” vessel in the Squadron.⁶⁹² She sat alongside newer and more powerful ironclads including the H.M.S. *Monarch*, the navy’s first sea-going turret ship,⁶⁹³ and two “exceptionally steady” vessels of the *Audacious*-class launched in 1869.⁶⁹⁴

Finally to complement the more distant appreciation of the Squadron, the Shah was taken aboard two of the ironclads. The first was the flagship, the H.M.S. *Agincourt*, a *Minotaur*-class armoured frigate launched in 1867. In a demonstration of battle-readiness the ship “beat to quarters”,⁶⁹⁵ its eight-hundred crewmen standing to attention on deck or scampering up the rigging of its five masts.⁶⁹⁶ His Majesty then moved to the “stout” and “formidable” H.M.S. *Sultan*, named in honour of Abdulaziz whose visit coincided with the date she was laid down.⁶⁹⁷ Here members of the ship’s crew were instructed to operate of one of the “immense” 18-ton guns, whilst the Shah watched at a close distance.⁶⁹⁸ Although only a “fleet of samples” reflecting the rapid changes in late 19th century naval warfare,⁶⁹⁹ it was arguably the mightiest assembly of warships that had yet been witnessed. Following another salute the Persian monarch then returned to Portsmouth, where he briefly toured of one Britain’s “principal” dockyards that honed and housed Britain’s modern ironclads, with its numerous basins, dry docks, and metal foundries all

⁶⁸⁶ Oscar Parkes, *British Battleships*, (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 1990), p. 199.

⁶⁸⁷ *Times*, ‘Spithead’, 23 June.

⁶⁸⁸ *Daily News*, 24 June.

⁶⁸⁹ ‘H.M.S. Glatton’, *I.L.N.*, 18 March 1871.

⁶⁹⁰ Gardiner, *Fighting Ships*, p. 22 & ‘H.M.S. Hotspur’, *I.L.N.*, 21 Jan. 1871.

⁶⁹¹ Gardiner, *Fighting Ships*, p. 19.

⁶⁹² *Daily News*, 24 June.

⁶⁹³ Gardiner, *Fighting Ships*, p. 20.

⁶⁹⁴ Gardiner, *Fighting Ships*, p. 15.

⁶⁹⁵ *Daily News*, 24 June.

⁶⁹⁶ Gardiner, *Fighting Ships*, p. 10.

⁶⁹⁷ *Daily News*, 24 June.

⁶⁹⁸ *Times*, 24 June.

⁶⁹⁹ Preston, *Gunboat*, p. 37.

connected by a “web” of railways.⁷⁰⁰ He also saw construction work being undertaken on a fast iron-hulled frigate which His Majesty was given the honour of naming after himself.⁷⁰¹

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When the Shah finally left Portsmouth on the 5th of July, the Royal Household had by all accounts “exhausted every possible source of entertainment”.⁷⁰² The Queen’s officials had even resorted to allowing a “ludicrous and amusing” punch-up between two prize-fighters at Buckingham Palace, an incident which was deemed “quite unwarrantable” by the Her Majesty.⁷⁰³ Putting aside Victoria’s vexations, the bout of boxing was demonstrative of the extensive efforts made by the British government to provide a suitably gratifying reception for the Shah. This cordial welcome, espoused through the impression of Overt Cordiality, was mostly undertaken to maintain friendly Anglo-Persian relations and to increase British influence in Persia. Furthermore, the analysis identified Court Splendour as a major component of Overt Cordiality, involving the use of the Royal Family to warmly receive and legitimise the Shah and his dynasty. Court Splendour also entailed heightened levels of deference, courtesy and hospitality to compensate for Britain’s unwillingness to contemplate increased Anglo-Persian cooperation. This compensatory strategy was also given impetus by a British belief – rightly or wrongly – in the Persian receptivity to display, which all combined to make for a welcome that was on an “extensive scale”.⁷⁰⁴

One cannot accurately gauge the extent of this scale and heightened deference without comparing the Shah’s reception to those of other sovereigns during the period. British state visits were highly constrained and consistent affairs, differing little in terms of protocol, ceremonial, entertainment and the role of the Royal Family. Cohen argues that diplomatic signalling often has to work in such a restrictive context, with a propensity for resorting to subtlety.⁷⁰⁵ It is possible therefore to conduct a fairly rewarding comparative analysis to illuminate some of the more implied elements of British diplomatic signalling with respect to Nasir al-Din. As to the monarchs suitable for comparison, the most obvious candidate is Sultan Abdulaziz I whose reception served in many ways as a blueprint for his fellow Oriental sovereign’s later state visit. Similarly another relevant visit in 1867 was that of the Khedive of Egypt. Meanwhile, in a European context the 1874 reception of Tsar Alexander II features, along with less frequent reference to Napoleon III’s earlier trip in 1855.

⁷⁰⁰ Jonathon Coad, *Support for the Fleet: Architecture and Engineering of the Royal Navy’s Bases, 1700-1914*, (Bristol: English Heritage, 2013), p. 4-9, p. 28-33 & p. 39-41

⁷⁰¹ ‘H.M.S. Shah’, *ILLN.*, 9 Dec.1876, *Times*, 24 June & ‘The Queen offered yesterday, to name the steam-frigate’, *Morning Post*, 25 June 1873.

⁷⁰² Watson, *Queen*, p. 225.

⁷⁰³ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 191, Biddulph to Sydney, 1 July 1873, in Watson, *A Queen*, p. 226 & Wright, *Persians*, p. 131.

⁷⁰⁴ ‘The Forthcoming Visit of the Shah’, *Daily News*, 13 June 1873.

⁷⁰⁵ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 138.

The first thing to note when comparing the receptions of said monarchs is the huge level of excitement which accompanied the sojourn of the Persian sovereign in particular, both in terms of press and public opinion. Vera Watson contends that no other monarch “caused the sensation, or aroused so much curiosity and excitement as the Shah”.⁷⁰⁶ This was clearly reflected in the greater number of articles and illustrations published by the press in 1873, compared to states visit prior to that date or immediately after. For example the *Illustrated London News* published only four articles on Tsar Alexander’s visit,⁷⁰⁷ whereas the Shah had eleven. Meanwhile, the Sultan and the Khedive combined were covered in eight articles.⁷⁰⁸ Connectedly in 1873 correspondents penned the most detailed articles, waxing lyrical about royalty, receptions, soldiers, warships, civic authorities, crowds, factories, ferns and rhododendrons. By contrast articles on the Sultan’s visit tended to be more prosaic.⁷⁰⁹ Such a feature was partly facilitated by the 1872 redemption of the Royal Family. For instance whilst the *Daily News* constantly extolled the Royal Family and the Shah, in 1867 the paper was reporting criticism at the “appearance” of the Beefeaters at the Royal Italian Opera.⁷¹⁰ There were also references to the crowd in 1867 which betrayed a relative lack of national enthusiasm for the display of royal unity. For example the Royal Italian Opera was reported to have been “tolerably well filled”, by a “not enthusiastical” crowd.⁷¹¹ By contrast the Shah and the Royal Family arrived “amid much cheering” from a packed audience.⁷¹²

This is not to suggest that the Sultan’s visit was unpopular, on the contrary “vast crowds” often accompanied his movements in the presence of the Royal Family.⁷¹³ There were, however, seemingly even greater levels of popular enthusiasm for the Shah in 1873. In Watson’s opinion the press and public furore around the latter’s visit emanated not from royal redemption, but from the mystery surrounding his Oriental person which contrasted with the Sultan, who was a more “known factor”.⁷¹⁴ Meanwhile, Alexander II was a very familiar figure, since he was Prince Alfred’s father-in-law and the sovereign of a state that Britain had long known as an ally or a frosty adversary. Such was the familiarity that his reception constituted a “mere matter of routine” for the Lord Chamberlain.⁷¹⁵ Watson also argues that the unique excitement in 1873 “penetrated” into official circles, leading to the almost pedantic efforts to

⁷⁰⁶ Watson, *Queen*, p. 213.

⁷⁰⁷ *ILL.N.*, 30 May, ‘His Imperial Majesty Alexander II, Czar of Russia’, *ILL.N.*, 16 May 1874, ‘The Czar’s Visit to England: The Emperor at Dover’, *ILL.N.*, 23 May 1874 & ‘The Czar’s Visit to England’, *ILL.N.*, 23 May 1874.

⁷⁰⁸ ‘The Sultan of Turkey’, *ILL.N.*, 13 July 1867, ‘Visit of the Sultan of Turkey and the Viceroy of Egypt’, *ILL.N.*, 13 July 1867, ‘The Sultan in England’, *ILL.N.*, 20 July 1867, ‘The Naval Review’, *ILL.N.*, 20 July 1867, ‘The Naval Review’, *ILL.N.*, 27 July 1867, ‘The Sultan at Guildhall’, *ILL.N.*, 27 July 1867, ‘The Sultan’s Ball at the India Office’, *ILL.N.*, 27 July 1867.

⁷⁰⁹ For instance see ‘The Sultan’, *Morning Post*, 20 July 1867.

⁷¹⁰ ‘The Sultan at the Opera’, *Daily News*, 16 July 1867.

⁷¹¹ *Daily News*, 16 July 1867.

⁷¹² *Times*, 23 June.

⁷¹³ Harcourt, ‘Sultan’, p. 36 & p. 40.

⁷¹⁴ Watson, *Queen*, p. 213.

⁷¹⁵ Watson, *Queen*, p. 229.

prepare for the Shah.⁷¹⁶ Such probing preparations were evident during the visit of the Sultan,⁷¹⁷ however, according to Watson they were less intense.⁷¹⁸ This view has some merit in that Turkey was a significant British ally with a more perceptible involvement in Great Power politics. Indeed, although seen as the “sick man of Europe” since 1853, the Sultanate was still ‘of Europe’, a status the Qajar court was still trying to acquire two decades later.⁷¹⁹ The counterargument comes from Freda Harcourt who contends that the Sultan, who had never visited Britain before, was in fact relatively “unknown” leading to significant levels of official excitement.⁷²⁰

In reality, both the Sultan and the Shah certainly did receive exceptional levels of attention vis-à-vis European monarchs. This involved major efforts to determine social habits and suitable entertainments on the basis of perceived Oriental peculiarities. It seems, however, that the Shah *was* given extra consideration. The *Times* summed up the disparity, stating on the 13th of June that “it is understood that the arrangements for the Shah’s reception will partake of the character of those adopted upon the arrival of the Sultan of Turkey in 1867, though they will...be upon a more extensive scale”.⁷²¹ Although both visits were conducted along Europe lines, this increased official consideration and excitement led to a more significant reception featuring *marginally* greater levels of deference and Royal attention. This I argue can be attributed to Britain’s compensatory strategy in lieu of entertaining closer cooperation.

The press response was, furthermore, tied to the increased official attention since the Royal Household and the British government provided newspaper correspondents with information and access. This aided the press in its provision of detailed accounts that in turn contributed to the suspense, enthusiasm and the formation of massive spectating crowds. Such an arrangement was significant though not uncommon in Victorian Britain due to the close relationship between the ‘fourth estate’ and the political elite.⁷²² Gladstone in particular was fond of using the press to further his political goals.⁷²³ In 1873 newspapers were thus co-opted into Britain’s performance team, helping to facilitate the Prime Minister’s goal of improving Anglo-Persian relations with a friendly national welcome. Furthermore, the press assisted Gladstone’s secondary goal of bringing the Royal Family back into the positive public spotlight. As to manifestations of the more extensive reception for the Shah, one can consider the expenditure, entertainment and accommodation entailed. In 1867 the House of Commons passed a vote to provide £25,000 for defraying the costs of Her Majesty entertaining and accommodating both the Sultan *and* the Khedive or Viceroy of Egypt, Ismail Pasha.⁷²⁴ Furthermore, part of that amount was

⁷¹⁶ Watson, *Queen*, p. 213-214.

⁷¹⁷ Harcourt, ‘Sultan’, p. 44 & p. 57.

⁷¹⁸ Watson, *Queen*, p. 213.

⁷¹⁹ M. Sukru Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 79.

⁷²⁰ Harcourt, ‘Sultan’, p. 43-44 & p. 36.

⁷²¹ ‘The Shah’s Visit’, *Times*, 13 June 1873.

⁷²² Kennedy, *Realities*, p. 52 & Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 54-74.

⁷²³ Brown, *Victorian News*, p. 170-173.

⁷²⁴ ‘SUPPLY_considered_in_Committee’, Mr. Whalley, *HC Deb_09_August 1867 vol 189 c1226-85*.

required for repairs to Buckingham Palace which had not seen a royal guest since Napoleon III in 1855.⁷²⁵ This included around £1,000 spent on reupholstering the palace furniture.⁷²⁶

As to the Queen's guests, the Khedive arrived before his sovereign on the 6th of July, staying for a total of twelve nights. His reception was "suitably grand" though with markedly less Royal attention.⁷²⁷ Since he was a vassal of the Sultan, the Viceroy was not invited to reside at Buckingham Palace, however, he did dine with the Queen and stay a night at Windsor.⁷²⁸ Incidentally the Khedivate was arguably as important a territory as Persia in the context of British foreign policy, due to competition with France over Egyptian cotton and control of the Suez Canal which had major implications for commerce and communication with the east.⁷²⁹

Meanwhile, the Sultan arrived on the 12th of July and stayed eleven days in a state visit that was much like the Shah's in terms of Royal treatment and entertainment.⁷³⁰ There were, however, occasions on which Nasir al-Din received greater deference than Abdulaziz. For instance whilst the Shah had an impressive throne area in the Crystal Palace, the Sultan merely occupied the standard Royal Box complemented by decorative plants and flowers.⁷³¹ In his study of diplomatic ceremonial William Roosen notes the importance of "situational" nonverbal communication including "physical layout of surroundings" to highlight equality or hierarchy.⁷³² At the Crystal Palace the British went out of their way to emphasise the Shah's hierarchical position as a sovereign, with the Prince of Wales and others sat in subordinate positions. Although the Sultan was also positioned centrally, the effect was diminished by the standard arrangement of the box. Such subtle indicators were employed despite the greater significance of the Ottoman Empire as a longstanding British ally crucial to the European balance of power and imperial defence.⁷³³ The Sublime Porte was also the site of another intense Anglo-French rivalry, indeed, the Sultan's invitation to visit Britain had largely resulted from the need to counteract the French who had entertained the Ottoman ruler earlier in the year.⁷³⁴

The sum spent on both the vassal and liege had not been insignificant given their strategic and economic importance. The cost, however, also had much to do with British perceptions of Oriental requirements. The Queen alluded to this prior to the Shah's arrival when writing to Gladstone to remind him "that the reception of Oriental sovereigns always entails an amount of outlay much beyond what could ever have been intended to be borne by the Civil List". This was often due to greater expenditure needed for

⁷²⁵ Lee, *Queen*, p. 255.

⁷²⁶ Watson, *Queen*, p. 185.

⁷²⁷ Harcourt, 'Sultan', p. 40, 'The Viceroy of Egypt', *Morning Post*, 8 July 1867 & 'Departure of the Viceroy of Egypt', *Morning Post*, 20 July 1873.

⁷²⁸ Harcourt, 'Sultan', p. 43.

⁷²⁹ The canal opened in 1869 (Harcourt, 'Sultan', p. 35).

⁷³⁰ 'Arrival of the Sultan', *Morning Post*, 13 July 1867 & 'Departure of the Sultan', *Morning Post*, 24 July 1873.

⁷³¹ 'The Sultan's Visit to the Crystal Palace', *Daily News*, 17 July 1867.

⁷³² William Roosen, 'Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A Systems Approach', *The Journal of Modern History*, 52 (1980) pp. 452-476 (p. 467).

⁷³³ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000*, (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), p. 18-25.

⁷³⁴ Harcourt, 'Sultan', p. 35.

carriages, livery and extra servants, and a larger suite of guests.⁷³⁵ The Sultan had nearly seventy in his suite,⁷³⁶ whilst the Shah brought a group numbering around ninety.⁷³⁷ This stood in contrast to European monarchs whose smaller parties had usually been managed within the Civil List.⁷³⁸ The Tsar for instance came with a party of approximately fifty.⁷³⁹

Her Majesty's contention regarding costs was also proved right in 1873, when the government spent £22,043.⁷⁴⁰ This was a sizeable sum given the similar amount used for *two* Oriental sovereigns in 1867, some of which also contributed to Buckingham Palace repairs benefitting subsequent guests. Meanwhile, part of the £22,043 went toward accommodating the Shah for an extra two nights at Buckingham Palace, thereby delaying his scheduled departure for France. According to the *Times* on the 2nd of July it was H.I.M. who had subtly intimated to British officials that he “would be pleased with an invitation to remain in London a day or two beyond the time originally fixed...and when they understood this, such an invitation was at once conveyed to him”.⁷⁴¹ The British government took this opportunity to facilitate more compensatory Overt Cordiality by organising another series of entertainments including a second private trip to Crystal Palace, the International Exhibition and the Albert Hall.⁷⁴² In the context of Court Splendour the Shah also attended another aristocratic garden party held by the Duke of Argyll,⁷⁴³ as well as a last social call on the Prince of Wales at Marlborough House.⁷⁴⁴ Finally on the evening of the 4th of July the Royal Household arranged for a trip to Drury Lane's Theatre Royal, where “every Crowned head since Charles II” had at some point sat in the Royal Box for a performance.⁷⁴⁵ Despite the hasty organisation the Prince of Wales and Duke of Edinburgh were present, providing a “cordial greeting” to H.I.M. The crowd also showed their appreciation before the Shah was treated to operatic performances and a ballet chosen for his specific “delectation”.⁷⁴⁶

Even before these developments, the Queen had written to Sydney stating that she was “afraid that it is intended to make more” of the Shah “than the Sultan”.⁷⁴⁷ During the visit this fear was in my opinion realised, albeit only to a small degree, befitting the subtle nature of diplomatic signalling. Ironically, despite her concerns, the last example of ‘making more’ of the Shah actually came from the Queen herself. Whereas in 1873 Her Majesty had acquiesced to Gladstone's insistence upon the Order of the

⁷³⁵ Queen Victoria to Gladstone, 3 April 1873 in Philip Guedalla, *The Queen and Mr Gladstone, 1845-1879*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1933), p. 410.

⁷³⁶ LC5/258, ‘Programme – Visit of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan’, n.d.

⁷³⁷ FO60/358, St. Petersburg, Thomson to Hammond, 28 May 1873.

⁷³⁸ ‘SUPPLY considered in Committee’, Mr. Ayrton.

⁷³⁹ LC5/258, ‘Programme – Visit of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of All the Russians’, n.d.

⁷⁴⁰ LC2/92, ‘Statement B An Estimate of the Expense incurred by the Visit of the Shah of Persia, dividing the expenses between the Treasury & the Civil List, according to the agreement of April 3rd 1873’, n.d.

⁷⁴¹ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 3 July 1873.

⁷⁴² ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Times*, 4 July 1873.

⁷⁴³ ‘The Shah of Persia’, *Morning Post*, 5 July 1873.

⁷⁴⁴ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 211.

⁷⁴⁵ W. J. Macqueen Pope, *Theatre Royal Drury Lane*, (London: W.H. Allen, 1945), p. 13.

⁷⁴⁶ ‘Movements of the Shah’, *Daily News*, 5 July 1873.

⁷⁴⁷ Ponsonby to Sydney, 31 May 1873, in Watson, *Queen*, p. 218.

Garret with only fleeting resistance, the visit of the Sultan had seen more dramatic incidents of protest. Indeed, throughout the early summer of 1867 the British government engaged in a protracted struggle to ensure that the Queen played any role at all in the reception.⁷⁴⁸ She finally relented in early July stating that despite her “shattered nerves”, the “poor Queen” would do what was necessary though it was “annoying”.⁷⁴⁹ She was still, however, resisting the call to make the Sultan a Stranger Knight during his stay, thus at the reception at Windsor on the 13th of July there was no investiture ceremony.⁷⁵⁰ Up until the last moment the Queen had favoured the Star of India and she relented only at a most inconvenient moment. In the end, in rolling seas midway through a review of the Channel Squadron on the 17th of July, the Queen “without any warning...and with borrowed insignia” from Prince Arthur, invested a very seasick Sultan with the Garter aboard the *Victoria & Albert*.⁷⁵¹ Though all had gone apparently well with the Sultan’s reception at Windsor and at the impromptu ceremony off Portsmouth, these were the only occasions Her Majesty saw the Ottoman sovereign.⁷⁵² By contrast the Shah, who had a more dignified investiture ceremony, also had the company of the Queen on four occasions, during which time he and Victoria seemed to build a genuine rapport.

These sovereign meetings were also facilitated by the lengthier stay of the Shah, which was indicative of a British desire for increased Overt Cordiality. It is difficult to draw conclusions regarding duration of state visits since other considerations could well have influenced both guest and hosts in terms of availability. However, it is logical to assume that in 1873 the British wanted the Shah to be in the country at least as long as he was in Russia, as a means of matching the Tsar’s hospitality. In facilitating an extension of two days they arguably outcompeted St. Petersburg. This view is supported by the Sultan’s mirrored lengths of stay in both France and Britain during 1867.⁷⁵³ Additionally longer stays were useful in that they presented opportunities for more royal attention, hospitality and entertainment to oil the wheels of interstate relations. Thus along with more sovereign meetings, the Shah had also visited the Theatre Royal to witness another royal pastime that neither the Tsar nor the Sultan had the time for. Similarly longer stays afforded more opportunity for displays of Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity and Civic and Public Welcome. For instance whilst there was no reference to a visit north for the Tsar, Abdulaziz had entertained notions of heading to the “capital of the Manufacturing Districts”, however, time did not permit such an excursion.⁷⁵⁴

Britain’s compensatory deference for the Shah and his fellow Oriental sovereign had its limits, however, demonstrating the outer reaches of permitted performative legitimisation and acceptance of Oriental

⁷⁴⁸ Harcourt, ‘Sultan’, p. 38

⁷⁴⁹ Victoria to Derby, 4 July 1867, Buckle, *The Letters Vol. IV*, p. 442

⁷⁵⁰ *Victoria*, Entry, 13 July 1867.

⁷⁵¹ H. Ponsonby to Barrington, 19 July 1867, in Watson, *Queen*, p. 184 & H. Ponsonby to Hammond, 22 July 1867, in Watson, *Queen*, p. 184.

⁷⁵² *Victoria*, Entry, 13 July 1867.

⁷⁵³ ‘The Great Exhibition’, *Times*, 1 July 1867.

⁷⁵⁴ ‘To The Editor Of The Times’, *Times*, 19 July 1867 & ‘The Sultan’s Visit to Manchester’, *Daily Post*, 18 July 1867.

monarchs into the European monarchical fraternity. Crucially in receptions for Napoleon III,⁷⁵⁵ the Tsar,⁷⁵⁶ and before that King Louis Philippe of France in 1844,⁷⁵⁷ the Queen had personally hosted her guests at Windsor for the duration of their state visits. Such proximity to the Queen was either accepted on the grounds of familial connection, personal familiarity, or because such sovereigns were European, Christian, and *actually* fellow monarchs of the same rank, unlike the Sultan and the Shah. It seems neither of the two Oriental monarchs picked up on this subtle but seemingly crucial signalling by Her Majesty. What one might ask, was the result of all of this compensatory deference, courtesy and hospitality in relation to Anglo-Persian relations? Connectedly what were the consequences of Britain's fostered impressions and wider performance techniques in the context of foreign policy aims in Persia? Rawlinson, echoing contemporary press reports,⁷⁵⁸ concluded that:

The most valuable result...of the Shah's visit to England, was the impression which he carried away, stamped indelibly on his mind, of the warm and cordial reception that he had met with from all classes of the community, an impression which will assuredly render him in the future more amenable to British counsels, and more disposed to reciprocate our friendly feelings. It is certain also that he saw much to admire in the teeming industry of our great centres of population, in the working of some of our time-honoured institutions, in the abundant evidence of a high civilisation, and above all, in the perfect order which reigned throughout the land.⁷⁵⁹

Here Sir Henry hit upon the most important aims that Britain had in the context of the visit, namely the maintenance of friendly relations and the increase of influence at the Qajar court. To this I would add the notion of legitimising Nasir al-Din's kingship in the interests of maintaining Persian sovereignty. Overarching these policies was, however, the need to avoid closer entanglement with Persia, and to avoid excessive Russian agitation. It was for this reason that Overt Cordiality and its two themes featured so heavily during the visit, with the use of compensatory royal attention, sacred ritual, celebratory festival, procession, aristocratic performativity, decorated and manipulated setting, nonverbal and verbal communication and costume, all designed to reify the cordial, mythical or idealised nature of Anglo-Persian relations. Indeed, such was the emphasis on these two themes that the analysis necessarily had to overlook many other examples during the visit including balls and receptions in Dover, Liverpool and in London at the Guildhall and the Foreign Office.⁷⁶⁰ The Shah also performatively tasted rural aristocratic life when he stayed with the Sutherlands at their Trentham Estate whilst touring Lancashire.⁷⁶¹

One can refer here to the work of Christian Goeschel on the meeting of Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler in 1937. Using an approach blending diplomatic and cultural history with notions of performance, Goeschel argues that the two fascist dictators 'staged' a friendship both on a national and personal level,

⁷⁵⁵ Lee, *Victoria*, p. 255.

⁷⁵⁶ 'The Czar at Windsor', *Daily Gazette*, 15 May 1874.

⁷⁵⁷ 'His Majesty Louis Philippe, King of the French...left Treport...for Portsmouth', *Morning Post*, 9 Oct. 1844.

⁷⁵⁸ 'The Shah of PERSIA leaves England to-day', *Morning Post*, 5 July 1873.

⁷⁵⁹ Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p. 132.

⁷⁶⁰ LC5/258, 'Programme – Visit of His Majesty the Shah', n.d.

⁷⁶¹ 'The Shah of Persia', *Times*, 27 June 1873 & *Times*, 28 June.

through a heavily choreographed visit infused with gesture, ritual, ceremonial and symbolic celebrations of their cordiality and complementary ideologies. Crucially, however, neither side was interested in actually concretising this relationship, with a treaty for instance. Mussolini in particular preferred to maintain an “illusion” of neutrality in the face of potential Anglo-French criticism.⁷⁶² Instead the two leaders participated in a “political drama” that gave Italo-German relations an “emotional image” of “unity”. Moreover, this “diplomatic performance...seemed to acquire the role of a political treaty” without actually having signed one.⁷⁶³ Consequently this new fascist friendship remained ambiguous, due to what Cohen would call the relationship’s “disclaimable” features, including non-binding verbal and nonverbal communications.⁷⁶⁴ It would seem apparent that the British government attempted something similar with their cordial compensatory strategy with the Shah, avoiding any formal commitments in the form of treaty or written statements, but instead pursuing expressions of personal friendship between the two sovereigns and by extension their nations.

Furthermore, I suggest that Britain’s impression of Overt Cordiality was also complemented by Goffman’s concept of dramatic prominence whereby a performance team has complete control of the “front region” or the front stage, and over which stage-props, performers and settings to use. Goffman argues that such control is generally, though not always, “seen as an advantage” during a performance.⁷⁶⁵ This was certainly true in the case of Overt Cordiality and Court Splendour, through which Britain could bring to bear its most splendid and best prepared stage-props and settings. By contrast, emphasis on Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity was slightly less prevalent, though there were still examples that proved too numerous to analyse in detail here. For instance there was a tour of the West India Docks, and also the Bank of England.⁷⁶⁶ Furthermore, the Shah visited the Liverpool Docks,⁷⁶⁷ and the Crewe Works specialising in railway and locomotive manufacturing for the L.N.W.R.⁷⁶⁸ The least prevalent aspect of World Power Vitality emphasised by the British was arguably Military Might, which featured prominently in only the three events analysed, along with the first naval demonstration off the Belgian coast.

I contend that the order of emphasis on the impressions and themes corresponded to the relative importance of specific British policies in Persia. Maintaining friendly relations was the most important, followed by increasing influence at the Qajar court using demonstrations of Court Splendour and Civic and Public Welcome. Next came demonstrations of Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity and Military Might, which also aimed to increase influence in Persia by demonstrating parity or superiority over

⁷⁶² Goeschel, ‘Staging’, p. 2.

⁷⁶³ Goeschel, ‘Staging’, p 19-20.

⁷⁶⁴ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 19.

⁷⁶⁵ Goffman, *The Presentation*, p.93.

⁷⁶⁶ *Times*, 2 July 1873.

⁷⁶⁷ *Times*, 27 June.

⁷⁶⁸ *Times*, 28 June.

⁷⁶⁸ *Times*, 2 July 1873.

Russia and other rivals. Finally the policy which Britain perceived to be the least effective in the short-term, was the maintenance of Qajar sovereignty through reform enacted by Persian politicians invigorated by displays of Military Might and Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity. Furthermore, given the desire to avoid Russian agitation and closer Anglo-Persian cooperation it is unsurprising to see no talk of providing British military equipment during displays of Military Might. It is, however, surprising that at no point during any demonstration of Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity was increased Anglo-Persian trade ever actually discussed by British officials in a serious capacity.

Regarding the efficacy of Overt Cordiality as a means of maintaining friendly relations, it seems the actions of the government and especially Her Majesty, were effective. The Shah's decision to extend his stay in the country was a clear indication of this. Furthermore, his reaction to the Garter ceremony was significant, as was the manner in which he bade farewell to the Queen. In his diary Nasir al-Din wrote touchingly of his last meeting with Victoria, stating "in truth, from my first arrival on English soil, down to this very day, the Sovereign has exercised towards us the fullness of kindness and friendship".⁷⁶⁹ He also laid a nosegay at the mausoleum of the Prince Consort at Frogmore, remarking that he "became extremely dejected and full of sadness" at the sombre moment.⁷⁷⁰ Lastly as per the Queen's command, he planted a commemorative oak tree in the grounds at Frogmore.⁷⁷¹ By contrast, when recalling his departure from Russia, the Shah had merely stated that he and the Emperor "mutually said good-bye".⁷⁷² This rather muted adieu was despite a far more prominent role played by the Emperor in hosting H.I.M. in Russia.⁷⁷³

It would thus appear that the Anglo-Iranian royal rapport referenced earlier, had a degree of authenticity, especially if one considers that Motadel sees a convergence between accounts of Queen Victoria in both the censored and uncensored versions of his travelogue in 1873. Furthermore British accounts concurred with this in that officials did note the Shah's rudeness toward the Empress Augusta. In British correspondence, there was no reference to such behaviour when in the presence of the Queen. Additionally, even in his censored and translated travelogue, the Shah writes of the Empress in very neutral terms, reserving far more respect and affection for the British sovereign. Connectedly, it would seem that the "troubling" "presence of ladies in the royal domain",⁷⁷⁴ on mainland Europe, was no longer an issue for the Shah when in the presence of the Queen. The Shah's issues with gender were threefold. First, there was a lack of familiarity with the "public display of the female body in low-cut ball gowns".⁷⁷⁵ Secondly he was also unused to intimacy between men and women in European aristocratic society, with dancing and leading married ladies into venues. This differed sharply from the segregated

⁷⁶⁹ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 203.

⁷⁷⁰ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 204.

⁷⁷¹ 'Movements of the Shah', *Daily News*, 31 July 1873.

⁷⁷² Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 66.

⁷⁷³ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 14-67.

⁷⁷⁴ Motadel, 'German Other', p. 574.

⁷⁷⁵ Motadel, 'German Other', p. 574.

habits of the Qajar court. Finally the Shah “expressly rejected the combination of European gender roles and status”. This was demonstrated by his treatment of the “brazen” Empress Augusta who on one occasion “commanded” the Shah seat himself in a carriage that she was driving, a command which he “refused” to follow.⁷⁷⁶

Again, there were no hints in British documentation which indicated anything but a deep sense of respect for the authority and majesty of Queen Victoria. The Shah’s different attitude to the British sovereign may have had several causes. Firstly, just as members of the British Royal Family were compelled to overlook race in the context of recognising aristocratic status,⁷⁷⁷ so too could Nasir al-Din have chosen to overlook gender. Moreover, this was not merely an emperor’s wife; instead Victoria was the crowned head of Iran’s overwhelmingly powerful and proximate southern neighbour, with whom good relations were important for the future of Qajar independence. In this sense the Shah’s public acceptance of the Queen’s authority could have been strategic. Secondly, since the Queen was a widow, wedded only to her subjects and the nation, her gender in a sense had been desexualised, becoming more matronly and matriarchal. Following Albert’s death she also dressed modestly thereafter, often in a simple white bonnet and black mourning gown with her arms and shoulders covered (see Fig. 28).⁷⁷⁸ It is possible that the Shah felt more comfortable with such attire, which differed from the German Empress, who despite being over sixty in 1873, dressed with bare shoulders and arms.

Moving to the impression of World Power Vitality, I contend that the Shah arguably saw Britain as superior to Russia in context of Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity. Although Nasir al-Din mentioned the manufactories in Moscow, along with gilded churches and vast crowds,⁷⁷⁹ it was London that caught his attention most. He thought it “impossible to describe the prosperity, the extent of the city” and “the number of lines of railway over which incessantly the trains come and go”.⁷⁸⁰ Meanwhile, at Charing Cross he beheld the “never-ending” crowd, and understood why:

...they [the British] are a great people, and that the Lord of the Universe has bestowed upon them power and might, sense and wisdom and enlightenment. Thus it is that they have conquered a country like India, and hold important possessions in America and elsewhere in the world.⁷⁸¹

It would be logical to see such praise continued in the context of Manchester where pieces of setting including the magnificent Watt’s Warehouse were in abundance. The Shah would have seen nothing of that scale in terms of industrial architecture anywhere across Europe.

⁷⁷⁶ Motadel, ‘German Other’, p. 576.

⁷⁷⁷ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, p. 8.

⁷⁷⁸ Margaret Homans, *Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837-1876*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 5.

⁷⁷⁹ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 35.

⁷⁸⁰ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 141.

⁷⁸¹ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 142.

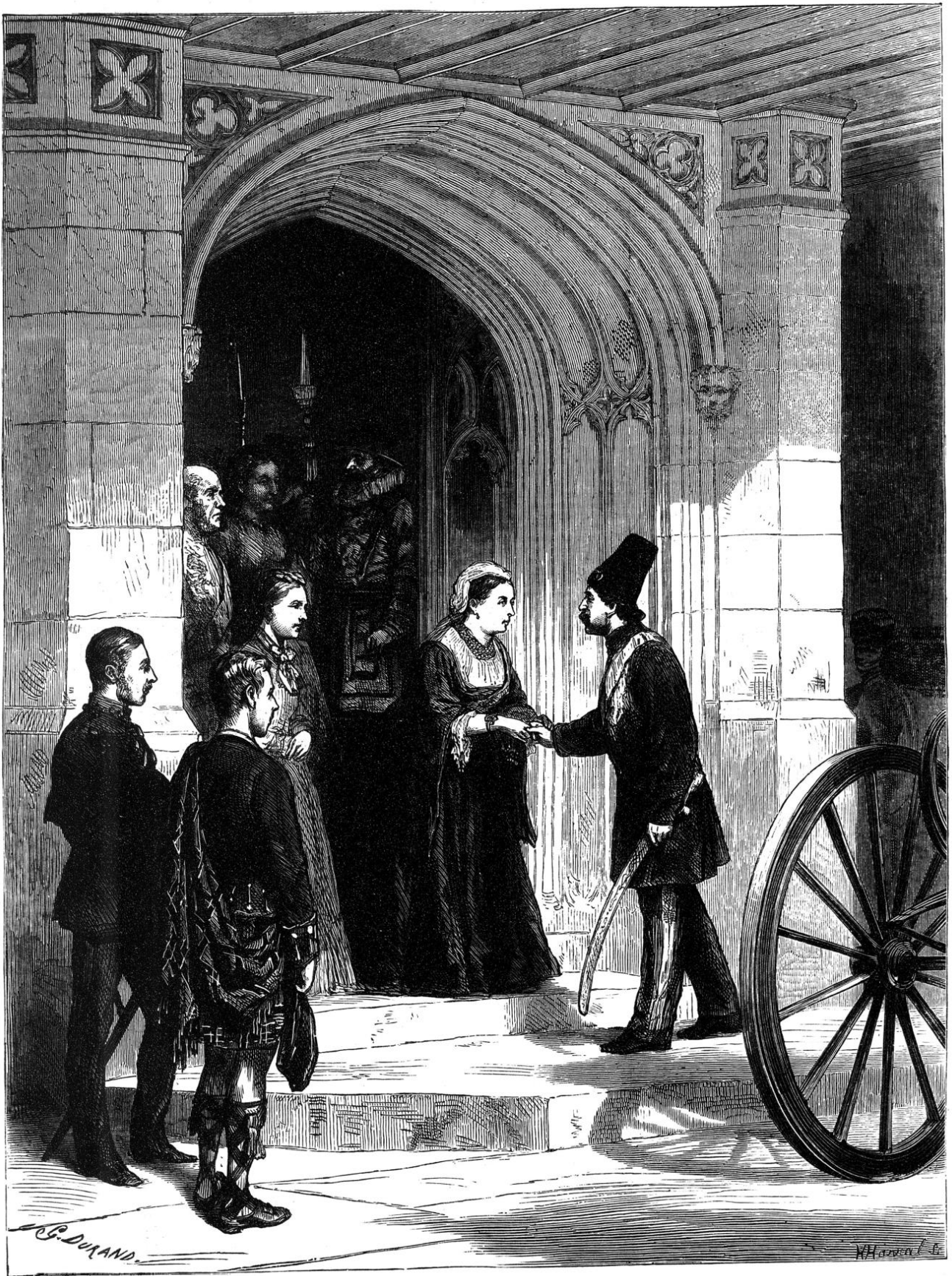


Fig. 28. The Queen receiving the Shah at Windsor in a modest mourning gown (*I.L.N.*, 28 June 1873).

Russia was years behind Britain in terms of manufacturing development, whilst the Ruhr in Germany had not yet become a dense industrialised belt. Its mining and engineering establishments were still often rural, dotted around towns and cities which saw limited population growth.⁷⁸² Essen for instance had a population of fifty-seven thousand in 1875.⁷⁸³ Meanwhile, in the Shah's Guarded Domains, cities were dominated by inward facing single-storey structures packed into a warren of streets, punctuated by mosques, palaces and bazaars, often enclosed in dilapidated mud walls.⁷⁸⁴ In Lord Curzon's opinion there was often an air of decay about Iranian cities and there was certainly no sign of modern industry.⁷⁸⁵ Even in 1924, a member of the British legation remarked on the poor state of Tehran, a "medieval town" with unpaved streets.⁷⁸⁶ What then was the Shah's reaction to modern Manchester's assault upon the senses? Nasir al-Din's strongest recollections of the city were not of its prosperity, though he did remember the welcoming crowds and the singing maidens at the mill. Instead the Shah noted that:

The city of Manchester, by reason of its exceeding number of manufactories, has its houses, doors, and walls, black as coal. So much so, that the complexions, visages, and dresses of the people are all black. The whole of the ladies of that place at most times wear black clothing, because no sooner do they put on white or coloured dresses, than lo! they are suddenly black.⁷⁸⁷

That this exaggerated perception remained imprinted on the Shah's mind is significant. According to Amanat the reason lay in Nasir al-Din's wider views of western modernity. He arguably found much to admire in Europe, from its palaces, its aquariums, its rural environment to its orderliness, its durable architecture, and its many achievements in "technology and communication".⁷⁸⁸ Despite this, the Shah was not desirous of industrialising his Guarded Domains because he also perceived the poverty, filth and the soot that inevitably accompanied capitalist prosperity in Europe. He found that he "did not like the smokestacks" of the mills, the "noise of the textile factories",⁷⁸⁹ or the "suffocating air, the gloom, and the "regimented lifestyle" and the "arduous working hours".⁷⁹⁰

In Manchester specifically, one thus sees how dramatic prominence – used advantageously in the context of Court Splendour – actually undermined British impression management when featuring Commercial and Capitalist Prosperity. Indeed, Goffman argues dramatic prominence also comes with pitfalls, most notably the inability to conceal information that might not correspond to desired impressions.⁷⁹¹ Performances might even be postponed or settings and stage location switched if deemed to be

⁷⁸² Norman J.G. Pounds, *The Ruhr, A Study in Historical and Economic Geography*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1952) p. 89-91.

⁷⁸³ Hugh Crisholm, *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: a dictionary of arts, sciences, literature and general information*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910) p. 778.

⁷⁸⁴ Lida Balilan Asl et al., 'Comparison of the traditional spatial organisation and structure of Tehrah Darolkhelafeh with Tabriz Darolsaltanat till mid Qajar era', *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences* (2013) p. 2003, George N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question Vol. I* (London: Frank Cass & co. Ltd., 1966, first published 1892), p. 151-153, p. 300-305, p. 520-521, Curzon, *Persia, Vol. II*, p. 25-44 & Gavin Hambly, 'The Traditional Iranian City in the Qajar Period', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 542-589.

⁷⁸⁵ Curzon, *Persia, Vol. II*, p. 41.

⁷⁸⁶ Gladwyn Jebb, *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), p. 21.

⁷⁸⁷ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 183-184.

⁷⁸⁸ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 424.

⁷⁸⁹ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 425.

⁷⁹⁰ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 429.

⁷⁹¹ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 97.

unsuitable or lacking. In the case of Manchester and indeed, most other sites where Britain performed for their Persian audience, such switching was impossible. In a sense the front and the back stage boundary collapsed, due to an inability to conceal the negative repercussions of Britain's rapidly acquired prosperity. No amount of festival, decorations or carefully selected processional routes could avoid this.

A quick study of Manchester's backstage in particular can highlight the facts of poverty that the British were unable to conceal from the Shah. In the early to the mid-19th century the speedy expansion of Manchester had led to high levels of overcrowding with poor quality sanitary conditions, often a stone's throw from major thoroughfares.⁷⁹² Crammed into cramped housing or even into cellars, with human waste overflowing onto the streets, Manchester's poor lived in grim and often deadly conditions.⁷⁹³ Despite improvements by the mid-Victorian era, poverty and impiety were never far from prosperity in the city.⁷⁹⁴ In 1870 the *Manchester Guardian* wrote a series of illuminating articles on the slums of the city which were often in view of the Shah's processional route. The area around the station for instance was known as a "dilapidated" red light district where "the weary traveller may be taken by the wily woman". Meanwhile, in roads adjacent to Market Street, there were run down and unlicensed public houses "crammed to literal suffocation with thieves and prostitutes".⁷⁹⁵ Moving onto Deansgate people slept on old straw mattresses in damp "half-fallen buildings" amidst a myriad of illegal gin shops full of indolent inebriates.⁷⁹⁶ Lastly in Chorlton-upon-Medlock situated very close to Oxford Street, Irish immigrants lived in "wretchedness and filth" sometimes nine people to a single bedroomed house, with no furniture, and an open sewer to dispose of waste.⁷⁹⁷ The Shah saw the effect this had on the workers of Britain, noting "many...poor people on whose countenances were visibly stamped the signs that they obtained living with difficulty".⁷⁹⁸ Unsurprisingly, he returned to Persia without much appetite for inflicting such 'reform' and development on his Guarded Domains. He did not want his Persian "subjects turning into labourers inhabiting" such "depressing industrial cities" as Manchester.⁷⁹⁹

Similarly, no reforms resulted from Britain's military displays. Although it was undisputed that the Royal Navy demonstrated British supremacy, the government would not countenance any Persian naval ambitions. Meanwhile, in the context of the army, no officers would be supplied to translate display into drill. It is true the Sadr-i Azam who also served as Minister of War from 1871, did launch a "major effort at military reorganisation", drawing up plans to regulate the army budget, enforce conscription and improve military education. Mirza Husain had, however, taken his cue from the Ottoman *tanzimat*

⁷⁹² Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 34.

⁷⁹³ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 39-43.

⁷⁹⁴ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 125-127.

⁷⁹⁵ 'In the Slums', *Guardian*, 17 March 1870.

⁷⁹⁶ 'In the Slums', *Guardian*, 10 March 1870.

⁷⁹⁷ 'The Census in the Slums: No. VIII...in Chorlton-Upon-Medlock', *Guardian*, 22 April 1870.

⁷⁹⁸ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 179.

⁷⁹⁹ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 425.

reforms, not from Britain.⁸⁰⁰ Furthermore, it was not until 1878, following another trip to Europe, that the Shah secured European instructors. These came not from Britain, but from Russia, who established the Persian Cossack Brigade in 1879.⁸⁰¹

Meanwhile, the display of Britain's land forces was another example of dramatic prominence with an inability to conceal inconvenient information, namely the small number of troops available for review. The Shah picked up on this deficiency noting that although the Household Cavalry were strong and exquisitely dressed like their Russian counterparts, "their number" was "few".⁸⁰² He noted too how the Prussians fielded twice as many troops for review as the British who in reality could not easily have matched Kaiser Wilhelm I's war machine.⁸⁰³ Furthermore, the Shah also noted that British guns at Woolwich were "older pattern" muzzle loaders, unlike Krupp's modern breech-loaders.⁸⁰⁴ The newspapers were not inclined to echo the canny observations of the Qajar sovereign because in part, their effusive praise of British gunnery and artillery production was aimed at massaging national pride. The Woolwich Arsenal was actually smaller than the Krupp works which employed around 8,000 workers.⁸⁰⁵ Meanwhile, although Woolwich guns were reliable, Krupp's breech-loaders had excelled during the Franco-Prussian War with greater range and accuracy.⁸⁰⁶ Perhaps this was why the Shah signed an agreement to make a "large order for field guns" from Herr Krupp during his tour of Prussia.⁸⁰⁷ It was also questionable whether or not the Shah was impressed by Britain or indeed, any European military bluster. By the time he reached the country he was becoming instead rather philosophical about the European penchant for parading its destructive capabilities. On the 30th of June a display of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was arranged in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, and the Shah remarked with some sagacity that Europeans had "invented a beautiful means of saving life" and yet:

...the wonder is in this, that on the one hand, they take such trouble and originate such appliances for the salvation of man from death, when on the other hand, in the armouries, arsenals and workshops of Woolwich, and of Krupp in Germany, they contrive fresh engines...for the quicker and more multitudinous slaughter of the human race.⁸⁰⁸

Such a view justified the *Examiner's* support for demonstrations of the country's industrial achievements, as opposed to its capacity for killing. Finally one can ask whether or not the two impressions and connected themes actually precipitated increased influence in Persia. Furthermore, one can ask if that

⁸⁰⁰ Cronin, 'military reform in Qajar Iran', p. 62-63 & Guity Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform in Iran, 1870-80*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p. 55-69.

⁸⁰¹ Nashat, *Origins*, p. 68 & Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 166-168.

⁸⁰² Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 142.

⁸⁰³ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 88.

⁸⁰⁴ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 57.

⁸⁰⁵ 'Workmen in the Krupp Gun Factory', *The Newcastle Courant*, 25 Jan.1878.

⁸⁰⁶ C.E. Dutton, 'On the principles of gun construction', *Chemistry, Physics, Technology etc.*, (1872), pp. 333-347, (p. 337-339, & p. 346) & Frank C. Bowen, 'A Century of Krupps', *Royal United Services Institution*, 87 (1942), pp. 153-159, (p. 153-154).

⁸⁰⁷ 'The Shah at Berlin', *I.L.N.*, 21 June 1873.

⁸⁰⁸ Redhouse, *Diary*, p. 191.

feeling of Anglo-Persian friendship was as indelible as Rawlinson suggested. Influence it seems was not increased, evidenced by the sudden dismissal of Mirza Husain Khan immediately upon the Shah's return to Persia in September of 1873.⁸⁰⁹ The Sadr-i Azam had been an Anglophile since the late 1850s and was a valuable asset,⁸¹⁰ though the British government were never willing to entertain his idea of transforming British and Persian relations into one more akin to the Anglo-Ottoman alliance.⁸¹¹

The Sadr-i Azam's demise had come at the hands of political and clerical rivals in Tehran who either had personal vendettas, or they objected to his centralising tendencies, and to the Reuter concession which they smeared as an agreement with an infidel heralding economic and political subjugation.⁸¹² Behind these domestic grievances also lay the hand of Russia who had been emboldened by Granville's definitive disavowal of the Reuter concession in July of 1873.⁸¹³ As such it was unsurprising that one of the key conspirators was the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirza Said Khan, a known Russophile in contact with the Russian Embassy in Tehran.⁸¹⁴ The British attempted to save Husain Khan's premiership with sanctioned intercessions from the Shah's British physician Dr Joseph Dickson,⁸¹⁵ and Thomson,⁸¹⁶ however, the Shah abolished the position of Sadr-i Azam and left his former chief minister in the cold until the Reuter concession was cancelled in November of 1873.⁸¹⁷ Britain had been unable to prevent this act of "disgraceful Russian intrigue".⁸¹⁸ Furthermore, despite Husain Khan's redemption in December, when he took the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs,⁸¹⁹ William Tylour Thomson wrote to Granville stating that Russia's influence was increasing in Tehran.⁸²⁰ Later in the decade in 1878 when Ronald took over from his brother, he also complained to Husain Khan that Russia possessed greater influence in the country which they were using to legitimise their encroachment on Persian territory north of the Atrak River.⁸²¹ The former Sadr-i Azam's response was telling. He claimed:

...he had for years endeavoured earnestly to bring Persia under the influence and protection of Her Majesty's Government, and that if he had not succeeded, and the Shah's sympathies were with Russia to a great extent, it was because we [the British] had refused to take Persia by the hand, and had thrown her aside.⁸²²

Thus it was clear that Britain's impressions were to an extent rendered ineffective due to that overarching desire to avoid closer relations with Persia. The British had been rejecting Persia since the Shah's overtures in the late 1850s, and this continued during and after the state visit. For instance the

⁸⁰⁹ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 120.

⁸¹⁰ Nashat, *Origins*, p. 37-38.

⁸¹¹ Nashat, *Origins*, p. 132.

⁸¹² Bakhsh, *Iranian Monarchy*, p. 116-117.

⁸¹³ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 116-117.

⁸¹⁴ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 118.

⁸¹⁵ FO60/351, Gilan, Dr. Joseph Dickson to Thomson, 16 Sept. 1873.

⁸¹⁶ FO60/351, Gulhek, William Tylour Thomson to Granville, 14 Sept. 1873.

⁸¹⁷ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 128.

⁸¹⁸ *Victoria*, Entry, 19 Oct. 1873.

⁸¹⁹ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 123.

⁸²⁰ Thornton, 'British Policy', p. 562.

⁸²¹ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 54.

⁸²² Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 53.

subject of politics had been largely ignored during June of 1873, though the Sadr-i Azam had tried and failed to extract another guarantee of sovereignty when at audience with the Foreign Secretary.⁸²³ The Persians, Rawlinson noted, must have “left London without coming to any more clear understanding” of British policy in Persia.⁸²⁴ Indeed, according to Kazemzadeh they must have felt “utterly confused” by the many “expressions of friendly sentiment they heard” which never transformed into a “straightforward promise of support”.⁸²⁵ Instead Granville was content to maintain status quo in part because he denied the reality of Russian expansionism in Central Asia, even with the capture of Khiva which took place despite Russia assuring Britain that it had no intention of annexing the city.⁸²⁶

Meanwhile, during the remainder of the 1870s Britain was still determining what new direction, if any, to take in Persia and Central Asia in response to Russia’s expansion, which merely added to Qajar confusion.⁸²⁷ Despite fleeting efforts from both parties to change the status quo by the end of the decade,⁸²⁸ a “more energetic British policy” had to wait until Lord Salisbury served as Conservative Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary from 1887 to 1892. It was during this time that the British Minister in Persia Sir Henry Drummond Wolff facilitated an invitation to the Qajar monarch to make a second state visit to Britain, facilitating more successful attempts to extract economic concessions from Persia.⁸²⁹ This differed markedly from the visit of 1873 which the Persians themselves requested. Moreover as previously noted, any state sponsored mercantilism had also been eschewed by Gladstone’s Liberal government. Despite still dominating Persia’s foreign trade in 1873, there was no appetite for expansion, due to the undeveloped and unstable nature of the country’s political and economic infrastructure.⁸³⁰ To conclude from this assessment that Britain’s performance during the state visit of 1873 was a *failure* is too bold, however. The fact remains that despite British complaints about increasing Russian influence, Anglo-Persian relations remained relatively amicable throughout the late 19th century. Persia also retained her independence, whilst intermittently continuing to petition Britain for assistance in the face of unpredictable oscillations in Russian policy.⁸³¹ Although it is unclear if the Shah took away an indelible impression of British friendship, it is logical to suggest that if Britain had *not* accepted the Persian government’s request for a state visit, Anglo-Persian relations would have suffered far more in the years following the visit of 1873. Pressed by surprising levels of Persian leverage, Britain’s performance and its fostered impression of Overt Cordiality in particular, were thus very necessary in the interests of maintaining the Anglo-Russian and Persian status quo during the period.

⁸²³ Wright, *Persians*, p. 131, & *Times*, 25 June.

⁸²⁴ Rawlinson, *England and Russia*, p. 132.

⁸²⁵ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 116.

⁸²⁶ Thornton, ‘British Policy’, p. 562 & Gerald Morgan, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Central Asia 1810-1895*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1981), p. 171.

⁸²⁷ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 28.

⁸²⁸ Greaves, ‘Relations’, p. 403-404.

⁸²⁹ Greaves, ‘Relations’, p. 406 & Wright, *Persians*, p. 136.

⁸³⁰ Gailbraith, ‘railways’, p. 486-489 & Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of Iran, 1800-1914*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 71.

⁸³¹ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 62-99.

CHAPTER
II
SIR PERCY LORAINÉ AND THE RISE OF
REZA KHAN
1922-1926

INTRODUCTION

Percii Persorum

Three Percy's have for better or worse
Filled from Great Britain's coffers Persia's purse.
The first who propped her 'gainst external shocks
With British gold was cunning Percy Cox.
Next, squandering gold as floods that burst their dykes
On Southern Persia rifles, Percy Sykes.
Sly Cox – bold Sykes! their efforts still were vain,
Yet may the third redeem the other twain,
And luck attend Sir Percy of Lorraine.⁷⁶⁵

This chapter switches focus, advancing chronologically to study British foreign policy formulation and impression management during the rise of Reza Khan, the strongman who domineered Persian politics from early 1921, first as Minister of War and then as Prime Minister, before going on to become the first Pahlavi monarch of Iran. His rise to power coincided with the tenure of Britain's equally domineering lead performer on the ground, Sir Percy Loraine. Analysis of this period led to the identification of the three impressions which Britain sought to foster – often through Percy – in order to further its aims in Persia; Great Power Paternalism, Disinterested Impartiality, and Overt Cordiality. All of these slightly contradictory impressions were employed on various occasions either through necessity, or due to preference for the different manner in which they ostensibly complemented British foreign policy objectives. The first was to show the persistence of power despite Britain's relative decline in Persia following the First World War. The second was to lessen resentment toward Britain following her habit of interfering into Persian affairs since the early 20th century. The final impression was aimed at flattering and finding favour with Reza Khan.

As regards structure, these impressions are first studied in the context of another salient dramatic encounter from the period – the political dispute between the British and Reza Khan in southern Persia 1922-1924, over British support for their established ally Sheikh Khaz'al of Mohammerah. This provides

⁷⁶⁵ FO1011/128, Britannic House London, unknown to Sir Percy Loraine, 29 Dec. 1924.

a close snapshot of all three impressions, before they are subsequently assessed in separate sections in the context of Loraine’s full tenure in Persia stretching to 1926. Furthermore the encounter also fleshes out British policy in Persia from the late 19th century, since this served to regulate impression management during the Khaz’al Crisis and beyond.



Fig. 29: Loraine [top left] stood behind Sir Sheikh Khaz’al al-Ka’bi of Mohammerah (FO1011/261, Persia, 1922-1925).

THE KHAZ’AL CRISIS ‘LIKE A PLAY’

On the early evening of the 6th of December 1924, the British Minister Sir Percy Loraine met with Reza Khan at the city of Ahvaz on the banks of the Karun River.⁷⁶⁶ Reza Khan was seeking to extend central government control over the southwestern province of Arabistan, where the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (A.P.O.C.) based its operations, and where Sir Sheikh Khaz’al al-Ka’bi of Mohammerah (Fig. 29) ruled much of the province autonomously in a “virtual British protectorate”.⁷⁶⁷ Loraine had called

⁷⁶⁶ FO416/75, Mohammerah, No. 284, Loraine to Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain, 6 Dec. 1924, (p. 235) & Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 94.

⁷⁶⁷ Cyrus Ghani, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Khan*, (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1998), p. 335.

the meeting to resolve an impending political and military crisis that risked jeopardising British interests in the province and in wider Persia. Preparing for his performance backstage in an A.P.O.C. bungalow, “Loraine had decided to take the initiative at this meeting”.⁷⁶⁸ When Reza Khan subsequently arrived in secret, the courtyard swarmed with “Persians armed to the teeth”, whilst more troops lined the streets surrounding the house looking “very mild and murderous”. In spite of the apparent peril, Lady Loraine pertinently said the whole affair was much “like a play” – dangerous but infused with drama – in which Percy played his part well.⁷⁶⁹ Seemingly unperturbed by the Persian troops, the British Minister “speaking with slow and forceful deliberation”,⁷⁷⁰ stated that he

...had been within an ace of informing His Majesty’s Government that the time had come to implement their assurances to the Sheikh. I have refrained from doing so in the almost forlorn hope that a way might yet be found to solve the difficulties without resort to force...⁷⁷¹

Loraine’s biographer Gordon Waterfield also mentioned the Minister’s allusion to the “profitless quarrel” which would result if Reza Khan persisted on his march southwards, damaging the two countries’ “greatest mutual asset – the oilfields”.⁷⁷² Here Loraine fully fused his personality with the role of the diplomat – involving a contradictory mixture of moralised “precision”,⁷⁷³ juxtaposed by necessary ambiguity and “subdued...understatement”.⁷⁷⁴ The words ‘quarrel’ and ‘implement’ were diplomatic code-words indicating that a serious breach in Anglo-Persian relations was possible, and that Britain might consequently resort to force. In this fragment of an interaction, one can observe the combination of personality and professionalism which pervaded Sir Percy’s performance as British Minister, in a turbulent period of Anglo-Persian relations.

GREAT POWER PATERNALISM

In his performance Sir Percy was also attempting to foster an impression of Great Power Paternalism, albeit one tempered with friendly self-restraint. Such an impression was designed to demonstrate the persistence of Britain’s military and political potency in post-war Persia. Loraine had *chosen* not to unleash the military might at his disposal, owing to his personal and professional regard for Reza Khan whom he had come to respect since his arrival in Persia in 1922.⁷⁷⁵ That Britain was apparently choosing not to militarily intervene in a domestic dispute between Ahmad Shah Qajar’s chief minister and a vassal of the same sovereign, is demonstrative of the extent of British paternalism in Persia.

⁷⁶⁸ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 94.

⁷⁶⁹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 95.

⁷⁷⁰ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 94.

⁷⁷¹ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 12, Loraine to Chamberlain, 22 Dec. 1924, (p. 18-25).

⁷⁷² Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 94.

⁷⁷³ Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1939) p. 60.

⁷⁷⁴ Raymond Cohen, ‘Diplomacy as theatre’, in *Diplomacy Three-volume Set* eds., Christer Jönsson and Richard Langhorne, (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2004), pp. 264-277 (p. 264), Christer Jönsson and Karin Aggestam, ‘Trends in Diplomatic Signalling’, in Jan Melissen ed., *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988), pp. 151-166, (p. 151), Christer Jönsson & M. Hall, *The Essence of Diplomacy*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 72, Nick Stanko, ‘Use of Language in Diplomacy’, in *Language and Diplomacy*, eds. Jovan Kurbalija and Hannah Slavik, (Malta: DiploProjects, 2001), pp. 39-47, (p. 45).

⁷⁷⁵ FO371/7804/3074, Loraine to Foreign Secretary, the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, 31 Jan. 1922 in Sabahi, *British* p. 167.



Fig. 30: Sir Percy's stare (FO1011/261).

Indeed involvement in internal Iranian affairs punctuated the history of Anglo-Persian relations for much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, reaching its zenith during the First World War when the British had often played a decisive role in domestic governance. Loraine had also made ample use of “personal front”, including “size, looks, posture, speech, facial expression and bodily gestures”.⁷⁷⁶ The British Minister, who stood at “over six feet tall”, with a “well-proportioned” physique,⁷⁷⁷ had controlled his voice, speaking slowly and forcefully through his bristling Edwardian moustache. Waterfield also relayed how “on occasions such as this Loraine’s dominating presence, his stern manner and steely blue eyes, were used to great advantage”.⁷⁷⁸ Meanwhile Godfrey Havard, his Oriental Secretary thought “the cold Loraine glare was fixed on Reza Khan as though to say: Beware! We are ready to fight if we must!” (Fig. 30).⁷⁷⁹ By “we” Havard of course meant the British for whom Loraine was fulfilling his duty as a diplomat and “symbolic representative of his country”.⁷⁸⁰ From this representative role Alisher Faizullaev deduces that a diplomat “as a political, psychological, and physical entity, represents the personhood and selfhood of the home country”, assuming a “state selfhood” that expresses that country’s “face and soul” in every act of speech or bodily movement.⁷⁸¹ According to the diplomatic historian Harold Nicolson, who also served as Loraine’s legation counsellor in 1925, Britain’s diplomatic soul was synonymous with the “commercial, mercantile or shop-keeper”⁷⁸² conception of diplomacy which reflected Britain’s preponderance for maritime trade.⁷⁸³ The ‘shop-keeper’ style of negotiation was “based upon the assumption that a compromise” was “generally more profitable than the complete destruction of the rival”.⁷⁸⁴ Kennedy’s pre-Chamberlain notion of British appeasement posited in the previous chapter had a similar emphasis on negotiated compromise.⁷⁸⁵ Connectedly British diplomacy was purportedly based on “moderation”, “reasonableness”,⁷⁸⁶ and a desire to avoid aggression.⁷⁸⁷ Loraine, with his conciliatory approach and his allusion to the importance of oil seemingly represented this shop-keeper soul.

Missing from Nicolson’s analysis, however, was an appreciation for the fact that peaceful negotiation was only one method of pursuing British foreign policy objectives. Other methods meanwhile might be more menacing, much like Loraine’s eyes. Nicolson may well have overlooked the menace because according to Abba Eban, he idealised British negotiating techniques, and like many of his era he glorified

⁷⁷⁶ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 24-5.

⁷⁷⁷ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 7-8.

⁷⁷⁸ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 95.

⁷⁷⁹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 95.

⁷⁸⁰ Hans Morgenthau, ‘Diplomacy’ in in *Diplomacy Three-volume Set* eds., Christer Jönsson and Richard Langhorne, (US: Sage Publications Ltd, 2004), pp. 62-91 (p. 64), & Jönsson *Essence*, p. 38.

⁷⁸¹ Faizullaev, ‘Diplomacy’, p. 501-2.

⁷⁸² Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, p. 25 & Derek Drinkwater, *Sir Harold Nicolson and International Relations: The Practitioner as Theorist*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 94.

⁷⁸³ Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, p. 72.

⁷⁸⁴ Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, p. 26.

⁷⁸⁵ Kennedy, ‘Appeasement’, p. 195-201.

⁷⁸⁶ Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, p. 71.

⁷⁸⁷ Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, p. 74.

Britain as a benign imperial power.⁷⁸⁸ Indeed according to Derek Drinkwater, Nicolson was rather proud of the nature and extent of Britain's imperial possessions though not the means by which they had been acquired. For instance in early 1926, on witnessing British rule in the Middle East, Nicolson noted "how gloriously and manfully imperial we [he British] are!" He was no lover of war, but he revelled in the "calm" dominion exercised by Britain over vast parts of the globe.⁷⁸⁹

The prodigious historian of British imperialism John Darwin notes, however, that calmness was often interrupted by "organised violence" which "played a huge part" in the furtherance of imperial interests when "energetic diplomacy" failed to serve British interests.⁷⁹⁰ In effect, Britain's foreign policy strategy involved an iron fist inside a velvet glove. Iran had felt the force of this fist as far back as 1856 when the Royal Navy delivered a "swift and decisive" amphibious uppercut to Persia's southern coast in response to Qajar attempts to annex Herat, a strategically important Afghan fortress situated on one of the primary routes from the Middle East and Central Asia into India.⁷⁹¹ Shortly before the conflict, the then Foreign Secretary, the Earl of Malmesbury, wrote that Britain could "easily cause its displeasure to be felt by Persia" but that it was "far from the wish of Her Majesty's Government" to do so.⁷⁹² In his verbal utterances in a "state selfhood" Loraine was perpetuating this notion of British benignity with a connected reluctance to use the country's military might, unless it became regrettably necessary. Of course the existence of this benignity was questionable, especially in view of Britain's more liberal use of military force and coercion during the First World War, when Persia struggled to maintain her neutrality. Loraine was aware of this, noting the negative effect on Anglo-Iranian relations, of a "surfeit" of British interventions in Iran from 1914 to 1921.⁷⁹³ The Khaz'al Crisis of 1922-1924, however, called for an impression that implied otherwise, employing both verbal and also nonverbal communication techniques indicative of British power. In the context of the latter, the manner in which Loraine delivered his verbal utterances is worthy of some consideration. In her work on the politician as a performer Kimberley Mullins argues that intonation, loudness and tempo are important characteristics in political communication.⁷⁹⁴ Mullins drew inspiration from Keir Elam's study of theatre semiotics, which highlighted how such "paralinguistic" features provide "essential information regarding the speaker's state, intentions and attitudes".⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁸⁸ Abba Eban, *The New Diplomacy, International Affairs in the Modern Age*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), p. 124.

⁷⁸⁹ Drinkwater, *Harold*, p. 64.

⁷⁹⁰ John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire, The Global Expansion of Britain*, (London: Penguin Books, 2012), p. 11 & p. 118.

⁷⁹¹ Standish, 'Persian War' p. 34, & Greaves, 'Relations' p. 394-395.

⁷⁹² Standish, 'Persian War', p. 20.

⁷⁹³ FO1011/131, Tehran, Loraine to George Lloyd, 31 Dec. 1925.

⁷⁹⁴ Kimberley Mullins, *The Politician as Performer: A Practical and Theoretical Assessment*, (PhD Diss., University of Newcastle, 2006), pp. 1-261, (p. 113).

⁷⁹⁵ Keir Elam, *Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1980), p. 78-80.



Fig. 31: Sir Percy kept up his polo in Tehran (FO1011/261).

It is evident that Loraine's intonation, tempo and loudness was demonstrative of that combination of British imperial benignity and brawn. Significantly, it was also a performative enactment of the English or British gentleman who contributed so much to the imperial project.⁷⁹⁶ Marcus Collins argues that the "ideal" 19th and 20th century British gentleman showed a "commitment to 'decency' and rejection of 'ruthlessness'", connected to the idea of fair play and good sportsmanship. A gentleman, almost exclusively of an upper or upper-middle class background, also displayed "moderation", acting as a "model of self-control who was 'trained in...reticence and restraint'". Connectedly he avoided "explosions of temper".⁷⁹⁷ Sir Percy Lyham Loraine, 12th Baronet of Kirkharle was every inch the gentleman imperialist.⁷⁹⁸ He was born into the Loraine Baronetcy, a Northumbrian landed upper class family of Franco-Norman aristocratic descent. Educated at Eton and Oxford where he played cricket and polo (Fig. 31), Loraine also cut his studies short to serve as an officer in the Boer War, before subsequently joining the Diplomatic Service in 1904.⁷⁹⁹ Loraine's words, delivered with that "slow and

⁷⁹⁶ Bernard Porter, *Empire Ways: Aspects of British Imperialism*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), Ch. 3.

⁷⁹⁷ Marcus Collins, "The fall of the English gentleman: the national character in decline, c. 1918-197", *Historical Research*, 75 (2002) pp. 90-111, (p. 93-94).

⁷⁹⁸ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 1.

⁷⁹⁹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 6-7. See also Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Ch.2, 3 & 4, & Porter, *Empire*, Ch. 3, for a social assessment of the Eton educated, sporting imperialist gentleman.

forceful deliberation” bore all the hallmarks of a self-controlled English gentleman diplomat – reasonable and peaceable – much like the idealised perception of the nation he was representing. Furthermore echoing Faizullaev’s conception of embodied statehood, Raymond Cohen argues that everything a diplomat does is “perceived to be significant” in the context of international relations.⁸⁰⁰ This includes body language and nonverbal communication such as “posture, hand movement, the use of space, facial expression and head movement”.⁸⁰¹ Moreover, Cohen claims that sincerity and spontaneity are absent from diplomatic bodily gestures which are always contrived, leading to their use as a “genuine index of the state of relations” between polities.⁸⁰²

It is apparent that Loraine’s facial expression – specifically the use of his eyes – was designed to indicate Britain’s readiness to fight, an intention channelled through his embodied “state selfhood”. Indeed, according to Michael Argyle the eyes and their “gaze” are an important component of nonverbal communication.⁸⁰³ Gaze can be used to affirm trust or to show interest in an interaction,⁸⁰⁴ however, it can also be employed in a “hostile” way to signal a threat.⁸⁰⁵ I posit that Loraine used his glare to denote potential British hostility. In keeping with the English gentleman’s aversion for any “explosions of temper”, however, the eyes and the hint of sternness in his manner also represented English self-control and moderation. Similarly Burgoon, Buller and Woodall argue that “longer gazes...promote attitude change and improve the overall effectiveness of a persuasive presentation”, increasing the willingness of a person “to comply with a request”.⁸⁰⁶ With Loraine’s eyes “fixed” on Reza Khan, it could certainly be argued that his gaze was being used in a protracted and persuasive manner.

Argyle also claims that staring can be used “to defend territory”,⁸⁰⁷ and Loraine was in effect defending real territory – namely the Sheikh’s hereditary holdings in Arabistan and by extension British interests. Indeed, the adoption of Great Power Paternalism in the case of the Khaz’al Crisis complemented British interests and foreign policy aims with respect to the whole of Persia and the Persian Gulf. The most immediate concern for the British was the need to avoid civil war in Arabistan to ensure the security of Britain’s commercial interests in southwest Persia, the most important of which was oil.⁸⁰⁸ It was in 1901 that British subject William Knox D’Arcy won a generous concession from Muzaffar ed-Din Shah for the “exclusive right” to export oil and petroleum from Persia for sixty years in exchange for royalties

⁸⁰⁰ Cohen, *Theatre*, Introduction.

⁸⁰¹ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 21 & 86.

⁸⁰² Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 90.

⁸⁰³ Argyle, *Communication*, p. 154.

⁸⁰⁴ Argyle, *Communication*, p. 159.

⁸⁰⁵ Argyle, *Communication*, p. 165.

⁸⁰⁶ Judee K. Burgoon, David B. Buller and W. Gill Woodall, *Nonverbal Communication, The Unspoken Dialogue*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1996), p. 401.

⁸⁰⁷ Argyle, *Communication*, p. 165.

⁸⁰⁸ FO416/112, Annual Report Persia (A.R.P.) – 1925. For a brief assessment of Britain and oil in Persia please see David McLean, *Britain and Her Buffer State, The Collapse of the Persian Empire, 1890-1914*, (London: Royal Historical Society, 1979), p. 125-128.

amounting to sixteen percent of annual profits.⁸⁰⁹ Seven years later “significant deposits” of oil were struck at Maidan-i-Naftun over fifty miles northeast of Ahvaz in the remote winter pasturelands of the Bakhtiari tribe,⁸¹⁰ however, it took until 1912 before a refinery was completed on ground leased from Sheikh Khaz’al on Abadan Island.⁸¹¹

A.P.O.C.’s operations remained relatively small over the next two years, however, in 1914 the Royal Navy signed a twenty-two year contract for six million tonnes of oil following a decision to switch from coal power to oil. The British government also purchased a majority of shares in the company.⁸¹² Although A.P.O.C. only provided a fraction of navy oil throughout the war,⁸¹³ the company expanded their production considerably from 1914 to 1918.⁸¹⁴ Furthermore, in the post-war period A.P.O.C. began to make an important contribution to the domestic British economy.⁸¹⁵ By 1924 the Foreign Office reported that a “purely British oil industry” was employing “some 1,000 Britishers in Persia and some 20,000 in Great Britain”, providing a “large proportion” of the navy’s oil as well as paying “large sums to His Majesty’s Treasury” and to the Persian government.⁸¹⁶ Loraine thought A.P.O.C’s installations were enormous, whilst his subordinate Gladwyn Jebb thought the company “was practically an *imperium in imperio*” a state within a state.⁸¹⁷

Alongside oil Britain had other commercial interests in Arabistan and southern Persia including maritime trade which benefitted from exclusive access to the Iranian interior by way of the Karun River, opened to international commerce with a concession to the British company Messrs. Lynch Bros. in 1888.⁸¹⁸ Lynch owned the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company which transported goods from Ahvaz to the Persian Gulf in the heart of Sheikh Khaz’al’s territory.⁸¹⁹ Meanwhile the Persian Road and Transport Company also owned by the Lynch Bros., moved the same goods along the ‘Lynch Road’, a two hundred and seventy mile stretch built between Ahvaz and Isfahan.⁸²⁰ Complementing these interests were also insurance and financial services provided by the Imperial Bank of Persia (I.B.P.), a British-owned enterprise that had begun operation with a concession to George de Reuter in 1889.⁸²¹

⁸⁰⁹ Geoffrey Jones, *The State and the Emergence of the British Oil Industry*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1981), p. 128-130 & J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: a documentary record, Vol. I*, (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1956), p. 249-252.

⁸¹⁰ H. Lyman Stebbins, *British Consuls and “Local” Imperialism in Iran, 1889-1921*, (PhD Diss., The University of Chicago, 2009) pp. 1-507, (p. 235) & Jones, *Oil*, p. 135.

⁸¹¹ Abadan was, just south of Mohammerah and a hundred mile pipeline linked the fields to the refinery (Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 235, p. 269-270 & Greaves, ‘Relations’, p. 418-19).

⁸¹² Kittner, p. 7, Jones, *Oil*, p. 142-147, & p. 154, Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 270-71.

⁸¹³ Jones, *Oil*, p. 203.

⁸¹⁴ R.W. Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company. The Developing Years 1901-1932, Vol. I*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1982), p. 295.

⁸¹⁵ Jones, *Oil*, p. 249, Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 502, Ferrier, *Petroleum*, p. 632.

⁸¹⁶ FO1011/128, ‘A precis of the relations of the Sheikh of Mohammerah with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company Ltd.’, 18 Aug. 1924.

⁸¹⁷ Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 21.

⁸¹⁸ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 32.

⁸¹⁹ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 34.

⁸²⁰ Built on lands of the Bakhtiari and the Sheikh (Gene R. Garthwaite, ‘The Bakhtiari Khans, The Government of Iran and the British, 1846-1915’, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 3 (1972), pp. 24-44, (p. 31-32).

Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 18 & p. 84-85, Wright, *English*, p. 138.

⁸²¹ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 33, Greaves, ‘Relations’, p. 408, Wright, *English*, p. 104-106.

Although trade with Persia was relatively insignificant compared to British commercial activities globally, Britain was dominant in the provinces of Arabistan, Fars and Laristan, insulating the region from practically all foreign competition.⁸²² The degraded condition of the British economy following the war, however, rendered British economic interests in Persia much more important. During the 1920s Britain had gone some way to recovery, however, the country was often beset by strikes, inflation, deflation, spending cuts and “record” levels of unemployment due to the decline of dominant pre-war industries.⁸²³ In his exhaustive study of the period, Charles Mowat declared that Britain “had been in a state of depression ever since the war”.⁸²⁴ A desire to maintain established and growing commercial ventures overseas was thus unsurprising.

There was, however, another important reason for Britain to keep its command of commerce in the south through Sir Percy’s performance. Economic supremacy in this part of Persia had never been solely down to the endeavours of private companies and entrepreneurs, instead it had been facilitated by the British government which often provided financial and political support for such commercial ventures. Crucially British officials mediated on behalf of British companies with the central government, and more importantly with local elites who were the real sources of power in the south. Such assistance was afforded because commercial supremacy facilitated increased political influence,⁸²⁵ which in turn buttressed the “foundation stone” of British imperial policy in the east since the end of the 19th century – the defence of India via supremacy of the Persian Gulf.⁸²⁶ Increasing influence in southern Persia had first been pursued in 1889 by Lord Salisbury and his Minister in Persia Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, to counter the growth of Tsarist Russian influence in northern Persia. This was part of broader attempt to improve Britain’s position in Persia involving another lavish state visit for Nasir al-Din alongside the pursuit of concessions including the Reuter’s banking concession, the opening of the Karun, and the ill-fated Tobacco Concession of 1890.⁸²⁷ The policy was then expanded from 1894-1907, by British Ministers Sir Mortimer Durand and Sir Arthur Hardinge, with support from Sir Percy Cox, the Consul-General in Bushehr, and Viceroy Curzon.⁸²⁸ A major aim of this expansion was to deny Russia a warm water port on the Persian Gulf, thereby threatening the route to India.⁸²⁹ Such a move would have undermined Persia’s historic role as a buffer state,⁸³⁰ with her independence guaranteed as a “cardinal precept” of British policy in the country according to Curzon.⁸³¹

⁸²² Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 20-21.

⁸²³ Barry Eichengreen, ‘The British economy between the wars’, in Roderick Floud & Paul Johnson eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. II: Economic Maturity, 1860-1939*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 314-343, (p. 318-321, & p.326-330), & Charles Loch Mowat, *Britain Between The Wars*, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1955), p. 119-131).

⁸²⁴ Mowat, *Between*, p. 259.

⁸²⁵ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 51.

⁸²⁶ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 159, Greaves, ‘Relations’, p. 416, & Ghani, *Iran*, p. 262.

⁸²⁷ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 184-186, & Greaves, ‘Relations’, p. 406-410.

⁸²⁸ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 85-153 & p. 229-236.

⁸²⁹ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 427-428 & Curzon, *Persia Vol. II*, p. 464-465, & Sabahi, *British*, p. 168.

⁸³⁰ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 112-114 & p. 151.

⁸³¹ Curzon, *Persia, Vol. II*, p. 605.

The definition of ‘independence’ in this context, however, was highly ambiguous in view of the manner in which Britain extended its influence in southern Persia. In the face of an increasingly ineffective Qajar government the British moved to embed themselves with local sources of power.⁸³² This was achieved using an expanded network of consular posts in southern Persia,⁸³³ administered by consuls who were mostly composed of British Indian Army officers seconded to the Foreign Department of the Government of India.⁸³⁴ Whilst the Foreign Office had ultimate control of Anglo-Persian relations, the government of India had a considerable say on matters since they often affected India, which also controlled consular posts in the south of Iran through the Consul-General in Bushehr, another Indian official. To prevent Russian encroachment and to ensure the security of British trade, these Indian officials understood the need to fill the vacuum left by the Qajars by mediating with local elites much as they did in India and the Trucial States.⁸³⁵ W. T. Strunk identified such men and the type of consular relations they conducted, as the “Persian Gulf School” of thought.⁸³⁶ In effect the adherents of this school usurped and undermined central government authority, eventually coming to “occupy the arbitral position in Iranian political society hitherto reserved to the Shah and his officials”.⁸³⁷ The consuls practiced this policy all over southern Persia with various groups including the Bakhtiari.⁸³⁸

Of importance to this encounter, was Britain’s consular relationship with another group headed by Sheikh Khaz’al. Following the opening of the Karun River British traders encountered problems with Sheikh Miz’al Khan Mu’iz al-Saltaneh, the hereditary ruler of Mohammerah, a virtually independent Arab Sheikhdom occupying territory along the coast and the Karun Valley under Persian suzerainty.⁸³⁹ Local government proved incapable of assisting British traders, and it was not until Miz’al’s death in 1897, possibly at the hands of his brother Khaz’al al-Ka’bi that the situation improved.⁸⁴⁰ This was due to Khaz’al himself facilitating British trade in the hope of gaining support to halt Persian government encroachment upon his newly acquired territory.⁸⁴¹

The British responded positively, committing to the Sheikh no less than six times before the outbreak of the First World War. The first came in December 1902 when Sir Arthur Hardinge stated that Britain would “protect” Mohammerah against a foreign naval attack, whilst continuing to provide “support” in

⁸³² Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 25-29.

⁸³³ For information on Britain’s consular expansion, see Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 16-17 & p. 85-117 & p. 143-144.

⁸³⁴ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 152.

⁸³⁵ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 28-30.

⁸³⁶ W. T. Strunk, *The Reign of Shaykh Khaz’al Ibn Jabir and the Suppression of the Principality: A Study of British imperialism in Southwestern Iran, 1897-1925*, (PhD Diss., Indiana University, 1977), pp. 1-468, (p. 369).

⁸³⁷ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. viii, p. 25 & p. 29.

⁸³⁸ Garthwaite, ‘Bakhtiyari’, p. 30-43.

⁸³⁹ The Sheikh was concerned that British commerce would lead to increased central government interference (Stebbins, *British Consuls*, p. 38-80). See also Curzon, *Persia Vol. II*, p. 324-326 & P. Oberling and B. Hourcade, “ARAB iv Arabtribes of Iran”, *Encyclopaedia Iranica* <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/arabiv>> [accessed 14.11.16]

⁸⁴⁰ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 80.

⁸⁴¹ The Sheikh objected to Persian government attempts to take control the customs administration in Mohammerah, (Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 132-135).

his tussle over customs and tax revenue with the central government, provided that he “remained faithful to the Shah” and acted “in accordance” with British advice.⁸⁴² The following December in 1903, the Sheikh was given another set of assurances after complaining about further central government encroachment. Hardinge in particular stated that the Sheikh was “justified in opposing” Tehran’s intrusions. To Lyman Stebbins such statements amounted to a “clear infringement of Iranian sovereignty”, in stark contrast to the persistent British claims of supporting Persian “integrity and independence”.⁸⁴³

As Britain’s consular project continued to expand during the early 1900s,⁸⁴⁴ the Sheikh began to be viewed as a “valuable ally” conducive to increased British influence and stabilised trade.⁸⁴⁵ Cox, who did much to assist Britain’s “cordon of consular posts” in southern Persia from 1904-1913, thought strengthening Britain’s “hold” over Sheikh Khaz’al was vital for securing the Karun region from foreign commercial competition.⁸⁴⁶ In December 1908 he thus made a further commitment to support the “continuance” of the Sheikh’s autonomy, whilst applying previous commitments to his “successors”.⁸⁴⁷ In May 1909, at the height of the Constitutional Revolution, Cox issued the next set of assurances to the Sheikh by guaranteeing his position in the event of the formation of any new government in Tehran. All previous commitments were also extended to his “heirs” as opposed to just his successors.⁸⁴⁸ The following October in 1910, Britain also recognised Sheikh Khaz’al’s stabilising rule over Arabistan during the Constitutional Revolution by making him Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (K.C.I.E).⁸⁴⁹ At this latest development the Persian government felt compelled to ask whether or not the Sheikh was now under British protection. Britain replied that they had “special relations” with the Sheikh and “would support him in the event of any encroachments on his rights” by the Persian government.⁸⁵⁰ Crucially, however, Britain did not fully disclose its assurances to the Sheikh. Subsequently the last commitment was issued in November 1914, on the day that British forces occupied Basra to defend its assets in southwestern Persia from its most immediate threat, the neighbouring Ottoman Empire. On this occasion Cox, now Chief Political Officer of the Indian Expeditionary Force (I.E.F.), reiterated Britain’s previous pledges, in view of the prospective important of Khaz’al and A.P.O.C. in the coming war.⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴² FO60/693, Sir Arthur Hardinge to Shaykh Khaz’al Khan, 7 Dec. 1902 in Stebbins, *British Consuls*, p. 137. See also Shahbaz Shahnavaaz, ‘Kaz’al Khan’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 31 May 2013, <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kazal-khan>> [accessed: 14.12.16].

⁸⁴³ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 138-139.

⁸⁴⁴ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 151.

⁸⁴⁵ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 207.

⁸⁴⁶ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 141 & FO248/934, Sir Percy Cox to Butler, 22 March 1908 in Stebbins, *British Consuls*, p. 232.

⁸⁴⁷ FO248/935, Cox to Shaykh Khaz’al, 1 Dec. 1908 in Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 233. Cox also engineered a Bakhtiari alliance with the Sheikh in early 1908, attempting to build a broader pro-British coalition in southern Iran (Stebbins, *Consul*, p. 232).

⁸⁴⁸ FO248/962, Cox to Shaykh Khaz’al, 16 May 1909 in Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 235.

⁸⁴⁹ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 261.

⁸⁵⁰ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 262, Ghani, *Iran*, p. 259.

⁸⁵¹ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 294 & p. 354. See FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1926, for the wording of the assurance.

Even after these last set of assurances the relationship continued to strengthen during the First World War. In early 1915 the Viceroy even visited Muhammerah on route to Basra and made the Sheikh a Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India (K.C.S.I).⁸⁵² Subsequently in 1917 he was made Knight Grand Commander of the Indian Empire (G.C.I.E) for maintaining stability in Arabistan in the face of nationalist agitation and incursions by the Central Powers in 1915.⁸⁵³ Indeed such was the level of Britain's faith in the Sheikh that Cox had also made plans for an alliance of local rulers in southern Persia including the Bakhtiari and the Sheikh, in the event of the Persian government siding with the Central Powers.⁸⁵⁴ He and other British officials including Curzon revived this idea of an independent Arab and tribal confederacy again in 1920 and 1921 when Britain briefly feared the loss of northern Persia to the Bolsheviks, following the formation of the Soviet Republic of Gilan.⁸⁵⁵ This historical assessment renders plain the extent to which the British embedded themselves in southwestern Persia. Britain maintained this state of embeddedness from 1889 to the First World War. This was despite the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 and Britain's alliance with Russia during the war. Indeed, even though the Great Game was in abeyance, Britain was in no mood to see any foreign power – allied or otherwise – competing with them in southern Persia. In this context Britain managed to secure the extension of their 'sphere of influence' granted in the Convention, with the incorporation of the neutral zone including Arabistan as part of the 1915 Constantinople Agreement.⁸⁵⁶

The Russian Revolution of November 1917 did precipitate an attempt to end the reliance on local rulers, however, this ultimately failed. Fearing the spread of Bolshevism and sensing a chance to finally solve the puzzle of where to place Persia in the system of imperial defence, Curzon and his close ally Cox engineered the ill-fated Anglo-Persian Agreement 1919.⁸⁵⁷ This sought to bind Persia to Britain with the employment of military officers to train a new Persian army, alongside other officials overseeing economic and political reform, all facilitated by a sizeable loan from the Treasury.⁸⁵⁸ In binding the two countries together Curzon sought to add a link in his proposed "chain of vassal states stretching from the Mediterranean to the Pamirs" protecting both the Indian frontier and Britain's lines of communication to imperial assets in the east.⁸⁵⁹ Such a strategy involved cooperation with a stronger Persian central government meaning an end to Britain's "local imperialism" in the south using consuls and close relations with local elites such as the Sheikh.⁸⁶⁰ According to Nance Kittner when the treaty finally collapsed in July of 1921, after facing serious obstacles and criticisms from France and the U.S.

⁸⁵² Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 261.

⁸⁵³ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 355, p. 361 & p. 462.

⁸⁵⁴ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 372.

⁸⁵⁵ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 483-484, Ghani, *Iran*, p. 148 & Sabahi, *British*, p. 117-118.

⁸⁵⁶ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 351.

⁸⁵⁷ Sabahi, *British*, p. 1-8.

⁸⁵⁸ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 20-21 & Hurewitz, *Diplomacy Vol. II*, p. 64-66.

⁸⁵⁹ Harold Nicolson, *Curzon: The Last Phase 1919-1925, A Study in Post-War Diplomacy*, (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1934), p. 121. See also William J. Olson, 'The Genesis of the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919', in Elie Kedourie & Sylvia G. Haim eds. *Towards a Modern Iran* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1980) pp. 185-216.

⁸⁶⁰ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 501.

and from within Persia, Britain was left directionless in Persia.⁸⁶¹ This led the government to “fall back” on a policy of “maintaining the status quo”, which in southern Persia meant retention of supremacy through its protégés including Khaz’al.⁸⁶² Curzon certainly felt as much, telling Loraine that he should “never release or slacken our hold on the Gulf”.⁸⁶³ As we shall have cause to see, Sir Percy was making considerable efforts to alter Britain’s status quo policy in Persia, responding to a reinvigorated central government under Reza Khan. In Arabistan, however, it was still incumbent upon Loraine to defend the status quo and to uphold Britain’s considerable commitments to the Sheikh.

As to further strategies involved in fostering the impression of Great Power Paternalism in pursuit of this status quo, one should also assess the beginning of the Khaz’al Crisis in 1922, not just the dramatics of late 1924. By the early summer of that 1922, the War Minister had defeated numerous tribal and revolutionary insurrections in the north and was desirous of extending central government authority over the territory of the Bakhtiari and the Sheikh,⁸⁶⁴ who had not paid taxes to the central government since 1913.⁸⁶⁵ Britain was concerned that any resultant conflict would disrupt trade or worse lead to resurgence of Soviet interference in the north which had been in decline since the Russo-Persian Treaty of Friendship signed in February of 1921.⁸⁶⁶ Loraine thus attempted to resolve the issue of outstanding tax through negotiation, however, in July of 1922 Reza Khan sent troops toward Arabistan.⁸⁶⁷ The Foreign Office reacted by instructing Loraine to state that should the:

Persian Government persist in pursuing (a) course which they know is strongly resented by you and by H.M.G., they must not be surprised if such action reacts on our good relations. Any unwarranted interference on their part with (the) Sheikh may render it necessary for H.M.G. to reconsider (the) present attitude and adopt such measures as may be necessary to support him.⁸⁶⁸

Here it was the Foreign Secretary the Earl of Balfour engaging in diplomatic “constructive ambiguity”.⁸⁶⁹ For instance the use of the term ‘reacts’ in reality signified another serious breach in relations, whilst ‘measures’ insinuated a Royal Navy presence should it become necessary.⁸⁷⁰ In the end it was the Sheikh’s domestic allies who halted this first advance, ambushing and repelling government troops in Luristan in late July.⁸⁷¹ It was becoming increasingly clear, however, that Britain must either submit to

⁸⁶¹ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 18-26. See also Homa Katouzian, ‘The Campaign against the Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 25 (1998), pp. 5-46.

⁸⁶² Kittner, *Issues*, p. 26.

⁸⁶³ FO1011/49, Foreign Office, Curzon to Loraine, 30 May 1922 & Waterfield, *Professional Diplomat*, p. 63.

⁸⁶⁴ Gavin Hambly, ‘The Pahlavi Autocracy: Riza Shah, 1921-1941’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 213-243, (p. 221-223), & Sabahi, *British*, p. 161-162.

⁸⁶⁵ Ghani, *Iran*, p. 335.

⁸⁶⁶ Sabahi, *British*, p. 169 & Ghani, *Iran*, p. 241.

⁸⁶⁷ FO416/71, Tehran, No. 22, Loraine to Foreign Secretary, the Earl of Balfour, 19 July 1922 (p. 32), FO416/71, Tehran, No. 23, Loraine to Balfour, 20 July 1922 (p. 33), FO416/71, Tehran, No. 24, Loraine to Balfour, 22 July, 1922 (p. 33). See also Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 352.

⁸⁶⁸ FO416/71, Foreign Office, No. 39, Balfour to Loraine, 27 July 1922 (p. 58), & FO371/7807, F.O. to Loraine, 27 July 1922, in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 355.

⁸⁶⁹ Jönsson & Hall, *Essence*, p. 72.

⁸⁷⁰ FO371/7807, Minute F.O., 24 July 1922, on Loraine to F.O., 22 July 1922 in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 356.

⁸⁷¹ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 31-33), FO416/71, Foreign Office, No. 44, Curzon to Loraine, 9 Aug. 1922 (p. 59). See also Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 357.

Reza Khan's centralising policy or actually act on its commitments to the Sheikh. Meanwhile, another test came in the summer and autumn of 1923, when Reza Khan sent troops into Arabistan for a second time.⁸⁷² Curzon had already reiterated his opinion that the Persian Prime Minister should be informed that his expansion would "meet with the disapproval of His Majesty's Government".⁸⁷³ Meanwhile George Churchill, head of the Persian Desk of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, thought support for Khaz'al should if necessary "lead to the despatch of a gunboat to Mohammerah".⁸⁷⁴

In reality Loraine was able to coax Reza Khan and the Sheikh to the negotiating table, patching up an agreement on tax and the ensuring the presence of only a limited contingent of Persian troops in the eastern most part of the province.⁸⁷⁵ According to Houshang Sabahi his negotiations for this agreement, however, had been "strengthened" by "visits" from two Royal Navy ships to Mohammerah.⁸⁷⁶ The sloops H.M.S. *Cyclamen* and H.M.S. *Crocus* arrived in September and October respectively.⁸⁷⁷ The use of the Royal Navy in this context was part of Britain's assumed impression of Great Power Paternalism, with a firm nod toward honouring commitments to the Sheikh. Indeed, it was arguably very subtle gunboat diplomacy, something the British were accustomed to employing in the Persian Gulf.⁸⁷⁸ James Cable defines gunboat diplomacy as "the use or threat of limited naval force, other than as an act of war, in order to secure advantage or to avert loss...in furtherance of an international dispute".⁸⁷⁹ Furthermore P.K. Ghosh notes that it is a form of "coercive diplomacy intended to secure specific advantage from another state".⁸⁸⁰ In a connected context the use of the Royal Navy conformed with Robert Art's logical assertion that military power can be used for the purposes of "deterrence", to "prevent an adversary from doing something" undesirable.⁸⁸¹ Meanwhile Cohen notes the use of such "sabre-rattling" as a means of visually buttressing the sort of "declaratory diplomacy" that the Foreign Office requested of Loraine.⁸⁸²

⁸⁷² Troops were actually despatched in September, with preparations throughout the summer (FO416/73, Tehran, No. 88, Loraine to Curzon 17 Sept. 1923 (p. 103). See also FO416/72, Tehran, No. 133, Loraine to Curzon, 25 May 1923 (p. 167), FO416/72, Foreign Office, No. 134, Curzon to Loraine, 29 May 1923 (p. 167), & Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 372 & p. 386.

⁸⁷³ FO371/9043, Curzon to Loraine, 29 May 1923 in Sabahi, *British*, p. 173.

⁸⁷⁴ FO371/9024, Min. by Churchill, 9 May 1923 in Curzon to Loraine, 10 May 1923, in Sabahi, *British*, p. 173-174.

⁸⁷⁵ FO416/73, Tehran, No. 175, Loraine to Curzon, 16 Oct. 1923 (p. 214), FO416/73, Tehran, No. 134, Loraine to Curzon, 23 Oct. 1923 (p. 160), FO416/73, Foreign Office, No. 170, Curzon to Loraine, 30 Nov. 1923, (p. 209), FO416/73, Tehran, No. 167, Loraine to Curzon, 27 Nov. 1923 (p. 208) & FO416/112, A.R.P. - 1923, (p. 28-30). See also Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 386-389.

⁸⁷⁶ Sabahi, *British*, p. 175 & Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 390.

⁸⁷⁷ 'Royal Navy Log Books of the World War I Era - HMS Cyclamen', <http://www.naval-history.net/OWShips-WW1-18-HMS_Cyclamen.htm> & 'Royal Navy Log Books of the World War I Era - HMS Crocus', <http://www.naval-history.net/OWShips-WW1-18-HMS_Crocus2.htm> [accessed: 5.11.16].

⁸⁷⁸ Samuel Pyeatt Menefee, 'Gunboat Diplomacy in the Persian Gulf? An Alternative Evaluation of a Contemporary Naval Conflict', *Virginian Journal of International Law*, 31 (1990), pp. 567-592, (p. 570-582).

⁸⁷⁹ James Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy: Political Applications of Limited Naval Force*, (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 14.

⁸⁸⁰ P.K. Ghosh, 'Revisiting gunboat diplomacy: An instrument of threat or use of limited naval force', *Strategic Analysis*, XXIV, pp. 2006-2017, (p. 2006).

⁸⁸¹ Art, 'Military Power', p. 6-7.

⁸⁸² Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 110.

The ensuing period of calm did not endure, however, with more Persian troops re-entering the province in November of 1924.⁸⁸³ The decisive demise of the Sheikh with apparent British indifference, now risked delivering a “very serious blow” to British prestige among Arab elites in Iraq and the Trucial States.⁸⁸⁴ Consequently Loraine again attempted mediation, telegraphing the Persian Prime Minister from Baghdad urging him to halt the advance and hold a meeting with the Sheikh and himself, but to no avail.⁸⁸⁵ Loraine, disappointed that Reza Khan had “broken every pledge” with respect to resolving the Khaz’al Crisis honourably,⁸⁸⁶ thus moved instead to impress Great Power Paternalism by again requesting the return of H.M.S. *Crocus* on the 25th of November. He also asked the new Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain, to “order at least one more warship to stand by” off the Arabistan coast, a request which the Admiralty acquiesced to by sending the *Crocus* and another two sloops, the *Cyclamen* and H.M.S. *Lupin*.⁸⁸⁷

Loraine also wanted a battalion of troops made ready in Basra with a further two brigades put on standby in India.⁸⁸⁸ The military authorities in Basra requested the battalion, whilst immediately alerting a fighter-bomber squadron and two rifle companies already based at the Iraqi port.⁸⁸⁹ In the event of a civil war such units would secure Britain’s oil installations, however, according to Strunk they had a “secondary object” in deterring further military incursion into the Sheikh’s territory.⁸⁹⁰ In view of Reza Khan’s apparent refusal to pursue a peaceable solution Loraine wanted this subtle sabre rattling reinforced by informing the Persian government that the British reserved “the right to take their own measures” in response to conflict in Arabistan.⁸⁹¹ Once again that term ‘measures’ was ominously suggestive. The Foreign Office agreed, suggesting that the presence of the Royal Navy would “probably do much to impress Reza Khan” in conjunction with Loraine’s mention of ‘measures’.⁸⁹²

The British Minister, as noted at the very beginning of the chapter, had managed to persuade Reza Khan to attend a conciliatory meeting on the 6th of December. According to Sabahi this was in part due to concern that the British might actually provide military and especially political support to the Sheikh who was forming a coalition of domestic rivals to Reza Khan including the Shah, who feared his premier’s increasing power.⁸⁹³ At the meeting Loraine’s use of personal front, backed up the presence of the Royal

⁸⁸³ Preparations began in October (FO416/75, Tehran, No. 140, Esmond Ovey to Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, 16 Oct. 1924, p. 149). See also FO416/75, Tehran, No. 168, Ovey to MacDonald, 5 Nov. 1924, (p. 169) & Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 416.

⁸⁸⁴ FO371/10136, Minute Victor Mallet on Consul Peel to F.O., 1 Oct. 1924, in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 428, see also Kittner, *Issues*, p. 80.

⁸⁸⁵ FO416/75, Baghdad, No. 199, Loraine to Persian Prime Minister in Loraine to Secretary of State for the Colonies John Henry Thomas, 18 Nov. 1924, (p. 193) & Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 437-440.

⁸⁸⁶ FO416/75, Baghdad, No. 213, Loraine to Chamberlain, 24 Nov. 1924, (p. 199).

⁸⁸⁷ FO416/75, Baghdad, No. 215, Loraine to Chamberlain, 25 Nov. 1924, (p. 199) & FO371/10137, Commander in Chief East Indies to Admiralty, 25 Nov. 1925 in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 443. See also Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 91.

⁸⁸⁸ FO416/75, Baghdad, No. 214, Loraine to Chamberlain, 24 Nov. 1924, (p. 199) & Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 443.

⁸⁸⁹ Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 443.

⁸⁹⁰ Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 444.

⁸⁹¹ FO416/75, Baghdad, No. 213, Loraine to Chamberlain, 25 Nov. 1924, (p. 199).

⁸⁹² FO371/10137, Minute by Mallet, 26 Nov. 1924 in Sabahi, *British*, p. 187.

⁸⁹³ Sabahi, *British*, p. 187.

Navy had ostensibly contributed to a successful outcome to the crisis.⁸⁹⁴ Indeed, after also meeting the Sheikh and swearing friendship on the Qur'an, "Reza assured Loraine that he did not want to quarrel with Britain, that Persian troops would not advance beyond an agreed" point in Arabistan, and that partial occupation would last only until the spring. Furthermore, except for a demand for recognition of central government control, the Sheikh was to be pardoned and left in place with all privileges.⁸⁹⁵ The results of the interview Loraine remarked, were "rather better than anticipated".⁸⁹⁶ Furthermore, the Minister thought that speaking to Reza Khan in a "personal manner with such frankness", "evidently made an impression" on the Persian premier.⁸⁹⁷ This view was echoed by his colleagues and superiors including Chamberlain who was warmly appreciative of Loraine's "firmness and patience" throughout the crisis.⁸⁹⁸

DISINTERESTED IMPARTIALITY

Lady Loraine called the affair a "good coup for a honeymoon",⁸⁹⁹ which had taken various strategies including "coaxing, threatening and to a certain extent, bluffing".⁹⁰⁰ The bluffing is important here since in reality the British government had very little intention of intervening militarily in southern Persia though it had been considered. Indeed, aside from the rather "alarming" request for troops in late 1924,⁹⁰¹ Loraine was often conducting a hollow performance of Great Power Paternalism, paying "lip service" to the Sheikh.⁹⁰² This was due to the slow realisation that the Persian government should be allowed to extend its authority over the province. This was, moreover, part of a broader British policy of non-interference or non-intervention in Persian internal affairs, adopted with increasing intensity from 1922 up until the deposition of Reza Shah in 1941. According to Kittner it was largely Loraine who initiated this policy of "benevolent inaction" which necessarily meant an end to Britain's consular "local imperialism".⁹⁰³ This broad policy meanwhile was closely complemented by another fostered impression – that of Disinterested Impartiality, which sought to allay suspicions of sinister British political machinations in Persia. As with Great Power Paternalism the adoption of this impression complemented foreign policy objectives in Persia. One such objective was the need to improve relations with the Persian government which had been deteriorating since the early 20th century due to longstanding

⁸⁹⁴ The British Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain had after persistent requests, refused to move a battalion of troops to Basra, leaving only the option of naval display (FO416/75, Foreign Office, No. 270, Chamberlain to Loraine, 2 Dec. 1924, (p. 231).

⁸⁹⁵ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 96-99 & FO416/75, Mohammerah, No. 286, Peel to Chamberlain, 7 Dec. 1924, (p. 23) & FO416/75, Mohammerah, No. 284, Loraine to Chamberlain, 6 Dec. 1924, (p. 235).

⁸⁹⁶ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 94.

⁸⁹⁷ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 12 Loraine to Chamberlain, 22 Dec. 1924, (p. 18-25).

⁸⁹⁸ FO416/76, Foreign Office, No. 29, Chamberlain to Loraine, 17 Feb. 1925, (p. 46) & FO416/76, Foreign Office, No. 9, Chamberlain to Loraine, 10 Jan. 1925, (p. 17-18). See also FO1011/128, D'Arcy Osborne to Loraine, 29 Dec. 1924, in which Osborne said that he thought it wasn't "humanly possible" to have done anything more to "extricate us from an immediately and painfully embarrassing situation".

⁸⁹⁹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 97.

⁹⁰⁰ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 97. Homa Katouzian also alludes to Loraine's bluffing in his *State and Society in Iran: The Eclipse of the Qajars and the Rise of the Pahlavis*, (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), p. 293.

⁹⁰¹ FO1011/28, Osborne to Percy, 29 Dec. 1924.

⁹⁰² FO371/10137, Loraine to F.O., 25 Nov. 1924 in Kittner, *Issues*, p. 84.

⁹⁰³ Kittner took the concept on American journalist Vincent Sheean, who wrote a book on post-war Persia in 1927 (Vincent Sheean, *The New Persia*, (New York, 1927), p. 260, & p. 300-301.

accusations of British interference in internal affairs stretching back to the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.⁹⁰⁴ Connectedly the impression of Disinterested Impartiality along with the policies of non-intervention and improving Anglo-Persian relations were ultimately aimed at securing Britain's aforementioned commercial and strategic interests in the southwest. Over the course of Loraine's tenure it became increasingly clear to the British Minister and later to his superiors that it no longer mattered if these interests were secured by a local protégé or by a strong yet cooperative central government.

The impression of Disinterested Impartiality and the policy of non-intervention were evident in the Khaz'al Crisis from 1922 to 1924 when back stage in various dispatches, telegrams and meetings, British officials considered and then abandoned any prospect of using actual force in support of the Sheikh. This was followed up by a front stage adoption of Disinterested Impartiality for the benefit of a Persian government audience. As we shall have cause to see below, such a development was incremental and encountered resistance, most notably from Britain's consuls in the southwest who favoured the continuation of status quo in southwestern Persia.⁹⁰⁵ Thus, in the early stages of the crisis in 1922 Loraine had argued in favour of maintaining a "doctrine of non-interference in domestic affairs in Persia", which meant that Britain's "friends" including the Sheikh would receive less support than previous.⁹⁰⁶ He also urged Khaz'al to cough up his unpaid taxes.⁹⁰⁷ Later in the year Loraine went further, asserting that Tehran should be the "ultimate criterion of our relationship with Persia" as opposed to protégés in the south. Connectedly he felt that fulfilling Britain's commitments to the Sheikh "might well precipitate actual hostilities with the Persian government, which must be "avoided by any means". For this reason he objected to a request made by the Sheikh for the supply of British arms whilst also emphasising the need to "steadily discourage" any defiant attitude toward the central government. This all took place at a time when Loraine was concurrently beginning to view Reza Khan and his "bold and adventurous plan" for centralisation, with increasing optimism.⁹⁰⁸

In stark contrast the British Consul-General in Bushehr, Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor, thought Britain should assertively contest any Persian troop movement into Arabistan on account of their assurances to the Sheikh whose request for British arms should have been honoured.⁹⁰⁹ The India Office and the Foreign Office erred on the side of Loraine, however, Curzon thought Britain should also "encourage" the Sheikh's resistance privately with tacit arms supply.⁹¹⁰ He also advocated continued reliance on Great Power Paternalism backed up by parading the Royal Navy in the Persian Gulf – to pursue their objectives in Arabistan.⁹¹¹ Such a strategy was in keeping with Curzon's political philosophy, which held

⁹⁰⁴ Greaves, 'Relations', p. 425, see also FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 11-16).

⁹⁰⁵ Sabahi, *British*, p. 174.

⁹⁰⁶ FO371/7807, Loraine to Lt. Colonel Trevor, 21 April 1922 in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 346-347.

⁹⁰⁷ FO416/70, Tehran, No. 214, Loraine to Curzon, 25 April 1922, (p. 185).

⁹⁰⁸ FO416/71, Loraine to Curzon, 4 Sept. 1922, & FO371/7807, Loraine to Curzon, 4 Sept. 1922, in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 363.

⁹⁰⁹ FO371/7805, Trevor to Loraine, 18 April 1922 in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 346 & p. 349.

⁹¹⁰ FO371/7808, F.O. to Loraine, 23 Aug. 1922, in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 360.

⁹¹¹ FO371/7807, F.O. Minute on Loraine to F.O., 22 July 1922 in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 356.

that one should always be “prepared to contemplate the employment of force in the last resort”.⁹¹² This continued support for the Sheikh was also partly due to uncertainty over whether or not Reza Khan would be a serious long-term player in Persian politics.⁹¹³ Consequently in performances to the Persian audience in the burgeoning Khaz'al Crisis, Loraine and the wider performance team limited the use of Disinterested Impartiality. In 1923 Loraine reiterated his view to superiors, stating that it was British policy to “respect absolutely the independence and integrity of Persia”, whilst concurrently supporting the “establishment of order and stability” under a strong central government. Loraine was also increasingly identifying Reza Khan as the chief architect of this programme, which was at odds with Britain's undisclosed commitments to the Sheikh of Mohammerah.⁹¹⁴ Indeed, he was encouraging Curzon to view Reza Khan's “centralising process with a benevolent eye” since it might well increase the safety of the oilfields and “make Persia an altogether more comfortable neighbour”.⁹¹⁵ He was more candid in private correspondence stating that he thought Reza Khan was the “best of the lot”,⁹¹⁶ who was “setting about his job as Prime Minister with enormous energy, considerable discernment, and even some wit”.⁹¹⁷

Meanwhile the Persian Gulf School including Trevor and the General Manager of A.P.O.C. Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson,⁹¹⁸ joined forces with Cox, then High Commissioner of Iraq, urging continued support for the Sheikh.⁹¹⁹ As previously noted, Churchill at the Persian Desk was also keen on the continued use of Great Power Paternalism along with Curzon, who also complained that Loraine saw “nothing but Reza Khan”, a politician who was seeking to undermine British interests in the south.⁹²⁰ Following his chief's instructions Loraine consequently continued to impress Great Power Paternalism toward Reza Khan, however, in a series of meetings in May and June of 1923 he also began to foster Disinterested Impartiality. Loraine undertook to do this by remarking to Reza Khan that “the British Government did not deny the right of the Persian government to send troops to any point in Persia”, and that although Britain had a “special relationship” with the Sheikh, his alliance entailed fulfilment of his “obligation to the Persian Government”. Furthermore Loraine stated that “there was no objection to be found in principle to the policy” of centralisation, only that there was concern regarding a “collision with important British interests” in the policy's pursuance.⁹²¹ According to Cyrus Ghani both parties left these meetings with an understanding that Britain would accept the Persian premier's extension of central

⁹¹² Rt. Hon. Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon, Vol. II*, (London: E Benn Ltd., 1928), p. 206.

⁹¹³ Aside from scepticism on the part of Curzon and Foreign Office officials, Loraine was also unsure of Reza Khan's future (FO416/70, Tehran, No. 180, Loraine to Curzon, 31 Jan. 1922, (p. 167-169), & Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 366).

⁹¹⁴ FO371/9043, Loraine to Curzon, 1 May 1923 in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 371-372 See also Kittner, *Issues*, p. 68-69.

⁹¹⁵ FO416/72, Tehran, No. 171, Loraine to Curzon, 21 May 1923, (p. 220).

⁹¹⁶ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to Sir William Tyrrell, 10 Dec. 1923.

⁹¹⁷ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to G. P. Churchill, 24 Nov. 1923.

⁹¹⁸ Who was also a former consul in southern Persia (J. Marlowe, *Late Victorian, The Life of Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson* (London: Cresset P., 1967), p. 40-71 & p. 261-267).

⁹¹⁹ FO1011/126, Mohammerah, Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson to Loraine, 19 May 1923, & FO371/9033, Cox to Duke of Devonshire, 9 April 1923 in Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 370-371. See also Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 78.

⁹²⁰ FO371/9024, Minute by Curzon, 5 June 1923 in Sabahi, *British*, p. 173.

⁹²¹ FO416/73, Tehran, No. 3, Loraine to Curzon, 28 May 1923, (p. 2-5).

government control over all of Persia bar Arabistan. It was also clear, however, that Reza Khan was committed to slowly extending authority over that province eventually.⁹²² It can be noted here that in all interactions with Reza Khan, even those in which Great Power Paternalism was emphasised, Loraine maintained his English gentlemanly manner. He also often assumed the two contradictory impressions of Disinterested Impartiality and Great Power Paternalism in the same performances, reflecting his wife's assertion about 'coaxing' and 'threatening' as simultaneous strategies used to pursue a successful conclusion to the Khaz'al Crisis. In turn, Reza Khan often made sure to stress that neither Britain's interests nor the Sheikh's privileges would be compromised by the extension of his authority over Arabistan.⁹²³

Only a year later, however, it was apparent to Loraine that Reza Khan had instead "chosen to resort to force" in an attempt to bring about a more complete submission of the Sheikh.⁹²⁴ At this stage Loraine and other members of Britain's performance team were still at odds over the use of Great Power and Paternalism and Disinterested Impartiality, before coming out firmly in favour of the latter by late November and early December of 1923. The first manifestation of this move toward the latter came with the fall of Stanley Baldwin's Conservative government in 1923, and its replacement by the country's first ever Labour administration under Ramsay MacDonald.⁹²⁵ With this development Curzon, one of key supporters of the southern strategy and a major barrier to abandoning Britain's commitments in the south, had disappeared. Much of the Labour movement put stress on anti-imperialism,⁹²⁶ and Strunk argues that MacDonald, who served as both Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, had also long criticised Britain's policy in Persia with respect to "local imperialism". Consequently he pursued a policy of "biased neutrality" in favour of the central government. Victor Mallet,⁹²⁷ Loraine and his chargé d'affaires Esmond Ovey who took over when Loraine went on leave, all concurred with the Labour leader regarding this new policy.⁹²⁸

Following Loraine's departure on leave in March, it was in August of 1924 that the Khaz'al Crisis began to flare up for a third time. Ostensibly responding to Persian government provocations, the Sheikh moved to contest Reza Khan's dominance. The Prime Minister's reputation had suffered at this juncture due to a botched attempt to dissolve the monarchy in favour of a republic, and the Sheikh sought to

⁹²² FO416/73, Report on the Interview between His Highness Mustafi-ul-Mamalek, his Excellency Serdar Sepah and His Majesty's Minister on May 31, 1923 in No. 26, Loraine to Curzon, 20 June 1923, (p. 24-29) & FO371/9024, Loraine to Curzon, 20 June 1923, in Ghani, *Iran*, p. 272.

⁹²³ FO416/73, Report...Interview between... Serdar Sepah... in Loraine to Curzon, 20 June 1923. See also Ghani, *Iran*, p. 269-271.

⁹²⁴ FO416/75, Baghdad, No. 199, Loraine to Chamberlain, 24 Nov. 1924, (p. 199).

⁹²⁵ Mowat, *Between*, p. 168-191.

⁹²⁶ Henry R. Winkler, 'The Emergence of a Labour Foreign Policy in Great Britain, 1918-1929', *The Journal of Modern History*, 28 (1956), pp. 247-258, (p. 252).

⁹²⁷ The new head of the Persia Desk.

⁹²⁸ Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 394-395 & Sabahi, *British*, p. 181.

form a coalition to remove the premier with support from the Shah in Paris.⁹²⁹ Ovey, who objected to the Sheikh's bellicosity, was instructed to calm him down and work towards a rapprochement with the central government.⁹³⁰ Peel, the British Consul at Ahwaz, however, expressed tacit British support for the Sheikh's burgeoning rebellion.⁹³¹ The new Consul-General Lieutenant-Colonel Prideaux was also less inclined to urge restraint.⁹³² Ovey was apparently "appalled" at this behaviour since it was tantamount to inciting a rebellion against the central government.⁹³³ In Goffman's terminology such behaviour on the part of Peel and Prideaux – both adherents of the dwindling the Persian Gulf School – was an act of dramaturgical disloyalty in which the performance team's united impression was put into jeopardy.⁹³⁴ Ovey complained to MacDonald who censured both consular officials, asking them to "speak (with) one voice)" under Ovey's overall direction.⁹³⁵ MacDonald also took the decision to contact the Sheikh to "warn" him that he would "expect no sympathy" from Britain if he continued to agitate for conflict.⁹³⁶

Even this intervention proved ineffective and in the ensuing impasse Ovey struggled to prevent escalation, leading the Foreign Office to recall Loraine on account of the "great personal prestige in Persia" that he could bring to bear.⁹³⁷ As noted, Loraine employed Great Power Paternalism when Reza Khan remained committed to sending troops into Arabistan,⁹³⁸ however, such an impression was ultimately impossible to reinforce with actual force. MacDonald had all but ruled out such a course of action in October, stating that he could not "too strongly emphasise the reluctance with which His Majesty's Government would proceed to any military or naval intervention" in Persia.⁹³⁹ This attitude did not change when MacDonald's short-lived Labour government fell from office on the 7th of November, replaced by another Conservative administration under Stanley Baldwin.⁹⁴⁰ Indeed, despite Loraine's genuine concern that "biased neutrality" had failed and that Britain had lost control of the situation,⁹⁴¹ the new Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain reiterated his predecessor's views.⁹⁴² At this particular moment Britain was also embroiled in a crisis in Egypt, facing rebellious riots following the assassination

⁹²⁹ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1924 (p. 19-20). See also Ghani, *Iran*, p. 337, Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 403-410 & Sabahi, *British*, p. 176-179. The Shah had left for Paris in January of 1922 (FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 15). He returned to Persia in December of that year (FO416/71, Tehran, No. 206, Loraine to Curzon, 17 Dec. 1922, (p. 257). He then left Persia again in November of 1923 bound for Paris after becoming perturbed by the increasing power of his new Prime Minister Reza Khan.(FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1923 (p. 2).

⁹³⁰ FO416/75, Tehran, No. 36, Ovey to MacDonald, 14 Aug. 1924, (p. 43) & FO416/75, Foreign Office, No. 39, MacDonald to Ovey, 16 Aug. 1924, (p. 44).

⁹³¹ FO417/75, Peel to Ovey, 23 Sept. 1924 (p. 115-116), FO416/75, Ahwaz, No. 101, Peel to MacDonald, 27 Sept. 1924 (p. 120) & FO371/10135, Peel to F.O., 23, 25 & 27 Sept. 1924 in Ghani, *Iran*, p. 338. See also Sabahi, *British*, p. 179 & Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 409.

⁹³² Local A.P.O.C officials were in agreement (Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 409).

⁹³³ FO416/75, Tehran, No. 80, Ovey to MacDonald, 16 Sept. 1924, (p. 108).

⁹³⁴ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 212-214.

⁹³⁵ FO371/10123, MacDonald to Peel, 10 Oct. 1924, in Ghani, *Iran*, p. 338 & FO371/10135, MacDonald to Peel, 1 Oct. 1924, in Kittner, *Issues*, p. 80.

⁹³⁶ FO416/75, Foreign Office, No. 130, MacDonald to Peel, 11 Oct. 1924, (p. 142).

⁹³⁷ FO371/10136, Minutes by Mallet, 10 Oct & 5 Nov, 1924 in Sabahi, *British* p. 184.

⁹³⁸ There were reportedly a thousand government troops in Dizful, in northern Arabistan, by the 2nd of December 1924 (FO416/75, Loraine to Chamberlain, 2 Dec. 1924).

⁹³⁹ FO416/75, Foreign Office, No. 124, MacDonald to Ovey, 9 Oct. 1924 (p. 138).

⁹⁴⁰ Mowat, *Between*, p. 194-195.

⁹⁴¹ FO416/75, Baghdad, No. 227, Loraine to Chamberlain, 25 Nov. 1924.

⁹⁴² FO416/75, Foreign Office, No. 216A, Chamberlain to Loraine, 25 Nov. 1924, (p. 200).

of the Governor of Sudan and Acting Commander of the Egyptian Army.⁹⁴³ Consequently Chamberlain restated his wish to “avoid complications in South Persia” on several occasions.⁹⁴⁴ A further problem arose in the shape of Bolshevik agitation with Soviet press organs reporting that Britain was backing the Sheikh to undermine “the national progressive forces of Persia”.⁹⁴⁵ Connectedly the Soviet Legation in Tehran was “ostentatiously supporting Reza Khan” during this stage of the crisis, posing as “his only friend”.⁹⁴⁶

Thus, despite Loraine’s disappointment over Reza Khan’s conduct, both he and the Foreign Office were now of the opinion that the nationalist and anti-Bolshevik Prime Minister presented a better option than the Sheikh. A military intervention on behalf of the latter would secure Britain’s influence in the south, but at the expense of a weakened central government open to Bolshevik machinations and likely without the strong leadership of Reza Khan whose reputation would have been ruined by failure in Arabistan.⁹⁴⁷ Connectedly, it had also come to light that the Persian Prime Minister might have broken promises to Loraine due to domestic rivals in the Majlis,⁹⁴⁸ who objected to his negotiating with Britain over the Sheikh’s position.⁹⁴⁹ Further adding to Loraine’s persistent support for Reza Khan, was his exasperation with the Sheikh. The British envoy wrote to Wilson who had been critical of Loraine’s strategy,⁹⁵⁰ defending his attitude during the latter phase of the crisis arguing that although he had “personal affection for the old man”:

...the fact of the matter is that the Sheikh has been relying on Cox’s assurances to get himself into every kind of mess, to follow or neglect as he pleases British advice, the acceptance of which was a condition of Cox’s assurances and when he gets tied up into knots he just comes and sits on my doorstep says I am absolutely innocent, I am as guiltless as I am ill-treated, every man’s hand is against but I am nothing but a paid servant of the British Government and please get me out of it without loss of dignity, property, prestige, authority, etc., etc. really we cannot go on like that. The Sheikh has been the greatest embarrassment and the greatest hindrance to the establishment of freer, franker, more cordial and more useful Anglo-Persian relations.⁹⁵¹

In view of such opinions, Britain’s performance team moved to adopt Disinterested Impartiality more assertively. First Loraine extracted the total submission of the Sheikh by way of a conciliatory telegram to Reza Khan, along with the disbandment of his forces.⁹⁵² He also persuaded the Sheikh, whose nerves

⁹⁴³ Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 447-448.

⁹⁴⁴ FO416/75, Foreign Office, No. 243, Chamberlain to Loraine, 28 Nov. 1924, (p. 221). See also FO371/10138, F.O. to Loraine, 4 Dec. 1924 in Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 94. Furthermore on the 26th of November Chamberlain stated that it would be “gravely embarrassing” were Britain forced to intervene militarily in Arabistan (FO416/75, Foreign Office, No. 228, Chamberlain to Loraine, 26 Nov. 1924, (p. 215).

⁹⁴⁵ FO416/75, Tehran, No. 280, Monson to Loraine, 5 Dec. 1924 (p. 234) & FO371/10136, Hodgson to MacDonald, 25 Sept. 1924, in Sabahi, *British*, p. 183.

⁹⁴⁶ FO416/75, Tehran, No. 183, Ovey to MacDonald, 23 Oct. 1924 (p. 184-186).

⁹⁴⁷ Sabahi, *British*, p. 190.

⁹⁴⁸ Persia’s parliament.

⁹⁴⁹ FO416/75, Tehran, No. 201, Monson to High Commissioner Baghdad, 17 Nov. 1924 (p. 194) Sabahi, *British*, p. 185.

⁹⁵⁰ Wilson had criticised Loraine for being a “Vicar of Bray”, by orchestrating Britain’s change of attitude to the Sheikh in order to curry favour with Reza Khan (FO1011/30, Mohammerah, Wilson to Loraine, 25 July 1925).

⁹⁵¹ FO1011/131, Gulhrk, Loraine to Wilson, 25 Sept. 1925.

⁹⁵² FO416/75, Baghdad, No. 247, Loraine to Chamberlain, 28 Nov. 1924, (p. 223), FO416/75, Tehran, No. 261, Monson to Loraine, 1 Dec. 1924 & FO416/75, Tehran, No. 280, Monson to Loraine, 5 Dec. 1924.

had “entirely collapsed” by this point, to meet with Reza Khan in Ahwaz.⁹⁵³ Such a move mollified the Persian premier who insisted on meeting in Arabistan to avoid the appearance of weakness. Loraine, who arrived in Mohammerah on the evening of the 5th of December 1924 before making his way to Ahwaz the following day,⁹⁵⁴ also agreed to meet Reza Khan in secret since the Persian Prime Minister “did not want news” of the “meeting to get about”.⁹⁵⁵

Prior to this, there had been an attempt to organise a similar meeting at Bushehr in mid-November. Reuters, however, leaked the news, forcing Reza Khan to publically harden his attitude in the face of criticism.⁹⁵⁶ The secrecy of the subsequent meeting was done to “help” Reza Khan “as far as possible to save his face, and to rescue him from his own extremists in Tehran” who objected to negotiations.⁹⁵⁷ Furthermore on the same day that he arrived in Mohammerah, Loraine ordered the Senior Naval Officer in the Persian Gulf to withdraw the *Crocus*, *Lupin* and *Cyclamen* to Basra, to “avoid any appearance of a naval demonstration at Abadan”.⁹⁵⁸ To Cohen, this act would also have constituted “nonverbal communication at the international level”, that is to say “the deliberate transfer of information by nonverbal means from state to another”.⁹⁵⁹ The information in this instance was an expression of Britain’s reluctance to intervene militarily. This form of nonverbal communication was to be used on several occasions during Loraine’s time in Tehran. Incidentally Christer Jönsson and Karin Aggestam also allude to a similar concept, noting that diplomacy features “nonverbal body language” encompassing everything from personal gestures to the conscious use of military deployments. For instance, they argued that “naval forces” are “capable of conspicuous presence and withdrawal” which “offer readily perceived and understood signalling opportunities”.⁹⁶⁰ This, it can be argued, took place in the case of the *Crocus* et al.

Loraine then backed up these signalling actions with verbal utterances in his meeting with Reza Khan on the 6th of December, noting Britain’s “extreme reluctance to intervene in Persian domestic affairs”. Furthermore he asserted that His Majesty’s Government had “always regarded the Sheikh as a Persian subject, and such assurances as they had given him in the past” were only binding “on the proper observance of his obligations towards the Persian Government”.⁹⁶¹ In Strunk’s view this disarming language contributed to the “surprisingly generous” terms offered to the Sheikh by Reza Khan.⁹⁶² Furthermore with this series of actions and utterances, Britain ostensibly blended the two impressions with sufficient success, coaxing threatening and bluffing Reza Khan into a negotiated settlement.

⁹⁵³ 416/75, Mohammerah, No. 279, Loraine to Chamberlain, 5 Dec. 1924, (p. 233-234).

⁹⁵⁴ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 93-94.

⁹⁵⁵ FO416/75, Mohammerah, No. 282, Acting Vice-Consul Lincoln to Chamberlain, 6 Dec. 1924, (p. 235)

⁹⁵⁶ FO416/75, Baghdad, No. 225, Loraine to Chamberlain, 25 Nov. 1924, (p. 213-214), & FO416/75, Bushehr, No. 234, Consul-General Lt. Colonel Prideaux to Chamberlain, 27 Nov. 1925, (p. 218).

⁹⁵⁷ FO416/75, Foreign Office, No. 243, Chamberlain to Loraine, 28 Nov. 1924, (p. 221).

⁹⁵⁸ FO416/75, Mohammerah, No. 278, Loraine to Chamberlain, 5 Dec. 1924, (p. 233).

⁹⁵⁹ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 19.

⁹⁶⁰ Jönsson and Aggestam, *Trends* p. 152.

⁹⁶¹ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 12, Loraine to Chamberlain, 22 Dec. 1924, (p. 18-25).

⁹⁶² Strunk, *Shaykh*, p. 455.

Loraine had also been instrumental in bringing about a “major policy reassessment”, with the subtle abandonment of the Sheikh, despite those assurances and his knighthood, in favour of accepting Persian government centralisation.⁹⁶³

OVERT CORDIALITY

It is evident that Britain assumed one further impression during the Khaz'al Crisis, that of Overt Cordiality, involving a more pronounced expression of support for Reza Khan than in the case of Disinterested Impartiality. Such a strategy aimed to woo the Persian premier, which ostensibly complemented Britain's aforementioned foreign policy objectives including improved relations, whilst reinforcing the notion that a major policy reassessment was underway. In a further interview with Reza Khan on the 7th of December, Loraine fostered this impression when he said he “welcomed” the result of the negotiations which were “in accordance with the desire of His Majesty's Government to see a united, stable and friendly Persia”. Loraine also “went further than that” stating that he:

...wished all the friends of England in South Persia to be friends of Tehran, to stand by and help their own Government; I wished the Persian Government, who had many anxieties, to feel that the south was safe, loyal, and peaceful... Relations with the Sheikh of Mohammerah were the test case, if this were solved...I firmly believed the wider results would shortly follow, with the greatest benefit to all concerned; for my part I was willing to contribute to that result.⁹⁶⁴

Furthermore he noted the need:

To bring the south into agreement with Tehran, to make Serdar Sepah [Commander-in-Chief, another title held by Reza Khan] himself realise that, so far from supporting a separatist policy...we are genuinely desirous of uniting the south with Tehran, and to carry out this policy into effect gradually, will make not only Persia's position, but also our own far stronger than hitherto.⁹⁶⁵

Loraine knew he had gone “somewhat beyond specific instructions” from Chamberlain with this personalised statement, as it amounted to “making Serdar Sepah and his Government a present of our friends in the south”. However, he felt such language was suitable and effective since Reza Khan was “evidently not expecting a statement of this sort” with such a frank expression of support for his centralising efforts with a concurrent willingness to sacrifice Britain's position in the south.⁹⁶⁶ Loraine had calculated that a more overtly cordial attitude would be beneficial to Britain's foreign policy in Persia.

⁹⁶³ Sabahi, *British*, p. 168.

⁹⁶⁴ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 12, Loraine to Chamberlain, 22 Dec. 1925, (p. 18-25).

⁹⁶⁵ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 12, Loraine to Chamberlain, 22 Dec. 1925, (p. 18-25).

⁹⁶⁶ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 12, Loraine to Chamberlain, 22 Dec. 1925, (p. 18-25).

BEYOND KHAZ'AL GREAT POWER PATERNALISM

Despite the cordiality and the impartiality hitherto mentioned, it is apparent that Loraine and Britain's performance team continued to utilise Great Power Paternalism throughout the years 1922 to 1926. Indeed all three impressions were fostered at different times in order to further British foreign policy objectives. As observed in the Khaz'al Crisis, however, the British government proved unwilling to use or display substantial military force. Previously Britain had not shown such restraint. For instance during the Constitutional Crisis the British government had heavily increased its consular guard details, with *sepoy* infantrymen, *sowar* cavalrymen and even maxim guns.⁹⁶⁷ These troops served a protective function but also assisted the consuls in their execution of 'local imperialism', by displaying the "might and majesty of the British Empire".⁹⁶⁸ This was especially so in the case of Bushehr, seat of the Consul-General and home to an escort of between two hundred and five hundred men.⁹⁶⁹

Meanwhile despite Persia's neutrality during the First World War, thousands of British and Indian troops of the I.E.F. were despatched to defend Abadan, Mohammerah and Ahwaz from any Ottoman attempt to seize the oilfields.⁹⁷⁰ There were also detachments at the Gulf Ports, in Fars, in Baluchistan, and Sistan, to protect British consulates and commercial interests and to counteract espionage efforts on the part of the Central Powers. Such troops were assisted by the Sistan Levy Corps, a British officered Persian force formed in 1915 to police the southern section of the Anglo-Russian 'East Persia Cordon' that insulated the region from enemy infiltration.⁹⁷¹ Subsequently in 1916, the British sponsored the formation of the South Persia Rifles (S.P.R.) another levy force employed to pacify Fars and Shiraz where German and Austrian agents had helped to fan the flames of a serious rebellion against the provincial government and the Anglo-Russian diplomatic establishment.⁹⁷² Following the Russian Revolution, Britain increased its military commitments in Persia yet again, first by plugging the gap left in the cordon by retreating Russian forces. Military expeditions were also sent to Bushehr and Shiraz in support of the S.P.R., and into northern Persia to secure the region from the Central Powers, the Bolsheviks and to control local rebel groups such as the Jangali movement of Gilan.⁹⁷³

The British government also used the presence of its armed forces in Persia along with its "purse", for the purposes of political persuasion.⁹⁷⁴ Regarding the monetary aspect of this strategy, the British government provided monthly repayable Treasury and I.B.P. loans to the Persian government for the upkeep of internal security apparatus including the gendarmerie and Persian Cossack Division. Using

⁹⁶⁷ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 229 & p. 253-255.

⁹⁶⁸ Sir Arthur Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), p. 283-284.

⁹⁶⁹ Wright, *English*, p. 41 & p. 171 & FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 60).

⁹⁷⁰ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 352-361 & Wright, *English*, p. 172.

⁹⁷¹ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 347-348 & Wright, *English*, p. 173.

⁹⁷² Wright, *English*, p. 174-176, Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 438, & p. 407-421.

⁹⁷³ Stebbins, *Consuls*, p. 434-459, Wright, *English*, p. 177-178 & Sabahi, *British*, p. 41.

⁹⁷⁴ Sabahi, *British*, p. 11.

such funds combined with a latent threat of force, British Ministers Sir Charles Marling (1915-1918) Sir Percy Cox (1918-1920) and Herman Norman (1920-1) dominated domestic politics in Persia during and shortly after the war. The British used this domination to browbeat the Shah and other Persian political elites into selecting anglophile or pro-Allied cabinets, whilst using bribery to bring about the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919.⁹⁷⁵ Such an exercise of power, heavily resented by Persian politicians and increasingly also the Persian public, could only last so long as the Treasury was willing to finance it, and if the War Office was prepared to keep British boots on the ground. Much to Curzon's dismay, neither ministry was inclined to take his view in the War Cabinet which moved instead to halt all funds and to gradually withdraw British forces. The loss of this ability to strong-arm subsequently contributed to the collapse of the Anglo-Persian Agreement.⁹⁷⁶ Ultimately the British government commitments in Persia in support of the proposed agreement were too burdensome at a time when the country was demobilising, economising, and prioritising only its most vital imperial interests after an exhausting and costly war.⁹⁷⁷ Consequently in his first Annual Report Loraine wrote that:

...by the beginning of 1922, all traces of British war organisations and all British agents engaged under the terms of the unratified convention (of 1919) had been removed and there only remained the usual diplomatic and consular representation of His Majesty's Government.⁹⁷⁸

The British government did briefly turn the financial screw after its military withdrawal, attempting to force the Persian government to honour A.P.O.C.'s purchase of the Khoshtaria Concession in northern Persia by halting I.B.P. loans and demanding immediate repayment of all other monthly sums provided during the war.⁹⁷⁹ Curzon had also wanted to withhold I.B.P. loans after Reza Khan's summary dismissal of British officers from the Cossack Division in the summer of 1921, as a means of forcing the new War Minister's resignation.⁹⁸⁰ Such a strategy proved short-lived, however, as it potentially compromised the bank's impartiality, which in any case often proved unwilling to undermine its business by becoming a tool of the British government.⁹⁸¹ The strategy also ran the risk of destabilising Persia in a period in which the British thought Soviet Russia was still inclined to make mischief.⁹⁸²

⁹⁷⁵ Sabahi, *British*, p. 11-33, Wright, *English*, p. 178-179, Ghani, *Iran*, p. 21-161.

⁹⁷⁶ FO1011/121, 'Persian Policy of His Majesty's Government', Speech by Earl Curzon of Kedleston in the House of Lords, 16 Nov. 1920 & FO371/6407, Minute by Curzon, Nov. 1921 in Sabahi, *British*, p. 5-8.

⁹⁷⁷ Sabahi, *British*, p. 33-61, & Wright, *English*, p. 179-180.

⁹⁷⁸ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 12).

⁹⁷⁹ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 254-268. For an assessment of the concession see FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 38-39).

⁹⁸⁰ Sabahi, *British*, p. 160 & FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 11).

⁹⁸¹ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 28-29), Sabahi, *British*, p. 27 & Kittner, *Issues*, p. 257.

⁹⁸² FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 29) & Sabahi, *British*, p. 160-164.

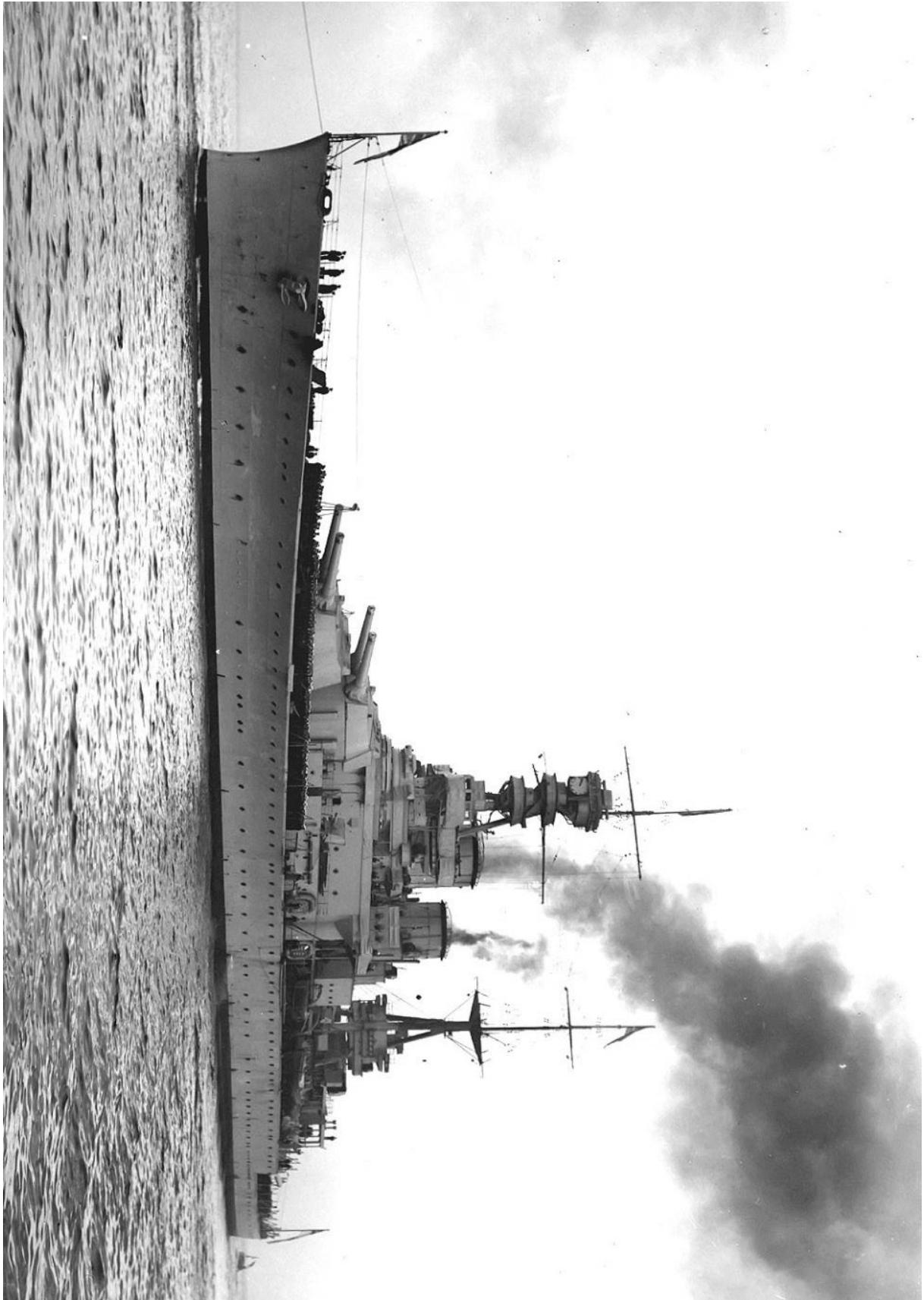


Fig. 32: The *H.M.S Renown* in Australia, 1920
(*Vintage Photographs of Battleships, Battlecruisers and Cruisers*).

Without recourse to force or financial leverage, Loraine consequently thought the basis of British post-war policy in Persia had largely been “cut away”, leaving little room for active intervention in Persian politics.⁹⁸³ Norman echoed this view, advising his successor that “without money or force you can do nothing constructive at Tehran”.⁹⁸⁴ Despite these impediments and despite the resentment often caused by heavy-handed diplomacy, Loraine still advocated the use of Great Power Paternalism, not least because Persians like Reza Khan supposedly understood the language of force when it was “made perfectly plain” to them with “visible effect”.⁹⁸⁵ The British Minister had to employ the impression more judiciously, however, maximising the use of the limited resources at his disposal. This included his aforementioned personal front, and also other elements of impersonal front or “sign-equipment” such as “furniture, decor, physical layout”, and “scenery and stage props”.⁹⁸⁶ In the context of Anglo-Iranian relations this meant Britain’s diplomatic footprint in the country including escorts, vehicles, and buildings. Indeed, Loraine utilised a piece of “mobile setting” in the fostered impression of Great Power Paternalism at the very beginning of his tenure when he made use of the battle-cruiser H.M.S. *Renown* which conveyed him from Bombay on the 26th of November, first to Bandar Abbas and thence to Bushehr.⁹⁸⁷ One can only imagine the awe and amazement felt by local Persians who had no modern navy to speak of; indeed it was only in 1924 that British officials felt the need to refer to any Iranian naval matters in their very thorough Annual Reports, noting the purchase of a German steamer renamed the *Peblevi*.⁹⁸⁸

By contrast the *Renown* (Fig. 32) was the lead vessel of her class, and the largest and fastest capital ship of the world’s most powerful navy. Capable of reaching “remarkable” speeds,⁹⁸⁹ she was the length of two football pitches, and half the width at 794 by 90ft, with six 15-inch hydraulically powered guns in three turrets, and another seventeen supporting 4-inch guns. She also had a squash court and a cinema, and had recently been redecorated to serve as the main escort ship for the Prince of Wales on his tour to the Dominions and to India and Japan in 1921 and 1922.⁹⁹⁰ With her colourful flapping signal flags strung from the bow to the stern of her newly painted grey and white hull, she would have cut a strange blend of festivity and ferocity. The *Renown* was also joined by the ever-present *Crocus* and another navy sloop the *R.I.M.S Lawrence*, forming a small armada slowly traversing the Persian Gulf coast, firing salutes for local dignitaries.⁹⁹¹

⁹⁸³ FO371/7805, Loraine to Curzon, 2 March 1922 & FO371/7807 & Loraine to Head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, Lancelot Oliphant, 6 July 1922 in Sabahi, *British*, p. 163.

⁹⁸⁴ FO1011/122, Herman Norman to Percy, 24 Nov. 1921.

⁹⁸⁵ FO371/10145, Loraine to MacDonald, 11 Feb. 1924 in Sabahi, *British*, p. 186 & FO416/74, Loraine to MacDonald, 11 Feb. 1924.

⁹⁸⁶ Goffman, Presentation, p. 22.

⁹⁸⁷ FO416/70, Tehran, No. 136, Loraine to Curzon, 24 Dec. 1922 (p. 102-103).

⁹⁸⁸ FO416/112 A.R.P. – 1924 (p. 60-1).

⁹⁸⁹ “The Prince starts for India: H.M.S. “Renown””, *Illustrated London News* (London, England), Saturday, October 29, 1921;

⁹⁹⁰ J.J. Colledge, *Ships of the Royal Navy: A Complete Record of all Fighting Ships of the Royal Navy from the 15th Century to the Present*, (Newbury: Casemate: 2010) p. 336 & Gardiner *Ships*, p. 38-39.

⁹⁹¹ FO416/70, Tehran, No. 136, Loraine to Curzon, 24 Dec. 1922, (p. 102-103).

Loraine remarked that “no ship approaching the “Renown” in size had ever been seen before in the Persian Gulf, and her visit aroused great interest and curiosity among the inhabitants of the littoral”.⁹⁹² Consequently the British Minister was keen to “popularise” the occasion and to amplify the effect of her “imposing dimensions”, thus he suggested inviting respectable Persians aboard.⁹⁹³ In private correspondence he was somewhat more candid stating that he “got as many people off the shore as possible to see the ship” including “some rather smelly Persian officials”, two of whom were violent democrats and “slithery brutes from Tehran” who might benefit from witnessing Britain’s military might.⁹⁹⁴ Loraine was grateful to have used this “ship of war” and its escorts to enter Persia with “dignity”, a sentiment echoed by Lancelot Oliphant, Loraine’s cousin and the Head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office which handled Persian affairs. He was “delighted to hear that the “*Renown* had proved so useful” to the new Minister.⁹⁹⁵ The warship had also allowed Loraine to enter Persia with a tinge of menace, perhaps not sabre rattling but certainly sauntering with the scabbard in plain sight.

Aside from the ships of the Royal Navy Loraine also made use of much smaller examples of mobile setting including two Vauxhall Kingston Tourers, one a “relic of the war”, and the other a newer “dashing yellow” model.⁹⁹⁶ When Loraine paid his personal visits to Persian politicians, a staple of his trade in the country,⁹⁹⁷ it was in one of these official cars with Dixon his uniformed chauffer (Fig. 32).⁹⁹⁸ Affixed to the bonnet there was also a little Union Flag pennant, a “generous” and “really quite beautiful” gift sent by Wilson from Bushehr.⁹⁹⁹ Conscious of his role as Britain’s symbolic representative in “state selfhood”, and a being a stickler for protocol, Loraine kept the present for himself as he did “not consider that anyone except the Head of the Mission is entitled to fly that flag on his car”.¹⁰⁰⁰ Loraine was thus utilising more “sign-equipment” to demonstrate Britain’s mechanised modernity with the British-made Vauxhall motorcar reinforced with the flag, that most potent of emotional symbols and representations of a nation.¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹² FO416/70, Tehran, No. 136, Loraine to Curzon, 24 Dec. 1922, (p. 102-103).

⁹⁹³ FO416/70, Tehran, No. 136, Loraine to Curzon, 24 Dec. 1922, (p. 102-103).

⁹⁹⁴ FO1011/9, H.M.S. Renown, Loraine to Oliphant, 28 Nov 1921.

⁹⁹⁵ FO1011/10, Foreign Office, Oliphant to Loraine, 10 April 1922, FO1011/124, Tehran, Loraine to R. G. Vansittart, 19 Feb. 1922, FO416/70, Tehran, No. 136, Loraine to Curzon, 24 Dec. 1922, (p. 102-103).

⁹⁹⁶ Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 22.

⁹⁹⁷ James Lees-Milne, *Harold Nicolson, A Biography, Vol. I - 1886-1929*, (London, Chato & Windus: 1980), p. 255.

⁹⁹⁸ FO1011/11, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 19 Feb. 1922.

⁹⁹⁹ FO1011/129, Tehran, Loraine to Wilson, 14 Feb. 1924.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 266.

¹⁰⁰¹ Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Richard Jenkins eds. *Flag, Nation and Symbolism in Europe and America*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) p. 1-14, p. 68-88.



Fig. 33: Loraine's Vauxhall, with pennant (FO1011/261).

Along with the Vauxhall, Loraine always took his escort, a varying number of Indian *sowar* cavalrymen seconded from different regiments who rotationally guarded Britain's Legation compound and various consulates. In using such escorts Loraine was perpetuating a custom of British diplomacy in Persia practiced since the early 19th century when Captain John Malcolm and Sir Gore Ouseley first courted Qajar Shahs with large and impressive escorts from Indian regiments.¹⁰⁰² As previously noted the British had also continued to indulge in this habit in southern Persia throughout the late 19th century and into Loraine's tenure, evidenced by the Minister's own photograph of Consul H. G. Chick at the Qur'an Gate at Shiraz. The consul cut a classic imperialist in his white sun helmet (Fig. 34). Jebb, the Legation's Third Secretary in 1924 stated in his memoirs that Loraine and his immediate staff, sometimes travelling in three cars, were "usually accompanied by at least some of these colourful protectors," taken from their base at the Legation compound which housed a "whole troop" with around forty horses.¹⁰⁰³

¹⁰⁰² Wright, *English*, p. 4 & p. 33.

¹⁰⁰³ Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 22.



Fig. 34: Consul Chick, a striking embodiment of British “local imperialism” (FO1011/261).

In 1922 Loraine was first escorted by the Guides Cavalry, followed by detachments of the Central India Horse and the 35th Scinde Horse (Fig. 35) who also joined some of the Legation’s Persian *gholams*, messengers in “white Kulas, scarlet tunics + white breeches” for added effect.¹⁰⁰⁴ Loraine was thus utilising stage-props which assisted Great Power Paternalism in the shape of subject-soldiers from Britain’s vast Asiatic holdings. According to Waterfield, Loraine was much akin to Curzon in that he saw the efficacy of using such escorts due to the fact that “Orientals were impressed by a display of pageantry”.¹⁰⁰⁵ In this sense he echoed the views professed by British official some fifty years prior in 1873. Furthermore, Loraine’s continual use of this compact cavalcade could be viewed in the context of processional political ritual. Loraine’s actions were certainly formal and repetitive, using costume and aforementioned props including the *sowars* and the Vauxhall, all of which could feature in Combs’ conception of processional political ritual.¹⁰⁰⁶ Furthermore Combs contends that “ritual is a language in which a group expresses its meaning through public dramatization”.¹⁰⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰⁴ FO1011/125 Loraine Diary Extract, Wed 22 March 1922, & Jebb p. 22.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Combs, *Dimensions*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Combs, *Dimensions*, p. 22.

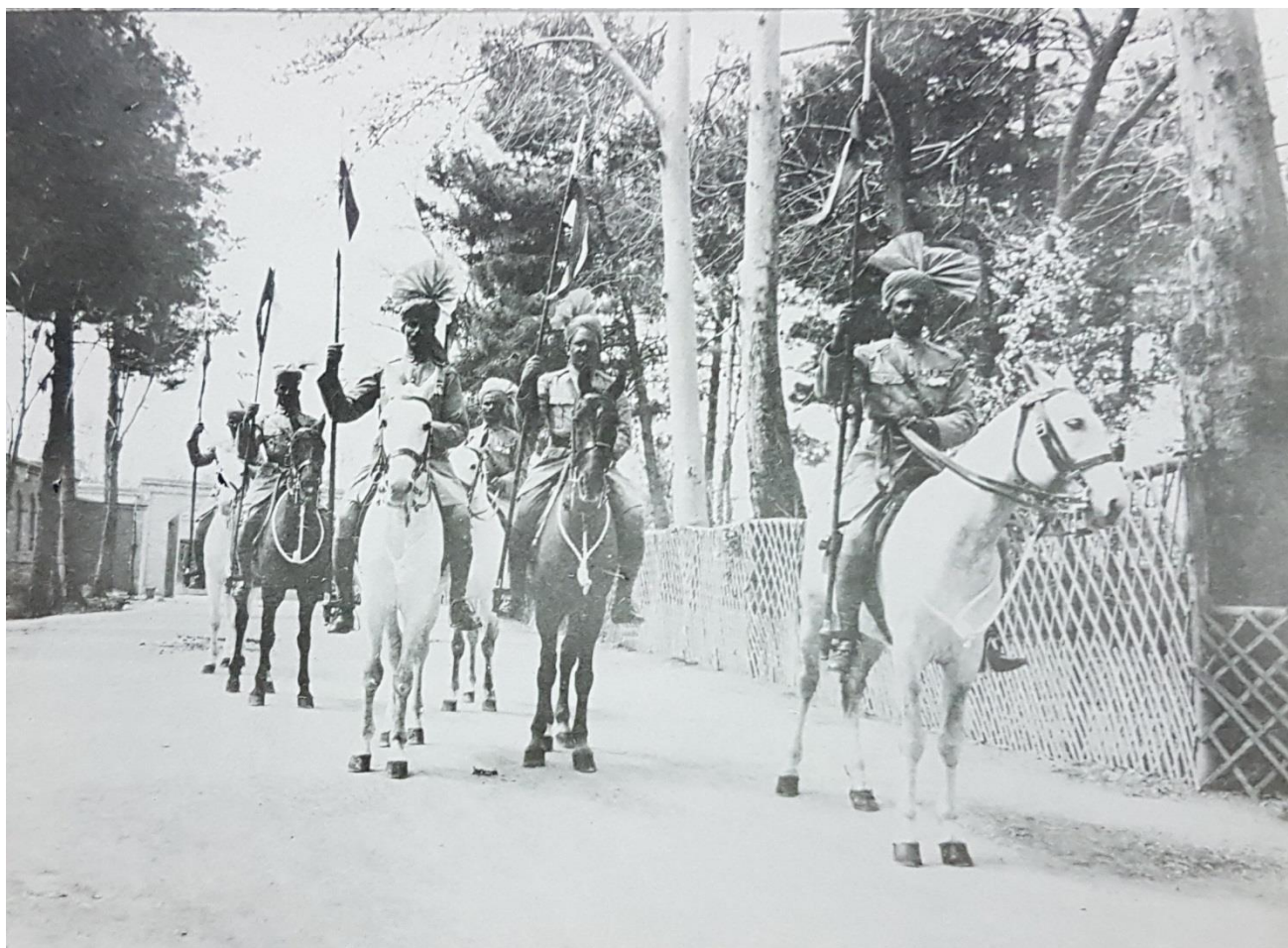


Fig. 35: Loraine's *sowar* escort drawn from the 35th Scinde Horse (FO1011/261).

Rituals can also “dramatize the differentiation, the separate identity of a political group from others” and can “add to the power...and dignity” of such groups.¹⁰⁰⁸ The meaning or purpose to the ritual here was to demonstrate and “reify” Britain’s dignified political and military power, in a ritual that accentuated separateness and superiority over a Persian audience, using an armed and mobile assembly moving through the streets of Tehran.¹⁰⁰⁹ In this context, the ritual differed from those celebrating unity and equality in 1873. The number of retainers also provided extra clout in this ritual display. When Nicolson arrived in 1924 his biographer Lees-Milne said the Counsellor thought the “Legation Staff was enormous. There were soldiers, archivists, interpreters and dragomen; military attachés, oriental secretaries, a doctor, typists and Indian *sowars*” (Fig. 36 & 37).¹⁰¹⁰ Such members of staff served in Goffman’s parlance as living stage-props and also “pieces of expressive equipment” providing Loraine with more “dramatic prominence” through which to reinforce Britain’s persistent and powerful diplomatic presence in Persia.¹⁰¹¹ Loraine himself thought he and his staff were “as good as four divisions” of British troops, in terms of maintaining the country’s presence and power.¹⁰¹²

¹⁰⁰⁸ Combs, *Dimensions*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Combs, *Dimensions*, p. 19.

¹⁰¹⁰ Harold to Vita, 28 Nov. 1925 in Nigel Nicolson ed., *Vita and Harold, The letters of Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson 1910-1962*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1992), p. 132 & Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 250.

¹⁰¹¹ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 220.

¹⁰¹² FO1011/11, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 16 Nov. 1923.



Fig. 36: The Legation staff including the *gholams* and *sonars* (FO1011/261).



Fig. 37: Another image of the senior Legation staff, all in dress uniform (FO1011/261).



Fig. 38: Interior pictures of the Mission House including the State Dining Room (Jim Gallagher, "The History British Embassy in Tehran"), <<http://www.gardencourtantiques.com/the-historic-british-embassy-in-tehran/>> [accessed: 13 Nov. 2916]





Fig. 39: The “absurd” clock-tower (FO1011/261).

Pertinently, Jebb thought it was necessary to have the *sowars* because “after all, we (Britain) were the top power, and it was considered right to show that we were more important than the Russians”.¹⁰¹⁵ This competitive relationship with Russia was still seemingly a persistent feature in the minds of British officials after the First World War. Manifest in this instance, was the connected preoccupation with impressing British supremacy vis-à-vis the Russians in the eyes of their Iranian audience. Such diplomatic rivalry was reciprocated by the Russian Legation which jibed the British for not having electric lighting in the British Legation buildings, leading to attempts by Loraine and Oliphant to rapidly rectify the situation through requests to the Office of Works,¹⁰¹⁴ the government body which oversaw the maintenance, extension, construction and demolition of Britain’s diplomatic buildings.¹⁰¹⁵ Aside from lighting, Loraine also petitioned to improve the cramped accommodation for his staff at the Legation, which proved difficult owing to the prevailing government trend for economising Britain’s commitments abroad.¹⁰¹⁶

Loraine was forced into further back stage tussles with the Office of Works over items including “table linen, services, porcelain and glass”, which his two predecessors had received for free, but which he had to purchase.¹⁰¹⁷ Such props were important for social functions at the Legation, a setting in itself, which oiled the wheels of diplomacy.¹⁰¹⁸ For instance Loraine would hold dinner parties and luncheons for Persian politicians.¹⁰¹⁹ The rooms in which these took place served as grand elements of setting buttressing Great Power Paternalism (Fig. 38). This was especially the case with the State Dining Room which had barely changed since 1876, when it was finally finished by British architect Caspar Clarke. Indeed, despite being forced to substitute some British material and manpower for Persian, the dining room was a fine example of neoclassical British decoration.¹⁰²⁰ The surrounding buildings and sixteen acre garden and walled compound in which the dining room was situated were yet more examples of setting that impressed Great Power Paternalism with “expressive intent”. Construction on the site began in 1870 after petitions for a new Ministerial residence from the then British Minister Charles Alison were accepted by the Foreign Office, the Treasury and the Office of Works. The whole project was completed by 1876, at considerable expense, coming in at £46,000, over two million pounds sterling today.¹⁰²¹

¹⁰¹⁵ Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 22.

¹⁰¹⁴ FO1011/18, Loraine to Oliphant, 20 June 1925 & FO1011/16 Oliphant to Loraine, 30 March 1926.

¹⁰¹⁵ Mark Bertram, *Room For Diplomacy, Britain's Diplomatic Buildings Overseas, 1800-2000*, (Bristol: Spire Books Ltd., 2010), p. 33.

¹⁰¹⁶ FO1011/10, Foreign Office, Oliphant to Loraine, 28 Feb. 1922, FO1011/11, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 18 May 1922, FO1011/16, Foreign Office, Oliphant to Loraine, 26 June 1925, Foreign Office, Oliphant to Loraine, 4 May 1925, Foreign Office, Oliphant to Loraine 30 April 1925, FO1011/17, Foreign Office, Oliphant to Loraine, 12 Nov. 1925, Foreign Office, Oliphant to Loraine, 21 Dec. 1925, FO1011/18, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 30 Sept. 1925, FO1011/20, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 17 Feb. 1926 & FO1011/19, Foreign Office, Oliphant to Loraine, 16 March 1926.

¹⁰¹⁷ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to C.H. Montgomery, 24 Nov. 1923.

¹⁰¹⁸ Candida Slater, *Good Manners and Bad Behaviour: The Unofficial Rules of Diplomacy*, (Leicester: Matador, 2008), p. 116.

¹⁰¹⁹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 105, p. 109, Ghani, *Iran*, p. 386.

¹⁰²⁰ Bertram, *Room*, p. 63.

¹⁰²¹ Bertram, *Room*, p. 63.



Fig. 40: The exterior of the Legation Residence, rendered in a beautifully colourful painting by a member of the Italian Legation (FO1011/261).

The construction had also taken much effort, after being beset by outbreaks of cholera, drought and delay as large quantities of materials had to be shipped from Britain. For instance the British imported a “flagstaff, iron gates, rainwater goods, ironmongery” and “a turret clock with four seven-foot dials and a four-hundredweight bell”.¹⁰²² To put the acreage into context the compound was the size of ten football pitches, containing a “magnificent garden with many water-tanks and huge *chenars*, or Oriental planes”, “weeping willows and oleanders”, fruit trees, violets, and Judas trees in flowerbeds with peacocks strutting about.¹⁰²³ The buildings, far grander and more robust than the rest of “tumble-down” Tehran,¹⁰²⁴ were a series of reddish, or “yellow brick Office of Works structures”, accommodation villas, the Chancery, a mews, stable blocks, and that “absurd detached clock-tower” (Fig. 39).¹⁰²⁵ Nicolson noted the “gloomy rounded-headed or Byzantine windows” of the buildings, like “Victorian rectories or the precincts of Wormwood Scrubs” prison.¹⁰²⁶ Finally there was the “largest and most imposing” building; the Legation residence in white slightly Oriental in appearance, topped with a rooftop pavilion, and containing a billiard and a drawing room (Fig. 40 & 41).¹⁰²⁷ The interior meanwhile was “palatial” with fine furniture, “plasterwork from South Kensington” and “carpets of divers colours”.¹⁰²⁸ Both Nicolson and Jebb thought the Legation, the “*Sifarat-i-Ingliz*”, and its surrounding compound were the “real centre” of Tehran and in some respects the centre of politics in the country.¹⁰²⁹

British travel writer Robert Byron said it all looked like a lunatic asylum, whilst another observer pertinently said it was akin to “an English public school”,¹⁰³⁰ replete with public school educated diplomats aplenty. One must of course be cautious of Jebb’s effusive praise of the Legation juxtaposed by his criticism of Tehran’s “unimpressive” architecture – some of which was quite the opposite – nevertheless in the view of British officials, their government possessed a sizeable and grandiose piece of setting situated at the heart of Persia’s capital. This setting was moreover implicitly used to impress Great Power Paternalism by the separateness and superiority expressed through its spaciousness, its perimeter walls and its solid British built structures. This imposing stage and setting also needed a suitable performer, a position readily filled by Sir Percy Loraine. Despite the brief presence of the *Renown*, and the more permanent Legation compound and its *sowar* escort and Vauxhall motorcar, as noted, Britain no longer possessed the leveraging power that it exercised during the First World War. During the Khaz’al Crisis the Foreign Office had thus asked if Loraine could “suggest other methods of bringing diplomatic pressure to bear upon the Persian government”.¹⁰³¹

¹⁰²² Bertram, *Room*, p. 60-1.

¹⁰²³ Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 21, Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 251, FO1011/125, Tehran, Loraine Diary Extract, 22 March 1922. Loraine was also a keen gardener (FO1011/20, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 20 Jan. 1926).

¹⁰²⁴ Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 21.

¹⁰²⁵ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 251.

¹⁰²⁶ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 251.

¹⁰²⁷ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 251, Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 21-2, & Bertram, *Room*, p. 62.

¹⁰²⁸ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 17.

¹⁰²⁹ Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 21, Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 251.

¹⁰³⁰ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 251.

¹⁰³¹ FO371/10138, F.O. to Loraine, 4 Dec. 1824 in Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 94.

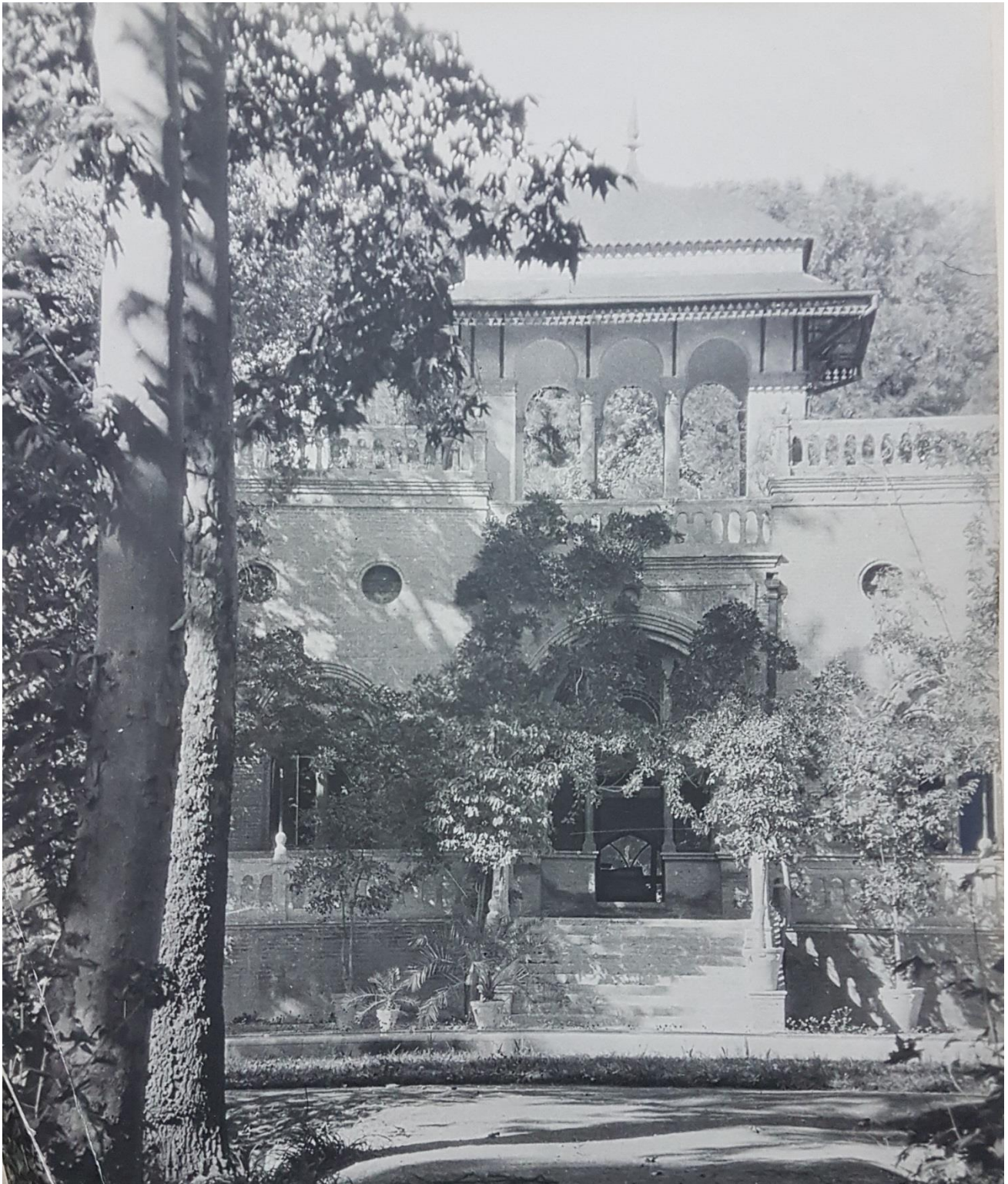


Fig. 41: Another of the exterior of the Legation Residence (FO1011/261).

Lorraine's biographer concluded that the "only possible pressure of any value" was the "force of his own personality".¹⁰³² As the analysis has demonstrated, the British Minister consequently made use of his personality as part of his "personal front" whilst fostering an impression of Great Power Paternalism in

¹⁰³² Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 94.

a “state selfhood”. One can also introduce other concepts incorporated into Percy’s necessarily personal performance including “idealisation” whereby a performer seeks to “incorporate and exemplify officially accredited values” of a society or organisation.¹⁰³³ Cohen explores a similar notion, looking at the “leader as a paragon” embodying the qualities of their state through costume and behaviour.¹⁰³⁴

Percy was of course a perfect embodiment of the British Empire with his aristocratic, Etonian, Oxfordian and military background. Indeed, he was described as the “best type of 1860 gentleman”, a “feudal” relic of the pre-war period, not unlike his implacable chief Curzon.¹⁰³⁵ Nicolson likened him to a “bit of wood – the same all through”, “grown in England” and of fine quality.¹⁰³⁶ He also believed that Loraine was “immensely conscious of the dignity of his profession, the superiority of the British way of life to any other, and the British methods of diplomacy”.¹⁰³⁷ Furthermore, the British Minister “genuinely thought of himself as a representative of his King and behaved accordingly”.¹⁰³⁸ Manifest here, was the cognizance of diplomats with respect to their own actions and words being representative of their nation’s character and policies. Furthermore, Loraine also viewed uniform and etiquette as important means of representing Britain and furthering its foreign policy objectives. Indeed he was always “impeccably dressed” since he thought this was the best way to impress and persuade Orientals.¹⁰³⁹ For semi-serious business encounters he thus donned suit and top hat with camel coat (Fig. 42 & 43). Nicolson, Loraine’s rather eccentric and also very sarcastic subordinate, recalled the importance Loraine placed on uniform in a humorous anecdote in his diary. Heading to *Now Ruḡ* celebration calls, Nicolson turned up in a black trilby since he didn’t feel dapper enough in a top hat:

I went with the Minister. He appeared in a top hat of course, but then you see he suits a top hat and feels quite at home in it. I expected a row, I was prepared to resist a row. But he was merely hurt and pained, and my Trilby, far from being a gesture of defiance, became a crown of thorns. I felt in a rather strange way shabby in it... “But really,” I said as we bumped through the streets, “no-one will see – one leaves these things in the hall...” “But don’t you see,” said Percy, “It’s the PRINCIPLE of the thing”.¹⁰⁴⁰

Purportedly Nicolson said that Loraine justified his pomposity with “the old bromide” that “these things mean so much to Orientals”.¹⁰⁴¹ Loraine here was thus idealising, embodying and performatively enacting the typical English gentleman that he thought a Persian might expect, respect, and respond to favourably. Meanwhile for more official affairs it was the standard diplomatic dress uniform; navy blue with exquisite gold braid, plumed bicorn hat, white gloves, either white or blue breeches, and ceremonial sword (Fig. 44).

¹⁰³³ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 35.

¹⁰³⁴ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 44-46.

¹⁰³⁵ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 249 & Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 50.

¹⁰³⁶ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 119.

¹⁰³⁷ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 249.

¹⁰³⁸ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 119.

¹⁰³⁹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 50, Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁴¹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 119, & Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 255.



Fig. 42: Loraine in his suit and top hat (FO1011/261).

Such a uniform made Loraine stand out as the “star, lead, or centre of attention”,¹⁰⁴² in his team emphasised by the less ostentatious uniforms worn by his subordinates and indeed the rest of the Diplomatic Corps in Iran (Fig. 45)¹⁰⁴³. With such costume, and his cavalcade of retainers, Loraine also helped to nurture a sense of “mystification”. Mystification, often achieved by surrounding a performer with “artificial” representations of mystery or power also affords performers “elbow room in building up an impression” of their choosing, masking potential weaknesses from excessive audience scrutiny.¹⁰⁴⁴ In his “state selfhood”, surrounded by an armed, mounted and motorised retinue, Loraine clothed himself in the artificial trappings of British imperial power as a means of masking Britain’s real weakness in Persia relative to its former paramountcy. His retinue also set him apart from his Persian audience who were expected to feel awe and respect for the “proconsular” Sir Percy, the “Vazir Mukhtar himself”, and the nation he embodied.¹⁰⁴⁵

¹⁰⁴² Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁴³ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 99.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 67-8.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Jebb, *The Memoirs*, p. 22.



Fig. 43: Loraine in his top hat and coat, full length (FO1011/261).



Fig. 44: Loraine in his formal uniform (FO1011/261).



Fig. 45: The Diplomatic Corps during the coronation, with Doyen Percy's uniform standing out almost without exception (FO1011/261).

Nicolson also teasingly called him a “stage ambassador”,¹⁰⁴⁶ an apt description since Loraine was indeed a performer and also a director, and *metteur-en-scène* controlling his “team”, as he called his staff, in its fostered impression of Great Power Paternalism.¹⁰⁴⁷ For the most part this team performed with excellent loyalty not least because they were often cut from the same imperialist cloth as Sir Percy, including Nicolson who sometimes embraced the Rudyard Kipling “side” to himself. In their small “Colony” the mission would play polo and tennis, host “tea-parties” and dinners serving British fare including “soup, trout, cutlets in aspic, turkey and an apricot ice” (Fig. 47). Such events would sometimes be accompanied by a little orchestral performance and followed by “English-school-boy sort” of speeches that were “noble” and “patriotic”.¹⁰⁴⁸ Loraine even had his dog with him, a Cocker Spaniel called Jumbo (Fig. 46).¹⁰⁴⁹ One can hardly imagine a scene away from home, that was more British than the compound on Ferdowsi Avenue.

Returning to Percy’s personal performance once more, one can note that in face-to-face encounters with Persian government officials Loraine may well have verbally adopted the impression of Disinterested Impartiality or Overt Cordiality. He always made sure, however, to do so with the trappings of Great Power Paternalism, including the costume, the stage-props, the etiquette and the manner. In the context of the latter Jebb thought Loraine was a “quasi vice-regal figure”, “impeccable” and “all-powerful” with a “brooding presence” befitting of his role as representative of King George V.¹⁰⁵⁰ This was in part why he was one of Curzon’s “favourites”,¹⁰⁵¹ hand-picked and promoted at the young age of forty-two to replace Herman Norman to undertake a “man’s job” in Persia – rescuing Britain’s pilloried prestige and position.¹⁰⁵² A fine example of Loraine’s befitting manner in this context can be found in his actions at the coronation of Reza Khan in April of 1926, humorously recounted by Nicolson:

Yesterday was the Coronation...We drove there in State – a thing I particularly abominate. I never did like amateur theatricals. I loathe bumping along a street surrounded by escorts. My friendly profile does not lend itself to such pro-consular antics and the collar of my uniform cuts cruelly into my chubby neck. Then we arrived. But Loraine, who has a weakness for the processional, insisted on our continuing through the gardens of the palace. First stalk six guards in solemn idiocy, then the Lorraines in equal solemnity, and then I come with Vita. At the main court of the palace there is a band. This is an awful moment as Loraine springs rigidly to attention while they play God Save the King. Lady Loraine bares her head as do the devout after receiving Holy Communion, and I get hot and uncomfortable, longing...for my pipe”.¹⁰⁵³

¹⁰⁴⁶ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 249.

¹⁰⁴⁷ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to George Lloyd, 18 March 1923.

¹⁰⁴⁸ H.N. to his parents, 26 May, 1926 & H.N. to Vita, 1 July 1926 in Nigel Nicolson ed., *The Harold Nicolson Diaries: 1907-1964*, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2005), p. 49-50.

¹⁰⁴⁹ FO1011/11, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 21 Jan. 1922.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Jebb, *The Memoirs*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁵¹ FO1011/126, Constantinople, Sir Horace Rumbold to Loraine, 16 April 1923, FO1011/122, St. James’s Club Piccadilly, Norman to Percy, 24 Nov. 1921, & Sabahi, *British*, p. 173.

¹⁰⁵² Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁵³ H.N. to his parents, April 1926, in *Harold Nicolson Diaries*, p. 46.



Fig. 46 & 47: Loraine with Jumbo [above] and Percy and Louise taking a break from tennis [below] (FO1011/261).



This sort of sniggering cynicism was not lost on Loraine who despaired of his subordinate's tardiness and lack of enthusiasm. Although Nicolson had a fondness for benign British imperialism he felt very much out of place in Persia with the "grotesque" Anglo-Indian culture of the colony. He was too unconventional in his style, speech and psyche.¹⁰⁵⁴ Loraine, however, saw all conduct and costume in the context of "duty" to one's country.¹⁰⁵⁵ Consequently he criticised Nicolson's beloved pipe. He disliked the trilby, and his subordinate's disdain for affectation, uniform, ceremonial and *sowars*.¹⁰⁵⁶ In terms of stage-props, demeanour and costume, Nicolson was not doing his bit for the team, which he humorously owned up to in an illustrated letter to Oliphant (Fig. 48).¹⁰⁵⁷ A last broad example of Loraine and Britain's Great Power Paternalism can be found in the language used in exchanges with Persian politicians including Reza Khan. As in the Khaz'al Crisis there were further examples of diplomatic coding, for instance in April of 1923 Curzon complained to the Persian Minister in London about his government ignoring seven notes sent by Loraine regarding the issue of outstanding debt.¹⁰⁵⁸ The Persian ambassador was consequently told that "any repetition" of this "intolerable" behaviour, "would have the most unpleasant consequences".¹⁰⁵⁹ At length, such remonstrations at least managed to help bring the Persians into formal discussions on the subject of its contested debts.¹⁰⁶⁰ Loraine and his staff also used similar diplomatic language when tackling the problem of the Persian press which spewed out reams of "abusive" articles full of anti-British "slanders", some purportedly emanating from Bolshevik efforts to sow discord Anglo-Persian discord.¹⁰⁶¹ During 1922 Loraine had been forced to "complain seriously" to the Persian government, who responded by suspending offending publications.¹⁰⁶² The "calumny and abuse" continued in 1923 however,¹⁰⁶³ before things came to a head in early 1924 when Loraine sent his Oriental Secretary to:

...tell the Prime Minister that my patience was exhausted, that I will no longer tolerate these disgusting affronts...and that unless an example is made now I shall conclude that they (the Persian government) acquiesce in seeing the accredited representative of a great and friendly Power publicly insulted; that failing prompt and vigorous steps to protect (the) personal dignity of His Majesty's representative, I shall place the whole matter in your Lordship's hands and request instructions.¹⁰⁶⁴

¹⁰⁵⁴ H.N. to his parents, 26 May, 1926 in Nicolson ed., *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 50 & Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 255, Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 116-119.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Loraine had almost lost hope due to Persian prevarication over their 'debt'. The only potential positive was the arrival of U.S. advisor Dr. Millspaugh, employed by the Persian government to reorganise their finances, (FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 28). The situation had not improved by the end of 1923 with Persian officials refusing to reply (FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1923, (p. 19). See also Kittner, *Issues*, p. 103-104. For an example see FO416/71, Enclosure No. 2, Loraine to Qavam es-Saltaneh, 6 Oct. 1922 in Tehran, No, 176, Loraine to Curzon, 19 Oct. 1922, (p. 231-233).

¹⁰⁵⁹ FO416/72, Curzon to Loraine, 17 April 1923.

¹⁰⁶⁰ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1924 (p. 16-18).

¹⁰⁶¹ FO1011/124, Tehran, Loraine to Lloyd, 18 Oct. 1922.

¹⁰⁶² FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 36). For an example of the complaints specifically see FO416/71, Tehran, No. 121, Loraine to Curzon, 5 Oct. 1922, (p. 158).

¹⁰⁶³ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1923, (p. 25-26).

¹⁰⁶⁴ FO416/74, Tehran, No. 15, Loraine to Curzon, 12 Jan. 1924, (p. 18-19)



Fig. 48: Nicolson undertaking his diplomatic duties in tardy attire (Lees-Milne, *Harold*).

Lorraine even thought it might be necessary to suspend relations with Persia if the matter was not attended to in a satisfactory manner,¹⁰⁶⁵ namely that the editor of one particular paper which had “transgressed the bounds of common decency”, should apologise profusely.¹⁰⁶⁶ After this fairly forceful strategy, Reza Khan persuaded the editor to provide a “formal apology” which was subsequently printed in the newspaper.¹⁰⁶⁷ During the remainder of Lorraine’s tenure, the issue of anti-Britishness in the Persian press declined markedly. In other examples, Lorraine’s language conflated with the fostered impression of Disinterested Impartiality. In this context the British Minister sought to express his superior Englishness by entertaining no dodgy deals and indirect or duplicitous dialogue. In doing so he sometimes spoke very frankly to his Persian interlocutors, with an added paternalistic edge. For instance in April of 1922 he wrote to colleague Ronald Lindsay, recalling how he admonished the Iranians over

¹⁰⁶⁵ FO416/74, Tehran, No. 15, Lorraine to Curzon, 12 Jan. 1924, (p. 18-19)

¹⁰⁶⁶ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1923, (p. 26).

¹⁰⁶⁷ FO416/74, Tehran, No. 30, Lorraine to MacDonald, 30 Jan. 1924 & FO416/74, Tehran, No. 43, Lorraine to MacDonald, 31 Jan. 1924.

their unofficial attempts to acquire loans. He said to them “with much solemnity, that in future if they wanted money, they must ask for it official + in writing”. He noted the Persian reaction with apparent glee, writing that “there is nothing they hate more than that + you would have laughed a good deal at seeing the long face they pulled”.¹⁰⁶⁸ One can hardly escape the impression that Loraine was just possibly infantilising his Persian audience here. Furthermore as with the Khaz'al Crisis, Loraine was disposed to the use of even more forceful language. For instance in November of 1923 he wrote to Sir George Lloyd, friend and fellow diplomat saying he often gave the Persians “pretty good towellings”.¹⁰⁶⁹ Towellings one must assume here equated to verbal haranguing. He delivered one such towelling to Reza Khan in September of 1923, complaining in an “extremely vigorous” language, about the “numerous delinquencies” demonstrated by the administration in Persia.¹⁰⁷⁰ A few months later in February of 1924 Loraine wrote to Wilson relaying how he was having a similar “tiff” with the Persian government regarding the Persians dragging their feet over the outstanding debt. In a meeting with the Persian Prime Minister, Loraine consequently “gave him a pretty good doing for a couple of hours. I think it shook him up and at all events I ended up by extracting from him the constitution of a mixed Commission to go into all the serious outstanding questions, to solve such as we could before I left for London”.¹⁰⁷¹ The Commission Loraine hoped, would resolve the matter of Persian debts to Britain.¹⁰⁷² Lastly, Loraine’s farewell audience to the Shah on the 28th of June 1926 was “not an occasion of exclusive compliments and regards” but was instead used to deliver a “good many home truths” by the Minister who “reproached” the Shah for Persian government corruption, mismanagement and excessive militarism.¹⁰⁷³

DISINTERESTED IMPARTIALITY

Despite the many examples of Britain and its performance team fostering Great Power Paternalism in the preceding section, a far more salient impression employed during Loraine’s tenure was that of Disinterested Impartiality. Through the use of this impression the British aimed to allay any Persian concern regarding the potential re-emergence of the coercive and interfering tactics that Britain had exercised from 1914 to 1921. Disinterested Impartiality was also necessarily fostered due to loss of dominance in Persia precipitated by Britain’s military and financial pull-out prior to Loraine’s arrival. The new Minister attempted to display the persistence of British power using the limited resources at his disposal, however, he could not fully avoid the reality of relative impotence in Persia in the post-war period. The departure of British forces and the cessation of financial assistance was also demonstrative of a general decline of interest in Persia on the part of the British government from 1922 to 1926.

¹⁰⁶⁸ FO1011/124, Tehran, Loraine to Ronald Lindsay, 12 April 1922.

¹⁰⁶⁹ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to Sir George Lloyd, 8 Nov 1923.

¹⁰⁷⁰ FO416/73, Tehran, No. 87, Loraine to Curzon, 14 Sept. 1923, (p. 103).

¹⁰⁷¹ FO1011/129, Tehran, Loraine to Wilson, 14 Feb. 1924 & FO416/112, A.R.P. - 1924, (p. 16-17).

¹⁰⁷² FO416/74, Tehran, No. 62, Loraine to MacDonald 13 Feb. 1924. See also Ghani, *Iran*, p. 303-304 & Kittner, *Issues*, p. 104.

¹⁰⁷³ Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 27 & FO416/79, Enclosure No. 21 Memorandum by Loraine in Gulhek, No. 21, Nicolson to Chamberlain, 3 July 1926, (p. 37-41).

Beyond protecting key interests in the Gulf, along with the settlement of Persian debt, Kittner notes that British Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries gave Persian affairs only limited attention.¹⁰⁷⁴ This was the case for both the Labour government of Ramsay MacDonald and the succeeding Conservative government of Stanley Baldwin, each of which had more pressing preoccupations abroad including the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, the Dawes Plan and the Locarno Pact in 1926.¹⁰⁷⁵ Meanwhile back in Britain there were persistent economic problems with poor labour relations in various industries including coalmining, all of which contributed to the General Strike of 1926.¹⁰⁷⁶

Curzon, Foreign Secretary during the earlier administrations of Lloyd George, Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin from 1919 to 1924, also evinced disinterest despite being “drawn to Persia by every fibre of his faith and temperament”.¹⁰⁷⁷ The collapse of the Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1919 had left him thoroughly “fed up” with a country that he had romanticised since his visit there in 1889.¹⁰⁷⁸ In May of 1922, Curzon wrote privately to Loraine criticising cabinet disinterest in Persia, and the failures of Sir Percy Cox and Herman Norman, all of which in his opinion had ruined any chance of the Anglo-Persian Agreement succeeding.¹⁰⁷⁹ He also bemoaned the fact that:

We have spent, or rather wasted, millions upon it (Persia) in the last years...Here you also have a British Foreign Minister who has devoted more years of labour in the last 35 years to the cause of Persian integrity and freedom than most other people have devoted days or hours. And what is the result of it all? A complete collapse of British prestige and influence in that country.¹⁰⁸⁰

Consequently Curzon was disposed to “look after” Britain’s “own interests” not Persia’s.¹⁰⁸¹ Aside from defending A.P.O.C.’s rights, maintaining British supremacy in the Persian Gulf, and settling Persian debt,¹⁰⁸² Curzon therefore urged Loraine to adopt a policy of non-intervention, best complemented by the impression of Disinterested Impartiality. In this context he told the new Minister to “show the most polite indifference to their [the Persians’] party games” and never to “cringe to a Persian or let out that we [Britain] are seriously disturbed”. He also cautioned Loraine against aligning with any Persian politician since they came and went “like performing dogs on a musical-hall stage”. Through studious indifference and disengagement the Persians would in time learn that “they cannot get on without” the “rock of British integrity” and assistance.¹⁰⁸³ Curzon was seemingly sincere in his bemused incomprehensibility at Persia’s rejection of his paternalistic regard for her wellbeing. Although mindful of his chief’s advice, Loraine was more perceptive in determining why prestige in Persia had been so

¹⁰⁷⁴ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 31-32.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Mowat, *Between*, p. 194-199 & p. 284-338.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Nicolson, *Curzon*, p. 120-121.

¹⁰⁷⁸ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to Sir George Lloyd Barclay, 8 Nov. 1923.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 59-62.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Curzon to Loraine, 30 May 1922, in Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁸¹ FO371/6401, Curzon Minute, 17 Feb. 1921 in Kittner, *Issues*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁸² Which stood at around four million pounds (Kittner, *Issues*, p. 103).

¹⁰⁸³ Curzon to Loraine, 30 May 1922, in Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 61.

badly damaged, and what needed to be done by way of rectification. In his Annual Report of 1922 the new Minister sketched out the reasons behind the collapse of the agreement and of British prestige. First he noted that the Persians had formed a negative “impression” of the British after their “betrayal” in signing the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 and allowing the Russians to crush the Constitutional Revolution. Moreover, British efforts to curb Russian excesses in northern Persia from 1907 to the outbreak of war proved incapable of allaying growing anti-British sentiment amongst Persian nationalists.¹⁰⁸⁴

Lorraine also showed some understanding of Persian umbrage at the violation of neutrality at the hands of Allied forces during the war,¹⁰⁸⁵ and the damage wrought on Persia by the conflict including economic hardship, displaced persons, famine and disease.¹⁰⁸⁶ Such behaviour coupled with Britain’s subsequent pull-out of Persia are what purportedly killed off the agreement. In addition there was also growing domestic Persian distrust of the political Triumvirate who were bribed into brokering the agreement with Cox,¹⁰⁸⁷ and international condemnation from the United States (U.S), France and Soviet Russia.¹⁰⁸⁸ Lastly Lorraine knew that many Persians also held Britain responsible for the coup d’état of February of 1921, orchestrated by an Anglophile, Sayyid Zia al-Din Tabatabai along with Reza Khan who received unofficial logistics support from Britain’s North Persia (Norper) Force under Major-General Edmund Ironside. This was seen as a “last desperate endeavour...to bring into force” the “doomed” agreement.¹⁰⁸⁹ Lorraine himself was of the opinion that:

...of course what has undoubtedly done us a great deal of harm here is the connection right or wrong, that Great Britain through her agents was responsible for the Sayyid Zia coup d’état: I think it can be lived down – for the impression, however, ill-founded and erroneous it may, it [sic] be very deep-seated – but it will take + much patience.¹⁰⁹⁰

Sayyid Zia was also “imprudent enough” to antagonise and then imprison many prominent Persian statesmen, some of whom had been previously “associated” with the British.¹⁰⁹¹ Consequently when Sir Percy arrived in the winter of 1922 he was purportedly “boycotted” by the Persian government and many former British allies.¹⁰⁹² He was also facing a government that was “bent on destroying...every trace of British influence, on thwarting the operation of established British interests and on preventing the establishment of new ones”. The Persians were also seeking to escape from their indebtedness to

¹⁰⁸⁴ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 12-13).

¹⁰⁸⁵ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 13).

¹⁰⁸⁶ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 62-67). See also Ghani, *Iran*, p. 17 & Keddie, ‘Late Qajars’, p. 208.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Katouzian, ‘Campaign’, p. 6.

¹⁰⁸⁸ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 11-12).

¹⁰⁸⁹ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 13).

¹⁰⁹⁰ FO1011/11, Tehran, Lorraine to Oliphant, 21 Jan. 1922 & FO1011/11, Tehran, Lorraine to Oliphant, 14 Feb. 1922. For more information on the coup see Ghani, *Iran*, p. 144-244 & Michael P. Zirinsky, ‘Imperial Power and Dictatorship: Britain and the Rise of Reza Shah, 1921-1926’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24 (1992) pp. 639-663.

¹⁰⁹¹ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 14).

¹⁰⁹² Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 66 & Ghani, *Iran*, p. 14.

Britain by soliciting the U.S. for financial and political support.¹⁰⁹³ Connectedly Britain was pilloried on three axes – “press, pulpit and Parliament”, all of which supported an “anti-British policy, hatred of the English and the total elimination of all English interference in Persian affairs”.¹⁰⁹⁴ Some of this vitriol emanated from the Bolsheviks in Soviet Russia, the “Bolos” as Loraine called them,¹⁰⁹⁵ who often funded anti-British propaganda.¹⁰⁹⁶ The Russians were also purportedly poised to destabilise the situation further, by posing as Persia’s friend if Britain attempted more assertive diplomatic tactics.¹⁰⁹⁷ Furthermore, Bolshevism had in Loraine’s view, given impetus to social and political nationalism in Persia, with a decidedly anti-Western tinge.¹⁰⁹⁸ Reza Khan’s relative neutrality vis-à-vis Britain, coupled with his burgeoning improvements to the country’s armed forces, were the only rays of hope.¹⁰⁹⁹

In this hostile environment Loraine was “determined from the start to intervene as little as possible in Persian affairs”,¹¹⁰⁰ hoping that in time Persia would see Britain as her only “real and disinterested friend”.¹¹⁰¹ Indeed, the new Minister did much to steer and direct Britain’s policy and performance toward Persia in this difficult period. Evidence of this can be found in both his private and official correspondence, and in the decisions he made, or led his superiors to make with regards policy in Persia. For instance in July of 1922 he reported to Curzon that he had “most carefully refrained from any semblance of interference in domestic politics; in view of their (Persian) repeated complaints of such interference”¹¹⁰² Meanwhile, in October of 1922 he wrote to George Lloyd asserting that he had openly “eschewed Norman’s role of a Warwick to Persian cabinets & Prime Ministers”.¹¹⁰³ Richard Neville, the 16th Earl of Warwick had earned a reputation for determining who would sit on the throne of England during the War of the Roses. In a tenuously comparable manner Norman had seen to the removal and instalment of several Persian Prime Ministers including Vosugh ed-Dowleh, Moshir ed-Dowleh, Fathollah Sepahdar and finally Sayyid Zia.¹¹⁰⁴ His propensity for picking Persian premiers even led Curzon to remark sarcastically that his much maligned Minister in Persia had made an “art of creating Persian governments and Prime Ministers”.¹¹⁰⁵

Meanwhile, in December of 1922 Loraine wrote to Wilson stating that his alternative approach, “the policy of non-intervention & the attitude of almost offensive imperturbability is...giving good results & its effect will be cumulative as long as we keep it up”.¹¹⁰⁶ He also corresponded with the famous British

¹⁰⁹³ The Shah had also scurried off to Europe in January of 1922 (FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 12 & 15).

¹⁰⁹⁴ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 14 & 15) & FO416/71, Tehran, No. 6, Loraine to Curzon, 7 May 1922, (p. 7-14).

¹⁰⁹⁵ FO1011/11, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 16 Nov. 1923.

¹⁰⁹⁶ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1924, (p. 6-7).

¹⁰⁹⁷ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 15 & p. 37).

¹⁰⁹⁸ FO416/71, Tehran, No. 6, Loraine to Curzon, 7 May 1922, (p. 7-14).

¹⁰⁹⁹ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 53).

¹¹⁰⁰ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 65.

¹¹⁰¹ FO371/7804, Loraine to F.O., 31 Jan. 1922 in Kittner, *Issues*, p. 65.

¹¹⁰² FO416/71, Tehran, No. 1, Loraine to Curzon, 2 July 1922 (p. 7-14).

¹¹⁰³ FO1011/124, Tehran, Loraine to Lloyd, 18 Oct. 1922.

¹¹⁰⁴ Ghani, *Iran*, p. 64-161.

¹¹⁰⁵ FO371/6401, Curzon Minute, 22 Feb. 1921, in Kittner, *Issues*, p. 53.

¹¹⁰⁶ FO1011/124, Tehran, Loraine to Wilson, 7 Dec. 1922.

writer and political agent Gertrude Bell, arguing that he felt his strategy was “on the right line” and that “the Persians have got to learn for themselves, & if you want them to do that, it’s no use fiddling with them & their affairs, still less intervening & pretending you don’t”.¹¹⁰⁷ Again a year later in he wrote to Foreign Office colleague Sir William Tyrrell, arguing that for success in Persia:

...the great secret is to go on steadily minding one’s own business & not...to get mixed up in any Persian games &, with each..., to wait patiently and non-committally [sic] until you find out what he wants; it’s rarely anything decent; but then you’ve got his measure. The variations from type are slight: there’s no bed-rock: a lie isn’t a lie, a baseness isn’t a baseness: an opinion is a fact: a fact is an inconvenience & a superfluity: so there is nothing at all.¹¹⁰⁸

Similarly in November of 1923 Loraine told George Lloyd that the Persians were becoming more accommodating since he had:

...now got their confidence because they know I have played straight with them, won’t take back my word & haven’t tried to do them in. After all it’s the only way for an Englishman to be with Orientals, or for that matter with anyone else, but in his quaint way the Oriental appreciates it more once his mind is made up about it.¹¹⁰⁹

Here one sees an example of Loraine performing in such a way as to conform to perceived Persian preconceptions of British fair play and honesty. There were also Orientalist undertones with respect to the accusation that Persians were inclined to show a lack of principle or consistency. Connectedly, there was a hint of paternalism in Loraine’s prose which likened Iran to a stubborn infant who would come around to Britain’s mature and sensible view if given a certain amount of independence. Tyrrell had already agreed with his colleague in July of 1922, arguing that by “simply sitting tight and letting the Persians stew in their own unsavoury juices, we shall in the end score more than if we, in the present conditions, were to try and help them in spite of themselves”.¹¹¹⁰ In that same month Consul Chick wrote to Loraine apologising for not fully adopting tactics that complemented the impression of Disinterested Impartiality. He said he had been trying to follow instructions, by “abstaining from all intervention in Persian affairs, and living a very retired life during the whole of 1922”, but that anti-British feeling was still evident, owing to his association with the S.P.R. and the habit of local nationalists and Iranian democrats intercepting and publishing his correspondence with local tribal potentates.¹¹¹¹ The following year this impression was still in force, receiving support from Oliphant who found “the idea of sitting tight so admirable”.¹¹¹² Loraine also reiterated his resistance to the strategy of cabinet making in September, telling Oliphant that he was “very much averse, even from my own personal point

¹¹⁰⁷ FO1011/124, Tehran, Loraine to Gertrude Bell, 1 Dec. 1922.

¹¹⁰⁸ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to Tyrrell, 10 Dec. 1923.

¹¹⁰⁹ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to George Lloyd, 8 Nov 1925.

¹¹¹⁰ FO1011/123, Foreign Office, Tyrrell to Loraine, 19 July 1922. It can be noted here that Iran’s main need throughout this period was financial support.

¹¹¹¹ FO1011/123, Shiraz, British Consul Chick to Loraine, 9 July 1922.

¹¹¹² FO1011/12, Foreign Office, Oliphant to Loraine, 28 June 1923.

of view, from being stuck with any responsibility for any Persian Cabinet”.¹¹¹³ He said the same to his Persian audience telling prominent and popular politician Mostofi al-Mamalek, then serving as Prime Minister, that “we [Britain] will not interfere with internal politics & never intrigue against a Persian government, even if we dislike it”.¹¹¹⁴

A further motivation for this non-committal attitude was Britain’s desire to protect the prestige and position of those rare Persian statesmen seen as capable, including Mostofi, but more importantly Reza Khan. In February of 1923 Loraine wrote to Norman explaining this strategy. Since Reza Khan was one of the only capable Persian politicians Loraine mused, if he was made into a “British pet, he would be ruined & we, one more would have to start all over again”.¹¹¹⁵ Many Persians were already suspicious of the relationship between Reza Khan and the British government on account of the coup d’état in 1921, and there were subsequent rumours that the Reza Khan was “hand in glove” with the British who were crossing his palms with silver. Loraine was perplexed by what he saw as the “absurd attitude of suspicion” often prevalent in Persia.¹¹¹⁶ One must remember that during this period, which coincided with the Khaz’al Crisis, Loraine was also slowly trying to convince Curzon of the efficacy of tacitly supporting Reza Khan’s centralising programme with a hands-off but supportive approach synonymous with the impression of Disinterested Impartiality. Such efforts proved effective when the British government consequently acquiesced to the more open adoption of this impression in the context of actual policy. For example in response to demands for the cession of British owned and operated post offices in southern Persia dating back to 1920, the British government agreed to transfer the administration to the Persian government after negotiations lasting from May of 1922 until an agreement was reached on the 9th of December.¹¹¹⁷ It was Loraine who advocated this course of action and despite a failure to ratify the agreement on the part of the Persian government, he also convinced his superiors to go ahead and close the post offices in April of 1923.¹¹¹⁸

Similarly in March and November of 1922, the Persian government officially protested against the continued presence of British troops on Persian soil.¹¹¹⁹ Even after the withdrawal of Norper force and the disbandment of its militias including the S.P.R., Britain still had nearly a thousand troops scattered along the Persian Gulf coast, securing order and protecting commercial and strategic interests including telegraph cables and wireless stations.¹¹²⁰ In mid-November the British government instructed Loraine to state that it “would welcome the creation of a Persian force capable of restoring and preserving order...in the Persian Gulf”. Without the existence of such a force at that present moment, however,

¹¹¹³ FO1011/13, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 2 Sept. 1923.

¹¹¹⁴ FO1011/13, Tehran, Loraine to Oliphant, 2 Jan. 1923. See also Ghani, *Iran*, p. 17.

¹¹¹⁵ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to Norman, 17 Nov. 1923. See also Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 75.

¹¹¹⁶ FO416/70, Tehran, No. 256, Loraine to Curzon, 15 April 1922, (p. 250-251).

¹¹¹⁷ FO416/72, No. 53, Papers Communicated by India Office, 15 March 1923, (p. 71).

¹¹¹⁸ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 43-44). See also FO416/70, Foreign Office, No. 218, Curzon to Loraine, 4 May 1922, (p. 186-187) and Kittner, *Issues*, p. 167-168.

¹¹¹⁹ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 60) & FO416/71, Tehran, No. 165, Loraine to Curzon, Nov 14. 1922, (p. 219).

¹¹²⁰ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922, (p. 60).

British troops would remain in situ.¹¹²¹ Following a Persian claim to such capability and a further request for troop withdrawal in March of 1923,¹¹²² Loraine wrote to Curzon arguing that the presence of British troops was expensive and that it caused Persian “irritation”. As the issue was of “political importance”, Loraine therefore thought it sensible for the British government to “publicly announce” its intention to acquiesce to the request. Furthermore he wanted the Foreign Office to state that it was in Britain’s interest to see the Persian government “assume full responsibility” for the military security of the Persian Gulf coast. Loraine foresaw a “considerable improvement of atmosphere” if such a course of action was undertaken.¹¹²³

After deliberations, and objections from Curzon,¹¹²⁴ the British government agreed to troop withdrawals in December.¹¹²⁵ The following February in 1924, some eighty percent of Britain’s garrisons were withdrawn. This move, another international level act of nonverbal communication, was very much “appreciated by the Persian Prime Minister”.¹¹²⁶ Subsequently in April of 1926, Britain withdrew all of its remaining forces garrisoning ports along the Gulf coast, which the new Imperial Court of Persia was “most grateful for”.¹¹²⁷ Such praise seemingly justified the efficacy of Disinterested Impartiality. In a similar context Britain also began to reduce the size of its consular escorts, and after complaints about the movement of Royal Navy warships in the Gulf and on the Shatt-el-Arab, it was further agreed that the Persian government should be informed of British naval movements in the area.¹¹²⁸ This was despite Curzon’s opinion that the Shatt-el-Arab did not constitute Persian waters, leaving him ill-disposed to respond favourably to the complaint.¹¹²⁹ Loraine, however, preferred a more conciliatory approach.¹¹³⁰

Another major example of Disinterested Impartiality concerns the ultimate fate of Sheikh Khaz’al which also belied the notion that Reza Khan would or could ever become a British ‘pet’ in the first place. After the ostensible resolution of the conflict in December of 1924, the Foreign Office was “most anxious” to formalise Reza Khan’s assurances. When the British Minister studied the situation, however, he “felt obliged to recommend an attitude of watchful inaction” as he thought an excessive show of lenience on Reza Khan’s part would spark criticism from Persian politicians and the public who resented the Sheikh’s semi-rebellion. It was best instead to “wait and see”,¹¹³¹ whilst letting things “die down rather than reawaken it by too much insistence”.¹¹³² Chamberlain approved of Loraine’s call for “non-

¹¹²¹ FO416/71, Tehran, No. 166, Loraine to Curzon, Nov 14. 1922, (p. 220).

¹¹²² FO416/72, Tehran, No. 78, Loraine to Curzon, 2 April 1923, (p. 122).

¹¹²³ FO416/72, Tehran, No. 101, Loraine to Curzon, 28 April, 1923, (p. 137).

¹¹²⁴ FO416/73, Foreign Office, No. 86, Curzon to Loraine, 15 Sept. 1923, (p. 102).

¹¹²⁵ FO416/74, Tehran, No. 53, Loraine to Curzon, 2 Jan. 1924, (p. 48-49).

¹¹²⁶ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1924, (p. 60).

¹¹²⁷ FO416/78, Enclosure 1, Loraine to Mohammed Ali Faruki, 5 April 1926 & Enclosure 2, Mohammed Ali Faruki to Loraine, 10 April 1926 in Tehran, No. 120, Loraine to Chamberlain, 19 April 1926, (p. 150).

¹¹²⁸ FO416/74, Enclosure 1, Loraine to Zoka-ul-Mulk in Tehran, No. 11, Loraine to Curzon, 7 Dec. 1923, (p. 15-16).

¹¹²⁹ FO416/73, Foreign Office, No. 159, Curzon to Loraine, 20 Nov. 1923, (p. 205).

¹¹³⁰ FO416/73, Tehran, No. 168, Loraine to Curzon, 27 Nov. 1923, (p. 208-209).

¹¹³¹ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 58, Loraine to Chamberlain, 12 March 1925, (p. 82-83).

¹¹³² FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 36).

intervention” which was in line with Loraine’s support for allowing Reza Khan latitude to allay any Persian suspicion that he might be working too closely with an interfering foreign power.¹¹³³ During the spring of 1925, however, the Persian military tightened its grip on Arabistan,¹¹³⁴ whilst Reza Khan started to request the presence of the Sheikh in Tehran to resolve his tax arrangements as per the agreement in December. After his refusal, Reza Khan accused the Sheikh of intriguing with tribes in Arabistan before arresting him and placing him under house arrest in Tehran on the 19th of April.¹¹³⁵

Although the Sheikh was treated respectfully, Loraine was vexed as the arrest humiliated Khaz’al and by extension the British government. Loraine had been holidaying with his wife in Isfahan at the time, and when the Minister consequently returned in rapidity to Tehran, he and his staff were also unexpectedly barred access to the Sheikh by Persian troops. Subsequently by Reza Khan himself reinforced this restriction using rather impertinent language to Loraine’s Oriental Secretary.¹¹³⁶ Although sympathetic to a strong central government, this “rank discourtesy”, which amounted to insulting the British government by mistreating its representative, gave “birth to serious misgivings” in the mind of Loraine with regards the Persian Prime Minister’s integrity. The Minister also contemplated an official “rupture” of relations whilst refusing to communicate with Reza Khan until he apologised and allowed access to the Sheikh.¹¹³⁷ Lady Loraine thought that Anglo-Persian relations “hung in the balance for 24hrs” until Reza Khan acquiesced and allowed access to the Sheikh. The Persian premier also promptly wrote to Loraine apologising and promising to “put the Sheikh’s affairs straight” with a satisfactory resolution.¹¹³⁸ With the “breach quite healed” Loraine even invited Reza Khan to a dinner party at the British Legation.¹¹³⁹

Although this small resurgence of Great Power Paternalism gained access to the Sheikh, in reality very little changed. Chamberlain had in any case advised “tact” whilst refusing to “contemplate the possibility” of recalling Loraine, which would have caused needless damage to ostensibly improving relations.¹¹⁴⁰ Chamberlain also remarked that “we are living in a different world to that in which the assurances were given and must walk warily”.¹¹⁴¹ In other words despite perfunctory protest, Britain had finally acquiesced to the complete collapse of their regional ally in Arabistan. In his first Annual Report after replacing Loraine in 1926, Sir Robert Clive wrote that Britain had been unable stand by its assurance to the Sheikh whose:

¹¹³³ FO416/76, Foreign Office, No. 73, Chamberlain to Loraine, 20 April 1925, (p. 98).

¹¹³⁴ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 58, Loraine to Chamberlain, 12 March 1925, (p. 82-83).

¹¹³⁵ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 75, Monson to Chamberlain, 23 April 1925, (p. 98) & FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925, (p. 36).

¹¹³⁶ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 105.

¹¹³⁷ FO416/76, Enclose 1, Loraine to Reza Khan, 11 May 1925 in Tehran, No. 132, Loraine to Chamberlain, 19 May 1925, (p. 146-149) & FO416/76, Tehran, No. 97, Loraine to Chamberlain, 12 May 1924, (p. 197).

¹¹³⁸ FO416/76, Enclosure 2, Reza Khan to Loraine, 19 May 1925 in Tehran, No. 132, Loraine to Chamberlain, 19 May 1925, (p. 146-149).

¹¹³⁹ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 104, Loraine to Chamberlain, 16 May 1925 & FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925, (p. 37). See also Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 102-106.

¹¹⁴⁰ FO371/10843, Chamberlain Minute on Loraine to Oliphant, 8 May 1925, in Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 104.

¹¹⁴¹ FO371/10843, Chamberlain Minute, 11 May 1925 in Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 297.

...jurisdiction has been abolished, his rights have been annulled, his property has been sequestered, his autonomy is a thing of the past; he has been arrested, transported to Tehran, and kept there under restraint for close on two years....The Shah's own attitude in this matter is not exempt from criticism; he has broken the pledges he gave at Ahwaz in December 1924...he has broken all the pledges which he gave so repeatedly and with such conviction to Sir Percy Loraine.¹¹⁴²

It was evident that Reza Khan had a propensity for employing this tactic of pushing Loraine to see where his limits were, before easing back just enough to ameliorate the Minister without actually doing all that much to fulfil any promises of redress. This frequently irritated Loraine and the British government, most notably in the context of Khaz'al but also over the issue of Persian indebtedness.

Despite Reza Khan's general attitude toward Britain being usually "of a most friendly nature",¹¹⁴³ these examples of recalcitrance partly ensured that Disinterested Impartiality was not entirely replaced by open support for Reza Khan in the shape of Overt Cordiality, the impression assessed in the next section. British officials, most notably Curzon, were not convinced about the prospect of aligning more closely with Reza Khan, either privately or publicly. Thus in the autumn of 1922, when Reza Khan came under attack from the Majlis deputies who feared he was about to launch another coup to seize more control,¹¹⁴⁴ Curzon informed Loraine that "any interference in domestic Persian politics is at present undesirable".¹¹⁴⁵ In similar vein in 1923 when the War Minister's allies sounded out Loraine regarding support for his candidacy for the position of Prime Minister, the British Minister was non-committal, adhering "absolutely" to his "principle of having no relations with any political party and of taking no hand in the making or breaking of cabinet".¹¹⁴⁶

Meanwhile in early 1924 when Reza Khan was potentially angling to make Persia a republic during the Shah's European absence, Loraine asked his superiors for "guidance" on how to proceed.¹¹⁴⁷ He was personally of the opinion that for all the young Shah's faults and antagonisms with his powerful Prime Minister, it was better for Persia to retain a monarchy.¹¹⁴⁸ Meanwhile, despite the Foreign Office harbouring negative views of Ahmad Shah,¹¹⁴⁹ MacDonald replied definitively stating that "if the Persians wish to introduce a republican regime, it is entirely their own concern, and you should not intervene in the matter or offer any advice".¹¹⁵⁰ Later in January of 1925 when Reza Khan first gently aired the idea of dynastic change, Loraine "refused to express any opinion officially or privately on a matter which His Majesty's Government regards as a purely internal Persian affair".¹¹⁵¹ During the actual

¹¹⁴² FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1926, (p. 29).

¹¹⁴³ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1923, (p. 22).

¹¹⁴⁴ FO416/71, Tehran, No. 123, Loraine to Curzon 7 Oct. 1922, (p. 159).

¹¹⁴⁵ FO416/71, Foreign Office, No. 126, Curzon to Loraine, 10 Oct. 1922, (p. 160).

¹¹⁴⁶ FO248/1369, Note by Loraine, 2 Oct. 1923 in Sabahi, *British*, p. 176. See also FO416/73, Tehran, No. 119, Loraine to Curzon, 7 Oct. 1923, (p. 144).

¹¹⁴⁷ FO416/74, Tehran, No. 80, Loraine to MacDonald, 26 Feb. 1924, (p. 74).

¹¹⁴⁸ FO416/74, Tehran, No. 79, Loraine to MacDonald, 26 Feb. 1924, (p. 74).

¹¹⁴⁹ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 74 & Sabahi, *British*, p. 177 & p. 194-195.

¹¹⁵⁰ FO416/74, Foreign Office, No. 82, MacDonald to Loraine, 29 Feb. 1924, (p. 76).

¹¹⁵¹ FO416/76, Tehran, No. 14, Loraine to Chamberlain, 22 Jan. 1924, (p. 29).

constitutional struggle of October 1925, Loraine also had two meetings with the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs who wanted to know London's views on the matter. Loraine said that he:

...declined to be drawn into any statement, and said that Persia must face the issue herself. I dwelt on the firm resolution of His Majesty's Government not to take sides nor be involved in this internal question.

The Foreign Minister retorted:

...if we [Britain] did not define our position some design or other would be imputed to us and would obtain general credence against which an assertion of disinterestedness would carry no conviction. He said that when the Shah announced intention to return, instant conclusion was that he had arranged matters with His Majesty's Government. He and the Prime Minister knew from me that this was quite untrue, but impression [sic] was widespread...¹¹⁵²

Loraine consequently reported that although he was "unconditionally in accord" with his own "policy of absolute neutrality", he thought more should be done to "make it clear to the public both here and elsewhere that such is the policy of His Majesty's Government".¹¹⁵³ Back stage Loraine had previously asked his superiors if he could very quietly encourage the Shah's return from Europe to stabilise the situation, thereby staving off dynastic change. The Foreign Office were against the move since it might be leaked, dragging Britain into internal Iranian affairs and leading to soured relations with the new centralising strong man Reza Khan.¹¹⁵⁴ The Persians persisted, however, with Loraine reporting another meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs three days later, in which he reported that Reza Khan wanted "rid of the Kadjar" but feared the "disapproval of His Majesty's Government", whose genuine aloofness he could not quite believe since he was "obsessed with the idea that in all Persian crises, British influence had been felt and had prevailed". Loraine reiterated the British policy of "strict non-intervention", stating that the Minister of Foreign Affairs "must really try to clear these mists away from the mind of the Prime Minister who was fighting shadows".¹¹⁵⁵

Two days later and only eight days from the Majlis vote on the matter, Chamberlain wrote to Loraine concerned about reports that hinted at Britain having a role in the Shah's potential return to Persia. He said there was "not a vestige of foundation for this allegation" and that "His Majesty's Government, have no desire to take sides in any constitutional struggle", a message which should be driven home to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister.¹¹⁵⁶ Loraine did as requested, stating that "His Majesty's Government were determined to leave Persia absolutely free to settle her internal affairs. This was the only possible attitude for a loyal friend". Purportedly the Persian Prime Minister was

¹¹⁵² FO416/77, Tehran, No. 127, Loraine to Chamberlain, 20 Oct. 1925, (p. 120).

¹¹⁵³ FO416/77, Tehran, No. 127, Loraine to Chamberlain, 20 Oct. 1925, (p. 120).

¹¹⁵⁴ FO371/10840, Minutes by Mallet, 23 Jan. 1925 in Sabahi, *British*, p. 194.

¹¹⁵⁵ FO416/77, Tehran, No. 128, Loraine to Chamberlain, 21 Oct. 1925, (p. 121-22).

¹¹⁵⁶ FO416/77, Foreign Office, No. 130, Chamberlain to Loraine, 23 Oct. 1925, (p. 122-123).

consequently more assured of Britain's neutrality, arguably facilitating the deposition of Ahmad Shah.¹¹⁵⁷ In other words Disinterested Impartiality actually amounted to support for Reza Khan as it represented a considerable departure from previous policy in Persia, especially during the First World War when British officials verbally and actively inserted themselves into Persian politics. In reality British officials including Loraine were wary of a new dynasty, but the absence of open disapproval and assertiveness was taken as acquiescence on the part of Reza Khan.

OVERT CORDIALITY

As noted, during the Khaz'al Crisis Loraine went beyond his Foreign Office remit by offering Reza Khan a more frank expression of support regarding his centralising programme, which concomitantly signified the sacrifice of Britain's friends in the south. Such behaviour was demonstrative of the last impression that Britain fostered toward Persia, that of Overt Cordiality. It was Loraine who chiefly communicated this impression through his words and actions. He did so due to his personal and professional regard for Persia's new strongman, the only politician that he came to view as capable of dragging the country out of the doldrums and keeping it firmly away from the clutches of the radical nationalists or the Bolsheviks, though the threat of the latter had become more remote by 1926. It was in early January of 1922 that Loraine expressed with some pride how he had spotted Reza Khan, as the "dark horse" in Persian politics.¹¹⁵⁸ Commendably he was also "resolute" and firmly in the "anti-Bolshevik camp".¹¹⁵⁹ Furthermore despite not being "a particularly easy man to handle because of his variability of humour," and his occasional recalcitrance,¹¹⁶⁰ Loraine thought Reza Khan was a rare Persian with "purpose & a mind". He was a man you could "do business with" unlike his fellow countrymen who had a propensity for talking "tripe".¹¹⁶¹ He also had a "driving power" which had led to tremendous improvements in the condition of Persia's armed forces.¹¹⁶² Connectedly Loraine remarked that Reza Khan "gets straight to what he has to say", and although he was of humble origin, he had "considerable natural dignity". Such dignity slipped on occasions when Reza Khan used the "very rough edge to his tongue" upon hapless Persians "unaccustomed" to that "sort of treatment". True to his sporting character, Loraine who enjoyed dishing out a robust 'towel' himself, praised this behaviour, likening the Persian Prime Minister to the famous cricketer Gilbert Jessop who knocked fast bowler Jack Hearne for six several times an over in their first encounter in the late 19th century.¹¹⁶³

Given that Britain could not too strongly identify with Reza Khan lest they taint his reputation, Loraine and his superiors had to tread carefully on the subject of Overt Cordiality. There were, however, still

¹¹⁵⁷ FO416/77, Tehran, No. 131, Loraine to Chamberlain, 26 Oct. 1925 & FO416/77, Tehran, No. 132, Loraine to Chamberlain, 29 Oct. 1925, (p. 122-123).

¹¹⁵⁸ FO1011/124, Tehran, Loraine to Lt. Colonel Prideaux, 16 Jan. 1922.

¹¹⁵⁹ FO1011/124, Tehran, Loraine to Prideaux, 16 Jan. 1922 & FO1011/124, Tehran, Loraine to Sydney Armitage-Smith, 29 June 1922.

¹¹⁶⁰ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to Lindsay, 30 Nov. 1923.

¹¹⁶¹ FO1011/127, Tehran, Loraine to Tyrrell, 10 Dec. 1923.

¹¹⁶² FO416/70, Tehran, No. 177, Loraine to Curzon, 31 Jan. 1922, (p. 157-159).

¹¹⁶³ FO416/70, Tehran, No. 177, Loraine to Curzon, 31 Jan. 1922, (p. 157-159) & Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 74.

examples of policies and statements which demonstrated the impression, both on the part of Loraine and the British government. This included a propensity for platitudes and profuse expressions of friendship to Persia in formal diplomatic language, much like in earlier Anglo-Iranian relations during the 19th century at the time of the Shah's visit in 1873. For instance when Chamberlain stressed Britain's neutrality shortly before the deposition of Ahmad Shah he also noted that:

His Majesty's Government are animated now, as in the past, by the most sincere and friendly feelings towards Persia, feelings which are based upon the ancient ties of friendship between the two countries, and upon their abiding common interests. Persia may therefore continue to count upon the sincere sympathy of Great Britain in her efforts to develop the prosperity of her country and to create an ordered national life with the institutions best suited to her ancient greatness and her modern needs.¹¹⁶⁴

As ever, Britain stressed the historical pedigree of Persia as an ancient polity, as well as the long history of warm Anglo-Iranian relations claimed from at least the time of Malcolm in the early 19th century if not earlier with the commercial ties of the East India Company (E.I.C.) and the diplomatic visits of the Shirley brothers in the late 16th century.¹¹⁶⁵ Another more salient reason for reserving more open expressions of Overt Cordiality was the fact that relations with Persia were often fraught with difficulty during the period under review. Frostier words were just as forthcoming with the British government chasing debt and complaining over outstanding issues including the Khaz'al Crisis, the Khoshtaria Concession, and Persia's efforts to court Britain's wartime allies, the U.S. Such efforts were largely unsuccessful due to America's reluctance to intervene; nonetheless Persian efforts still irked Britain. Iran did manage employ American financial advisors under a U.S. State Department advisor, Dr Arthur Millspaugh, a move that the British government came to look upon relatively favourably since it might have improved Persia's perilous economic circumstances. Efforts to involve U.S companies in the extraction of Persian oil, however, failed.¹¹⁶⁶

Alternatively more measured communications were made by Loraine alluding to Britain's continued desire for Persian "independence and integrity" and a "satisfactory" Anglo-Persian "rapprochement".¹¹⁶⁷ Such rhetoric was employed as a consequence of the often frustrating and protracted nature of efforts to improve Anglo-Iranian relations despite the apparent success of Loraine's policy of non-interference, facilitated by the impression of Disinterested Impartiality.¹¹⁶⁸ Moreover given the aforementioned concerns, the formulation of policy that actually demonstrated Overt Cordiality was infrequent. Handing over post offices and reducing troop numbers were demonstrations of non-interference that were also

¹¹⁶⁴ FO416/77, Chamberlain to Loraine, 23 Oct. 1925.

¹¹⁶⁵ Wright, *English*, p. 2-3.

¹¹⁶⁶ Sabahi, *British*, p. 141-154. For further information on Irano-American relations see, FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 19-20), FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1923 (p. 9-10) & FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1924 (p. 7-8).

¹¹⁶⁷ FO416/70, Enclosure Memorandum of Conversation between Sir P.Loraine and Minister of War in Loraine to Curzon, 31 Jan. 1922.

¹¹⁶⁸ For complaints about the protracted nature of the improvement see FO416/72, Loraine to Curzon, 31 Dec. 1922, FO416/72, Curzon to Loraine 10 May 1923, FO416/72, Loraine to Curzon, 1 June 1923, FO416/74, Loraine to MacDonald 13 Feb. 1924, FO416/74, Loraine to MacDonald, 11 Feb. 1924 FO416/74, Loraine to MacDonald, 16 Feb. 1924.

beneficial to the British government in terms of reducing financial expenditure in Persia. One policy that could more firmly be placed in the context of Overt Cordiality as yet another international level act of nonverbal communication, was the decision to reduce Persia's debt significantly as a gesture of goodwill, despite this being financially injurious to the British government. During the first meeting of the mixed Commission to resolve the issue of Persian debt in February of 1924, the Persian Prime Minister did admit to the debt in principle, however, there was an appeal for remission on the grounds that it constituted part of Britain's wartime expenditure. Loraine consented to relay the appeal to the British government.¹¹⁶⁹ Just before returning home on leave the British Minister then made a "private proposal" to Reza Khan, suggesting debt reduction to expedite repayment and improve relations. The Persian government showed some interest and made an offer of one million pounds sterling, under a quarter of the four and a half million purportedly owed. Once back in London Loraine put the offer to his superiors in an interdepartmental conference, and it was subsequently agreed to counteroffer with two million pounds repayable over twenty-five years.¹¹⁷⁰ At length in March of 1926, the Persian government accepted the British offer, though Majlis consent was unforthcoming.¹¹⁷¹

Meanwhile Loraine also engaged in more personal acts that constituted Overt Cordiality through his "state selfhood", using both verbal and nonverbal communication. As Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps in Persia, Loraine was obliged to host dinner parties, some of which Reza Khan attended. On such occasions Percy would play poker with the Persian Prime Minister at the British Legation, sometimes into the early hours.¹¹⁷² Such a seemingly insignificant act of social bonding was, however, more significant in the context of Loraine's role as a symbolic representative of the British government in that his games of cards indicated a desire for British cordiality toward Persia. Similarly Loraine kept up his polo in Persia, and encouraged Reza Khan to allow his officers to form teams to play one another and the Legation.¹¹⁷³ At one dinner party in the winter of 1925 following a game, the British Minister presented to "His Highness as the beloved chief of the Persian Army and as Honorary President of the Tehran Polo Club", a "silver bowl" that was "to be played for in an annual competition by the regiments of the Imperial Persian Army". He then toasted the Persian army and its "illustrious leader His Highness the Serdar Sepah".¹¹⁷⁴ Such effusive language was indicative of a more personalised method of showing Britain's support for Reza Khan through the unofficial communications of its representative.

Furthermore Loraine and Oliphant also saw to the purchase of a £200 Zeiss tripod telescope for Reza Khan as a private gift in late 1923, to celebrate his elevation to Prime Minister.¹¹⁷⁵ Gift-giving of this sort had a long history in Anglo-Iranian relations, first practised by Malcolm who was ostensibly inserting

¹¹⁶⁹ FO416/74, Loraine to MacDonald, 18 Feb. 1924.

¹¹⁷⁰ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1924 (p. 17).

¹¹⁷¹ FO416/78, Chamberlain to Loraine, 23 March 1926.

¹¹⁷² Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 110.

¹¹⁷³ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 109.

¹¹⁷⁴ FO1011/131, Invitation to Dinner Party, Dec. 1925.

¹¹⁷⁵ FO1011/126, F.O. to Loraine, 20 Oct. 1923, & FO1011/127, Loraine to Tyrrell, 10 Dec. 1923.

himself into a custom that was part of Qajar royal ritual culture.¹¹⁷⁶ Although excessive gift-giving was soon curtailed by a parsimonious Foreign Office, Loraine still had a small allowance for this purpose. Arguably one could view the Minister's act as a form of symbolic Persian *pishkesh*, the giving of gifts or hosting receptions for one's superior to show respect, humility and flattery.¹¹⁷⁷

The most noticeable expressions and actions impressing Overt Cordiality were, however, reserved for the abolition of the Qajar dynasty in October of 1925, and the subsequent coronation of the first Pahlavi monarch in April of 1926. Britain had of course stressed its total impartiality during the process by which the Qajar monarchy was replaced by the provisional government of Reza Khan on the 31st of October 1925.¹¹⁷⁸ Privately Loraine had erred on the side of Qajar dynastic continuation, and upon the Majlis decision to depose Ahmad Shah he asked for guidance on how to formulate policy toward the new provisional head of state.¹¹⁷⁹ He did also report that the Persian government were "most anxious" that "His Majesty's Government should be the first foreign Government" to recognise the new dynasty. Despite his former reservations, in Loraine's opinion it would be "advantageous to satisfy this aspiration", since it demonstrated a continuation of the policy of non-interference whilst also promoting Persian goodwill.¹¹⁸⁰ In this sense it was yet another example of nonverbal communication at the international level. Chamberlain replied on the 2nd of November authorising Loraine to inform Reza Khan that "His Majesty's Government are prepared to accord provisional recognition" of the new regime.¹¹⁸¹ On the following day Loraine notified the provisional government of its recognition, whereupon Reza Khan:

...expressed the liveliest satisfaction at the communication and at the fact that His Majesty's Government were the first foreign Government to recognise the new state of affairs and said that it was a further proof of the friendly feelings entertained by His Majesty's Government towards Persia and himself...¹¹⁸²

Loraine further remarked that "Reza Khan's attitude towards myself was extremely cordial" and that the "action has made a deep impression on him, which I do not think will be lightly removed".¹¹⁸³ Chamberlain "entirely" approved of how the whole affair was handled.¹¹⁸⁴ Subsequently on the 12th of December the Majlis made Reza Khan constitutional sovereign with the title Reza Shah Pahlavi.¹¹⁸⁵

¹¹⁷⁶ Wright, *English*, p. 32-38.

¹¹⁷⁷ Anne H. Betteridge, 'Gift Exchange in Iran: The Locus of Self-Identity in Social Interaction', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 58 (1985) pp. 190-202 (p. 193), Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 6, & Mehrdad Kia, 'Inside the Court of Naser od-Din Shah Qajar, 1881-96: The Life and Diary of Mohammad Hasan Khan E'temad os-Saltaneh', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 37 (2001), pp. 101-141 (p. 120).

¹¹⁷⁸ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925 (p. 6), FO416/77, Loraine to Chamberlain, 31 Oct. 1925. See also FO416/77, Loraine to Chamberlain, 6 Nov. 1925 & FO416/77, Loraine to Chamberlain, 6 Nov. 1925 (p. 186-188) for a more thorough assessment of the deposition.

¹¹⁷⁹ FO416/77, Loraine to Chamberlain, 31 Oct. 1925.

¹¹⁸⁰ FO416/77, Loraine to Chamberlain, 1 Nov. 1925.

¹¹⁸¹ FO416/77, Chamberlain to Loraine, 2 Nov. 1925.

¹¹⁸² FO416/77, Loraine to Chamberlain, 3 Nov. 1925 & FO416/77, Enclosure – Sir Percy Loraine to Reza Khan Pahlavi, in Loraine to Chamberlain, 3 Nov. 1925.

¹¹⁸³ FO416/77, Enclosure – Sir Percy Loraine to Reza Khan Pahlavi, in Loraine to Chamberlain, 3 Nov. 1925.

¹¹⁸⁴ FO416/77, Chamberlain to Loraine, 4 Nov. 1925.

¹¹⁸⁵ FO416/77, Loraine to Tyrrell, 12 Dec. 1925.

Loraine naturally wanted prompt recognition of this next step in the collapse of the Qajars,¹¹⁸⁶ which led to a telegram from both the Foreign Office,¹¹⁸⁷ and King George the V on the 14th of December in which the language of Overt Cordiality was employed. I “desire” the King wrote:

...to offer you my congratulations and heartfelt wish that Persia under your rule may enjoy the benefits of peace and prosperity. The friendly relations entertained by me and my people for the Persian nation can only be deepened by that era of development which I confidently hope, may rebound to the honour of your Majesty and the whole Persian nation.¹¹⁸⁸

One must remember that King George the V, ruler of half a billion subjects inhabiting over approximately fourteen million square miles, was addressing this friendly act of recognition upon a lowborn commoner who had joined the Persian Cossack Brigade at the age of fifteen.¹¹⁸⁹ The only incident which marred Britain’s impression was a disinclination to elevate the British Legation in Persia to that of a full Embassy with an ambassador, which Soviet Russia chose to do when the provisional government was formed.¹¹⁹⁰ This entailed the “painful” loss of diplomatic seniority for Loraine who ranked as an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary beneath that of an ambassador.¹¹⁹¹ The Foreign Office were inclined to ignore the slight to Loraine by expressing Disinterested Impartiality,¹¹⁹² whilst taking some solace from the fact that in reality Russia’s lacklustre recognition of the Shah was not nearly as effusive as their own, which had caused “consternation” in the Shah’s new government.¹¹⁹³ Connectedly Reza Shah himself informed Loraine that he attached no importance to Russia’s decision to elevate its mission status.¹¹⁹⁴ Yet more expressions of Overt Cordiality were to follow, however, during the coronation of the new Shah in April. As there was no set tradition regarding coronations, Persian officials were anxious to arrange suitable ceremonial proceedings. Reza Shah Pahlavi’s new ambitious Minister of Court Abdul Hossein Khan Teymourdash thus contacted European legations for assistance.¹¹⁹⁵ Unsurprisingly in view of the pedigree of the British monarchy, the Court Minister asked for the proceedings for the coronation of King George V at Westminster Abbey in 1910.¹¹⁹⁶ These were gladly furnished though there was some confusion when a Persian official asked in private “what a *Rouge Dragon Poursuivant* was, evidently under the impression that it was some kind of animal”.¹¹⁹⁷ Teymourdash then proceeded to enlist the assistance of Lady Loraine and Nicolson’s famous wife the poet and novelist Vita Sackville-West (Fig. 49), who had left Britain in January bound for Tehran.¹¹⁹⁸

¹¹⁸⁶ FO416/77, Loraine to Tyrrell, 13 Dec. 1925.

¹¹⁸⁷ FO416/77, Tyrrell to Loraine, 14 Dec. 1925.

¹¹⁸⁸ FO416/77, King George V to the Shah of Persia, 14 Dec. 1925.

¹¹⁸⁹ FO416/70, Loraine to Curzon, 31 Jan. 1922 & Ghani, *Iran*, p. 161-165.

¹¹⁹⁰ FO416/78, Loraine to Chamberlain, 17 Dec. 1925.

¹¹⁹¹ FO416/77, Loraine to Chamberlain, 16 Dec. 1925, Waterfield, *Diplomacy*, p. 124, FO416/78, Loraine to Chamberlain, 2 Feb. 1926.

¹¹⁹² FO416/77, Tyrrell to Loraine, 17 Dec. 1925.

¹¹⁹³ FO416/77, Loraine to Chamberlain, 19 Dec. 1925.

¹¹⁹⁴ FO416/77, Loraine to Chamberlain, 24 Dec. 1925.

¹¹⁹⁵ Ghani, *Iran*, p. 385.

¹¹⁹⁶ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 127.

¹¹⁹⁷ Vita Sackville-West, *Passenger to Teheran*, (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2007) p. 126-127.

¹¹⁹⁸ Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 63.



Fig. 49: Vita [left] and Louse [right] around the time of the Shah's coronation. (FO1011/261)

Both ladies it is claimed, played a considerable role in the organisation and performance direction of the ceremonial aspects of the coronation, thereby showing British favour and friendship to the fledging dynasty. Indeed by virtue of their nationality and their relationship to Harold and Percy, Vita and Louise also acted in a form of “state selfhood”, their actions and words implicitly demonstrative of the British government’s attitude toward Reza Shah Pahlavi. Arguably due to their gender, as Edwardian middle and upper class women, they also provided an added dimension to the impression of Overt Cordiality, in the organisation and aesthetics of the coronation. Vita’s actions were ostensibly significant. In private she expressed her dismay at the “characteristic lack of foresight” on the part of the Persians who “had left everything to the last” minute. The organisation of the coronation she thought, were like the preparations for an amateur dramatic show, with an air of childish glee at the decorations, the magnificent hung carpets, the “vases, tea-ports” and “especially clocks, for which, like most Orientals” the Persians had a “great fondness”. The whole thing she mused was much like a “jumble-sale” evidently in need of some solid British organisation.¹¹⁹⁹ The ceremony was to be held in the so-called “Museum Hall” of Gulistan Palace, which contained an odd assortment of European antiques, sculptures and vases etc. The Palace, a place with “ludicrous contrasts of squalor and magnificence,”¹²⁰⁰ was undergoing repairs, the walls being repainted and “rubbish-heaps” and weeds being removed.¹²⁰¹ Vita offered advice on what colour the throne room and the capital’s train station ought to be painted, in readiness for the coronation.¹²⁰² Many of her ideas she noted:

...were European, and novel. The Persians themselves cared not at all whether the paint in the throne-room betrayed patches of damp, or whether the china for the state banquet matched, and said so quite frankly. “You see”, said one of them, “it is only recently that we have even begun to sit on chairs”. The anxiety to impress the Europeans was endearing; there was no point, however, humble, on which they would not consult their English friends. They would arrive with little patterns of brocade and velvet; they would ask us to come down and approve the colour of the throne-room. “You see”, they said “we do not know”. They ordered vast quantities of glass and china from English firms; it would not arrive in time for the coronation, they had left it too late, but no matter. They must have red cloth for the palace servants like the red liveries worn by the servants at the English Legation.¹²⁰³

One can’t of course escape the sense that Vita, despite being far more open-minded than other members of the British Colony in Iran,¹²⁰⁴ implicitly belittled and infantilised the Iranians in her account. Meanwhile Waterfield is just as bold in his claims regarding Lady Loraine’s role, asserting that she:

...telegraphed to various well-known London stores and enlisted the help of her mother and her sisters over choosing suitable goods. Requirements included china, glass and silverware, fitted luncheon-baskets and stationary, and material for two hundred and fifty liveries, for which Lady Loraine was to make designs; she also made drawings for court uniforms and for a new Order the Shah was creating.

¹¹⁹⁹ Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 124-125.

¹²⁰⁰ Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 143.

¹²⁰¹ Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 125.

¹²⁰² H.N. to his parents, 29 April 1926 in *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 47.

¹²⁰³ Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 126

¹²⁰⁴ She was prone to lesbian relationships with prominent literary figures whilst married to Harold, himself somewhat of a sexual transgressor for the time.

Lady Loraine was in her element, she was a competent manager, something of an artist, and knew how things should be done: with her rather imperious manner she saw to it that she got what she wanted.¹²⁰⁵

Louise also objected to the candles in the “beautiful” but neglected Gulistan Palace, instead insisting upon “having electric lighting installed to show off the jewels and *objets d’art* she intended to display in the many glass cases round the walls”.¹²⁰⁶ Louise and Vita then “raided” the royal treasury to fill the display cases, finding linen bags “vomiting emeralds and pearls...jewelled scimitars, daggers encrusted with rubies” and “ropes of enormous pearls”. Gasping at this Aladdin’s Cave, the ladies “plunged” their “hands up to the wrist in the heaps” of precious stones,¹²⁰⁷ selecting those to be “sorted, cleaned, polished and arranged”.¹²⁰⁸ Percy meanwhile attended to the matter of acquiring a gift from the British government in time for the coronation. Oliphant proposed two vases which Loraine thought would be “appreciated” by the new sovereign.¹²⁰⁹ One the morning of the 25th with all preparations made, Vita reflected upon the impending drama. Adorned with the emeralds that Nasir al-Din Shah had presented to Harold’s “mummy” when his father served as Legation Secretary in Persia,¹²¹⁰ she was:

...quite emotionally anxious that everything should go off well; I took a personal interest in that throne-room which I had so often visited at the unofficial hour of ten in the morning, to criticise the shades of its peach-coloured distempered walls, to condemn the more outrageous of the Sèvres vases...that room which I was now about to see under its most pompous aspect...I felt towards it much as the bride’s confidential friend who right to up the hour of the ceremony has seen the bride in brogues and jersey – untidy, agitated, intimate.¹²¹¹

The subsequent ceremony blended European and Persian regalia, featuring the famous Peacock Throne alongside another especially constructed for the occasion (Fig. 50). There was also a new Pahlavi Crown, gold braided European frockcoats, and surly mullahs, “dirty, bearded old men in long robes and huge turbans”.¹²¹² It was in Loraine’s opinion a “not unimpressive” affair.¹²¹³ With suitable solemnity the “grizzled”¹²¹⁴ Cossack trooper sat upon the “magnificent” new throne becoming the “rigid, theocratic, rather superb...Ruler of the World, the King of Kings”.¹²¹⁵ Ostensibly the personal efforts of the Legation Staff alongside Lady Loraine and Vita, had contributed significantly to the successful coronation of Persia’s new monarch, who had vanquished the “effete and corrupt Kajar dynasty”.¹²¹⁶ They had also aided in the fostered the impression of Overt Cordiality which in turn improved Anglo-Iranian relations.

¹²⁰⁵ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 127.

¹²⁰⁶ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 127.

¹²⁰⁷ Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 129-130.

¹²⁰⁸ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 127.

¹²⁰⁹ FO1011/19 Oliphant to Loraine, 20 Jan 1926 & FO1011/20, Loraine to Oliphant, 24 March 1926.

¹²¹⁰ Harold Nicolson had been born in Tehran when his father was serving in 1886 (Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 2 & H.N. to his parents, 29 April 1926 in *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 47).

¹²¹¹ Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 130.

¹²¹² Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 131.

¹²¹³ FO416/78, Loraine to Chamberlain, 1 May 1926.

¹²¹⁴ Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 127.

¹²¹⁵ H.N. to his parents, 29 April 1926 in *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 47.

¹²¹⁶ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925 (p. 7).

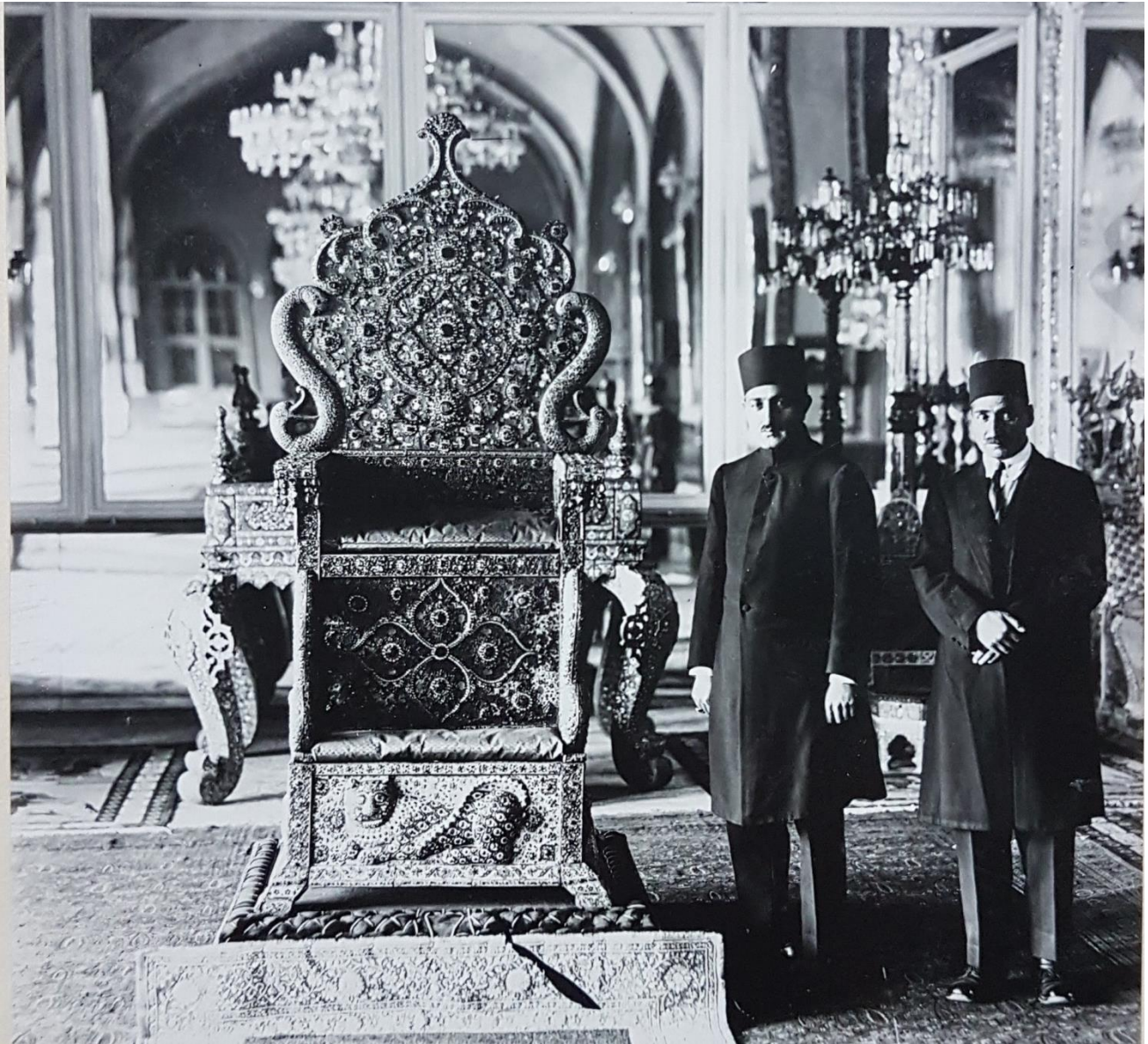


Fig. 50: The Peacock Throne obscured by the newer throne in front (FO1011/261).

Indeed in his Annual Report of 1925 Loraine wrote that the “rise to sovereignty of Reza whose close and cordial relations with His Majesty’s Minister had for long been a subject of universal comment, increased respect for England, it being argued that Reza’s success could not have been achieved unless England had favoured it, however, unostentatiously and discreetly”.¹²¹⁷ Similarly he thought the new Shah had been the “principal instrument through whom it has been possible to reach a far better state of Anglo-Persian relations than has obtained for a good many years”. Meanwhile his:

...very accession to the throne is generally regarded as denoting a foreign policy with a bias towards England, and many Persians even go so far as to consider this accession as an absolute master-stroke of British diplomacy, as inscrutable as it is irresistible.¹²¹⁸

¹²¹⁷ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925 (p. 7).

¹²¹⁸ FO416/78, Loraine to Chamberlain, 17 Dec. 1925.

Connectedly Loraine informed his former Commercial Secretary, Mr Havard, that “the current belief among the Persian’s is that Reza Shah is my Shah! & that we have scored a very big hit by putting him on the throne!”¹²¹⁹ At this juncture with Reza Shah in an unassailable position of strength, it was no longer much of a concern if Britain was considered in cahoots with the former Cossack since the “tone of the press” had become “almost irreproachable; the Majlis was far from antagonistic” and the “attitude of all Persian officials” had grown “more and more cordial and friendly”.¹²²⁰ Before concluding by tentatively assessing the veracity of such assertions which shortly predated Loraine’s departure from Persia, it is worth noting one other aspect of the British performance toward Iran from 1922 to 1926. Although there was praise for the Persians and especially for Reza Khan British officials were also prone to ridiculing and criticising their Persian audience in private or in subsequent publications. In many ways this bore similarity to the manner in which British officials privately discussed Nasir al-Din Shah and his retinue in 1873. It has already been noted how Vita criticised the “characteristic” Oriental lack of punctiliousness on account of the belated Persian organisation of the coronation. Similarly both Vita and Loraine likened Persians to children. Meanwhile in praising Reza Shah, Vita noted the task he had ahead of him:

For the ruler of Persia, however, half the problem lies precisely in the character of that nation; easy to dominate, because energy meets with no opposition, they are, once dominated, impossible to use; there is no material to build with; like all weak, soft people, they break and discourage the spirit sooner than a more difficult, vigorous race....This character leads naturally to the innumerable abuses and corruptions from which Persia suffers; the absence of justice, the sale of offices, the corruption, bribery, speculation, and general dishonesty that appals the beholder.¹²²¹

Similarly Loraine thought Persia a “rather slimy oriental backwater of intrigue and corruption” populated by a people who lacked principle and talked tripe.¹²²² Nepotism and self-interest were other negative characteristics which had “become thoroughly ingrained in the habits and morality of the people” of Persia.¹²²³ Perhaps worst of all for Percy, was that the Persian often failed to behave “like a gentleman” with respect to politics and the question of debt to His Majesty’s Government.¹²²⁴ Meanwhile Vita had called the Mullahs “dirty”, Loraine thought nationalists “smelly” and Curzon said all Persian politicians were “performing dogs”. The most virulent criticism for the Persians was, however, put forward by Nicolson who thought them the “most contemptible race on earth”.¹²²⁵

This “derogation” of the Persian audience, as Goffman puts it, took place largely back stage in a way that was “inconsistent” with the front stage behaviour used by the British in their impression of Overt

¹²¹⁹ FO1011/133, Loraine to R. Hadow, 16 Feb. 1926.

¹²²⁰ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925 (p. 7).

¹²²¹ Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 128.

¹²²² FO1011/127, Loraine to Lindsay, 30 Nov. 1923.

¹²²³ FO1011/127, Loraine to C. Van H. Engert, 24 Nov. 1923.

¹²²⁴ FO1011/127, Loraine to Lindsay, 30 Nov. 1923.

¹²²⁵ H.N. to Percy Loraine, 28 Aug. 1926 in *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 52.

Cordiality.¹²²⁶ This discrepancy illuminates the somewhat typical Orientalist perceptions of the Persian other held by British officials. Connectedly it highlights the degree to which contrivance and insincerity were intrinsically part of the execution of foreign policy and the craft of diplomacy, a view broadly proffered by Cohen. British officials contrived to impress Overt Cordiality despite holding far less palatable views of Persians and Persia in private. They would also contrive to make Britain appear militarily and politically more potent in Persia, at a time when British power had dissipated markedly. That Percy was acutely aware of his acts and words being representative of far greater things than his personal preconceptions is beyond dispute. For this reason he definitely partook of contrivance and insincerity to further British foreign policy aims. It would be unfair, however, to suggest that diplomats were nothing but conscious tools of their represented state in that combined “state selfhood”. It would also be unfair to question the affection that Loraine had for Reza Khan and also for Persia, in spite of his negative outbursts. His biographer recalled how he broke down on the day of his departure, and “sneaking” into the garden he “cried like a kid” whilst reflecting on his work “and the Persians, with whose life” he had “become so much intertwined”.¹²²⁷ Thus despite being a gentleman imperialist and a diplomat prone to controlling emotions and moreover viewing Persians as inferior to his powerful representative state, Percy was capable of dispensing with his official role, betraying a more nuanced personal self.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is that at this juncture that one might ask if Britain’s fostered impressions – contrived or sincere – actually furthered British foreign policy aims in Persia from 1922 to 1926. During the encounter over the Khaz’al Crisis, Loraine had blended his official diplomatic role with his own domineering ‘proconsular’ and yet gentlemanly character, using nonverbal and verbal communication such as eye contact and subtle textual threats drafted by himself or his superiors, to demonstrate Britain’s intention to stand by its commitments to the Sheikh, and defend its commercial and strategic interests in his autonomous region. Loraine had also used what little sabre-rattling stage-props Britain had to hand, to impress Great Power Paternalism on a Persian audience preconceived to be receptive to demonstrations of force. This was, however, mostly a bluff, since simultaneously Loraine also advocated Disinterested Impartiality by putting the sabre back in the scabbard, ordering naval vessels away from Abadan, forcing the Sheikh’s capitulation and using disarming language toward Reza Khan. This reflected Britain’s disinclination to use force to secure a stable and friendly Persia, facilitating the flow of A.P.O.C. oil and implicitly buffering Britain’s line of communication to the east from Bolshevism. Such disinclination was compelled, however, by British parsimony in Persia following the First World War. It was also impelled by Loraine who argued that a more conciliatory approach to Persia would work best after years of unpopular interference during the war. To this end he also advocated the use of Overt Cordiality with

¹²²⁶ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 170.

¹²²⁷ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 133.

deferential verbal communication to make Reza Khan a partner in securing British interests in southern Persia.

This contradictory system of impression management continued throughout Loraine's tenure with increasing emphasis on Disinterested Impartiality and Overt Cordiality, the two impressions identified as most effective by the British Minister. This designation moreover, was eventually supported by Loraine's superiors, especially after the departure of arch-imperialist Curzon. Despite emphasising these two impressions, Loraine, acting as the primary performer through which Britain transmitted its impressions, also constantly employed Great Power Paternalism with what meagre means he had at his disposal. This included subtle sabre-rattling with impressive piece of mobile setting such as the *Renown*. Additionally he used his legation compound, diplomatic cars, pennants, escorts, staff, uniform, comportment and firm language as a means of ritually emphasising Britain's persistent and powerful presence in an 'Oriental' potentate that purportedly had expectations regarding the behaviour of British officialdom. Loraine was moreover the perfect "metteur-en-scene" who produced, directed and starred in this performative enactment of the gentleman imperialist; pleasant and polite yet also proper and puissant.¹²²⁸ In some ways one can consider the focus on these techniques of performance within the impression of Great Power Paternalism, as compensatory, much like in the case of Overt Cordiality in the preceding chapter.

Despite the apparent prevalence of this Great Power Paternalism, Disinterested Impartiality was seemingly more significant during Loraine's tenure, with the Minister studiously avoiding involvement in internal political squabbles, appealing to another self-professed trope of Britishness that Persians apparently admired – fair play and honesty. Britain also conceded to Persian demands for troop withdrawal and ultimately allowed the Sheikh's slow demise, whilst trying to avoid signs of favouritism to Reza Khan which would have endangered his position. Finally Britain employed Overt Cordiality largely on account of Loraine's burgeoning, albeit conditional support of Reza Khan. The impression was furthered through personal acts of friendship, or political acts including debt reduction. Finally Britain's most cordial act was to facilitate the new Shah's coronation, and legitimise Reza's new dynasty with early recognition. Did this 'play' as Lady Louise called the dramatized diplomatic series of encounters from 1922 to 1926, have tangible consequences? That Britain's position in Persia had improved significantly by that latter date is seemingly indisputable. In 1922 the British government and its officials on the ground had been boycotted or branded enemies of Persia. In 1926 the British Legation was treated with a much greater level of respect. Indeed, Kittner asserts that Loraine's policy of "benevolent inaction", "gradually resulted in the re-establishment of 'good relations' between the two countries".¹²²⁹ Harry Bennett also lauds Loraine for laying the foundations for a "steady improvement in Anglo-Persian relations".¹²³⁰

¹²²⁸ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 114.

¹²²⁹ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 301.

¹²³⁰ G. H., Bennett, *British Foreign Policy During the Curzon Period, 1919-1924*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd.: 1995), p. 134.

Loraine and by extension the British government also enjoyed newfound intimacy with Reza Shah, which it was felt, would translate into tangible and rapid results regarding “outstanding questions” in Anglo-Persian relations including war debt and the future of Sheikh Khaz’al who had been arrested and dispossessed of his lands.¹²³¹ Loraine was also hopeful that Persia’s “long delayed” recognition of the Government of Iraq would be expedited. Britain, who had a League of Nations mandate in Iraq, had expected Persian recognition from at least 1922, with Loraine intermittently pressing for a resolution over the entire course of his posting. For her own part Persia required *quid pro quo* guarantees regarding certain demands, before recognition could be given.¹²³² Furthermore following the failed Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919 there was the matter of discriminatory tariff policies which favoured Russian trade over British.¹²³³ There was also the uncertain future of the Duzdap Railway, an Indian line which was extended into Persia during the war to support the eastern cordon. Ever since the end of the war the two countries had been debating its fate and Loraine had proved incapable of bringing about a satisfactory conclusion.¹²³⁴ Furthermore resolutions were needed relating to telegraphy in Persia, with many British owned and operated lines coveted by the Persian government.¹²³⁵

Chamberlain shared Loraine’s optimistic hopes for a future resolution of these matters, however, putting trust in the continuation of his “friendly, patient, and conciliatory attitude in Persia” which would be employed by his replacement Clive.¹²³⁶ All was not as it seemed, however. When Loraine left Persia on the 2nd of July, only the most “perfunctory civilities were paid him at the frontier” despite him being one the “staunchest friends Persia ever possessed”.¹²³⁷ Nicolson also recalled how immediately after this “ungraceful” treatment of Loraine, Reza Shah demanded that the British Legation be stripped of its military escort. Moreover none of the outstanding issues that Loraine thought ripe for resolution proved to be so. Clive’s Annual Report was “pessimistic” and a “depressing read”, noting that 1926 had “proved a disappointment” since “no single one of the questions outstanding between His Majesty’s Government and Persia has been settled”.¹²³⁸ Britain’s frustrations surrounding these issues continued as the 1920s progressed into the early 1930s by which time Persia had successfully evaded the question of debt to Britain, it never having been put to the Majlis, a persistent and effective tactic employed by Persian statesmen.¹²³⁹ This was despite the gesture of goodwill on the part of Loraine who secured a substantial reduction of the sum owed. Meanwhile Sheikh Khaz’al was perhaps the most tragic result of Persia’s propensity for acting contrary to British wishes. The Shah permanently annexed his lands and the old

¹²³¹ FO416/78, Loraine to Chamberlain, 31 Dec. 1925 & FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925 (p. 7).

¹²³² FO416/78, Loraine to Chamberlain, 31 Dec. 1925, FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1922 (p. 21) & FO416/112, A.R.P., 1925 (p. 13).

¹²³³ Kittner, *Issue*, p. 102 & FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925 (p. 60).

¹²³⁴ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925 (p. 53-55).

¹²³⁵ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1925 (p. 56).

¹²³⁶ FO416/79, Chamberlain to Nicolson, 28 July 1926 (p. 46).

¹²³⁷ FO416/112, A.R.P., 1926 (p. 3).

¹²³⁸ FO416/112, A.R.P., 1926 (p. 3).

¹²³⁹ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 100 & p. 102-149.

man, a Knight of His Majesty, died alone in Tehran in 1936 still under house arrest.¹²⁴⁰ The Persian government had also successfully muscled in on yet more British interests including the quarantine service, and the lighting and buoying of the Persian Gulf. Reza Shah had also secured Royal Navy evacuations from coaling stations on the islands of Henjam and Basidu.¹²⁴¹ Nicolson and later other officials called such incidents “pin-pricks” which Reza Shah and his wily Court Minister Teymourdash chose to frequently poke the British government with during the continued process of centralisation and the concomitant removal of foreign interference.¹²⁴² Kittner writes that as a consequence Britain slowly re-orientated its Gulf policy toward the Arab Littoral, exercising “pragmatic and successive withdrawal of British involvement in Persia”.¹²⁴³ As long as A.P.O.C.’s operations remained largely unchallenged, and so long as the Gulf was secure, Britain was prepared to suffer such pricks.

Thus when in 1926 Clive reported that “our domination of the Gulf is unassailed [sic]” and the “position in the oil-fields is intact”, the situation was tolerable. Moreover this situation prevailed until the forced abdication of Reza Shah in 1941, though A.P.O.C. had been compelled to cede more of its profits and concessionary rights to the Persian government in an agreement in 1933 following the cancellation of the D’Arcy Concession in the preceding year.¹²⁴⁴ Britain also continued to desire a stable and relatively friendly Government in Persia, and if that meant surrendering on certain issues, so be it.¹²⁴⁵ In the context of these overarching aims therefore, Britain’s performance during the rise of Reza Khan could be seen as relatively effective. Nevertheless, Kittner notes that Britain “had neither the desire nor the capacity to engage in a more aggressive policy” against a determined Persian government headed by a strong leader in the shape of Reza Shah, who merits some description here. It is apparent that Reza, the new Persian strongman, was a consummate political performer himself in that he strung the British – especially Loraine – along with professions of friendship and promises of future resolutions to outstanding issues. He also avoided those red lines including the nationalisation of A.P.O.C., the premature invasion of Arabistan, and denying access to the Sheikh in Terhran, which would have provoked a serious response even in Britain’s relatively weakened and disinterested state. Reza Khan was also skilful in his use of verbal communications, frequently flattering the British by asserting that “he would do with Persian hands that which the British had wished to do with British hands, *i.e.* create a strong army, restore order and consolidate a strong and independent Persia”.¹²⁴⁶ Reza Khan had also offered Loraine his “personal friendship” and furthermore the qualified friendship of Persia from as far back as January of 1922.¹²⁴⁷ Such professions of friendship continued throughout Loraine’s time in Persia, including in his farewell audience where the new Shah also employed nonverbal communication.

¹²⁴⁰ Strunk, *The Reign of Shāykh*, p. 468 & Kittner, *Issues*, p. 86.

¹²⁴¹ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 100.

¹²⁴² H.N. to Percy, 28 Aug. 1926, in *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 52 & Kittner, *Issues*, p. 134, p. 145, p. 162, p. 171, p. 178 & p. 185.

¹²⁴³ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 302.

¹²⁴⁴ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1926, Clive to Chamberlain, 26 Jan. 1927 & Kittner, *Issues*, p. 277 & p. 297. See also Parviz Mina, ‘Oil Agreements in Iran’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 20 July 2004, <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/oil-agreements-in-iran>> [accessed: 14 Nov. 2016].

¹²⁴⁵ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 310.

¹²⁴⁶ FO416/70, Enclosure Memorandum of Conversation between Sir P.Loraine and Minister of War in Loraine to Curzon, 31 Jan. 1922.

¹²⁴⁷ FO416/70, Loraine to Curzon, 23 Jan. 1922.

With a “broad smile” on his face, the Shah expressed his “deep regret” at Loraine’s departure. The Shah also said he was “taking leave of me [Loraine] as His Majesty’s representative but also as a personal friend and a collaborator for whom he had a genuine personal affection”. The Shah also “expressed the very earnest hope that” Loraine’s “successor would employ the same conciliatory...methods” which in Loraine’s case “had been so eminently useful to His Majesty’s Government and helpful for the Persian Government”.¹²⁴⁸ Similarly Nicolson recalls how he “burst into real cordiality” when he and Loraine visited the new ruler in December of 1925, thanking “him for all he had done to help him”.¹²⁴⁹

The smile according to Cohen is another important and often contrived communicative indicator of interstate relations, the broader and longer usually signifying satisfaction and close relations.¹²⁵⁰ Reza Shah was seemingly indicating close Anglo-Iranian relations, however, in view of the failure to resolve outstanding issues, Nicolson who took over from Loraine before Clive’s arrival, began to question the Shah and the whole basis of Britain’s policy of pursuing “good relations”.¹²⁵¹ He thought the Shah’s lamentation at Loraine’s departure was “crocodilian”¹²⁵² and subsequently wrote to his former chief suggesting that Reza Khan was actually “untrustworthy” and “sly”, and that ‘good relations’ would not further foreign policy aims in Persia. It might “prevent” the Persians from “being nasty; but it” wouldn’t “make them nice”.¹²⁵³ Moreover in Nicolson’s opinion the Shah was actually becoming ‘nasty’ in Persia, prone to “spasms of impulsive rage” as he worked “towards a military autocracy”.¹²⁵⁴ Reza Shah was also being incomprehensibly ‘nice’ to Russia, appointing Russian sympathisers to his cabinet, inducing the Majlis to approve an agreement regarding the Caspian fisheries, and sending the trusted Teymouratche to Moscow as his personal representative. By contrast “he did everything possible to dissociate himself from Great Britain and to make public his repudiation of any pro-English tendency”.¹²⁵⁵ One could argue that Nicolson’s views were due in part to his aversion to the Persian race or his “mental agony” over Vita’s departure,¹²⁵⁶ however, both Clive and later Reginald Hoare expressed similar concerns and frustrations.¹²⁵⁷ Moreover as representatives of “one of the world’s most powerful nations” they found themselves equally unable to settle persistent outstanding issues with Persia, a “third-rate Power”.¹²⁵⁸ Nicolson’s concerns led to him to deliver a fateful despatch to the Foreign Office in September of 1926 suggesting that “friendly relations” was turning into a failure.¹²⁵⁹ This caused a “minor sensation” in the Foreign Office.¹²⁶⁰ Loraine felt that his former Counsellor was being too pessimistic which he relayed to

¹²⁴⁸ FO416/79, Enclosure No. 21 Memorandum by Loraine in Nicolson to Chamberlain, 3 July 1926.

¹²⁴⁹ HN to his parents, 13 Dec. 1925 in *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 45.

¹²⁵⁰ Cohen, *Theatre of Power*, p. 106-107.

¹²⁵¹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 135.

¹²⁵² Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 279.

¹²⁵³ HN to Loraine, 28 Aug. 1926 in *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 52.

¹²⁵⁴ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1926 (p. 3).

¹²⁵⁵ FO416/112, A.R.P. – 1926 (p. 5).

¹²⁵⁶ HN to his parents, 7 May 1926 in *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 48.

¹²⁵⁷ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 37.

¹²⁵⁸ Kittner, *Issues*, p. 301.

¹²⁵⁹ FO416/79, Nicolson to Chamberlain, 30 Sept. 1926.

¹²⁶⁰ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 136.

Oliphant. Nicolson's superiors including Oliphant, Tyrrell, and the Foreign Secretary, thought him presumptuous and incorrect in his doubts about the necessity of pursuing good relations.¹²⁶¹ Lees-Milne argues that the censure Nicolson consequently received for his doubting despatch contributed significantly to the premature demise of his diplomatic career.¹²⁶² Chamberlain also felt compelled to remind Clive that the "primary objects" of Britain's relations with Persia were the safety of her commercial interests including A.P.O.C. and the security of India through the existence of a stable independent Persia. Moreover he stated that "His Majesty's Government are convinced that a policy of good relations with Persia is the one best calculated to serve these purposes". Furthermore whilst it was a "matter for regret" that the Persian government had not yet "fully appreciated" the value of Britain's friendly attitude, "His Majesty's Government" was not "disheartened".¹²⁶³

This was because "in the end" Britain's "desire for good and friendly relations" would be recognised and reciprocated by the Persian government who would settle any outstanding issues in due course.¹²⁶⁴ And so it was that Britain's use of certain impressions persisted, most notably Overt Cordiality and Disinterested Impartiality. In the circumstances there was little else for it. Although their key interests remained relatively secure, the British government had met its match in Reza Khan. His physical stature and presence – six foot three and "powerfully built" – was on a par with Loraine in person, whilst he benefitted from the added "latent brutality" of a non-commissioned Cossack officer.¹²⁶⁵ Much as Loraine's "personal front" sometimes represented Britain in a "state selfhood", so too it could be argued did Reza Khan's. His powerful physique (Fig. 51) was indicative of a new "strong and independent Persia" which Britain had to deal with on altogether more genuinely equal footing, at least until the Second World War.¹²⁶⁶ Lastly although Nicolson's concerns about Reza Khan proved in many ways accurate in that he took on the mantle of a "quintessential dictator", it can still be said that the first Pahlavi dynast wrought massive changes on Persia and did pursue a more "self-reliant" and "self-sustaining" future for what became the modern country of Iran.¹²⁶⁷

¹²⁶¹ Waterfield, *Professional*, p. 136-137.

¹²⁶² Lees-Milne, *Harold*, p. 290.

¹²⁶³ FO416/79, Chamberlain to Clive, 29 Nov. 1926.

¹²⁶⁴ FO416/79, Chamberlain to Clive, 29 Nov. 1926.

¹²⁶⁵ FO416/70, Loraine to Curzon, 31 Jan. 1922, Sackville-West, *Passenger*, p. 127 & HN to Parents, 13 Dec. 1925 in *Nicolson Diaries*, p. 44.

¹²⁶⁶ FO416/70, Enclosure Memorandum of Conversation between Sir P.Loraine and Minister of War in Loraine to Curzon, 31 Jan. 1922.

¹²⁶⁷ Hambly, 'Pahlavi Autocracy – 1921', p. 235-243.



Fig. 51: The dominating presence of the Cossack trooper turned King of Kings circa 1926 (FO1011/261).

CHAPTER
III
THE COLLAPSE OF THE PAHLAVI
DYNASTY
1974-1979

INTRODUCTION

Awake! – for Doctor David None-Too-Bright,
Has joined with Eldon Griffiths and the Right:
And Lo! the Shah appears to have become
A Freedom-Loving Fellow overnight.
Dreaming of Teheran, where Bullets fly,
They heard an urgent Voice from Millbank cry:
“Awake, for there are Chieftain Tanks to sell,
And One thank God who is prepared to buy”.
Come, fill the Order-Book and let us sing
The Praises of the kindly Killer-King
Come, grovel to the Peacock Throne – for Lo!
We need the Oil – and Oil is everything.¹²⁶⁹

This final analysis chapter advances chronologically a further forty-eight years to 1974, when the seemingly omnipotent Pahlavi potentate Mohammad Reza Shah reached the “dizzying” heights of political and economic success,¹²⁷⁰ before a popular revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini swept him from power in January of 1979 in the wake of yearlong protests over repression, corruption, and a faltering economy.¹²⁷¹ Contemporaneously Britain was encountering a newfound sense of global impotency following imperial decline and decolonisation.¹²⁷² Within this context Britain assumed three impressions to further its foreign policy aims in Persia; Overt Cordiality, Disinterested Impartiality and finally Great Power Survivalism. The first was to flatter the Shah as a means of maintaining cordial Anglo-Iranian relations, whilst the second was to allay any suspicion of interference in Iranian internal affairs. Furthermore both impressions would assist Britain’s policy of maintaining an alliance with Iran as part of the broad U.S. led strategy of ‘Containment’ which sought to minimise Soviet influence in the Middle East and beyond.¹²⁷³ As to Great Power Survivalism, this was centred on ensuring that the Iranians would continue “to regard Britain as relevant politically...economically,” militarily and even culturally,¹²⁷⁴ meriting the existence of such an alliance. More importantly, all three of these impressions

¹²⁶⁹ Roger Woddis, ‘The Persian Version’, *Punch Historical Archive*, 15 Nov. 1978.

¹²⁷⁰ FCO8/2497, Annual Review Iran (A.R.I.) – 1975, (p. 1).

¹²⁷¹ Gavin Hambly, ‘The Pahlavi Autocracy: Muhammad Riza Shah, 1941-1979’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 244-293, (p. 287-293).

¹²⁷² Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974-1979*, (London: Penguin, 2013), p. 76-89.

¹²⁷³ Bruce Robellet Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. vx.

¹²⁷⁴ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State for Foreign And Commonwealth affairs to Iran 4-8 March 1976 – Brief No. 1.

were used to nurture a blossoming commercial relationship with Iran. As in the case of the previous chapters, the impressions are first studied in the context of a specific event within the period, namely the visit of Princess Ashraf Pahlavi to Britain in June of 1976. Her visit represents the middle-point of the period under review, whilst also providing examples of all three impressions. This section also provides context on nature Anglo-Iranian relations and the relative status of Britain and Iran in 1970s since this heavily impacted upon impressions fostered during the period. Thereafter all three impressions are assessed in separate sections covering the years 1974 to 1979.

THE VISIT OF PRINCESS ASHRAF 'TO BE KILLED BY SUCH RIFF-RAFF'

During the afternoon of the 12th of June 1976 the Shah's twin sister Her Imperial Highness (H.I.H.) Princess Ashraf ul-Mulk Pahlavi, paid a visit to Wadham College Oxford to observe the fruits of her £150,000 donation to the institution for the construction of a new Persian library.¹²⁷⁵ Despite a courteous official college welcome, there was a big crowd of demonstrators and only few officers "to cope" with an ugly reception that caught Thames Valley Police "completely by surprise".¹²⁷⁶ Indeed, it was only "at the last moment" that efforts had been made "to avoid the demonstrations" by attempting to smuggle the Princess in "through a back entrance".¹²⁷⁷ According to the Iranian Ambassador Parvis Radji, this failed, as "there were demonstrators there too" with cars "deliberately parked...to prevent...passage". Meanwhile, "at least a hundred people, some with hoods on, chanted the most ferocious obscenities" and "pelted" the car with eggs".¹²⁷⁸ When projectiles turned to "stones" that caused "considerable damage" to the Ambassador's Rolls Royce,¹²⁷⁹ a "phalanx of police" had to be called in to escort the party to the Warden's lodgings. Here the beleaguered party looked over some architectural plans, however, the moment was spoilt by "deafening chants" outside".¹²⁸⁰ Subsequently a subdued dinner was held in the college hall, purposefully emptied of students to "prevent a repetition" of any unpleasant disruption. Nevertheless it proved to be a "wretched meal", whilst dessert featured "more abuse" dished out by demonstrators on departure.¹²⁸¹

The Princess was "quite shaken by the day's experience", remarking that it would have been a "pity to be killed by such riff-raff".¹²⁸² As the trip to Wadham was connected to an official four day visit it was unsurprising that she and the Ambassador were "interested to know what" had "gone wrong with the

¹²⁷⁵ Radji, *In the Service of the Peacock Throne*, Entry 16 June 1976, p. 14 & Ashraf Pahlavi, *Faces in the Mirror*, (New Jersey Prentice-Hall Inc., 1980), p. 171.

¹²⁷⁶ FCO8/2767, 'Report on Visit by Her Imperial Highness', K.I.H. Whatley, Programme Organiser, Central Office of Information, n.d., & FCO8/2767, Roger Du Boulay, Vice-Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps to Lucas, 14 June 1976.

¹²⁷⁷ FCO8/2767, Boulay to Lucas, 14 June 1976 & Radji, Entry 16 June, 1976 p. 14.

¹²⁷⁸ Radji, Entry 16 June, 1976 p. 14.

¹²⁷⁹ FCO8/2767, Tony Crosland to Parsons, 14 June 1976 & FCO8/2767, 'Report on a Visit by Her Imperial Highness', H.W. Harrison, 14 June 1976.

¹²⁸⁰ Radji, Entry 16 June, 1976 p. 14 & FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 14 June 1976.

¹²⁸¹ Radji, Entry 16 June, 1976 p. 15.

¹²⁸² Radji, Entry 16 June, 1976 p. 15 & FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 14 June 1976.

police arrangements”.¹²⁸³ Radji had previously requested that demonstrators be kept at least two hundred yards away, an inconceivable distance in the opinion of Ivor Lucas, the head of the Middle East Department (M.E.D.) at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (F.C.O). Reports that protestors had been allowed “within touching distance” were, however, of more concern.¹²⁸⁴ As such the F.C.O. asked the police for an “urgent report”,¹²⁸⁵ whilst expressing their “regret”,¹²⁸⁶ for the “disastrous occasion”.¹²⁸⁷

OVERT CORDIALITY

In this moment one sees how Britain’s desired impression of Overt Cordiality had been disrupted by demonstrators causing a “scene”. According to Goffman a scene occurs “when the audience decides it can no longer play the game of polite interaction” by confronting performers with disruptive “expressive acts”.¹²⁸⁸ The disruptive audience at Wadham had been composed of some of the estimated 20,000 Iranian students at British universities.¹²⁸⁹ Both Qajar and later Pahlavi governments had sought to modernise Iran in part by sending students to Western universities.¹²⁹⁰ During the 1930s these students became increasingly politicised and anti-Pahlavi,¹²⁹¹ a situation which only worsened during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah. At the same time numbers of students increased substantially, resulting in the creation of student organisations including the Iranian Student Society in Great Britain (I.S.S.), which the *Guardian* claimed was responsible for Wadham fracas.¹²⁹² The I.S.S. had been active in Britain since the 1950s,¹²⁹³ and in 1962 united with other organisations in Europe and the U.S. to form the Confederation of Iranian Students (C.I.S.). With up to 100,000 members the C.I.S. “spearheaded an international campaign exposing the shah’s regime as a repressive dictatorship” by working in “close cooperation with human-rights” groups and Western student bodies to organise “militant demonstrations” whenever members of the Pahlavi royal family were present.¹²⁹⁴

Furthermore Goffman argues that scenes take place when individuals in a performance team “can no longer countenance” the actions of their fellow team members.¹²⁹⁵ Standing alongside Iranian students at Wadham were also “masked” British student activists, “Trotskyites” and individuals from Amnesty International, the well-known British-founded organisation that assisted political prisoners around the world.¹²⁹⁶ There was also representation from the Committee Against Repression in Iran (C.A.R.I.)

¹²⁸³ FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 14 June 1976 & FCO8/2767, P.K. Williams to W. Oakes, 6 Feb. 1976.

¹²⁸⁴ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Boulay, 14 June 1976.

¹²⁸⁵ FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 14 June 1976.

¹²⁸⁶ FCO8/2767, Michael Weir, F.C.O., to Boulay, 14 June 1976.

¹²⁸⁷ Radji, Entry 16 June, 1976 p. 14.

¹²⁸⁸ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 210-212.

¹²⁸⁹ FCO8/2761, ‘U.K. Trade with Iran’, Lucas to Weir, n.d., 1976.

¹²⁹⁰ Afshin Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition to the Shah*, (California: Mazda Publishers, 2002), p. 13-20.

¹²⁹¹ Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student*, p. 19-25.

¹²⁹² ‘Iranian visit is opposed’, *Guardian*, 10 June 1976.

¹²⁹³ Afshin, *Student*, p. 33-34.

¹²⁹⁴ Afshin Matin-Asgari, ‘Confederation of Iranian Students, National Union’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 15 Dec. 1992 <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/confederation-of-iranian-students>> [accessed:21.11.16].

¹²⁹⁵ Goffman *Presentation*, p. 210-212.

¹²⁹⁶ FCO8/2767, Boulay to Lucas, 14 June 1976. For more information on Amnesty International see FCO8/2997, H.J. Spence, ‘Amnesty International and Iran’, 18 Jan. 1977.

composed of British political organisations, trade unions and student groups with support from the National Union of Students (N.U.S).¹²⁹⁷ C.A.R.I. argued that Princess Ashraf was a “representative” of “one of the most barbaric...regimes in the world”,¹²⁹⁸ that had just “increased its repression of opponents to higher levels than ever before” having killed sixty “oppositionists” in five months.¹²⁹⁹ Amnesty International concurred arguing that Iran had the “highest rate of death penalties in the world” and a “history of torture beyond belief”.¹³⁰⁰

British students, C.A.R.I. representatives, and British members of Amnesty International were by extension also protesting at their own government’s relationship with the Pahlavi regime, including hosting the Princess.¹³⁰¹ The N.U.S. was “outraged”,¹³⁰² whilst C.A.R.I. argued that the Labour government’s invitation to Ashraf lent “implicit support to a regime” which treated “basic human and democratic rights with contempt”. As such they called on “all progressive forces” in Britain to join picket lines, or to write to the Prime Minister in protest.¹³⁰³ All of the members of these domestic groups were in a sense on the same national performance team as the British government by dint of citizenship. Much like the crowd in 1873, they were representing the country and implicitly playing a part in the government’s impression management. Instead of complementing Overt Cordiality, however, they had caused a scene, expressing discontent with the reception and the cordial nature of Anglo-Iranian relations. This did not assist the foreign policy aims of James Callaghan’s Labour administration which wanted the brief visit of the Iranian princess to “enhance” the cordiality of Anglo-Iranian relations.¹³⁰⁴

Such enhancement was needed to further certain British foreign policy aims. Firstly the increased cordiality would help to preserve Britain’s strategic anti-Soviet alliance with Iran constituted first by the Baghdad Pact from 1955-1958 and subsequently by the Central Treaty Organisation (C.E.N.T.O).¹³⁰⁵ The latter institution in particular brought further layers to Anglo-Iranian relations and British policy in Persia. Whilst Cihat Göktepe argues that C.E.N.T.O. had been useful for keeping Iran in the pro-Western camp during its early years,¹³⁰⁶ Panagiotis Dimitrakis is more sceptical of its efficacy in the 1970s, arguing instead that it became useless as a defensive alliance for two reasons. Firstly it was the U.S. which had been Iran’s major strategic and military partner since the late 1950s, in a relationship secured bilaterally.¹³⁰⁷ Furthermore the 1970s was characterised by Cold War ‘détente’ which meant that Iran was

¹²⁹⁷ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 499 & Marguerite Garling, *The Human Rights Handbook*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979), p. 82.

¹²⁹⁸ FCO8/2767, C.A.R.I. and I.S.S in G.B., ‘Stop Labour’s Collaboration with the Iranian Dictatorship!’, n.d.

¹²⁹⁹ FCO8/2767, ‘Stop Labour’s Collaboration’.

¹³⁰⁰ *Amnesty International, Annual Report 1974/75*, (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1975).

¹³⁰¹ ‘British arms sales drive stirs protest’, *Guardian*, 16 June 1976.

¹³⁰² FCO8/2767, N.U.S., ‘Open letter to the Prime Minister Mr Callaghan’, 1 June 1976.

¹³⁰³ FCO8/2767, C.A.R.I. and I.S.S., ‘Labour’s Collaboration’.

¹³⁰⁴ FCO8/2767, R.N. Dales. F.C.O., to P.R.H. Wright, Private Secretary 10 Downing Street, 10 May 1976.

¹³⁰⁵ Panagiotis Dimitrakis, ‘British Diplomacy and the Decline of CENTO’, *Comparative Strategy*, 28 (2009), pp. 317-331, (p. 328).

¹³⁰⁶ Cihat Göktepe, ‘The ‘forgotten alliance’? Anglo-Turkish relations and CENTO, 1959-65’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 35 (1999), pp. 103-129, p. 118 & p. 126).

¹³⁰⁷ Mark J. Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah*, (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 85-130.

under no great threat of Soviet incursion. As such the British came to see C.E.N.T.O. as a “paper tiger”.¹³⁰⁸ In addition from 1967 British governments were contemplating cost-saving disengagement from the Middle East.¹³⁰⁹

Britain chose, however, to remain in C.E.N.T.O. with several motivations in mind. The first was the organisation’s provision of a secure air route to Hong Kong, one of the empire’s last remaining possessions.¹³¹⁰ Secondly despite reduced risk of Russian aggression, departure from the alliance would have signalled weakness to the Warsaw Pact.¹³¹¹ Furthermore as part of C.E.N.T.O. the Shah had come to play “an important role in strengthening security in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean area”¹³¹² following Britain’s actual withdrawal from the Gulf in December of 1971.¹³¹³ This included Anglo-Iranian cooperation in a military intervention in Oman from 1972 to 1975 to combat an insurgency featuring Marxist forces including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman.¹³¹⁴ This also suited President Richard Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, both of whom wanted Iran to play a more muscular role in the Gulf as part of the “Nixon Doctrine” whereby regional allies would be armed and entrusted with responsibility for containing Soviet influence.¹³¹⁵

More importantly British officials argued that leaving C.E.N.T.O. would have been “extremely damaging” to relations with the Shah.¹³¹⁶ Though His Imperial Majesty (H.I.M.) had at times been suspicious and critical of the organisation he never sought to leave it.¹³¹⁷ Joseph Kechichian contends that the Shah was instead content to remain in what was an “exclusive international club” which provided “prestige” as well as economic benefits.¹³¹⁸ Similarly opposing the Shah’s ambitions for a more prestigious role in policing the Gulf also ran the risk of damaging relations.¹³¹⁹ This was significant since the British were also reliant on Iranian amity for the “good thing” they had “going with the Shah” in the field of commerce.¹³²⁰ The 1970s in particular saw a dramatic increase in Anglo-Iranian trade. In 1970 visible

¹³⁰⁸ Dimitrakis, ‘CENTO’, p. 321 & p. 327.

¹³⁰⁹ Dimitrakis, ‘CENTO’, p. 319.

¹³¹⁰ Dimitrakis, ‘CENTO’, p. 319 & p. 322.

¹³¹¹ Dimitrakis, ‘CENTO’, p. 320.

¹³¹² FCO8/2761, ‘U.K. Trade’.

¹³¹³ David Owen, *Time to Declare*, (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 389-390.

¹³¹⁴ Amin Saikal, ‘Iranian Foreign Policy, 1921-1979’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 426-456 (p. 455),

FCO8/3601, N.W. Browne, ‘British Policy on Iran 1974-1978’, p. 45 & James F. Goode, ‘Assisting Our Bothers, Defending Ourselves: The Iranian Intervention in Oman, 1972-1975’, *Iranian Studies*, 47 (2014), pp. 41-462. (p. 446-448 & p. 450-453).

¹³¹⁵ Roham Alvandi, ‘Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: The Origins of Iranian Primacy in the Persian Gulf’, *Diplomatic History*, 36 (2012), pp. 337-372 (p. 346-371), F. Gregory Gause, ‘British and American Policies in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1973’, *Review of International Studies*, 11 (1985), pp. 247-273, (p. 260-267) & Goode, ‘Assisting’, p. 442-444.

¹³¹⁶ Dimitrakis, ‘CENTO’, p. 322.

¹³¹⁷ Panagiotis Dimitrakis, *Failed Alliances of the Cold War, Britain’s Strategy and Ambitions in Asia and the Middle East*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. 2012), p. 151.

¹³¹⁸ Joseph A. Kechichian, ‘Central Treaty Organisation’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 15 Dec. 1991 <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/central-treaty-organization-cento-a-mutual-defense-and-economic-cooperation-pact-among-persia-turkey-and-pakistan-wi>> [accessed: 21.11.16].

¹³¹⁹ Tore T. Petersen, *Richard Nixon, Great Britain and the Anglo-American Alignment in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula*, (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2009), p. 71.

¹³²⁰ Ivor Lucas, *Road to Damascus*, (London: The Radcliff Press, 1997), p. 170.

trade with Iran was valued £140m,¹³²¹ by 1976, however, that figure had risen to a staggering £1.5bn.¹³²² At this point Michael Weir, the Assistant Under-Secretary and Director of Middle East and North African Affairs at the F.C.O. reported that Iran had become Britain's "largest market in Asia and the Middle East" and "perhaps" the country's "tenth largest" globally.¹³²³ Traded goods unsurprisingly involved Iranian oil, which provided a fifth of Britain's crude supplies in 1976.¹³²⁴ Oil also played a huge role in the growth of trade after the Iran's revenues jumped from \$2.4bn in 1972 to \$18.5bn in 1974 following the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (O.P.E.C) oil embargo on the West.¹³²⁵ In January of 1974 this led to Britain selling Iran £110m worth of industrial raw materials in exchange for five million tons of oil at a favourable price.¹³²⁶ In that same year the government also agreed to take a \$1.2bn loan from the Shah's growing "foreign aid" budget for investment in the British public sector.¹³²⁷

Furthermore whilst in 1972 British exports to Iran stood at £117m, they had risen to £510.9m by 1976. Meanwhile mostly petroleum based imports from Iran rose rapidly in value from £123.8m in 1972 to £1.049bn by 1976.¹³²⁸ As with the hefty loan, the increased purchase of British goods had been facilitated by higher oil revenues. Commercial activity was also helped by the 1972 formation of a Joint Ministerial Economic Commission (J.M.E.C) which met annually for the purposes of encouraging "greater trade and economic cooperation".¹³²⁹ A substantial chunk of Britain's increasing exports came from "manufactured goods, machinery and transport" including saloon cars made by Chrysler Corporation U.K.¹³³⁰ Furthermore around the time of Ashraf's visit the Shah was even negotiating the purchase of Concorde passenger jets.¹³³¹ There were also contracts involved in "roads, railways, ports" and power stations, "cold stores, warehouses, retail stores" and finally in "education and health" facilities.¹³³² In this latter context Ashraf's visit was aimed at taking advantage of H.I.H.'s "considerable commercial influence" in her capacity as President of the Imperial Organisation of Social Services (I.O.S.S.) in Iran.¹³³³ This Pahlavi family charity was set up shortly after the Second World War, and looked "to raise the level of health and education among the poorer classes of the population" of Iran, engaging in the construction of hospitals, training doctors, controlling diseases, and procuring school textbooks and pharmaceutical supplies.¹³³⁴ A number of British firms involved in this sector were already

¹³²¹ Frank Brenchley, *Britain and the Middle East, An Economic History 1945-87*, (London: Lester Crook Academic Publishing, 1989), p. 179.

¹³²² Brenchley, *Economic*, p. 259.

¹³²³ FCO8/2761, 'U.K. Trade'.

¹³²⁴ FCO8/2761, 'U.K. Trade'.

¹³²⁵ Hushang Moghtader 'The Impact of Increased Oil Revenue on Iran's Economic Development' in Elie Kedourie & Sylvia G. Haim eds., *Towards a Modern Iran, Studies in Thought, Politics and Society*, (London: Frank Cass, 1980), p. 241-262, (p. 241).

¹³²⁶ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 47 & 'Oil barter: self-defeating protectionism', *Times*, 28 Jan. 1974.

¹³²⁷ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 47 & FCO8/2497, I.A.R. – 1974 (p. 2).

¹³²⁸ Brenchley, *Economic*, p. 254 & p. 259 & FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 43 & p. 48.

¹³²⁹ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 42-43.

¹³³⁰ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 48 & 'Big Rootes Deal in Iran', *Financial Times*, 24 March 1970.

¹³³¹ 'Concorde Iran Deal Still On', *Financial Times*, 15 May 1976.

¹³³² FCO8/2761, 'U.K. Trade', & 'U.K. Lands £10m Iranian Power Station Order', *Financial Times*, 22 July 1971.

¹³³³ FCO8/2767, Dales to P.R.H. Wright, 10 May 1976.

¹³³⁴ FCO8/2767, Lucas, 'Brief: No.3 – Visit of Ashraf of Iran', 4 June 1976.

operating in Iran, whilst others were “under negotiation” for further projects.¹³³⁵ Meanwhile there was talk of the Department of Health and Social Security (D.H.S.S.) acting as an I.O.S.S. pharmaceutical procurement agent.¹³³⁶

Britain’s most lucrative and also its most controversial commercial interaction with Iran was, however, the sale of weaponry which began around 1967,¹³³⁷ before picking up major momentum in the 1970s. By 1976 over 20,000 British jobs depended on various contracts which amounted to “over 30% of the U.K.’s defence sales” valued between £1.8 and £2bn.¹³³⁸ As a result “Iran became by far the largest recipient in the world of British defence sales between 1970 and 1979”.¹³³⁹ Major purchases included Chieftain Tanks and Scorpion armoured reconnaissance vehicles. This burgeoning commercial relationship was very important to Britain and its often struggling manufacturing sector.¹³⁴⁰ For these reasons in part, Anthony Parsons, the British Ambassador in Iran from 1974, had reorganised the embassy by the following year, making “export promotion” its first priority,¹³⁴¹ in a business environment permeated by “ferocious” competition with Europe,¹³⁴² Japan and the U.S.¹³⁴³ Parson’s strategy was also compelled by changes in government attitudes toward commerce after a report from the Plowden Committee in 1963. This stressed that “economic and commercial work” had assumed such a “position of fundamental importance” for diplomatic staff that it “must be regarded as a first charge on the resources of overseas services”.¹³⁴⁴ The Duncan Report of 1969 reiterated these points,¹³⁴⁵ and their combined effect purportedly ensured that that Diplomatic Service was “brainwashed...into believing that trade promotion was the be-all and end-all” of a diplomat’s duties, even to the detriment of political observation.¹³⁴⁶ Similarly defence policy took on a commercial hue when the Stokes Report of 1965 precipitated Labour’s creation of the Defence Sales Organisation (D.S.O.). This aimed to facilitate higher levels of defence exports to boost British employment and offset the costs of domestic military development.¹³⁴⁷

Just how important facilitating trade with Iran had become for Britain is related to the state of the country and its economy in the 1970s. Although the decade has been subject to some revisionist scholarship citing press sensationalism and the perpetuation of pessimistic distortions, it was still a

¹³³⁵ FCO8/2767, ‘Brief: No.3 – Ashraf & Robert Graham, *The Illusion of Power*, (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1978), p. 156-157.

¹³³⁶ FCO8/2767, George Chalmers, Counsellor Tehran, to Lucas, 27 May 1976.

¹³³⁷ Dimitrakis, *Failed*, p. 152.

¹³³⁸ FCO8/2761, ‘U.K. Trade’.

¹³³⁹ Anthony Parsons, ‘An expense of money in a waste of weapons’, *Index of Censorship*, 10 (1991), pp. 25-26 (p. 25).

¹³⁴⁰ Brenchley, *Economic*, p. 249.

¹³⁴¹ Anthony Parsons, *The Pride and the Fall, Iran, 1974-1979*, (Jonathan Cape: London, 1984), p. 37.

¹³⁴² FCO8/2497, I.A.R – 1975, (p. 7) & FCO8/2761, ‘U.K. Trade’.

¹³⁴³ Posnett, ‘Treating’, p. 121. See also ‘PARSONS, Sir Anthony Derrick, GCMG, LVO, MC (1922-1996)’, pp. 1-29 (p.15), Churchill Archives British Diplomatic Oral History Programme <<https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Leahy.pdf>> [accessed: 10.12.16].

¹³⁴⁴ *Report of the Committee on Representational Services Overseas appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Plowden 1962-1963*, vol. Cmnd. 2276 (London: Her Majesty’s Station Office, 1964), p. 3.

¹³⁴⁵ Zara Steiner, ‘The Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Resistance and Adaptation to Changing Times’, *Contemporary British History*, 8 (2004), pp. 13-30 (p. 26).

¹³⁴⁶ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 182.

¹³⁴⁷ Mark Phythian, *The Politics of British Arms Sales in 1964*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 30-33 & p. 64-75.

severely testing time for Britain.¹³⁴⁸ In the early years of the 1970s Europe's "economic invalid" was facing many of the same problems it had experienced in the decades prior including a devalued pound and a "massive" balance of payments deficit.¹³⁴⁹ This was exacerbated by an ever declining share of the world trade in manufacturing from 25 percent in 1950 to just 10 percent in 1970, half that of West Germany.¹³⁵⁰

More generally there was low growth, with interest rates at "crisis levels", "rampant" inflation and a budget deficit "careering almost out of control".¹³⁵¹ Unemployment had also reached the "emotive" one million mark for the first time in 1971,¹³⁵² a figure that was to become commonplace for the rest of the decade with unemployment rates of up to 6.2 percent, more than double that of the 1960s.¹³⁵³ A further problem centred on poor labour relations with 70m days lost through industrial disputes from 1970-1974.¹³⁵⁴ Such strike action led the Heath administration to issue five state of emergency declarations, more than any previous government in British history.¹³⁵⁵ In particular emergencies were declared in February 1972 due to the first national coal strike in nearly fifty years which also put industry on a three-day week.¹³⁵⁶ Subsequently another was declared again in the winter of 1973, this time bringing down the government.¹³⁵⁷ Unfortunately respite for the subsequent Labour administration of Harold Wilson was not forthcoming due to the onset of global economic downturn in the wake of the 1973 oil shock. This increased consumer prices, hampered exports and ultimately sent the economy nose-diving into a recession for two years.¹³⁵⁸ Upon Wilson's resignation in April of 1976 Jim Callaghan and his Chancellor Denis Healey were left trying to manage an economy that faced a "constant buffeting" from "one unfolding emergency after another".¹³⁵⁹ Due to the precarious state of sterling, continual strikes, and increased government spending needed to offset the cost of higher unemployment,¹³⁶⁰ Healey was forced into the "humiliation" of taking a \$3.9bn loan from the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) in the winter of 1976.¹³⁶¹ This did stabilise the economy,¹³⁶² however, the country still lost 10m days to strikes in 1977.¹³⁶³

¹³⁴⁸ James Thomas, 'Bound in by history': The Winter of Discontent in British Politics, 1979-2004', *Media, Culture & Society*, 29 (2007), pp. 263-283 (p. 263-264 & p. 268-273).

¹³⁴⁹ 'Hello Europe!', *Economist*, 30 Dec. 1972 & Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory, Britain 1900-2000*, (London.: Allen Lane, 1996), p. 333.

¹³⁵⁰ Sandbrook, *Seasons*, p. 87.

¹³⁵¹ *Economist*, 30 Dec.

¹³⁵² Clarke, *Hope*, p. 334 & Kenneth O. Morgan, *Britain Since 1945, The People's Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 343.

¹³⁵³ 'Unemployment statistics from 1881 to the present day', *Labour Market Trends*, 1996 (pp. 5-18), p. 10

<file:///H:/PhD%20FILE/Main%20PhD%20File/Main%20File/unemploymentbackto1881_tcm77-267536.pdf> [accessed: 30.11.16].

¹³⁵⁴ Clarke, *Hope*, p. 347.

¹³⁵⁵ Morgan, *Since*, p. 318.

¹³⁵⁶ Clarke, *Hope*, p. 333-334 & Morgan, *Since*, p. 347.

¹³⁵⁷ Clarke, *Hope*, p. 338.

¹³⁵⁸ David Sanders, *Losing an Empire, Finding a Role – British Foreign Policy Since 1945*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1990), p. 219-220 & Clarke, *Hope*, p. 351.

¹³⁵⁹ Clarke, *Hope*, p. 352.

¹³⁶⁰ Morgan, *Since*, p. 383.

¹³⁶¹ Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What Crisis? Britain in the 1970s*, (London: Aurum Press Ltd., 2008), p. 189 & Clarke, *Hope*, p. 352.

¹³⁶² Morgan, *Since*, p. 384.

¹³⁶³ Turner, *Crisis?*, p. 189.

Given the prevailing economic condition manifestations of decline had also begun to show. For instance according to Dominic Sandbrook the country's capital looked "remarkably shabby" during the period, as did its former provincial manufacturing metropolises.¹³⁶⁴ A sense of decline subsequently seeped into popular consciousness,¹³⁶⁵ and with a mood of "depression and resignation",¹³⁶⁶ Britons increasingly reflected on their former imperial greatness.¹³⁶⁷ In 1945 the country had been a victorious member of "The Big Three", however, attempts to stay in sight of the new emerging U.S. and Soviet superpowers proved unsustainable leaving Britain dangerously "overextended" militarily, politically and economically.¹³⁶⁸ After the Suez debacle which made this overextension painfully apparent there followed a ten year wave of decolonisation given further impetus by the growth of Third World nationalism. Consequently by 1966 Britain had only the merest "residue" of an empire left.¹³⁶⁹

At this point she could still claim to be a "Great Power of the first rank",¹³⁷⁰ however, within another decade Britain had slid further into relative irrelevance. Despite reductions in overseas commitments, the country was still precariously stretched. Following a Defence Review from 1964 to 1966 Labour thus chose to prioritise obligations to N.A.T.O., drawing up plans to withdraw from most remaining commitments east of Suez.¹³⁷¹ Major bases at Aden and Singapore were evacuated in 1967 and 1971 respectively, the same year Britain withdrew from the Persian Gulf.¹³⁷² Subsequently there was another denuding Defence Review in 1974,¹³⁷³ by which time David Sanders contends that "Britain's world role had been almost completely abandoned".¹³⁷⁴ Similarly any attempt to remain the economic epicentre of a large overseas sterling area using the pound as a reserve currency had been scuppered by instability and speculation trading which precipitated devaluation and drained Britain of gold reserves.¹³⁷⁵ In response the country moved to integrate with its continental neighbours, finally managing to become a member of the European Economic Community (E.E.C.) in 1973.¹³⁷⁶ Within this community, however, Britain was "just another European power",¹³⁷⁷ lagging behind many of her fellow community members.¹³⁷⁸

Although scholars such as Michael J. Turner argue that Britain's post-war decline still left her able to "project" a renewed "image of strength" it was in many ways still painfully palpable.¹³⁷⁹ Sandbrook

¹³⁶⁴ Sandbrook, *Seasons*, p. 79.

¹³⁶⁵ Sandbrook, *Seasons*, p. 75-89 & p. 99.

¹³⁶⁶ Turner, *Crisis?*, p. 189.

¹³⁶⁷ Sandbrook, *Seasons*, p. 85 & p. 87.

¹³⁶⁸ Sanders, *Losing*, p. 1 & Kennedy, *Realities*, p. 362-363.

¹³⁶⁹ Sanders, *Losing*, p. 72 & John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation, The Retreat from Empire in the post-war World*, (London: Palgrave, 1988), p. 167-278.

¹³⁷⁰ Sanders, *Losing*, p. 105, & Kennedy, *Realities*, p. 331-332.

¹³⁷¹ Sanders, *Losing*, p. 114.

¹³⁷² Sanders, *Losing*, p. 230.

¹³⁷³ Dimitrakis, 'CENTO', p. 322.

¹³⁷⁴ Sanders, *Losing*, p. 229.

¹³⁷⁵ Sanders, *Losing*, p. 204-205.

¹³⁷⁶ Morgan, *Since*, p. 339.

¹³⁷⁷ Sanders, *Losing*, p. 231.

¹³⁷⁸ Sanders, *Losing*, p. 117 & Kennedy, *Realities*, p. 341.

¹³⁷⁹ Michael J. Turner, *Britain's International Role, 1970-1991*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), p. 234.

suggests that “reminders of Britain’s fallen place in the world” were “humiliating”, especially when formerly inferior Oriental powers flaunted newfound wealth. This was arguably the case in the mid-1970s when unpopular rich Gulf Arabs flocked to London pumping a vital \$2.5bn into London banks by 1974 alone, inadvertently contributing to Britain’s economic survival in the face of the oil crisis.¹³⁸⁰ The Iranian contribution was arguably just as significant. David Owen, the Foreign Secretary from 1977 to 1979, consequently noted that the “Shah’s favour was important” as Britain “desperately needed...to offset the oil price shock by selling an increased proportion of our industrial output to Iran.”¹³⁸¹ Nicholas Browne, who was tasked with writing a post-mortem on British policy in Iran after the shock of the revolution, was even starker in his assessment.¹³⁸² By early 1973 he argued that “for the first time, in the F.C.O.’s judgement, Britain needed Iran more than Iran needed Britain”.¹³⁸³ In later interviews Lucas was of the same mind. He claimed that British arms sales to Iran were partly aimed at giving Britain “leverage” and influence over Iran by making the Shah reliant on the British for arms. In reality “precisely the reverse” came to pass, with Britain “dependent upon the Shah” for propping up a very significant part of Britain’s defence industry.¹³⁸⁴

The significance of these admissions cannot be overstated. The reliance on Persian purchases and the mere fact that Her Majesty’s Government (H.M.G.) took a loan from the Shah, is truly phenomenal given Britain’s former global standing. Moreover it was Britain that had formerly used loans as financial levers to impose its imperial will on Persia fifty years prior.¹³⁸⁵ Such a profound shift in power was not lost on the Iranians. As early as 1972 the Shah’s long-serving Court Minister Asadollah Alam remarked that the British “are so forlorn that nothing interests them these days save commerce and arms deals”.¹³⁸⁶ Meanwhile by 1974 Alam was serenely informing Parsons that he regarded “every member” of the British government “with an equally profound degree of disinterest”.¹³⁸⁷ As to the Shah, he basked in his country’s burgeoning wealth and Britain’s post-imperial pain, caused in part by oil price hikes he had pushed for.¹³⁸⁸ In an extraordinary interview with British journalist Peter Snow the Shah even reassured the British government that he would invest in the country to “alleviate” its resultant economic problems. With a subtle smirk he further remarked that Iran would have parity with Britain in ten years, before “in the next twenty five years” becoming one of the “five most prosperous countries of the

¹³⁸⁰ Sandbrook, *Seasons*, p. 93-94.

¹³⁸¹ Owen, *Declare*, p. 390.

¹³⁸² FCO8/4029, ‘Circular’, in Burns to David Miers, Head of Middle East Department, 6 July 1981.

¹³⁸³ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 44.

¹³⁸⁴ ‘LUCAS, Ivor Thomas Mark, CMG (b.1927)’, C.O.H.P.) <<https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Lucas.pdf>>, pp. 1-42 (p. 33), [accessed: 10.12.16].

¹³⁸⁵ Sabahi, *British*, p. 11-32.

¹³⁸⁶ Alam, *Confidential*, Diary Entry, 7 Aug. 1972, p. 234.

¹³⁸⁷ Alam, *Confidential*, Entry, 29 Oct. 1974, p. 394.

¹³⁸⁸ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 2 & Dimitrakis, *Failed*, p. 160.

world”. To keep up Britain could no longer rely on exploiting nations like his own. Instead his “friend” must fix its “permissive” and “undisciplined society”.¹³⁸⁹

The British correctly saw such claims as “over-optimistic”.¹³⁹⁰ Even though Iran “totally dominated the Gulf region”,¹³⁹¹ and had progressed a great deal due to the Shah’s 1963 “White Revolution” and his later drive for “Great Civilization”,¹³⁹² the country was still considerably less developed than Britain by all economic variables. For instance in 1976 Britain’s G.D.P. was approximately double that of Iran’s.¹³⁹³ Meanwhile two years prior Iran’s recorded literacy rate was around 50 percent, a figure Britain had surpassed in the early 19th century.¹³⁹⁴ In 1974 Parsons also observed a country “of bewildering contrasts” between Western modernity and Qajar era traditionalism.¹³⁹⁵ Although the Ambassador did not yet foresee the impending disaster resulting in part from the Shah’s economic policies, he thought the Pahlavi path to Great Civilization would be harder than proposed.¹³⁹⁶ In such circumstances Britain was not yet in danger of being superseded.¹³⁹⁷ That being said the fact British officials were prepared to accept the humiliation of the Pahlavi monarch “lecturing” them on how to run the country, speaks volumes for the dire need Britain had for Iranian commerce.¹³⁹⁸ This was arguably the main motivation for using the impression of Overt Cordiality, a strategy that was also given impetus by the nature of Iranian government. As an autocratic monarch “all major business” was decided by the Shah,¹³⁹⁹ and he was “quite capable” of saying “Right. No orders to the British”.¹⁴⁰⁰

It was for this reason that Parsons reiterated to the Shah in June 1976 that the British government “were very sorry about the demonstration” at Wadham. Thankfully the Shah had shown “no sign of being annoyed”, instead he was “obviously pleased” with the visit, as was the Iranian Ambassador.¹⁴⁰¹ Parsons also reported that the Princess was “delighted with her visit”. Capitalising on this positivity, the British Ambassador had pressed “her very hard” on procurement and thought he would soon have a £1.5m contract “in the bag”.¹⁴⁰² Clearly the disruptive “scene” perpetrated by the Iranian student audience and errant British activists had not derailed the impression of Overt Cordiality. This was in no small part due

¹³⁸⁹ BBC SWB ME/4514/D/1, 31 Jan. 1974 interview with Peter Snow for ITV, 29 Jan. 1974 in Ali Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921, The Pahlavis and After*, (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2003), p. 184-185. See also ‘Shah Interview with Peter Snow’, (1974), <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELBgNlg9gNA>> [accessed: 30.11.16].

¹³⁹⁰ FCO8/2284, ‘Economic Development in Iran’, in Williams to Coles, 29 March 1974.

¹³⁹¹ Owen, *Declare*, p. 387.

¹³⁹² Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 248, Abbas Milani, *The Shah*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 337-338 & K.S. MacLachlan, ‘Economic Development, 1921-1979’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 608-638 (p. 616-621 & p. 631-634).

¹³⁹³ Hadi Salehi Esfahani & M. Hashem Pesaran, ‘The Iranian Economy in the Twentieth Century: A Global Perspective’, *Iranian Studies*, 42 (2009), pp. 171-211, (p. 181).

¹³⁹⁴ FCO8/2262, Parsons, ‘Is the Great Civilisation Possible?’, 16 Oct. 1974.

¹³⁹⁵ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 8.

¹³⁹⁶ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 8-12.

¹³⁹⁷ Sanders, *Losing*, p. 220.

¹³⁹⁸ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 170.

¹³⁹⁹ FCO8/2997, Weir – ‘Human Rights in Foreign Policy’, 31 Jan. 1977.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Denis Wright, ‘Harvard Iranian Oral History Project’, Transcript 6, seq. 234 <[https://iif.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:2906583\\$1i](https://iif.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:2906583$1i)> [visited: 1. 12. 16].

¹⁴⁰¹ FCO8/2767, Parsons to Lucas, 4 July 1976 & FCO8/2767, Parsons to Lucas, 8 July 1976.

¹⁴⁰² FCO8/2766, Parsons to Weir, 1 Sept. 1976.

to the strategies employed by the British government, to which we now turn. Effective strategies included a “drawn out” planning process used to ensure there was a sufficiently courteous welcome.¹⁴⁰³ It was in April of 1975 that Parsons had first suggested the idea of inviting Ashraf to the country “because of the considerable political and commercial benefits” that might result.¹⁴⁰⁴ In December the M.E.D. gave a green light before beginning consultations on the itinerary with various government bodies including the D.H.S.S.¹⁴⁰⁵

In particular the Princess was said to be desirous of “Royal attention”, thus the M.E.D. suggested luncheon with the Queen Mother, as well as a trip to Horse Guards with members of the Royal Family to see the Queen Trooping the Colour.¹⁴⁰⁶ As in 1873 British officials were of the opinion that the Pahlavis wanted royal recognition and legitimisation, especially from the British Royal Family. Indeed the Shah was said to have had “something of a complex” regarding the subject.¹⁴⁰⁷ It was true for instance that the Shah admired Queen Elizabeth,¹⁴⁰⁸ and felt a considerable degree of warmth for the British Royal Family in general.¹⁴⁰⁹ James Buchan goes further, arguing that “above all, Mohammed Reza wanted his house to be accepted as equal by the senior royal houses of Europe, especially the House of Windsor.”¹⁴¹⁰ Denis Wright was of the same opinion, recalling in his memoir how the Shah “wanted, above all” the presence of the Queen at his coronation in 1967.¹⁴¹¹ When it was announced that Her Majesty had prior engagements he purportedly cancelled all invitations to heads of state.¹⁴¹² He was also “grumpy” when the Queen failed to attend his lavish celebrations for the 2500th Foundation of the Imperial State of Iran in October 1971.¹⁴¹³ Despite threatening loss of commercial contracts on both occasions, the Shah had to make do with Prince Philip who ultimately proved an entertaining royal representative.¹⁴¹⁴

According to Buchan the British government also used the Queen’s absence in November 1971 to diplomatically signal discontent with Iranian plans to unilaterally seize strategic islands in the Gulf after Britain’s impending withdrawal.¹⁴¹⁵ This moment of recalcitrance was, however, an exception. The British were more often inclined to pander to Pahlavi desires for royal intimacy. Thus there had been a state visit to Britain in 1959, along with more informal visits in 1955, 1965 and 1972.¹⁴¹⁶ This was despite

¹⁴⁰³ FCO8/2767, J.H. Moore, Information Administration Department, to R.J. Alston, Tehran, 28 July 1976.

¹⁴⁰⁴ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Weir, 17 May 1976.

¹⁴⁰⁵ FCO8/2767, Chalmers, to P.K. Williams, M.E.D., 25 Jan. 1976, FCO8/2767, Dianna Makgill, Protocol & Conference Dept. to A. Heath, M.E.D., 29 Jan. 1976, & FCO8/2767, Williams to Heath, 23 Jan. 1976.

¹⁴⁰⁶ FCO8/2767, Heath to Makgill, 23 Jan. 1976.

¹⁴⁰⁷ FCO8/2271, Atony Acland, Principal Secretary to the Secretary of State to P.R.H Wright, M.E.D., 14 Oct. 1974.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *The Shah’s Story*, (London: Michael Joseph, 1980), p. 40.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Ashraf, *Faces*, p. 171.

¹⁴¹⁰ James Buchan, *Days of God, The Revolution in Iran and Its Consequences*, (London: John Murray, 2012), p. 53.

¹⁴¹¹ Denis Wright, *Unpublished Memoir*, (St. Antony’s College, n.d.), p. 389.

¹⁴¹² D. Wright, *Trans.* 4 seq. 137-8.

¹⁴¹³ Milani, *Shah*, p. 324.

¹⁴¹⁴ Milani, *Shah*, p. 325.

¹⁴¹⁵ Buchan, *Days*, p. 55 & Wright, *Memoir*, p. 435.

¹⁴¹⁶ ‘The Shah’s Visit to London’, *Times*, 17 Feb. 1955.

the increasing risk of assassination attempts on the Shah which potentially endangered the Queen's life.¹⁴¹⁷ Meanwhile the Crown Prince and two of his siblings visited Britain in 1974, as did the Shah's wife the Shahbanu Farah Pahlavi, in April 1976. In return the Queen paid a state visit to Iran in 1961, followed by a short stop off in Tehran in 1973. Meanwhile in 1975, the Queen Mother, the Prince of Wales and their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Kent all visited Iran for varying lengths of time. Such royal interactions thus became the common currency of Overt Cordiality and of good relations with the Shah, helping to oil the wheels of commerce.¹⁴¹⁸

As in 1873, the British were also still of the opinion that the Pahlavis – being typical Persians – were preoccupied by pomp and protocol. Thus in March of 1976, Parsons apologised about the palaver over the Princess who was “already behaving with classical Persian self-importance and touchiness”.¹⁴¹⁹ This had to be tolerated, however, as the visit was going to be “more directly beneficial” than the Shahbanu's since Ashraf controlled £22m from the I.O.S.S. budget. Prior to this point the Princess had favoured France for commercial contracts, and in Parsons' opinion the “main point of the visit” was to remedy this.¹⁴²⁰ He thought the “key” requirement needed to prise the Princess from Paris was a “call on the Queen”. If this did “not materialise” the ambassador thought the visit would be cancelled, leaving Britain “worse off”.¹⁴²¹ By April the planning eased his worries. First the Queen Mother was to host a luncheon at Clarence House, before accompanying the Princess to Horse Guards. Ashraf would then join the Queen for a reception at Buckingham Palace.¹⁴²²

The non-royal aspects of the trip were, however, proving more difficult to organise. Just a month prior to arrival there was still “particular urgency” regarding the rank of the official to greet the Princess at the airport.¹⁴²³ The Iranians wanted a cabinet minister to create a “good initial impression”.¹⁴²⁴ H.I.H. also desired a “Ministerial dinner” and a reception at the Iranian embassy with suitably high ranking guests including the Foreign Secretary and if possible the Prime Minister.¹⁴²⁵ The urgency and the concern in attending to all of these matters stemmed from the F.C.O.'s opinion that the Iranians attached “great importance to matters of protocol and the level of...Ministerial” as well as Royal “attention offered”.¹⁴²⁶ Indeed as with the royal touch, Parsons was of the opinion that insufficient ministerial attention would lead to cancellation.¹⁴²⁷

¹⁴¹⁷ FCO8/1887, Armstrong to Graham, 19 June 1972.

¹⁴¹⁸ FCO8/2767, 'Brief: No.2 – Ashraf'.

¹⁴¹⁹ FCO8/2767, Parsons to F.C.O., 14 March 1976.

¹⁴²⁰ FCO8/2767, Parsons to F.C.O., 14 March 1976.

¹⁴²¹ FCO8/2767, Parsons to F.C.O., 14 March 1976.

¹⁴²² FCO8/2767, Callaghan to Parsons, 2 April 1976.

¹⁴²³ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Weir, 5 May 1976.

¹⁴²⁴ FCO8/2767, Parsons to F.C.O., 17 May 1976.

¹⁴²⁵ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Weir, 5 May 1976.

¹⁴²⁶ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Weir, 5 May 1976.

¹⁴²⁷ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Weir, 17 May 1976.

The problem, however, was the visit's coincidence with cabinet changes proposed by Callaghan who had taken over in April. This meant senior ministers were unsure of their position and availability.¹⁴²⁸ Originally Barbara Castle at the D.H.S.S. was to meet the Princess at the airport,¹⁴²⁹ however, she was to be replaced by David Ennals who had already scheduled a visit to the Soviet Union.¹⁴³⁰ Such was the state of uncertainty that the new Foreign Secretary Anthony Crosland wrote to Parsons on the 13th of May to say that he was "sorry" for the delay.¹⁴³¹ Meanwhile two days earlier the M.E.D. asked if a tea-party held by Mrs Callaghan would be a good idea.¹⁴³² On the 16th Parsons provided Ashraf's reply stating that he "had a long and not entirely easy conversation with the Princess" who "did not conceal her impatience" with proceedings. The Princess agreed to attend the tea party if Mr Callaghan was present to discuss politics, since she was "not just a woman". Furthermore she was very keen to get Royal or ministerial attendance at a reception and another dinner she was laying on at the Iranian embassy. Parsons noted that:

On this point, I feel strongly that a maximum effort must be made to persuade some distinguished people to attend...She is a senior member of the Pahlavi family and it would look insulting if we failed to produce a single member of the Royal Family or senior Minister on such an occasion.¹⁴³³

The whole process was turning out to be a "nightmare",¹⁴³⁴ and in some quarters there was even "strong language" about the "extravagance" of Iranian demands which were constantly increasing the scale of the visit.¹⁴³⁵ Such language, along with critical comments on Iranian national character was of course kept definitively backstage. Again as in 1873, it could be argued that the British were irked at having to go to such lengths to cater for the Persians, leading to "derogation" to compensate for lost "self-respect".¹⁴³⁶ Paradoxically the necessary attention by the Queen and the cabinet represented another public "gesture of salutation" and "inconvenience display".¹⁴³⁷ Iranian leverage was similarly salient during 1873, however, the overriding need for commerce made the situation more acute. Indeed Parsons advised the government to "accede as far as possible" to "the Iranians' requests".¹⁴³⁸

¹⁴²⁸ FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 3 May 1976.

¹⁴²⁹ FCO8/2767, Williams to Heath, 29 Jan. 1976.

¹⁴³⁰ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Parsons, 13 May 1976.

¹⁴³¹ FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 13 May 1976.

¹⁴³² FCO8/2767, Lucas to Parsons, 11 May 1976.

¹⁴³³ FCO8/2767, Parsons to F.C.O., 16 May 1976.

¹⁴³⁴ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Weir, 18 May 1976.

¹⁴³⁵ FCO0/2767, Weir to Lucas, 3 May 1976.

¹⁴³⁶ Goffman *Presentation*, p. 170.

¹⁴³⁷ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 98.

¹⁴³⁸ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Weir, 5 May 1976.

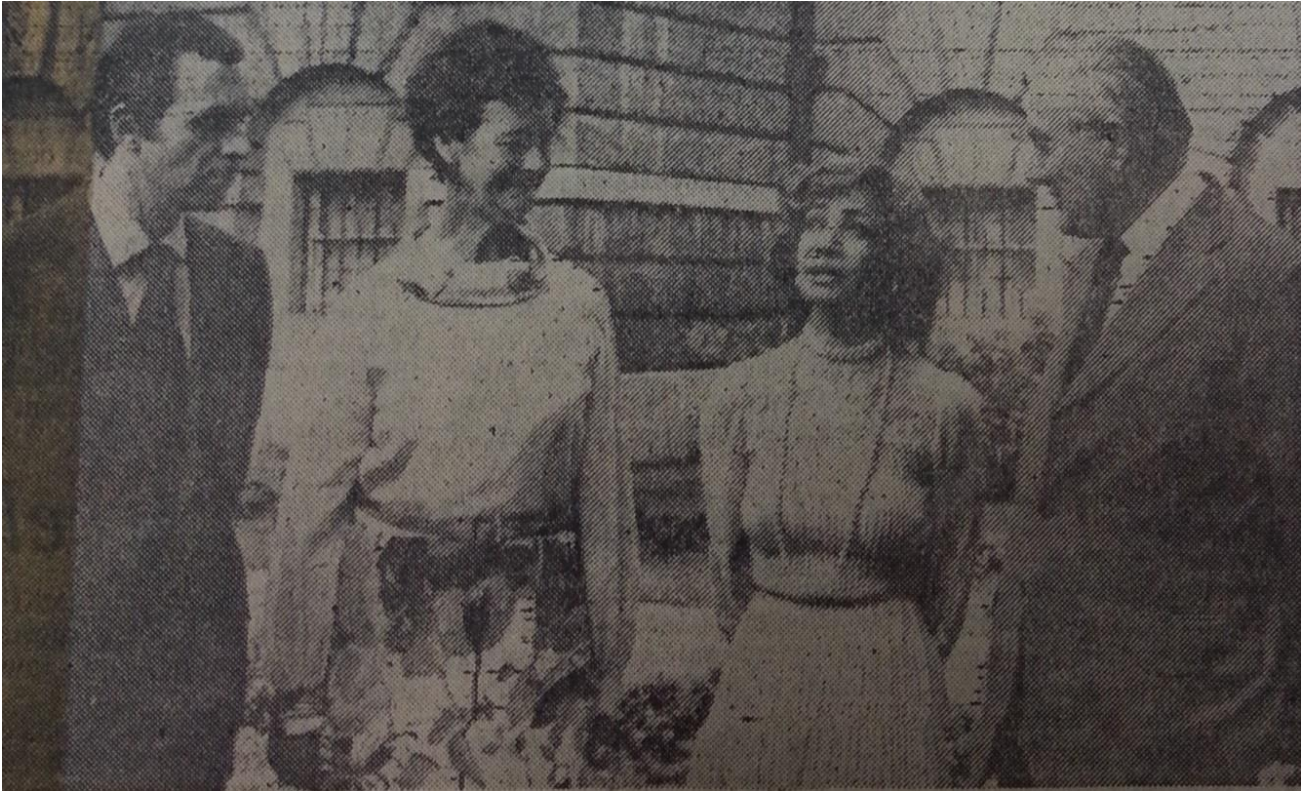


Fig. 52: Ashraf talking to Mr and Mrs Callaghan alongside Radji (FCO8/2767, 'Kayhan', 15 June 1976).

Thus by the 4th of June 1976, a detailed programme reflecting “both the importance of Royal contacts in...friendly bilateral relations, and the Princess’ interests in the field of Social Services and Women’s Affairs” had been formulated.¹⁴³⁹ The programme, the royals and cabinet ministers involved in its execution were all utilised to foster an impression of Overt Cordiality, demonstrating the importance with which the British government perceived the visit, the Pahlavi dynasty and Anglo-Iranian relations. Meanwhile a highly detailed series of “Briefs” made by the M.E.D. with input from various other government departments were distributed to the royals and cabinet ministers as part of Britain’s performance team.¹⁴⁴⁰ This loose form of dramaturgical “directing” provided relevant information regarding Anglo-Iranian relations, the I.O.S.S., and Princess Ashraf, which led to a uniform impression. This loose ‘script’ as it were, even had a small section on what subjects the Iranians were “particularly sensitive about” including “referring to the Persian Gulf by any other name”.¹⁴⁴¹ Four days later the British government executed their tortuously constructed programme when she was met at Heathrow Airport “on behalf of H.M. Government by the Rt. Hon. Harold Lever, M.P., Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster”.¹⁴⁴² Mr Lever had been selected as other cabinet ministers were unavailable and because he had visited Iran previously in 1974.¹⁴⁴³

¹⁴³⁹ FCO8/2767 Lucas, ‘Visit of Princess Ashraf of Iran’, 4 June 1976.

¹⁴⁴⁰ FCO8/2767, ‘Brief: No. 1-5 – Ashraf’.

¹⁴⁴¹ FCO8/2767, ‘Brief: No.5 – Ashraf’.

¹⁴⁴² FCO8/2767, ‘Brief: No. 1– Ashraf’.

¹⁴⁴³ FCO8/2767, Lucas to Weir, 17 May 1976, FCO8/2767, Roy Hattersley to Harold Lever, 18 May 1976 & FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 21 May 1976.

The choice purportedly “delighted” the Princess.¹⁴⁴⁴ Subsequently the party was transported to the Iranian embassy in three specially hired limousines.¹⁴⁴⁵ Having “agreed (reluctantly) to make a brief courtesy call on the Princess”,¹⁴⁴⁶ Crosland was received at the embassy that evening.¹⁴⁴⁷ Radji, a Cambridge graduate who mixed easily in British circles,¹⁴⁴⁸ thought the Foreign Secretary “handsome and intelligent...but not very good at small talk”.¹⁴⁴⁹ His presence and verbal expressions of support for C.E.N.T.O. were, however, necessary in the interests of impressing Overt Cordiality and cementing Britain’s strategic relationship with Iran.¹⁴⁵⁰ Meanwhile further professions of Overt Cordiality were evident on the 9th of June when the Princess attended the Callaghans’ tea party held at 10 Downing Street (Fig. 52). The Prime Minister and his wife were joined by guests sympathetic to Iran who added to the impression including Lord and Lady Carrington. Peter Carrington was the former Conservative Secretary of State for Defence and had overseen largescale weapon sales to Iran from 1971 to 1974.¹⁴⁵¹ Upon leaving government he also became President of the Iran Society, set up in 1936 to improve knowledge and understanding of Iranian culture, art and literature.¹⁴⁵²

Toward the end of the party Ashraf also got her time with the Prime Minister who shared a ten minute conversation on political matters. In this brief interaction Callaghan impressed Overt Cordiality when he verbally “assured” the Princess that their “two governments should continue to co-operate very closely” on policy in the Persian Gulf.¹⁴⁵³ Subsequently that evening the Princess attended a “Ministerial” dinner hosted by Lever on behalf of H.M.G. at Lancaster House.¹⁴⁵⁴ Renamed in 1912, the house was formerly owned by the Sutherlands who had played a significant role during the Shah’s visit of 1873. Following the Second World War, the Foreign Office became tenants of the property which they used for diplomatic functions. This included receptions held for Iranian government ministers and for C.E.N.T.O. during the 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁴⁵⁵ Although its opulent interior had suffered badly during and after the war it was subsequently restored to its former glory, and as such served as a suitably grand piece of heritage setting to demonstrate the importance with which the British government perceived the visit of the Princess.¹⁴⁵⁶

As at Downing Street, guests at Lancaster House were selected for their friendliness toward Pahlavi Iran, and their rank to suit Ashraf’s expectations. This included Earl Mountbatten of Burma, a beloved

¹⁴⁴⁴ FCO8/2767, Parsons to F.C.O., 24 May 1976.

¹⁴⁴⁵ FCO8/2767, ‘Detailed Itinerary – Visit of Her Imperial Highness, The Princess Ashraf Pahlavi of Iran’, 4 June 1976.

¹⁴⁴⁶ FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 20 May 1976.

¹⁴⁴⁷ FCO8/2767, ‘Detailed Itinerary – Ashraf’, 4 June 1976.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Lucas, *Decline*, p. 175.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Radji, Entry 16 June 1976, p. 13.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Radji, Entry 16 June 1976, p. 13.

¹⁴⁵¹ ‘Carrington for Iran’, *Financial Times*, 27 Sept. 1973.

¹⁴⁵² ‘The Iran Society’, *Times*, 9 May 1936.

¹⁴⁵³ FCO8/2767, Wright to Dales, 9 June 1976.

¹⁴⁵⁴ FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 21 May 1976.

¹⁴⁵⁵ See ‘Court Circular’, *Times*, 14 Dec. 1960, & ‘CENTO gets renewed sense of purpose’, *Times*, 3 June 1973.

¹⁴⁵⁶ ‘Lancaster House Restored’, *Times*, 14 July 1953.

relative of the Queen. There was also a selection of local government officials, businessmen, aldermen and lords, including Lord Bethell representing the Anglo-Iranian Parliamentary Group. (A.I.P.G).¹⁴⁵⁷ The latter organisation had kept up relations with the Iranian embassy from at least 1956.¹⁴⁵⁸ During the 1970s it was chaired by Eldon Griffiths, a Conservative politician and journalist who was “sympathetic” to the Pahlavi regime.¹⁴⁵⁹ Meanwhile a further example of M.E.D. “directing” and acting as a *metteur-en-scène* in the interests of Overt Cordiality came in the shape of Mr Lever’s speech at the dinner. Stressing Anglo-Iranian equality and cooperativeness Lever used an M.E.D. drafted text stating that:

Your Imperial Highness’ visit is an indication of the close and friendly relations between Iran and the United Kingdom. The continuous flow of visitors between our two countries is a reflection of this warmth and friendliness. Our cordial relations reflect the common interests we have shared in the region of the Persian Gulf for many years and our common determination to maintain our national independence and strength. We are allies in C.E.N.T.O...Our common political interests are therefore augmented and enriched by our cooperation in the economic field – cooperation enhanced by being based on a relationship of equality. We in Britain are proud to contribute to the realisation of Iran’s goals in the economy, in social welfare and in the education development of her people. We are determined to continue to work together and to develop cooperation in all fields.¹⁴⁶⁰

It was reported that the Princess “commented most favourably” on the “friendly atmosphere” this fostered.¹⁴⁶¹ Subsequently on the 10th of June, the Princess held her own dinner at the Iranian embassy. The M.E.D. had a great deal of difficulty finding cabinet ministers to attend in all the chaos of changing government until Lord Goronwy-Roberts agreed. He was a Labour peer who had played a significant role in Britain’s withdrawal from the Gulf, and so had experience of Iran. In addition, the Queen’s sister Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret joined him, facilitating that “important” need to satisfy Ashraf’s demands for royalty.¹⁴⁶² According to Radji, the Princess was largely in a “good mood” which kept her at the embassy until after midnight.¹⁴⁶³ Her presence “clearly pleased” Princess Ashraf,¹⁴⁶⁴ however, according to Radji Margaret had actually committed two of what Goffman terms “unmeant gestures” during the evening. Disruptive unmeant gestures occur when a performer makes a “slip of the tongue”, or when they “act in such a way as to give the impression that” they are “too much or too little concerned with the interaction”.¹⁴⁶⁵ Margaret’s first gesture happened on entering the embassy after navigating through a small crowd of vocal demonstrators. She had brushed off the apologies of the ambassador saying she was used to such nuisances when encountering I.R.A. sympathisers, however, to the ambassador’s “astonishment” she added “but of course, you have torture, which we don’t”. Radji replied stating that Her Highness was surely “misinformed” about the situation in Iran. Secondly the ambassador noted that the Queen’s sister “smoked constantly, coughed frequently and showed no great

¹⁴⁵⁷ FCO8/2767 ‘Guest List for the Dinner to be held at Lancaster House on Wednesday 9 June 1976’.

¹⁴⁵⁸ ‘Court Circular’, *Times*, 13 March 1956.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Radji, Entry, 9 Nov. 1978, p. 255 & 19 Dec. 1978 p. 288.

¹⁴⁶⁰ FCO8/2767, ‘Draft Speech’ in Dale to Weir, 8 June 1976.

¹⁴⁶¹ FCO8/2767, R.M. James, M.E.D., to Chalmers, 2 July 1976.

¹⁴⁶² FCO8/2767, Lucas to Margaret Turner, 2 June 1976 & Wright, *Memoir*, p. 416-417.

¹⁴⁶³ Radji, Entry 16 June 1976, p. 14.

¹⁴⁶⁴ FCO8/2767, James to Chalmers, 2 July 1976.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Goffman *Presentation*, p. 52.

interest in conversing with either Princess Ashraf or the other guests”.¹⁴⁶⁶ Evidently she had either not been briefed, or had ignored the brief which stressed the need to show an interest in the Princess. Moreover the Brief had noted that Persians were prickly about the “human rights and the treatment of prisoners” in Iran.¹⁴⁶⁷

Margaret’s infractions seemingly caused no lasting agitation, indicating that British Royals at least had some scope for momentarily departing from the desired script. Meanwhile there were purportedly no unmeant gestures when Princess Ashraf attended luncheon with the Queen Mother at Clarence House on the afternoon of the 11th. Instead Princess Ashraf remarked in her memoir after her visit that she was very “fond” of the “cheerful” Queen Mother.¹⁴⁶⁸ Similarly all went well at the Trooping ceremony. The Princess was first conducted to Buckingham Palace with necessary ceremony, before watching the Queen on parade, and subsequently joining her for lunch, where she was “gracious” to Princess Ashraf.¹⁴⁶⁹ As Britain’s head of state, in committing to the above act of hospitality, the Queen – much like her grandmother before her – had acted as an ‘instrument’ or as “signalman” or woman, giving personalised yet public indications about the close state of Anglo-Iranian relations.¹⁴⁷⁰ The Queen and other members of the Royal Family were to act as signalling instruments regularly from 1974 to 1978.

Meanwhile a last example of Overt Cordiality relates to control of demonstrators who had the potential to disrupt impressions. Other than the incident at Wadham things were “very well controlled”.¹⁴⁷¹ For instance on route to No. 10 the party managed to avoid a gathering of demonstrators outside Downing Street by taking a more circuitous route.¹⁴⁷² On other occasions there had been students “shouting abuse...and displaying placards accusing the Princess of...heinous crimes”, however, they had been kept at a distance and so “caused no interruption”.¹⁴⁷³ In this regard British officials directing the visit had successfully employed “circumspection” whereby “the kind of audience that will give a minimum of trouble”, was selected, along with controlled proximity of disruptive elements.¹⁴⁷⁴ Similarly one could argue that British officials exercised circumspection in their selection of interactive audiences at No. 10 and at Lancaster House. Given the unpopularity of the Pahlavis with politicians on the left of the Labour Party, it would have been fairly easy to have invited disruptive guests.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Radji, Entry 16 June 1976, p. 14.

¹⁴⁶⁷ FCO8/2767, ‘Brief: No.5’.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Ashraf, *Faces*, p. 171.

¹⁴⁶⁹ FCO8/2767 James to Chalmers, 2 July 1976.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 46.

¹⁴⁷¹ FCO8/2767, ‘Report’, Harrison & FCO8/2767, Crosland to Parsons, 14 June 1976.

¹⁴⁷² FCO8/2767, ‘Report’, Harrison.

¹⁴⁷³ FCO8/2767, ‘Report’, Harrison.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Goffman *Presentation*, p. 218-219.

DISINTERESTED IMPARTIALITY

The control of student protestors, the Brief, and the drafted speech all also touch upon the second major impression which Britain fostered during the 1970s, that of Disinterested Impartiality. This often operated in much the same way as in 1922, when Loraine used the impression to allay Iranian suspicions of interference in internal affairs to improve relations. From 1974 to 1979 there was, however, an added dimension in that Disinterested Impartiality was necessary for the purposes of maintaining Britain's far more lucrative commercial relationship. The need for the impression stemmed from the Shah's deep-rooted "distrust" of the British government and furthermore the British press, on account of past interferences.¹⁴⁷⁵ This suspicion melded with a belief in Britain's continued ability to exert influence on Iran, despite post-war decline. Indeed the Shah's former Minister of Economy Alinaghi Alikhani stated that "when it came to the British, suspicion gave place to outright paranoia" with the Shah sensing "the hand of the British government...behind every criticism of Iran".¹⁴⁷⁶ British officials were of the same mind, including Parsons,¹⁴⁷⁷ and Owen. The latter in particular noted the Persian propensity to "ascribe almost magical powers to the British Secret Service", and more broadly to the "hidden hand of Britain" pulling strings in Iran with more potency than the U.S. or the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷⁸

The Shah's paranoia was partly understandable given the history of Anglo-Iranian relations. As we saw in the preceding chapter, Britain did indeed interfere in Iran during the early 20th century, including a murky role in the coup of 1921.¹⁴⁷⁹ Twenty years later the British and Russian governments also orchestrated the forced abdication of the first Pahlavi monarch whose tolerance for a German colony in Iran was thought to be indicative of a pro-German predisposition and a soft attitude to potential Nazi espionage.¹⁴⁸⁰ Perhaps more importantly in 1953 the British provided significant support to the U.S. and royalist Iranians who orchestrated a coup to remove the anti-Pahlavi Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh after his unilateral nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (A.I.O.C. formerly A.P.O.C.) in 1951.¹⁴⁸¹ Although Mossadegh's deposition was "instrumental" in facilitating direct rule for the Shah, it made him more suspicious and also awed by British power.¹⁴⁸² Indeed according to Wright the Shah believed Britain had "thrown out the old Qajar dynasty, had installed his father in their place, then thrown out his father and could now keep him in power or depose him" as she "saw fit".¹⁴⁸³

¹⁴⁷⁵ Denis Wright, 'Ten years in Iran – some highlights', *Asian Affairs*, 22 (1991), pp. 259-271, (p. 265).

¹⁴⁷⁶ Alam, *Confidential*, Entry, p. 19.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 122.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Owen, *Declare*, p. 390.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Zirinsky, 'Dictatorship', p. 645-647.

¹⁴⁸⁰ F. Eshraghi, 'Anglo-Soviet occupation of Iran in August 1941', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 20 (1984), pp. 27-52 (p. 46-47).

¹⁴⁸¹ Ervand Abrahamian, 'The 1953 Coup in Iran', *Science & Society*, 65 (2001), pp. 182-215, (p. 185-191, & p. 197-211). See also Hambly, 'Pahlavi Autocracy – 1941-1979', p. 253-264.

¹⁴⁸² FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 40.

¹⁴⁸³ Wright, 'highlights', p. 265.

Moreover in ousting the first Reza Shah the British had “deliberately” used the B.B.C. to undermine his authority with “broadcasts referring to his mismanagement, greed and cruelty”.¹⁴⁸⁴ The B.B.C. also played a role in Britain’s propaganda efforts against Mossadegh.¹⁴⁸⁵ During the remainder of Mohammad Reza’s reign this led to an “obsession” with the “bastards” at the B.B.C. and more broadly the British press which the Shah thought were extensions of the British government.¹⁴⁸⁶ In effect he perceived the B.B.C. in particular, to be in the same performance team, with directing rights in the hands of British officials. This was a misapprehension not helped by F.C.O. funding for the B.B.C.’s Persian Service. Consequently British officials were often harangued about their role in either directing or failing to control the print and broadcast media which had the habit of precipitating disruptive “scenes” by criticising the regime on a variety of subjects including human rights.¹⁴⁸⁷

Furthermore due to an increasing sense of megalomania the Shah began to see any press criticism or even British government advice as tantamount to interference in Iranian internal affairs.¹⁴⁸⁸ Disinterested Impartiality thus took the form of “keeping the Shah sweet”¹⁴⁸⁹ by largely ignoring his “warts”,¹⁴⁹⁰ amounting to a total avoidance of public and often even private criticism of the Pahlavi regime.¹⁴⁹¹ Connectedly British officials tried to defend the independence of the B.B.C., whilst at the same time showing sympathy at the Shah’s grievances, and even on occasion going so far as to encourage Britain’s “crusading press” to publish less negative portrayals of Iran.¹⁴⁹² Meanwhile another aspect of the impression was centred on British officials deflecting criticism of the Shah on the part of fellow members of Britain’s performance team including union representatives, M.Ps and their constituents concerned about human rights abuses. This also often entailed praise for Iran along the lines of Overt Cordiality. Lucas recalled how he and his staff spent a “commendable amount of time and trouble composing replies to the flood of letters” criticising the regime and Britain’s relations with it.¹⁴⁹³ This was despite the government’s knowledge that abuses took place, suitably summed up by Parsons who claimed:

The Shah’s human rights record was dismal. The public media were under strict control and free speech was a dangerous luxury. Arbitrary arrest, torture and executions were commonplace [and] the secret police, SAVAK, was pervasive.¹⁴⁹⁴

¹⁴⁸⁴ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 39 & Annabelle Sreberny and Massoumeh Torfeh, *Persian Service: The BBC and British Interests in Iran*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2014), p. 35-44.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Abrahamian, ‘Coup’, p. 192-193.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Alam, *Confidential*, p. 19 & Entry, 26 May 1976, p. 488.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 172 & Milani, *Shah*, p. 336.

¹⁴⁸⁹ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 72.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 170.

¹⁴⁹¹ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 172.

¹⁴⁹² Sreberny, *Service*, p. 78-86 & FCO8/2761, Parsons to Lucas, 30 Sept. 1976.

¹⁴⁹³ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 171.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Parsons, ‘An expense’, p. 26.

Disinterested Impartiality manifested itself during the visit of Princess Ashraf in this vein. For instance whilst conversing with the Prime Minister at Number 10, Ashraf stated:

...that she had been asked to convey the Shah's continuing concern about the attitude of the British press and the B.B.C towards Iran, which he found incompatible with the excellent relations between our two governments.¹⁴⁹⁵

Callaghan agreed that in general "press coverage...on Iran was deplorable". Although he sympathised, he stressed that the relationship between the government and the B.B.C. was "a complicated one" which unfortunately meant his "influence was very strictly limited". That being said he promised to "impress on" the B.B.C. to produce better reports on Persia.¹⁴⁹⁶ Similarly just as Callaghan had avoided the substance of press accusations, Lever's speech was also carefully crafted by the M.E.D. to omit any reference to abuses.

British officials also impressed Disinterested Impartiality in responses to letters of complaint about the visit to the Prime Minister. For instance on the 20th of June Ronald Macintosh, the Secretary of a small Labour Party Branch, wrote to the Prime Minister asking the government to "reconsider" their invitation in view of the "oppressive" nature of the Shah's regime.¹⁴⁹⁷ According to Lucas the M.E.D. would usually approach replies in a "stereotyped" fashion, first employing the argument that it would be "counterproductive" to criticise as Britain had "no standing to intervene in Iran's internal affairs". Secondly the M.E.D. would argue that for all of the regime's faults, the "Shah was trying to liberate his regime and deserved encouragement rather than criticism".¹⁴⁹⁸ The reply to Macintosh proved to be a textbook execution of the M.E.D.'s strategy, which was repeated almost verbatim for all other complaints about the visit.¹⁴⁹⁹ First it noted that any move to disinvite the Princess "would not only damage our friendly relations with Iran – with whom we have extremely important interests in common, both economic and political – but would not promote any changes in Iran".¹⁵⁰⁰ Furthermore the reply noted that the government had "no standing to intervene with foreign governments on the way they conduct their affairs" and that "Iran has made great economic and social progress in recent years", helped by Princess Ashraf and her work in "literacy, social welfare and women's affairs".¹⁵⁰¹ The heightened sensitivity over the visit incidentally reflected a split in the Labour Party with its backbenchers and National Executive Committee (N.E.C.) moving "to the left" during the early 1970s.¹⁵⁰² This led to greater emphasis on the global "promotion of human rights", commitment to

¹⁴⁹⁵ FCO8/2767, Dales to Weir, 9 June 1976.

¹⁴⁹⁶ FCO8/2767, Dales to Weir, 9 June 1976.

¹⁴⁹⁷ FCO8/2767, Macintosh to Prime Minister, 20 June 1975.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 171.

¹⁴⁹⁹ For instance see FCO8/2767, James to Mr Garrett, 25 June 1976.

¹⁵⁰⁰ FCO8/2767, James to Mr Macintosh, 29 June 1976.

¹⁵⁰¹ FCO8/2767, James to Mr Macintosh, 29 June 1976.

¹⁵⁰² Rhiannon Vickers, *The Labour Party and the World, Vol. II: Labour's Foreign Policy since 1951*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p. 91-92.

détente, the Helsinki Accords, and further reductions in defence expenditure.¹⁵⁰³ Unsurprisingly support for a human rights abusing dictatorial bulwark against a receding Soviet threat was viewed critically. Although the Prime Minister and senior cabinet ministers like Healey, Crosland, and later Owen were sympathetic to the human rights cause, they differed on defence and foreign policy, inclining more to the centre or right of the party.¹⁵⁰⁴ Healey indeed had overseen the creation of the D.S.O., whilst Owen was a committed Atlanticist.¹⁵⁰⁵ All also saw the need for the continuation of Britain's strategic and commercially lucrative relationship with the Shah, despite his warts.

As to the attentions of the press during the visit, the M.E.D. reported that there “was not a great deal of...interest” bar a neutral piece in the *Times*, and some criticism in the *Guardian*.¹⁵⁰⁶ Given the sheer volume of comings and goings of Pahlavi Royals and also Iranian politicians this is perhaps unsurprising. The visit of Nasir al-Din Shah was a momentous and unique occasion. A year prior to the visit of Ashraf, however, the Shah's wife had come to Britain, and there had also been visits from various Iranian government officials from the start of the decade.¹⁵⁰⁷ Meanwhile in 1976 alone Callaghan had visited Iran as Foreign Secretary, as had cabinet ministers Tony Benn and Barbara Castle.¹⁵⁰⁸ This “flow of ministers” was reflective of two factors. Firstly the British government asserted that the visitation strategy was “no accident”, instead it was British “by design” and was used to “maintain close relations with Iran”.¹⁵⁰⁹ In this sense they constituted an international level act of nonverbal communication, sending out message. Secondly this was a demonstration of modern trends in diplomacy which involved various government officials visiting one another's ministries to further relations and cooperative ventures.¹⁵¹⁰

GREAT POWER SURVIVALISM

The final impression fostered during the visit of Princess Ashraf was that of Great Power Survivalism. As previously noted Britain suffered palpable decline in the decades following the Second World War. Although British officials took the Shah's lectures on this subject, they still had to project an image of strength for the purposes of maintaining relevance as a global power. More importantly such projection was needed to justify Britain's role as a major Iranian arms supplier, and as a commercial and political partner. Within this impression there was also a paradox whereby Britain had to impress a sense of national longevity with its mature yet magnificent constitutional monarchy, whilst also highlighting its modernity and means of producing state of the art technology.

¹⁵⁰³ 'Labour Party Manifesto', Oct. 1974 <<http://www.politicsresources.net/area/U.K./man/lab74oct.htm>> [accessed: 5.12.16] & Vickers, *Labour*, p. 96 & p. 115.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Vickers, *Labour*, p. 110-115 & Stephen Meredith, *Labours old and new*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 34.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Vickers, *Labour*, p. 111.

¹⁵⁰⁶ FCO8/2767, James to Chalmers, 2 July 1976

¹⁵⁰⁷ See FCO8/2269, 'Visits of Members of Iranian Parliament to the United Kingdom From Iran'.

¹⁵⁰⁸ FCO8/2767, 'Brief: No.2' – Ashraf & 'Mrs Castle's shot in the arm to exports', *Times*, 12 April 1976.

¹⁵⁰⁹ FCO8/2736, 'Secretary of State's Visit to Iran: BBC External Service Interview', n.d., 1976.

¹⁵¹⁰ G.R. Berridge, *Diplomacy, Theory and Practice*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 207.

In the case of Ashraf's visit this impression manifested itself in several ways. First after consultation with the Princess's advisors the British government tailored a programme that would complement her role in the I.O.S.S. and her interest in women's affairs as Head of the Iranian Women's Organisation.¹⁵¹¹ This would also serve to display British achievements in the field of women's rights, and health and social care, involving symbols of modernity and post-war national pride. Connectedly it would provide ample opportunity to display advanced healthcare equipment that might be purchased. To this end on the 9th of June the Princess visited an exhibition at the Disabled Living Foundation (D.L.F.) to "see a selection of aids available to the disabled".¹⁵¹² The D.L.F. was a charity set up in 1969 to facilitate "independent living" for the disabled.¹⁵¹³

Subsequently on the 10th of June the Princess was shown the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children (G.O.S.H.), a notable facility of the National Health Service (N.H.S.).¹⁵¹⁴ Formed in 1948 by the Labour Minister for Health Aneurin Bevan, the N.H.S. was the "first service in the world to offer free health care at the point of delivery to everyone from cradle to grave".¹⁵¹⁵ Although imperfect, the N.H.S. brought huge progress compared to the pre-war provision of healthcare.¹⁵¹⁶ Indeed despite medical advances from the Victorian and Edwardian eras,¹⁵¹⁷ the immediate years prior to 1948 were known for a "patchwork" of private, voluntary, insurance based and locally run facilities, many of which were old, under-equipped and financially struggling.¹⁵¹⁸ This led to varying levels of "chaotic", costly and "uncoordinated" care that failed to dramatically alter mortality rates between 1921 and 1940.¹⁵¹⁹ There was also continual difficulty in combatting diseases such as diphtheria, lobar pneumonia and tuberculosis which preyed on the poor.¹⁵²⁰ The N.H.S. Act of 1946 eventually brought order and equality to this confusion by nationalising all pre-existing hospitals and moving to create a fully state funded "comprehensive health and rehabilitation service".¹⁵²¹ Over the next ten years this unique and affordable new system came to be held in high regard,¹⁵²² before maturing into an "enduring British institution" and an embodiment of the wider welfare state "so wedded to Britons' notion of themselves" as a "compassionate people that no government could abolish it any more than they could abolish the monarchy".¹⁵²³ Peter Hennessey remarked that its creation had arguably been the "second of Britain's

¹⁵¹¹ FCO8/2767, Parsons to F.C.O., 11 March 1976, & FCO8/2767, 'Brief: No.5 – Ashraf'.

¹⁵¹² FCO8/2767, 'Detailed Itinerary – Ashraf'.

¹⁵¹³ 'Aids for disabled people on permanent display', *Times* 11 March 1971, & 'About us' <<http://www.dlf.org.U.K./content/about-us>> [accessed: 28.12.16].

¹⁵¹⁴ FCO8/2767, 'Detailed Itinerary – Ashraf'.

¹⁵¹⁵ Richard Weight, *patriots, National Identity in Britain, 1940-2000*, (London: Pan Books, 2003), p. 121.

¹⁵¹⁶ Brian Abel-Smith, 'The Beveridge Report: Its origins and outcomes', *International Social Security Review*, 45 (1992), pp. 5-16 (p. 8).

¹⁵¹⁷ Steven Cherry, *Medical services and hospital in Britain, 1860-1939*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 12-26.

¹⁵¹⁸ G. Barry and Lesley A. Carruthers, *A History of Britain's Hospitals and the background to the Medical, Nursing and Allied Professions*, (London: CPI Bath, 2005), p. 365-368.

¹⁵¹⁹ Virginia Berridge, *Health and Society in Britain since 1919*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 10 & George Davey Smith, 'The NHS and the national health', in Gordon Macpherson eds., *Our NHS, A Celebration of 50 Years*, (London: BMJ Books, 1998), p. 33.

¹⁵²⁰ Geoffrey Rivett, *From Cradle to Grave, Fifty Years of the NHS*, (London: King's Fund Publishing, 1997), p. 1-3 & Barry, *Hospitals*, p. 368.

¹⁵²¹ Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1984), p. 233.

¹⁵²² Barry, *Hospitals*, p. 370.

¹⁵²³ Clarke, *Hope*, p. 224 & Weight, *patriots*, p. 122.

finest hours” through which it became a “symbol” of a “formidable, self-confident nation”.¹⁵²⁴ Connectedly it also became a means by which Britain could express a form of moral as opposed to “hard” military or economic power. Joseph Nye writes that the use of such non-coercive institutions can be a feature of “soft power”, that is to say, “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion”. Nye argues that this form of power “rests” on a country’s “resources of culture” and “values” including democracy, the rights of citizens, “literature, art and education”. With such power a state is able to “entice”, “persuade” and “co-opt” another state or its citizens into willingly making desirable changes.¹⁵²⁵ Such changes often centre on “admiring” and then “emulating” another country’s values, or “aspiring to its levels of prosperity and openness”¹⁵²⁶

That Labour chose to express this form of “soft power” during the visit is unsurprising given Ashraf’s interest in developing Iranian healthcare. In this sense there was a rather straightforward economic incentive for displaying the N.H.S. in operation. In addition, however, Labour was proud of its role as the “dedicated midwife” of this symbolic institution.¹⁵²⁷ In 1974 the party had returned to power consequently “determined to defend” the N.H.S. which had purportedly been underfunded by the Conservatives.¹⁵²⁸ Despite increased spending the service was, however, in “turmoil” for much of the decade,¹⁵²⁹ faced with financial difficulties, stalled building programmes and industrial strife resultant of the economic downturn.¹⁵³⁰ The N.H.S., however, was still vastly superior to any equivalent organisation in Iran where despite some impressive advances, there was a shortage of doctors, equipment, nurses and coordination which led to basic or heavily uneven rural and urban provision of healthcare.¹⁵³¹ Furthermore implicit within Anglo-Iranians relations since the 19th century was a desire for Iran to modernise so as to ensure its stability and prosperity, so long as this married with wider British interests. This situation had not altered by the 1970s during which time Parsons had argued for Britain to “participate actively” in the Shah’s plans for modernisation which included “universal medical care”. Such participation would be to Britain’s “commercial and political advantage”, whilst also precipitating “genuine stability”.¹⁵³²

¹⁵²⁴ Peter Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain, 1945-1951*, (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1992), p. 144.

¹⁵²⁵ Joseph S. Nye Jr., ‘Public Diplomacy and Soft Power’, *Annals*, 616 (2008), pp. 94-109 (p. 94-96).

¹⁵²⁶ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power, The Means of Success in World Politics*, (U.S., Public Affairs, 2004), p. 5.

¹⁵²⁷ Gordon Macpherson, ‘Introduction’, in *Our NHS*, p. ix.

¹⁵²⁸ ‘Manifesto’, Oct. 1974.

¹⁵²⁹ Lord Walton of Detchant, ‘1946-1996 and all that: 50 years of the NHS’, in *Our NHS*, p. 6-9.

¹⁵³⁰ Rivett, *Cradle*, p. 264-279.

¹⁵³¹ Mohammad Ali Faghil, ‘Behdari’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 15 Dec. 1989 <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/behdari>> [accessed: 8.12.16], Thomas Walton, ‘Economic development and revolutionary upheavals in Iran’, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 4 (1980), pp. 271-292 (p. 283), ‘The most powerful woman in the land where power rules supreme’,

Times, 7 June 1976 & FCO8/2262, Parsons, ‘Is the Great Civilisation Possible?’, 16 Oct. 1974.

¹⁵³² FCO8/2496, Parsons, ‘Iran – Internal Situation’, 14 Aug. 1975.



Fig. 53: Princess Ashraf and Alderman Lady Donaldson (FCO8/2767, 'Kayhan', 10 June 1972).

As we shall have case to see in subsequent sections, British officials also regularly praised the Shah's modernising efforts which Britain was proud to participate in. Using soft power was one such method of active and persuasive participation, which led in part to the Princess being shown around G.O.S.H. by the Prime Minister's wife Audrey who was also Chairman of the Board of Governors at the hospital. This suitable piece of setting was an "internationally famous centre for child healthcare" dating back to 1852.¹⁵³³ Despite its Victorian exterior the hospital had seen many medical innovations including Britain's first Heart and Lung Unit for children founded in 1947.¹⁵³⁴ Subsequently in 1961 it opened the first paediatric leukaemia research centre in the country,¹⁵³⁵ and put the first paediatric heart and lung bypass machine into operation a year later.¹⁵³⁶ During the 1970s this led to drastic improvement in leukaemia survival rates for children.¹⁵³⁷

¹⁵³³ Nicholas Baldwin, 'The History of The Hospital for Sick Children at Great Ormond Street', n.d., <<http://hharp.org/library/gosh/general/history.html>> [visited 8. 12. 16].

¹⁵³⁴ Kevin Telfer, *The Remarkable Story of Great Ormond Street Hospital*, (London: Simon & Schuster, 2008), p. 73.

¹⁵³⁵ 'Research Unit for LeU.K.aemia', *Times*, 7 Dec. 1961.

¹⁵³⁶ 'Breakthroughs in children's medicine – Heart and Lung', *Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity*, 2007, (pp. 3-46) p. 13.

¹⁵³⁷ 'Breakthroughs in children's medicine – Cancer', (pp. 1-42), p. 14 & 'Breakthroughs...Heart and Lung', p. 17.

Meanwhile the British government also sought to impress Great Power Survivalism with another allusion to modernity through its support for sexual equality. In early 1970 the first National Women's Liberation Conference had been organised to agitate for equal pay, education, employment and abortion rights. Labour subsequently championed the cause by passing the Equal Pay Act in that same year, the Sex Discrimination Act in 1976 and the Employment Protection Act in 1975. This facilitated incremental improvements in women's rights and greater participation in the labour market.¹⁵³⁸ On the 9th of June the Princess was thus invited to meet some of these participants at an "all-woman luncheon" held at the Guildhall.¹⁵³⁹ The event was hosted by Alderman Lady Donaldson, a former governor at G.O.S.H. and the first ever female Alderman for the City of London (Fig. 53).¹⁵⁴⁰ She was joined by high achieving women from both the private and public sector working as solicitors, stock brokers, politicians, lecturers and journalists etc.¹⁵⁴¹ Crucially British officials avoided any judgement of potential Iranian inferiority in these contexts which was a firm nod to Disinterested Impartiality. Lecturing the Iranians on poor healthcare or women's rights would have been counterproductive. Instead a display of British soft power was utilised to encourage emulation whilst at the same time subtly indicating that Britain was still a superior power.

There were two remaining methods by which Britain impressed Great Power Survivalism during the visit. The first related to national longevity and stability symbolised by the monarchy's "time honoured spectacle" of "Trooping the Colour" in which the Household Cavalry and Foot Guards "troop" to their regimental bands, with colours dipped in salute to the British sovereign.¹⁵⁴² The tradition of a Colour Guard displaying the standard dates back to at least the seventeenth century, however, it was during the reign of George III that it became a ceremonial demonstration of the British Army and its loyalty to the sovereign whose birthday the Trooping ceremony also celebrates.¹⁵⁴³ Since Queen Victoria's birthday fell in May, the Shah was not privy to such a demonstration during his visit in 1873. Trooping ceremonies during that time were, however, very much akin to the fuller Review that he witnessed at Windsor.¹⁵⁴⁴

¹⁵³⁸ Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women, The History of Women in Britain and the United States*, (London: Penguin, 1997), p. 405 & p. 413.

¹⁵³⁹ 'Court Circular', *Times*, 10 June 1976.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Anne Pimlott Baker, 'Donaldson, Dame (Dorothy) Mary, Lady Donaldson of Lymington (1921–2003)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Jan. 2007 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/92578>> [accessed: 8.12.16].

¹⁵⁴¹ FCO8/2767, 'Detailed Itinerary – Ashraf'.

¹⁵⁴² 'Time Honoured Spectacle at the Horse Guards', *Daily Mail*, 24 May 1900.

¹⁵⁴³ Charles Carlton, *Royal Warriors, A Military History of the British Monarchy*, (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2003), p. 1.

¹⁵⁴⁴ 'The Queen's Birthday Celebrations', *Daily News*, 31 May 1875.



Fig. 54: 'The Queen takes part in 'Trooping of the Colour' <<http://www.alamy.com/>>



Fig. 55: The National Theatre ("Window on the World, *J.L.N.*, 27 Oct. 1973).

In both instances it was notable that British forces were arrayed in battle formation, though there was added ceremony. By 1976 the notion of scarlet coated British troops going into battle in line formation was long gone following the adoption of new tactics and khaki Service Dress at the turn of the 20th century. Furthermore, the Trooping display also featured greater levels of elaborate ceremonial marching, as well as a newly developed sense of meaning which complemented a propensity for post-war Britons to take solace in the country's heritage.¹⁵⁴⁵ Indeed according to Charles Carlton:

...the rousing music, the precise marching, colourful ceremonial and martial discipline of this ritual are part of the pomp and circumstance which the British rightly claim to do so well. It is a reassuring link with a safe past, a constant custom in a changing world with an uncertain future.¹⁵⁴⁶

With their disciplined movements, and Victorian era uniforms, the Coldstream Guards present in 1873 and now also a hundred years later, acted as living "stage props" embodying Britain's imperial greatness despite decolonisation and relative economic decline.¹⁵⁴⁷ In 1976 the Queen also used personal front by donning a scarlet military uniform with a beret, inspecting the troops on horseback (Fig. 54).¹⁵⁴⁸ She thus performed in "self statehood", embodying Britain's lived link to its proud martial past in which its redcoats ranged the globe. Princess Ashraf was said to have been suitably "impressed by the splendour and efficiency" of the troops.¹⁵⁴⁹ Meanwhile the final example of Great Power Survivalism represents that very change which the Trooping ceremony was a partial escape from. Following the destruction wrought by the 'Blitz' of the Second World War, Britain wedded the welfare state with radical architectural innovations involving necessary economy which fundamentally changed the country's urban landscape. Much needed new housing, and commercial and public buildings thus began to feature prefabricated building techniques, metal framing, and functional concrete often in high-rise structures.¹⁵⁵⁰ As previously noted Cohen alluded to the notion of buildings reflecting values or beliefs of a community.¹⁵⁵¹ In Britain this innovative new architecture came to symbolise the country's "brighter" and more "modernist future to come".¹⁵⁵² By the 1970s this brutalist bubble was already bursting with the re-emergence slums, this time made of cracked and graffiti covered concrete which more adequately epitomised the struggles of the decade.¹⁵⁵³

That did not, however, stop the British government from attempting to impress Great Power Survivalism through the modern architecture of Southbank. As the original site of the Festival of Britain

¹⁵⁴⁵ Sandbrook, *Seasons*, p. 86-92.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Carlton, *Warriors*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴⁷ For footage see: British Pathé, 'Trooping the Colour', (1976) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVWff4g51_w> [accessed: 15.01.17].

¹⁵⁴⁸ See also British Pathé, 'Queen At The Trooping the Colour', (1976).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty-Av_im_vw> [accessed: 15.01.17].

¹⁵⁴⁹ FCO8/2767, 'Report', Harrison.

¹⁵⁵⁰ John Grindrod, *Concretopia: A Journey Around the Rebuilding of Postwar Britain*, (London: Old Street Publishing, 2014), p. 15-16, p. 95-97 & p. 147-182.

¹⁵⁵¹ Cohen, *Theatre*, p. 218.

¹⁵⁵² Robert Elwall, *Building a Better Tomorrow*, (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons-Academy, 2000), p. 10-11.

¹⁵⁵³ Sandbrook, *Seasons*, p. 79.

in 1951 the area temporarily epitomised the new “socialist, modernist spirit” of post-war Britain.¹⁵⁵⁴ After the festival Southbank had “fallen into decline”, however, during the early 1960s a slow regeneration process began. This would eventually house the new National Theatre, which was visited by the Princess on the 11th of June.¹⁵⁵⁵ It was clear why Ashraf and also the Shahbanu had been taken here. The theatre was a striking structure with straight “uncompromising” concrete lines, constructed on concrete rafts atop of marshland.¹⁵⁵⁶ Contemporary press reports thought it the “finest” national theatre in the world,¹⁵⁵⁷ a “concrete iceberg” of cascading “tray-like decks” (Fig. 55).¹⁵⁵⁸ At a dinner laid on for the Shah’s wife Mr Callaghan expressed his admiration for it, encapsulating Cohen’s assertions by stating that:

...we [the British] are proud that we were able to show you our new National Theatre...we are sure that what we have finally constructed is a worthy reflection of British design, technology and artistic talent in the second half of the Twentieth Century.¹⁵⁵⁹

BEYOND ASHRAF **OVERT CORDIALITY**

Many of the dramatic techniques used during the visit of the Princess were evident from 1974 to 1979, including cordial written and verbal communications, and dramatic visits to and from Iran. More specifically there were persistent efforts to make the Shah feel like a regional partner whose advice and intimacy was valued and sought after. For instance during 1974 the M.E.D. ensured that there was a “broad-ranging and continuous dialogue with the Shah...through Mr Parsons, both directly” at regular audiences “and indirectly through his day-to-day contact with the Shah’s Minister of Court”.¹⁵⁶⁰ Such interactions persisted for the duration of the ambassador’s posting. In Parsons’ first year there was still a suspicion, however, that the Shah felt as though he was still perceived to be an “up-start”.¹⁵⁶¹ The M.E.D. hoped that the Shah’s private trip to Windsor in 1973 would have convinced him that he was viewed instead “as an equal in Royal circles”.¹⁵⁶² By way of necessary additional efforts the British government also entertained the 14-year old Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi and his brother Ali Reza and sister Princess Farahnaz in the summer of 1974. In March of that year the Shah mentioned to Parsons that he was thinking of a British summer holiday to give his children experience of the country, and in the interests of Overt Cordiality Parsons “made appropriate noises”.¹⁵⁶³

¹⁵⁵⁴ Elwall, *Building*, p. 11.

¹⁵⁵⁵ Grindrod, *Concretopia*, p. 410.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Grindrod, *Concretopia*, p. 417.

¹⁵⁵⁷ ‘Backstage grumbles are good for National spirit’, 13 July 1976.

¹⁵⁵⁸ ‘Writ in Concrete’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 July 1977.

¹⁵⁵⁹ FCO8/2766 ‘Draft Speech for Mr Callaghan’s Dinner in Honour of Her Imperial Majesty the Shahbanou on Thursday 8 April’ in Day Weir, 5 April 1976.

¹⁵⁶⁰ FCO8/2271, Acland to Wright, M.E.D., 18 Oct 1974.

¹⁵⁶¹ FCO8/2271, Acland to Wright, M.E.D., 14 Oct. 1974.

¹⁵⁶² FCO8/2271, Acland to Wright, M.E.D., 18 Oct 1974.

¹⁵⁶³ FCO8/2289, Parsons to Wright, M.E.D., 20 March 1974.

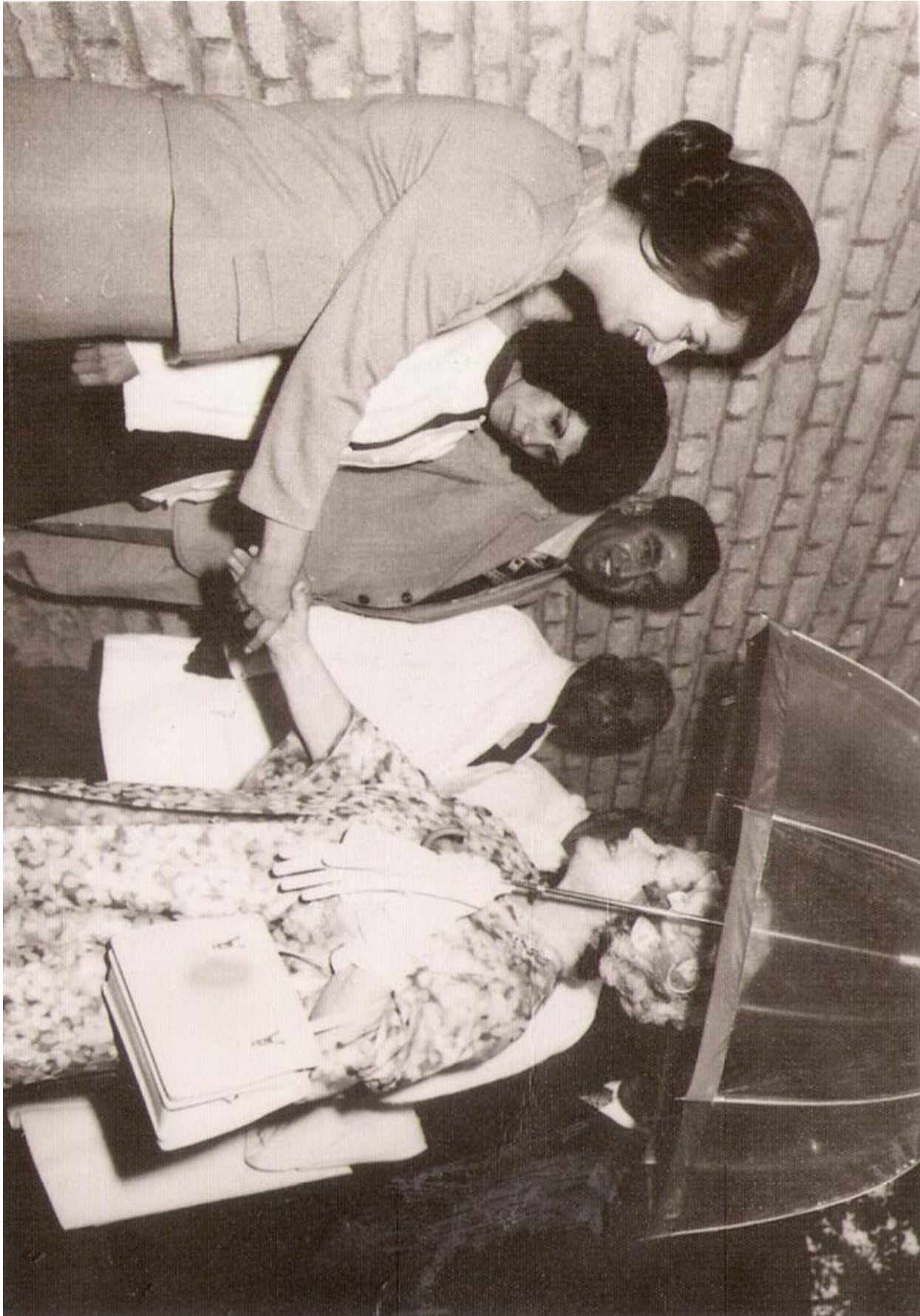


Fig. 56: The Queen Mother using her charming smile at the Isfahan Church Missionary Society.

As in the case of Princess Ashraf, the ambassador “attached great importance to the success” of this potential visit.¹⁵⁶⁴ Subsequently in May the Iranian embassy made enquiries about a private visit,¹⁵⁶⁵ and the M.E.D. responded positively, moving to consider the itinerary and necessary marks of “Royal attention”.¹⁵⁶⁶ The Queen proved amenable, suggesting lunch at Buckingham Palace.¹⁵⁶⁷ Consequently Parsons informed an “extremely grateful” Shah,¹⁵⁶⁸ that “the Queen would of course be pleased to do something for his children during their stay”.¹⁵⁶⁹ To assist the M.E.D. Parsons also suggested a range of activities including a trip to the Tank Museum at Bovington, as well as listing some of the children’s interests including Mickey Mouse films.¹⁵⁷⁰ The Iranian embassy meanwhile was keen on “conventional sight-seeing”.¹⁵⁷¹ After substantial correspondence a provisional programme was outlined by the 10th of July,¹⁵⁷² along with another detailed “Brief”.¹⁵⁷³ Subsequently from the 26th of July to the 6th of August the children enjoyed a varied programme of events in England and Scotland. In the former they visited historic sites including the Tower of London, along with modern working facilities including New Scotland Yard.¹⁵⁷⁴ Meanwhile the Queen was “most interested” in making sure the children were well attended when dining with her at Buckingham Palace.¹⁵⁷⁵ In Scotland the royal children also visited Edinburgh Castle and the Musselburgh Highland Games. This was all interspersed with films, football and junk food.¹⁵⁷⁶ Despite the fact that the children were as easily pleased by “kicking an empty ‘Coke’ can around”, the visit purportedly went very well,¹⁵⁷⁷ which came as a “great relief” to Parsons who also reported that the Shah felt “very warmly” about the trip.¹⁵⁷⁸ Consequently the ambassador had a:

...feeling that the visit will have strongly favourable repercussions for British interests in the future, just as an unsuccessful visit would have had correspondingly serious implications for us.¹⁵⁷⁹

In conjunction with hosting the Shah’s children there were also ministerial visits to Iran in 1974 including one in late September from Lord Malcolm Shepherd, the Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal.¹⁵⁸⁰ With sufficient briefing beforehand Shepherd had a “most...friendly conversation” with the Iranian Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda, which underlined that “Britain and Iran had

¹⁵⁶⁴ FCO8/2289, Parsons to F.C.O., 30 June 1974.

¹⁵⁶⁵ FCO8/2289, Callaghan to Parsons, 21 May 1974.

¹⁵⁶⁶ FCO8/2289, T.J. Clark, M.E.D. to J.N.O. Curle, Protocol & Conference Dept., 21 May 1974.

¹⁵⁶⁷ FCO8/2289, Wright to Williams, 1 July 1974.

¹⁵⁶⁸ FCO8/2289, Parsons to F.C.O., 30 May 1974.

¹⁵⁶⁹ FCO8/2289, F.C.O. to Parsons, 23 May 1974.

¹⁵⁷⁰ FCO8/2289, Parsons to Wright, 6 June 1974.

¹⁵⁷¹ FCO8/2289, Parsons to F.C.O., 24 June 1974.

¹⁵⁷² FCO8/2289, ‘Programme for the Visit of His imperial Highness the Crown Prince of Iran’, 10 July 1974.

¹⁵⁷³ FCO8/2289, ‘Brief on the Visit to the United Kingdom of His Imperial Highness the Crown Princess of Iran, Princess Farahnaz, and Prince Ali Reza’, n.d.

¹⁵⁷⁴ FCO8/2289, Clark to Parsons, 9 Aug. 1974.

¹⁵⁷⁵ FCO8/2289, Clark to Parsons, 9 Aug. 1974.

¹⁵⁷⁶ FCO8/2289, ‘Programme for the Visit of the Imperial Children Sunday 21 July to Tuesday 6 August’, n.d.

¹⁵⁷⁷ FCO8/2289, Alan C. Thomson, Escorting Office, S.I.O. Edinburgh, to Williams, 9 Aug. 1974.

¹⁵⁷⁸ FCO/2289, Parsons to Clark, 18 Aug. 1974.

¹⁵⁷⁹ FCO/2289, Parsons to Clark, 18 Aug. 1974.

¹⁵⁸⁰ FCO8/2260, Parsons to F.C.O., 17 Sept. 1974.

many common interests”.¹⁵⁸¹ Parsons thought the visit a “great success” that served to assure the Iranians of “the continuity of our interest in their important and growing country”.¹⁵⁸² Meanwhile a second visit in December came from Harold Lever who was serving as an Economic Advisor to Wilson alongside his duties as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He reported in June that one of the Shah’s confidants had indicated that his sovereign wanted contact at a “high political level” in the British government. Lever was “disposed to respond favourably” since it might “give offence” if he did not.¹⁵⁸³ The Prime Minister and the F.C.O. agreed, arguing that a “regular exchange of Ministerial visits” was “an important expression of the very close relations we enjoy with Iran”.¹⁵⁸⁴

After an intense briefing Lever attended meetings with H.I.M. on the 3rd of December discussing oil, commercial concerns, and Britain’s impending Defence Review. Although there was some disagreement with the Shah’s profiteering oil policies,¹⁵⁸⁵ Lever stressed that Britain “attached the greatest importance to” its “relationship with Iran” in both a strategic and commercial context.¹⁵⁸⁶ Connectedly a further sense of Overt Cordiality was fostered by Lever’s attempt to make the Shah feel that he was a valued ally privy to private British strategic and policy thinking. He thus “emphasised” that he was in Iran “to begin the process of consultation with the Shah”, instead of “simply telling” him. Moreover Lever stated that the “Prime Minister had particularly wanted...to start the consultations with the Shah before” a “statement was made in Parliament”.¹⁵⁸⁷ Meanwhile 1975 was an important year for Overt Cordiality in the context of the Royal Family. Of several visits, including a brief one from the Prince of Wales and the Queen’s cousin the Duke of Kent, space only permits a fuller assessment of the Queen Mother’s official trip to Iran in April. In brief the visit of the Duke and his wife, and the Charles in September and February respectively were said to “have made a major contribution to Anglo-Iranian relations” by demonstrating unremitting royal attention to ensure that the Shah felt recognised as an equal monarch.¹⁵⁸⁸

As to the Queen Mother, she was armed with extensive M.E.D. “Briefs” providing “possible topics of conversation” on Iran, Anglo-Iranian relations and the Pahlavi Royal Family for her trip from the 14th to the 19th of April.¹⁵⁸⁹ Parsons was full of praise for the 74-year old’s evident use of this material and more broadly for her efforts in support of Overt Cordiality. He wrote that Her Majesty “cast her spell” and “enchanted everyone she met” with her “charm”. In doing so she used personal front, smiling and showing “vigorous interest in all whom she met and everything which she saw” (Fig. 56).¹⁵⁹⁰ Indeed she

¹⁵⁸¹ FCO8/2260, Parsons to F.C.O., 17 Sept. 1974 & FCO8/2260, Wilde, ‘Notes on a Meeting, prime Minister’, 30 Sept. 1974.

¹⁵⁸² FCO8/2260, F.C.O. Minute, 24 Oct. 1974 & FCO8/2260, Parsons to F.C.O., 9 Oct. 1974.

¹⁵⁸³ FCO8/2270, Lever to the Prime Minister, 4 June 1974.

¹⁵⁸⁴ FCO8/2270, Bridges to M.E.D., 5 June 1974, FCO8/2270, F.C.O to Prime Minister, 10 June 1974.

¹⁵⁸⁵ FCO8/2270, ‘Record of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster’s Audience with the Shah’, 3 Dec. 1974.

¹⁵⁸⁶ FCO8/2270, Parsons to J.E. Jackson, Defence Department, 5 Dec. 1974.

¹⁵⁸⁷ FCO8/2270, Parsons to Jackson, 5 Dec. 1974.

¹⁵⁸⁸ FCO8/2522, ‘Visit of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchesses of Kent, 6 Oct. 1975.

¹⁵⁸⁹ FCO8/2522, ‘Visit to Iran of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother 14-19 April 1975 – Background Brief on Iran’, n.d.

¹⁵⁹⁰ FCO8/2522, Parsons to Callaghan, 30 April 1975.

had displayed “indefatigable enjoyment” with “a truly exacting programme of events which continued non-stop every day from 10 o’clock in the morning until late at night”.¹⁵⁹¹ Such affability and attentiveness was perceived to be a part of the Queen Mother’s personal character which brought liberal amounts of individuality to her official role. That she was a “pleasure-lover in the best possible sense as well as a pleasure-giver” made her an immensely popular member of the Royal Family.¹⁵⁹²

This aspect of her character was brought to bear in Iran where “the personal relationship and devotion she at once inspired in those who attended her amazed some officials”.¹⁵⁹³ Despite her *joie de vivre* and also a “hatred of being hurried” when there was enjoyment to be had, the Queen Mother did possess certain traits which made her an eminently suitable choice for adopting “self statehood”, sending signals about the state of Anglo-Iranian relations. Unlike her daughter Margaret, who was seemingly loose-lipped, and prone to extramarital “flings” and “slugging gin”,¹⁵⁹⁴ the Queen Mother had “hidden reserves of control”.¹⁵⁹⁵ Thus when representing and embodying Britain in Iran, she showed stoic levels of outward satisfaction in the face of a programme which had her hurrying from palaces in Tehran, to tombs in Shiraz and banquets in Isfahan.¹⁵⁹⁶

In private Her Majesty showed dislike for such haste remarking that she “found the whole country agitating” and did not “really like being driven at 60 miles an hour through crowded streets, with so many police” and “soldiers surrounding one”.¹⁵⁹⁷ She was not accustomed to such fleeting interactions with crowds, on the contrary her “priorities” were “quite clear: people before plans”.¹⁵⁹⁸ That she kept these complaints backstage was another demonstration of Goffman’s concept of “dramaturgical discipline”.¹⁵⁹⁹ The Queen Mother also managed to do this with a “unique combination” of her “unaffected simplicity and kindness” stemming from her personal character, along with the “regal bearing” expected of her status as a member of the Royal Family which in some ways remained reminiscent of the Victorian and Edwardian eras.¹⁶⁰⁰ One might also add that the Queen Mother’s gender played a role...Parsons did not want to sound “over-sentimental” but he felt “very proud to be British” in light of Her Majesty’s conduct. He thought it was a “triumph” that played upon the Shah’s deep affection and respect” for the British Royal Family which formed an “important element in Anglo-

¹⁵⁹¹ FCO8/2522, Parsons to Callaghan, 30 April 1975.

¹⁵⁹² Margaret Laing, ‘The Queen Mother’, *ILLN.*, 30 Aug. 1975 & Neil Blain and Hugh O’Donnell, *Media, Monarchy and Power*, (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2003), p. 24-27.

¹⁵⁹³ Laing, ‘Queen Mother’, *ILLN.*, 30 Aug. 1975.

¹⁵⁹⁴ ‘Why even today, Royal problems can’t be purely private’, *Daily Mail*, 18 March 1976.

¹⁵⁹⁵ *ILLN.*, 30 Aug. 1975.

¹⁵⁹⁶ FCO8/2522, ‘Programme – Visit of Her Majesty...the Queen Mother to Iran’, n.d. 1975.

¹⁵⁹⁷ William Shawcross, *Counting One’s Blessings: The Selected Letters of Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother*, (London: Macmillan, 2012), 23 May 1975, to the Prince of Wales, p. 577.

¹⁵⁹⁸ *ILLN.*, 30 Aug. 1975.

¹⁵⁹⁹ Goffman *Presentation*, p. 216-18.

¹⁶⁰⁰ *ILLN.*, 30 Aug. 1975.

Iranian relations". As such the "visit had done much to strengthen and deepen" Britain's relationship with Iran.¹⁶⁰¹

Meanwhile with regards ministerial visits in 1975, Healey conducted a five-day trip to Iran from the 7th to the 13th of October.¹⁶⁰² This was to provide some cabinet-level clout for a U.K.-Iran investment conference, and to discuss how Britain might secure the second \$400m tranche of the \$1.2bn loan. The Iranians were purportedly considering retention of the tranche as a bargaining chip in negotiations for a preferential trade agreement with the E.E.C. More generally the visit was to emphasise continued "British interest" in Iran.¹⁶⁰³ As such Healey was briefed to say that Britain looked "forward to the development of yet closer links between the two countries" in the context of joint ventures facilitated by the J.M.E.C. which had last met in January of 1975.¹⁶⁰⁴ Furthermore "Speaking Notes" were peppered with phrases such as "we welcome" and "we are glad" when referring to Anglo-Iranian commercial cooperation.¹⁶⁰⁵

The M.E.D. thought the visit proved "helpful in maintaining the generally good atmosphere in bilateral relations". Moreover with ambiguous language Healey had also managed to safeguard the second tranche of the loan by expressing support for a preferential E.E.C.-Iran trade agreement whilst actually committing "to nothing" of the sort.¹⁶⁰⁶ Britain did tacitly back Iran's desire for an agreement, however, they objected to the Shah's hastiness.¹⁶⁰⁷ Healey had also shown discipline in his frontstage performance which differed from his derogatory backstage opinions of Iran. Indeed like Curzon before him and a whole host of British officials including Parsons, Healey privately thought "corruption was rife" in Iran and that the Shah "surrounded himself with sycophants".¹⁶⁰⁸ Similarly in the following year the British government used several visits to foster Overt Cordiality. First Tony Benn, the Secretary of State for Energy and the "champion of the hard left", had visited in January of 1976.¹⁶⁰⁹ The minister went to observe National Iranian Oil Company (N.I.O.C.) operations, and to discuss energy policy and the potential for British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. to play a role in Iranian nuclear development.¹⁶¹⁰ The visit also came at a point when Iranian oil revenues had dipped, precipitating requests for the British government to pressure British Petroleum (B.P.) and Royal Dutch Shell, both "privileged buyers" into "lifting" more oil.¹⁶¹¹ Benn had to delicately stress the government's inability to influence the companies, whilst also dampening renewed interest in purchasing British goods with oil in a similar arrangement to that of

¹⁶⁰¹ FCO8/2522, Parsons to Callaghan, 30 April 1975.

¹⁶⁰² FCO8/2497, I.A.R – 1975, (p. 8).

¹⁶⁰³ 'Healey sees Shah at start of 5-day Iran visit', *Financial Times*, 9 Oct. 1975, 'Mr Healey to discuss loan of \$800m during Iran visit', *Times*, 3 Oct. 1975, & FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 49.

¹⁶⁰⁴ FCO8/2497, I.A.R – 1975, (p. 5).

¹⁶⁰⁵ FCO8/2509, 'Her Majesty's Treasury – Chancellor's Visit to Iran – Brief by Department of Trade', 26 Sept. 1975.

¹⁶⁰⁶ 'Shahrade', *Economist*, 18 Oct. 1975.

¹⁶⁰⁷ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 49.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Denis Healey, *The Time of My Life*, (London: Michael Joseph, 1989), p. 425, Parsons, *Pride*, p. 11 & Curzon, *Persia*, Vol. I, p. 401.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Clarke, *Hope*, p. 348.

¹⁶¹⁰ FCO8/2505, Chalmers to F.C.O., 29 Dec. 1975 & Afkhami, *Life*, p. 351-358.

¹⁶¹¹ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 50 & Afkhami, *Life*, p. 274-27.

1974.¹⁶¹² After talks with government ministers Benn had an audience with the Shah in which he followed this brief whilst also impressing Over Cordiality with various positive verbal remarks.¹⁶¹³ For instance Benn said that Britain had “close relations with Iran” and that there was a “convergence of the two countries’ interests” which would make it “possible to consolidate” a “unique relationship”. He also praised the N.I.O.C and said “he had been very impressed by what was being achieved in Iran” by the Shah who was “being too modest” about his own contribution. Finally Benn stressed that Britain had a “great deal to offer” Iran by way of nuclear energy expertise.¹⁶¹⁴ Backstage Benn had been a little more candid, however, there was still no reference to torture, or excessive levels of criticism. On the contrary although Benn thought the Shah was “a Mussolini without a doubt”, he was perhaps “right” about the need for progressive change to be directed from “the top”, i.e. dictatorially. Furthermore although it was “impossible to have affection” for the Shah, Benn still thought he would likely “count historically as having been a ‘good king’”.¹⁶¹⁵

Even Callaghan was more critical in his backstage comments following another visit used to complement Overt Cordiality in March. Indeed in his memoir Callaghan wrote that he “did not care for the manner in which all the Western powers” including Britain “felt that they must pay court to the Shah”. Nor did he have “any sympathy with the brutal internal repression” exercised by the regime.¹⁶¹⁶ There were also other causes for complaint at that juncture including the persistent issue of oil liftings,¹⁶¹⁷ and an Iranian anti-corruption drive which led to a spat with the British firm Tate and Lyle.¹⁶¹⁸ Meanwhile other British firms in Iran were facing missed payments and loss of profitability.¹⁶¹⁹ Lastly despite Healey’s efforts, Iran’s desire for preferential treatment by the E.E.C. was still a sore point.¹⁶²⁰ Nevertheless relations were “generally good”,¹⁶²¹ and Britain wanted to maintain these relations by gently ironing out any disagreements. Thus although Callaghan could defend Britain’s position using very extensive “Steering Brief” and “Speaking Notes” provided by the M.E.D. and multiple other government departments,¹⁶²² the main aims of the visit included:

...i) to foster and improve our existing close relations with Iran by demonstrating to the Shah that we value his views and wish to cooperate with him ii) to seek to ensure that our bilateral relationship is not damaged by the Shah’s current concern over oil liftings... [and] iii) in a country where trade and defence

¹⁶¹² FCO8/2505, ‘Secretary of State’s Visit to Iran, Jan. 1976 – Brief: No.B13: Oil for Goods’, n.d., & FCO8/2505, ‘Brief: No.B4 – Negotiations Between Iran and the Consortium of Oil Companies’, n.d.

¹⁶¹³ FCO8/2738, ‘Note on the Secretary of State For Energy’s Audience with the Shah...’, 7 Aug. 1976.

¹⁶¹⁴ FCO8/2738, ‘Note on the Secretary...’, 7 Aug. 1976.

¹⁶¹⁵ Tony Benn, *Against the Tide, Diaries 1973-76*, (London: Arrow Books, 1990), p. 492.

¹⁶¹⁶ James Callaghan, *Times and Chance*, (London: Billing & Sons Ltd., 1987), p. 388.

¹⁶¹⁷ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State for Foreign And Commonwealth affairs to Iran 4-8 March 1976 – Brief No. 1.

¹⁶¹⁸ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State 4-8 March Brief No. 6 – Annex No. 14’, n.d. 1976.

¹⁶¹⁹ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State 4-8 March 1976 ‘U.K./Iran Commercial Relations...Brief No: 6’.

& FCO8/2738, Chalmers to F.C.O., 26 Feb. 1976.

¹⁶²⁰ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State 4-8 March 1976 ‘U.K./Iran Commercial Relations...Brief No: 5’.

¹⁶²¹ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State 4-8...Brief No: 1’.

¹⁶²² There were two large files full of briefs for Callaghan (FCO8/2737, & 2738 both entitled ‘Visit of the Secretary of State to Iran: Briefs’).

sales to some extent depend upon the suppliers political image, to make the maximum public impact to highlight Britain's position as one of Iran's closest partners...¹⁶²³

Callaghan, who was also the first Foreign Secretary to visit Iran since Douglas-Home in 1973, executed this strategy in a “most successful” manner.¹⁶²⁴ First shortly prior to the visit on the 2nd of March he addressed the National Iranian Radio & Television service (N.I.R.T.), stating that his visit, those of his cabinet colleagues and members of the Royal Family were manifestations of Britain’s “regard” for Iran “as one of the most important partners that” Britain had both in “commercial matters and in political relations”.¹⁶²⁵ Subsequently from the 4th to the 8th of March Mr Callaghan and his wife also attended dinners, luncheons, sight-seeing in Isfahan and most importantly a series of audiences with the Foreign Secretary’s opposite number Abbas Ali Khalatbari and the Iranian Prime Minister. Finally the “centrepiece” of the visit was an audience with the Shah himself.¹⁶²⁶

According to Parsons this audience in particular “could not have gone better”. During the nearly two hour talk Callaghan managed to changed tack on the liftings moving to indicate his “determination” to encourage B.P. and Shell to extract more oil. He also successfully petitioned the Shah to facilitate stalled payments to British firms operating in Iran.¹⁶²⁷ Lastly he fully secured the dates for the release of the second tranche of the loan to Britain, after renewed doubt had surfaced due to Iranian cash shortages.¹⁶²⁸ In summary the visit “confirmed” that Anglo-Iranian relations were “sufficiently deep-rooted, intimate and broadly based” so as “not to be affected by short-term vicissitudes”.¹⁶²⁹ This was evidenced by the Shah’s “thoroughly cordial” tone throughout, and by “the fact that he personally took the wheel and drove” Mr Callaghan to his residential palace following the audience. This inconvenience display was taken by Parsons to be a “mark of high favour”.¹⁶³⁰

In the following month it was Britain’s turn to impress Overt Cordiality by hosting the Shah’s wife Farah Diba from the 5th to the 10th of April. As in the case of Princess Ashraf, Farah’s trip was “designed to reflect...the importance of Royal contacts” between Britain and Iran and to “enhance” diplomatic relations. After her stellar performance in Persia the Queen Mother was the Royal Family member called into action as the host to affect this enhancement (Fig. 57).¹⁶³¹

¹⁶²³ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State 4-8 March 1976 – Brief No. 1.

¹⁶²⁴ FCO8/2736, Williams to Day, 19 March 1976.

¹⁶²⁵ FCO8/2736, ‘Mr Callaghan Iran Television’ 2 March 1976.

¹⁶²⁶ FCO8/2736, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to Iran 4-8 March – Summary’, 10 March 1976, (p. 2).

¹⁶²⁷ FCO8/2736, Summary’, 10 March 1976. (p. 3).

¹⁶²⁸ ‘Callaghan Soothes U.K.-Iranian Relations’, *Financial Times*, 8 March 1976.

¹⁶²⁹ FCO8/2736, Summary’, 10 March 1976, (p. 3).

¹⁶³⁰ FCO8/2736, Summary’, 10 March 1976, (p. 2).

¹⁶³¹ FCO8/2766, ‘Visit To the U.K. of the Shahbanou of Iran, 5-10 April 1976’, n.d.
& FCO8/2767, Dales to Wright, 10 May 1976.



Fig. 57: The Queen Mother and the Shahbanu, 1976 <<http://www.alamy.com/>>



Fig. 58: The Queen Mother and the Shahbanu arriving at Covent Garden Opera House (INF14/423).

With the usual briefing and a carefully constructed programme the Empress was given a significant show of royal attention. Firstly she was met by the Queen Mother's Lord Chamberlain the Earl of Dalhousie at the airport. He conducted her to Clarence House where she would stay with the Queen Mother who regularly dined with the Empress, whilst joining her on excursions including a trip to a ballet performance at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden (Fig. 58).¹⁶³² Farah also had luncheon with the Kents and subsequently with the Queen at Windsor.¹⁶³³ Meanwhile a final royal touch involved the sovereign and the Shahbanu jointly opening the World of Islam Festival at the Science Museum in London.¹⁶³⁴ Regarding the opening ceremony the British had shown customary deference to Iranian requests for attention to royal status. In mid-March Parsons informed the F.C.O. that Alam was:

...anxious that the Shahbanou should play a part at this ceremony appropriate to her status as Queen of Iran...All Iran would be looking at the photographs...of this ceremony through a microscope. They would be very quick to seize on anything which might be construed as a lack of full honours to their Queen. In the eyes of the Iranian public, it was this kind of thing which would make or mar the visit.¹⁶³⁵

The F.C.O. responded by stating that they had "gone most carefully into the arrangements" for the festival. It was agreed that Farah would arrive "after all other guests and just before the Queen". Subsequently "their Majesties" would "take their places on the dais" together, in a show of dynastic unity and equality.¹⁶³⁶

Meanwhile in a non-royal context the M.E.D. argued that "it would obviously contribute to the success of the visit if the Prime Minister would agree to offer to give a dinner in honour of the Shahbanou".¹⁶³⁷ Wilson was indisposed,¹⁶³⁸ so the Foreign Secretary agreed to step in.¹⁶³⁹ By the 5th of April, however, Callaghan had assumed the position of Prime Minister and so was able to impress added Overt Cordiality with his first dinner at Downing Street in honour of the Empress. As usual the M.E.D. drafted the speech which was heavily laced with verbal statements supportive of the impression. The Prime Minister was instructed to say how he was "delighted" to have had an "opportunity of marking the close and friendly relations between" Britain and Iran in Farah's "gracious presence".¹⁶⁴⁰ Furthermore he recalled "with the greatest pleasure" his visit to Iran in March, a country which "impressed" him with the "enormous progress" it had seen since the 1950s. Moreover this progress was a "tribute to the foresight, resolution, and imagination of His Imperial Majesty". Callaghan then praised

¹⁶³² FCO8/2766, 'Visit To the U.K. of the Shahbanou of Iran, 5-10 April 1976 – Programme', n.d.

¹⁶³³ FCO8/2766, 'Visit To the U.K. of the Shahbanou of Iran, 5-10 April 1976 – Programme', n.d.

¹⁶³⁴ 'Islam festival inaugurated by the Queen', *Times*, 9 April 1976.

¹⁶³⁵ FCO8/2766, Parsons to F.C.O., 17 March 1976.

¹⁶³⁶ FCO8/2766, Callaghan to Parsons, 19 March 1976.

¹⁶³⁷ FCO8/2766, Lucas to Weir, 30 Jan. 1976.

¹⁶³⁸ FCO8/2766, Lucas to Chalmers, 6 Feb. 1976.

¹⁶³⁹ FCO8/2766, F.C.O. to Tehran, 10 Feb. 1976.

¹⁶⁴⁰ FCO8/2766, 'Draft Speech for Mr Callaghan's Dinner in Honour of Her Imperial Majesty the Shahbanou on Thursday 8 April', n.d.

the Shahbanu for her “very important role in the development of the arts...and sciences” in Iran which justified her role in opening the World of Islam Festival.¹⁶⁴¹

Meanwhile in subsequent sections the M.E.D. went for another allusion to royal amity, instructing Callaghan to state that Farah’s status as guest of the Queen Mother was an “indication of the close contacts between the Royal Families” of the two countries. Connectedly on a government level Callaghan alluded to the “close and friendly” nature of Anglo-Iranian relations in which there were “common interests...shared in the Persian Gulf region” and a “common determination to maintain...national independence and strength” in the context of the C.E.N.T.O. alliance. Furthermore this relationship was “augmented and enriched” by commercial cooperation and Britain’s contribution to the “realisation of Iran’s goals in the economy, in social welfare, and in...cultural and educational development”. Britain was also playing an “important role in the development” of Iran’s automotive industry, its railways and its maritime power. Finally Callaghan reiterated the point British officials continually raised about the frequency of visits to and from Iran, remarking that the “flow of visitors” was a “reflection” of Anglo-Iranian cooperation and even “interdependence”, which he was “determined” to nurture due to the “great things” Britain and Iran could “accomplish together”.¹⁶⁴²

Meanwhile further examples of Overt Cordiality in 1976 include the Mayor of Tehran’s two day trip to London in September as a Guest of the Lord Mayor.¹⁶⁴³ Furthermore the impression was also evident in British political and economic decision-making over Iran. For instance in July of 1976 the Shah persisted with efforts to substitute cash payments for oil in a form of barter exchange or “counter purchase” for British manufacturing products. Specifically the Iranians expressed an interest in using oil for an order of four naval logistics ships and Rapier missiles. Subsequently in December further “pressure” in this context was exerted by the Iranians for the purchase of 110 Scorpion light tanks, and a Military Industrial Complex (M.I.C.) to be constructed at Isfahan for servicing Iran’s Chieftain Tanks.¹⁶⁴⁴ In the interests of keeping him ‘sweet’ the British government “decided to let the Shah have his way”, allowing all deals to be paid for in oil.¹⁶⁴⁵ Unfortunately this did not, however, prevent both the logistic ship and Scorpion deals being put on hold due to Iranian financial difficulties.¹⁶⁴⁶ Turning to 1977 expressions of Overt Cordiality were slightly less prevalent than in the previous year, though visits remained a staple example. Thus from the 13th to the 15th of May 1977 the Foreign Secretary went to Iran for C.E.N.T.O. talks. Unsurprisingly one of the “main aims of the visit” was:

- i) to improve our already close relations by demonstrating to the Shah that we value exchanges of views with him on world problems and wish to cooperate with him in their solution.¹⁶⁴⁷

¹⁶⁴¹ FCO8/2766, ‘Draft Speech for Mr Callaghan’s Dinner...’

¹⁶⁴² FCO8/2766, ‘Draft Speech for Mr Callaghan’s Dinner...’

¹⁶⁴³ FCO8/2763, ‘Visit of the Mayor of Tehran – Programme’, n.d.

¹⁶⁴⁴ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 51 & *New Statesmen*, 17 Oct. 1980.

¹⁶⁴⁵ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 51.

¹⁶⁴⁶ Graham, *The Illusion*, p. 113.

¹⁶⁴⁷ FCO8/2988, Visit to Iran of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs 13-15 May 1977. Briefs, Brief: No. B’, n.d.

Furthermore sections on what “Line To Take”, similar to ‘Speaking Notes’, encouraged Owen to express his “pleasure at visiting Iran”,¹⁶⁴⁸ a country Britain was “keen to develop” even closer commercial links with. Other lines buttressing Overt Cordiality included “we [the British] value the close collaboration between the U.K. and Iran”, which was a “thrusting and dynamic country”.¹⁶⁴⁹ Two final nods to Overt Cordiality during the visit featured firstly Owen being instructed to extend “oil counter purchase arrangements” still in operation for the Rapier and M.I.C. deals, to three civil contracts including the electrification of the Tehran-Tabriz railway. Secondly the Foreign Secretary was given license to waive the third and final \$400m tranche of the loan in exchange for the revival of the two stalled defence contracts.¹⁶⁵⁰ Britain had a slightly improved situation after securing the I.M.F. loan in December of 1976 which made this act possible, however, it still constituted a “material concession” from the government. Meanwhile Iran was going through economic difficulties in 1977 and was in need of liquidity. By accepting oil as payment for civil contracts, and publically stating that the loan was no longer needed, Britain was making an international level act of nonverbal communication that showed goodwill, whilst providing Iran with much needed cash a way for the country to divest herself of financial obligations without causing embarrassment or damaging her credit rating. It was felt that the £60m required for the renowned defence contract was an acceptable sum to take by way of compensation.¹⁶⁵¹

Smaller examples of Overt Cordiality in 1977 included friendly British interactions with the Iranian embassy in London which aimed to maintain cooperative intimacy. For instance following his C.E.N.T.O. meeting in May Owen invited the Iranian ambassador to lunch, which turned out to be a very “friendly and informal” affair in which the Foreign Secretary announced that Radji could “see him whenever” he wished.¹⁶⁵² Princess Margaret also made another appearance at a dinner held at the embassy. Once again, however, her performance was comically characterised by unmeant gestures, including a remark about a photograph of Mahatma Ghandi, his wife, and the Shah and Shahbanu on the wall of the embassy. Margaret thought the Empress looked “nice”, however, the Shah was “always gloomy”. Subsequently she asked if the other woman in the picture was Gandhi’s wife, and after the ambassador agreed that it was, Margaret looked “thoughtful” before announcing “Dick-tay-ta”, leaving Radji “wondering” who in the picture she was referring to.¹⁶⁵³

Meanwhile a final example of Overt Cordiality in this context during 1977 was British official attendance of the Shah’s 57th birthday celebrations held at the Iranian Embassy in London on the 26th of October. A

¹⁶⁴⁸ FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. B1.

¹⁶⁴⁹ FCO8/2988, ‘Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary’s Visit to Iran 13-15 May 1977, Summary of Lines to Take’, n.d.

¹⁶⁵⁰ FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. B6.

¹⁶⁵¹ FCO8/2988, Visit...No. B6.

¹⁶⁵² Radji, Entry, 25 May 1977, p. 82.

¹⁶⁵³ Radji, Entry, 25 May 1977, p. 82-83.

month prior to this the M.E.D. recalled the absence of any ministerial presence at Radji's Iranian National Day Reception in 1976. The ambassador had purportedly been "upset by this" as Iranians attached "great significance to the level of representation on such occasions as indicating the value" that the British government placed on relations. In view of this peculiarity, and due to the "major importance of Iran", the M.E.D. recommended that the F.C.O. Minister of State Frank Judd, and if possible also the Foreign Secretary, make an appearance.¹⁶⁵⁴ In the end five cabinet ministers along with senior officials from the F.C.O. attended.¹⁶⁵⁵ Subsequently in 1978 and early 1979, expressions of Overt Cordiality began to diminish perceptibly, a development largely related to serious unrest that erupted from January onwards. Despite this there was still considerable evidence of Overt Cordiality, especially in the first half of the year. For instance in January of 1978 the British were contending with a 'bad patch' in relations emanating from an embarrassing corruption case involving British commissions payments for arms sales to Iran at the end of 1977. This prompted the Iranian government to declare that "British firms hoping for government contracts need not bother to apply".¹⁶⁵⁶ At the same time Parsons also reported that the Shah felt there had been a disappointing reduction in British displays of support in early 1978.¹⁶⁵⁷ In response Parsons "arranged" for Fred Mulley, the Secretary of State for Defence,¹⁶⁵⁸ to visit Iran in the spring of 1978 to smooth things over. According to Owen, Mulley "took flattery" to "levels exceeded only by Jimmy Carter,¹⁶⁵⁹ who in December of 1977 had called Iran "an island of stability" due to the "great leadership of the Shah".¹⁶⁶⁰ Meanwhile in March Mulley "paid tribute to the statesmanship" of the Shah and his "perceptive leadership". Connectedly he said that the:

British government attached great importance to its very close and longstanding relationship with Iran, and that it deeply appreciated the contribution of Iran to regional stability.¹⁶⁶¹

Browne reported that in private some British officials had expressed concern about the decision to send Mulley. For instance Judd was already questioning the future of the Shah's regime, cautioning against nailing Britain's "colours too firmly" to his mast.¹⁶⁶² Furthermore the Prime Minister had expressed his reluctance to "kowtow to the Shah" on this occasion. The embassy, however, argued that "constant flattery of the Shah was a cheap form of insurance" for safeguarding British commercial interests.¹⁶⁶³ This included the deal for the M.I.C. at Isfahan which had stalled owing cash shortages. Mulley helped to reinvigorate negotiations, leading to an agreement in early May worth £750m in oil and sterling.¹⁶⁶⁴

¹⁶⁵⁴ FCO8/2985, Lucas to Frank Judd, 17 Sept. 1977.

¹⁶⁵⁵ Radji, Entry, 26 Oct. 1977, p. 119.

¹⁶⁵⁶ Owen, *Declare*, p. 395.

¹⁶⁵⁷ FCO8/3212, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Jan. 1978.

¹⁶⁵⁸ He took over from Mason in September of 1976.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Owen, *Declare*, p. 395.

¹⁶⁶⁰ Bill, *Eagle*, p. 233 & , 'Jimmy Carter Toasting the Shah', <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqrHQpRHwvs>> [accessed: 15.01.17].

¹⁶⁶¹ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 55.

¹⁶⁶² FCO8/3212, Lucas to Weir, 24 Jan. 1978.

¹⁶⁶³ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 55.

¹⁶⁶⁴ FCO8/3359, 'Calendar of Events – 1978', 7 May.



Fig. 59: Prince Reza Pahlavi at Windsor Castle 1978 (INF14/423).

Officials did not know at that point, but Mulley's trip would be the "final flowering of the traditional British policy of flattering aggrandisement of the Shah".¹⁶⁶⁵ Indeed this was the last official ministerial visit to Pahlavi Iran designed to enhance diplomatic relations. Similarly, no members of the British Royal Family went on official trips to Iran in 1978. Small-scale visits did, however, continue, including several in June by M.P.'s including Edward Heath, Harold Wilson and Erik Deakins.¹⁶⁶⁶ Parsons also kept up his audiences with the Shah, however, he went on leave from the end of May until mid-September leading to a reduction in this customary method of imparting Overt Cordiality.¹⁶⁶⁷ Significantly, this all took place against a backdrop of growing unrest in Iran, covered in detail by regular situation reports from Parsons. In December of 1977 the outspoken Ayatollah Khomeini launched a fierce criticism of the regime, accusing the Pahlavis of pilfering the nation's wealth and independence.¹⁶⁶⁸ The seventy-six year old cleric had been a vocal opponent of the regime since at least 1963 when he orchestrated a series of protests and strikes against government repression, dependence on the U.S., and the purported constitutional and Islamic illegitimacy of the Shah's White Revolution reform programme.¹⁶⁶⁹

For his anti-government antics the ayatollah had been arrested and exiled, eventually settling in Najaf Iraq, from where he continued to criticise the regime.¹⁶⁷⁰ In response to his outburst in 1977, the Iranian government launched a smear campaign which provoked protests and riots in the religious city of Qom from the 7th to the 11th of January, with lesser incidents in Isfahan, Mashhad and Tehran. These disturbances were only put down by the police after a dozen or more protestors had been shot dead.¹⁶⁷¹ Arguably the determined response by demonstrators had in part been precipitated by the Shah's experiment with controlled liberalisation beginning in January of 1977. In an effort to invigorate politics as part of his broader modernisation plans the Shah had allowed for greater freedom of expression and criticism of the government.¹⁶⁷² Furthermore the Shah's modernisation programme featured the extolment of re-Islamic Iranian traditions juxtaposed by secularism, consumerism and women's rights, all of which aggravated religious sensibilities in Iran, leading to a growth of politicised and conservative Shiism.¹⁶⁷³

Khomeini subsequently fermented this combination of anti-regime religious fervour and newfound freedom, leading to retaliatory demonstrations in Tabriz exactly forty days after the Qom disturbances, a figure poignant for Islamic mourning rituals. Major rioting targeted luxury stores, off-licenses, banks,

¹⁶⁶⁵ FCO8/3359, 'Calendar of Events – 1978', 7 May.

¹⁶⁶⁶ FCO8/3359, 'Calendar of Events – 1978', 7 June, 8-13 June, 24-27 June respectively.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 66-67.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Afkhami, *Life*, p. 452.

¹⁶⁶⁹ Hambly, 'Pahlavi Autocracy – 1941-1979', p. 281-283, Buchan, *Days*, p. 120-129 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 56.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Buchan, *Days*, p. 131 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 56.

¹⁶⁷¹ FCO8/3183, Parsons, 'Internal Difficulties in Iran', 31 Jan. 1978 & Buchan, *Days*, p. 201.

¹⁶⁷² Parsons, *Pride*, p. 48-50.

¹⁶⁷³ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 54-55, Buchan, *Days*, p. 121. See also Abdar Rahman Koya ed., *Imam Khomeini, Life, Thought and Legacy*, (Malaysia: Islamic Book Trust, 2009), p. 5-6 & Ali Mirsepassi-Ashtiana, 'The Crisis of Secular Politics. and the Rise of Political Islam in Iran', *Duke University Press*, 38 (1994), pp. 51-84 (p.58-79).

hotels, and institutions of the Pahlavi state and the Rastakhiz Party,¹⁶⁷⁴ Iran's single legitimate political organisation established by the Shah in 1975.¹⁶⁷⁵ In response the government imposed martial law, bringing troops onto the streets of an Iranian city for the first time since 1963.¹⁶⁷⁶ Parsons later identified this series of protests as the "match which lit the fuse", causing an explosion of rioting "throughout the country" during the spring and early summer, often coinciding with further forty day increments. These were often propelled by aggrieved worshippers and theological students enflamed by police aggression and more by sermons from Khomeini in Iraq, and other clerics in Iran.¹⁶⁷⁷

Despite the disturbances, the Shah continued to pursue his liberalisation strategy during the spring, including further prisoner amnesties and a greater freedom of expression.¹⁶⁷⁸ Poor management of this experiment was, however, facilitating as opposed to forestalling unrest.¹⁶⁷⁹ Indeed, in the consequently freer environment, the ranks of the protesters were swelled with non-Islamic students, nationalist and left-wing oppositionists, traders from the bazaar and the urban working classes,¹⁶⁸⁰ many of whom aggravated by regime repression, corruption and economic grievances including poor housing and declining incomes.¹⁶⁸¹ Aside from police brutality, the government ineffectually employed Rastakhiz Party counterdemonstrations in April, to combat the protests.¹⁶⁸² Intrinsically associated with the regime, the Rastakhiz Party had precipitated a mixture of apathy and resentment from its creation, a situation exacerbated in 1978 by the role that its activists played in violently trying to suppress protests with intimidating rallies, vigilantism, and even bomb attacks.¹⁶⁸³ Parallel to these events the British continued to employ expressions of Overt Cordiality during the spring and summer. For instance they kept up close contact with Radji, including informal lunches with Weir and Parsons.¹⁶⁸⁴ Radji also observed the maintenance of friendly contact between the Iranian and British royal families. For instance Princess Margaret dined at the Iranian embassy on the 31st of July.¹⁶⁸⁵ More importantly two days after a student riot at Mashhad University, the Crown Prince visited Britain for a second time from the 20th to the 22nd of June.¹⁶⁸⁶ As on previous occasions Overt Cordiality was facilitated by suitable levels of royal attention which assisted foreign policy aims in Persia by catering to perceived Pahlavi desire for recognition and dynastic legitimacy.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 63 This later also included desecration of Pahlavi statues (Parsons, *Pride*, p. 111).

¹⁶⁷⁵ Hambly, 'Pahlavi Autocracy – 1941-1979', p. 289-290.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Buchan, *Days*, p. 201-203.

¹⁶⁷⁷ FCO/3359, 'I.A.R – 1978' (p. 2) & PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 6 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 651.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Radji, Entry 2 March 1978, p. 156.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 53 & p. 83.

¹⁶⁸⁰ Buchan, *Days*, p. 203 & FCO8/ 3183, P.J. Westmacott, Second Secretary Tehran to Sanderson, 1 March 1978.

¹⁶⁸¹ PREM16/1719, Parsons to Owen, 'The Recent Disturbances in Iran', 9 Oct. 1978.

¹⁶⁸² These took place on the 9th of April and purportedly attracted 300,000 marchers (FCO8/3359, 'Calendar of Events –1978').

¹⁶⁸³ Buchan, *Days*, p. 205 & FCO8/3183, Parsons, 'Internal Difficulties in Iran', 31 Jan. 1978.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Radji, Entry 13 Jan. 1978, p. 141 & Entry, 13 April 1978, p. 165 & Entry, 27 June 1978, p. 194-195.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Radji, Entry 31 July 1978, p. 204-205.

¹⁶⁸⁶ FCO8/3359, 'Calendar of Events – 1978'. This was followed by a week-long private stay at the Shah's 166-acre Surrey private estate bought for half a million pounds in 1976 ('Shah Chez Soi-everywhere', *Financial Times*, 12 Jan. 1979).

First the Crown Prince was met at Heathrow by amongst others, two members of the Royal Household.¹⁶⁸⁷ From here he went to Windsor Castle (Fig. 59), where he dined with the Queen. Her Majesty impressed Overt Cordiality by escorting Prince Reza to the place of honour on her right, joining other royals including Princess Anne and the Duchess of Gloucester, wife of the Queen's cousin. After a tiresome dinner stretching into the early hours, the Queen remarked approvingly of the seventeen year old's stamina.¹⁶⁸⁸ On the following day the Crown Prince also attended Royal Ascot. Wearing a grey morning suit and top hat he sat next to the similarly attired Prince of Wales with Her Majesty opposite in the same style of royal carriage used to convey Nasir al-Din Shah over a hundred years prior. In donning the suit and accompanying the royals the Prince was also afforded the opportunity to performatively participate in the cultural customs of the British aristocracy, whilst also legitimising the Pahlavi dynasty as a natural part of Europe's remaining post-Great War monarchical fraternity.

In grainy images of the event, Elizabeth, Charles and Reza also waved and shared congenial smiles, using nonverbal communication including facial expressions and body language, to indicate unity and cordiality. As previously noted, Cohen is of the opinion that smiles in a diplomatic setting are conscious indicators of interstate relations.¹⁶⁸⁹ In this instance and in the case of the Queen Mother, British royals used this particular facial expression to indicate the closeness of Anglo-Iranian relations. This was despite the presence of some fifty "masked demonstrators" who attempted to make a 'scene' by shouting slogans that called on Britain to stop giving "more arms to the fascist Shah". Circumspect security arrangements were such that this disruptive audience was "only briefly visible" at the gate. The Prince purportedly failed to notice them, whilst their cheers were conveniently drowned out by the usual public applause for the Royal Family which the Iranian heir could also acknowledge and bask in.¹⁶⁹⁰

Safely in the ground, Reza observed the horseracing before dining in the Royal Enclosure where the Queen Mother impressed Overt Cordiality as per her usual performances when amidst Persian royals. In particular she reminisced about her trip to Persepolis, before promising to write to the Shanbanu. A last mark of royal favour meanwhile featured Prince Philip taking the Shah's heir to watch a game of polo. Subsequently on the morning of the 22nd Charles and Philip saw the Prince to a helicopter which took him to Dartmouth for a visit to Iranian cadets studying at the Royal Naval College.¹⁶⁹¹ Meanwhile in Iran a brief period of relative calm and normality during late June and July, was shattered by developments during Ramadan in August.¹⁶⁹² In an emotive fasting month there was renewed violence in the capital and in major provincial cities, with protestors once again attacking symbols of the state, along with bars,

¹⁶⁸⁷ Radji, Entry 20 June 1978, p. 191-192.

¹⁶⁸⁸ Radji, Entry 20 June 1978, p. 191-192.

¹⁶⁸⁹ Cohen, *Theatre of Power*, p. 106-107.

¹⁶⁹⁰ 'Student demo shatters the calm of Royal Ascot', *Daily Mail*, 22 June 1978.

¹⁶⁹¹ Radji, Entry 22 June 1978, p. 192-193.

¹⁶⁹² FCO8/3184, S.M.J. Lamport to M.E.D., 6 July 1978. There were still violent clashes including in Mashhad on the 25th of July (Radji, Entry 25 July 1978, p. 203).

restaurants, casinos and cinemas.¹⁶⁹³ Following particularly fierce unrest in Isfahan from the 9th to the 11th martial law was imposed.¹⁶⁹⁴ Worse was to follow in Abadan when a religious extremist set fire to a cinema killing nearly four hundred people on the 19th.¹⁶⁹⁵ Blame for the Abadan tragedy, however, fell significantly onto the government, leading to yet more anti-regime protests in Iran and in Europe where students stormed Iranian embassies.¹⁶⁹⁶ Following these calamities the year-old government of Jamshid Amouzegar fell, replaced by that of Ja'far Sharif-Emami, an elder statesman seen capable of acting independently of the Shah and ameliorating religious anti-regime sentiment.¹⁶⁹⁷ The new Prime Minister made concessions including the closure of casinos, whilst also seeking to maintain the momentum of liberalisation.¹⁶⁹⁸



Fig. 60: Armed troops of the I.I.A.F. use Chieftain Tanks to control protestors circa 1978
 <<http://www.davidburnett.com>>

This, however, did “nothing to check the rising tide” of unrest which next emerged at end of Ramadan.¹⁶⁹⁹ When clashes broke out at “huge” demonstrations in Tehran on the 8th of September in Jaleh Square,¹⁷⁰⁰ troops largely untrained and ill-equipped for crowd control imposed martial law and

¹⁶⁹³ FCO/3359, ‘I.A.R – 1978’ (p. 2), FCO8/3184, Chalmers to F.C.O., 12 Aug. 1978, FCO8/3184, Chalmers to F.C.O., 14 Aug. 1976, FCO8/3184, Chalmers, to F.C.O., 16 Aug. 1978 & FCO8/3184, Lampport to R.S. Gorham, M.E.D., 17 Aug. 1978.

¹⁶⁹⁴ FCO8/3359, ‘Calendar of Events – 1978’.

¹⁶⁹⁵ FCO8/3184, Chalmers to F.C.O., 20 Aug. 1978.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Afkhami, *Life*, p. 458-459.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Buchan, *Days*, p. 208-209 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 68.

¹⁶⁹⁸ For instance see FCO8/3214, Lampport to Gorham, 30 Aug. 1978.

¹⁶⁹⁹ Buchan, *Days*, p. 217.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 69.

mowed down perhaps a hundred protestors with machinegun fire.¹⁷⁰¹ For the rest of the month relative calm ensued, politically, however, the future of the regime was now in definite doubt.¹⁷⁰² With regards Overt Cordiality during this chaotic new phase of unrest, in June the decision was made to respond favourably to an Iranian request to buy CS gas for the purposes controlling demonstrations.¹⁷⁰³ The Foreign Secretary also went further than gas, sending riot-gear, and according to Buchan, a small British military mission to train the army in tactics developed for Northern Ireland.¹⁷⁰⁴ Owen deduced that ignoring Iranian requests would have led to loss of influence,¹⁷⁰⁵ whilst implicitly facilitating the undesirable scene of British-made weaponry being used against largely unarmed protesters.¹⁷⁰⁶ Much like the waived tranche, the decision to sell CS gas was also an international level nonverbal message of support. In reality the assistance was insufficient, since Iranian troops continued to use small arms and Chieftains in their efforts to control demonstrations (see Fig. 60).¹⁷⁰⁷

Judd, ever the dissenting voice thought the sale “was going too far” in showing support to the Shah.¹⁷⁰⁸ Meanwhile Parsons also made use of Overt Cordiality when he returned to Iran in mid-September. At two audiences the Shah, who seemed “exhausted and spiritless”, expressed a need for “reassurance” and continued Anglo-American support.¹⁷⁰⁹ Parsons “gave it”, due to his belief that it was best to avoid showing any “sign of wavering” or “hedging bets”. Indeed he still believed the regime could survive, and thought Britain “must do everything” by way of expression of support, to bolster the Shah’s regime. Not doing so would only “destabilise the situation” by providing the opposition with evidence that the regime was being abandoned by its key allies.¹⁷¹⁰ Audiences with the Shah at his Niavaran Palace subsequently became a weekly occurrence until the final days of the Pahlavi regime, implicitly indicating Britain’s continued backing.¹⁷¹¹ Furthermore the ambassador made sure to publically “declare his support for the regime” at the next annual International Trade Fair in Tehran on the 26th of September 1978.¹⁷¹² Specifically the ambassador was “heartened by the determination the Shah’s government had shown to maintain stability and progress, and wished them well in these tasks.”¹⁷¹³ Parsons’ persistent efforts to impress Overt Cordiality were also augmented by verbal and written communications from senior

¹⁷⁰¹ PREM16/1719, Parsons to Owen, “The Recent Disturbances in Iran” 9 Oct. 1978. See also Radji, Entry 8 Sept. 1978, p. 226-227 & Afkhami, *Life*, p. 462-467.

¹⁷⁰² Parsons, *Pride*, p. 76, FCO8/3185, Lucas to Murray, 28 Sept. 1978 & PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Sept. 1978 Tel. No. 616.

¹⁷⁰³ FCO8/3131, Owen to Callaghan, 19 June 1978, & Owen, *Declare*, p. 395.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Buchan, *Days*, p. 223.

¹⁷⁰⁵ FCO8/3131, W.K. Prendergast to Judd, 13 June 1978.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Owen, *Declare*, p. 395.

¹⁷⁰⁷ Troops shot into the air for the most part or firing that simply fired rifle rounds into oncoming demonstrators during unrest in November (Parsons, *Pride*, p. 104 & p. 109). Alternatively it was claimed that tanks were used in Tehran and in Mashhad in December of 1978, either employing their main armament or even purportedly running over protestors (Parsons, *Pride*, p. 108-109 & FCO8/3359, ‘Calendar of Events – 1978’).

¹⁷⁰⁸ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 56.

¹⁷⁰⁹ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 16 Sept. 1978, Tel. No. 589.

¹⁷¹⁰ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Sept. 1978, Tel. No. 618 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 71-72 & p. 74.

¹⁷¹¹ Buchan, *Days*, p. 225.

¹⁷¹² FCO8/3359, ‘Calendar of Events – 1978’.

¹⁷¹³ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 57.

government officials. For instance after encouragement from the embassy in Tehran,¹⁷¹⁴ the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister expressed the government's "deepest sympathy" for the victims of the Abadan tragedy in late August.¹⁷¹⁵ Furthermore on the 14th of the following month the ambassador was authorised to deliver a public message of support from the Prime Minister, stating that he was saddened that such a spate of unrest was taking place during the Shah's leadership of Iran "which was moving steadily in the direction of becoming a modern industrialised society, consistent with the country's important role in world affairs". The Prime Minister rounded off by noting that Iran's "stability and prosperity" were "of key importance to her friends and allies" including Britain.¹⁷¹⁶ At the same time Callaghan also rallied his cabinet, arguing that Britain "must continue to support the Shah against the mad mullahs" opposing him.¹⁷¹⁷

Meanwhile on the 29th the Foreign Secretary told his new opposite number Amir Khosrow Afshar that a scheduled State Visit from Her Majesty the Queen first discussed in 1974,¹⁷¹⁸ was still set to take place in the spring of 1979. This was also made public knowledge in parliament as late as November.¹⁷¹⁹ More importantly Owen asserted that Shah had the continued public "support of the British government", even though this had "drawn criticism at home".¹⁷²⁰ These expressions of support happened just as levels of unrest heightened again in Iran, with protests forcing the closure of bazaars throughout the country in early October.¹⁷²¹ Towns and cities in the north and west which had previously escaped turmoil now also witnessed violence.¹⁷²² Furthermore major public and private sector strike action became another tool in the arsenal of the opposition, exploiting existent economic grievances.¹⁷²³ In particular, this severely undermined Iran's vital oil industry.¹⁷²⁴ Major student protests in Tehran and around the country also erupted at the start of the new academic term on the 7th of October, before continuing throughout the month.¹⁷²⁵ Khomeini had also relocated to Paris a day earlier,¹⁷²⁶ from where he continued to vocally and financially support the protests, as well as drawing disparate opposition groups around his cause calling for the abolition of the Pahlavi dynasty and the formation of an Islamic Republic. This included the communist Tudeh Party,¹⁷²⁷ and the secular pro-democratic National Front, a significant portion of which openly sided with Khomeini at the end of the month.¹⁷²⁸

¹⁷¹⁴ FCO8/3184, Chalmers to F.C.O., 21 Aug. 1978 & FCO8/3184, Lucas to Weir, 21 Aug. 1978.

¹⁷¹⁵ FCO8/3184, Owen to Tehran, 22 Aug. 1978.

¹⁷¹⁶ PREM16/1719, Callaghan to H.I.M., 14 Sept. 1978.

¹⁷¹⁷ Tony Benn, *Conflicts of Interest, Dairies 1977-80*, (London: Arrow Books, 1991), Entry, 14 Sept. 1978, p. 338-339.

¹⁷¹⁸ FCO8/2509, Wright to Parsons, 25 April 1974.

¹⁷¹⁹ 'Queen's Speech', Mr Speaker, *HC Deb*, 1 Nov. 1978 *vol 957 col 4-8*.

¹⁷²⁰ FCO8/3185, Richard to F.C.O., 29 Sept. 1978 & FCO8/3186, 'Record of a Meeting Between the F.C.O. Secretary and the Iranian Foreign Minister in New York on 29 Sept. 1978 at 10.00AM', n.d.

¹⁷²¹ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 3 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 636.

¹⁷²² PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O, 9 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 662 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 77.

¹⁷²³ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 77.

¹⁷²⁴ Parsons to F.C.O., 30 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 717 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 84.

¹⁷²⁵ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 30 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 718 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 80.

¹⁷²⁶ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 79.

¹⁷²⁷ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 3 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 637.

¹⁷²⁸ Buchan, *Days*, p. 236-237 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 87.

In these simmering circumstances the British still persevered with the impression of Overt Cordiality by showing an unwillingness to criticise or even distance themselves from Pahlavi Iran, their main source of business and stability in the Middle East. For instance Owen appeared on London Weekend Television on the 23rd of October, giving an interview recorded a week previously, in which he went “out on a limb” by “proclaiming his support for the Shah from the rooftops”, asserting that Britain would “not back off” when its “friends were under attack”. Furthermore he argued that it would not have been “in the interests of Britain for the Shah to be deposed” by a “fanatical Moslem element”.¹⁷²⁹ Parsons praised his superior, arguing that it was ultimately “right to state” Britain’s position “so clearly”, for which the regime was “grateful”.¹⁷³⁰

Subsequent events in Iran, however, finally brought a modification to Britain’s fostered impression of Overt Cordiality. As October turned to November martial law faltered, turning Tehran into a “battlefield” in which groups of demonstrators ranged daily through the city vandalising and setting fire to multiple buildings including the British embassy.¹⁷³¹ In such circumstances the Shah, who had previously been wary of a military government using excessive force,¹⁷³² replaced Sharif-Emami with General Gholam Reza Azhari, the Chief of The Supreme Commander’s Staff of the Imperial Iranian Armed Forces (I.I.A.F.).¹⁷³³ The Shah stopped short of ordering a full military crackdown, however, choosing instead to “broadcast to the nation” on the 6th of November calling for “calm” and pledging to respect Iran’s Islamic values and the constitutional democratic aspirations of its people, including support for free elections.¹⁷³⁴ Although this brought temporary calm,¹⁷³⁵ it failed to prevent continued strike action, loss of oil production and violent protests in the provinces during the remainder of the month.¹⁷³⁶ Connectedly from late November onwards the loyalty of the I.I.A.F. was also “finally beginning to crumble” with growing signs of fraternisation, desertion, sabotage, and even mutiny.¹⁷³⁷

Overt Cordiality was consequently scaled back first on the 6th of November, when a statement in parliament by the Foreign Secretary failed to mention any customary allusion to close Anglo-Iranian relations.¹⁷³⁸ Around this time the British government also imposed a “moratorium” on any “public expressions of support”.¹⁷³⁹ Despite a decline in public support, British backing of the regime did, however, continue more covertly, imparted through Parsons’ audiences and through the actions of the

¹⁷²⁹ Lucas, *Damascus*, p.173 & FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 57.

¹⁷³⁰ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 30 Oct. 1978.

¹⁷³¹ FCO/3359, ‘I.A.R – 1978’ (p. 2), PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 5 Nov. 1978, Parsons, *Pride*, p. 90-95, Afkhami, *Life*, p. 472 & Buchan, *Days*, p. 239.

¹⁷³² Buchan, *Days*, p. 203-204.

¹⁷³³ Afkhami, *Life*, p. 476.

¹⁷³⁴ PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 6 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 751 & Buchan, *Days*, p. 241.

¹⁷³⁵ PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 13 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 813.

¹⁷³⁶ FCO/3359, ‘I.A.R – 1978’ (p. 4) & PREM16/1729, Parsons to F.C.O., 23 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 851.

¹⁷³⁷ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 106 & p. 11, PREM16/1729, Parsons to F.C.O., 14 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 998 & PREM16/1729, Parsons to F.C.O., 19 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 999.

¹⁷³⁸ PREM16/1720, ‘Secretary of State’s Parliamentary Statement: Monday 6 Nov.’, n.d.

¹⁷³⁹ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 173. See also PREM16/1719, Cartledge to Prendergast, 27 Oct. 1978.

Foreign Secretary who decided to meet his opposite number again on the 14th of December. Owen knew he “would doubtless be criticised for seeing him” by the press, but this nonverbal gesture was his “way of showing his support”. Furthermore “he wanted” Afshar to “know that there was no shift in British policy”.¹⁷⁴⁰ This took place shortly after “colossal popular anti-Shah marches” during the Shia mourning period of Muharram.¹⁷⁴¹ On the 10th and 11th of December over a million Iranians from all classes protested for various reasons, from support for freedom and democracy to “death to the butcher Shah” and the formation of an Islamic republic.¹⁷⁴² The army was powerless to prevent these marches,¹⁷⁴³ nor could it bring the economy out of its “paralysed” state, struck down by strikes and power cuts.¹⁷⁴⁴ A sudden surge of militant provincial pro-Shah rallies in mid-December also failed to dent anti-government protests,¹⁷⁴⁵ which became more aggressive later in the month with attacks on the U.S. embassy in Tehran,¹⁷⁴⁶ and British Council Centres in Ahwaz, Shiraz and Mashhad.¹⁷⁴⁷ Subsequently by the 30th “effective government” had “ceased to exist”,¹⁷⁴⁸ prompting the Western governments to advise their nationals to leave.¹⁷⁴⁹ Parsons meanwhile had been promoted to the position of Permanent Under-Secretary at the F.C.O. and was preparing to return to London before the country succumbed to full-scale “anarchy”.¹⁷⁵⁰

By way of the last vestiges of what could now be termed Covert Cordiality, the ambassador still dutifully attended audiences with the Shah, often accompanied by the U.S. ambassador William Healy Sullivan. Parsons was attending these almost voluntarily, as from the 21st the pink telegrams bringing F.C.O. directions to the ambassador had dried up,¹⁷⁵¹ indicating that the government had resigned itself to await the outcome of the struggle between cleric and king. There were also distracting domestic concerns in Britain including the infamous Winter of Discontent.¹⁷⁵² This differed from the U.S. approach which broadly sought to support the Shah until the bitter end, though there were institutional disagreements between the embassy in Iran, the State Department, the National Security Agency and the military.¹⁷⁵³

Meanwhile such was Parson’s sense of duty, he even attended an audience directly after the British embassy had been attacked on November the 5th, crawling across a “ravaged” Tehran in a “decrepit”

¹⁷⁴⁰ FCO8/3200, ‘Record of Conversation Between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Foreign Minister of Iran on Thursday 14 Dec. 1978’, n.d.

¹⁷⁴¹ FCO/3359, ‘I.A.R – 1978’ (p. 4).

¹⁷⁴² Parsons, *Pride*, p. 110, PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 10 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 959, PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 11 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 960 & PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 11 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 961

¹⁷⁴³ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 109 & p. 111.

¹⁷⁴⁴ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 109 & FCO/3359, ‘I.A.R – 1978’, (p. 4).

¹⁷⁴⁵ PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 18 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 993 & PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 18 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 977.

¹⁷⁴⁶ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 117, PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 24 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 1015, PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 27 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 1020, & PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 28 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 1025.

¹⁷⁴⁷ PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 30 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 1032.

¹⁷⁴⁸ PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 30 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 1035.

¹⁷⁴⁹ PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 31 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 1036.

¹⁷⁵⁰ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 117 & p. 120.

¹⁷⁵¹ PREM16/1720, F.C.O. to Parsons, 21 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 721.

¹⁷⁵² Buchan, *Days*, p. 247.

¹⁷⁵³ For a more in-depth assessment of U.S. institutional conflict during the revolution see Bill, *Eagle*, p. 244-260.

military vehicle under escort.¹⁷⁵⁴ Subsequently much like Loraine before him, Parsons had a “profoundly emotional experience” as his departure beckoned, indicating a genuine sense of personally felt cordiality. Specifically in his final audience on the 8th of January, the ambassador, who had “come to know the Shah well” since 1974, found it “difficult to speak” whilst drying his tears that were “literally” in his eyes.¹⁷⁵⁵ After conversing about the seemingly inevitable collapse of the regime, Parsons “wished him luck” and never saw the Shah again.¹⁷⁵⁶ Eight days later the H.I.M. departed for Egypt, with Parsons leaving for London soon after on the 21st.¹⁷⁵⁷ Less than a month later the tenuous civilian government left behind under Shapour Bakhtiar, a moderate oppositionist from the National Front,¹⁷⁵⁸ collapsed after a futile attempt to quell Khomeini’s unstoppable revolution.¹⁷⁵⁹ With Parsons’ departure James Buchan writes that Britain “was lowering the curtain on nearly two centuries of engagement with Iran”, an observation which rings true in that Britain and the Islamic Republic of Iran have never reached remotely similar levels of political and economic engagement compared to the days of the Qajar and the Pahlavi dynasties.¹⁷⁶⁰

DISINTERESTED IMPARTIALITY

Regarding Disinterested Impartiality from 1974, the impression was first manifest in the strategy employed by the ambassador on his arrival in March. As a diplomat Parsons needed to make accurate observations of Iran’s political and economic situation, however, he knew this might undermine the “principal objective” of “building a close...relationship with the Shah”.¹⁷⁶¹ Given Britain’s “not undeserved reputation for interfering” in the country Parsons thus thought it sensible to observe “without arousing any suspicion of improper involvement in Iran’s internal affairs” or “making clandestine contacts” with religious or political opposition groups.¹⁷⁶² In this manner Parsons replicated the non-interference strategies of Loraine and later Wright who both avoided Anglophile contacts when restoring diplomatic relations following the coups of 1921 and 1953.¹⁷⁶³

Meanwhile although relations had become much closer following royal visits and Gulf cooperation, the Shah was still very “sensitive” to “any sort of criticism, especially from the British”.¹⁷⁶⁴ In the autumn of 1973 he had demonstrated this sensitivity by expelling the B.B.C.’s Iran correspondent following a piece from *Panorama* he disapproved of.¹⁷⁶⁵ In order to offset the damage the M.E.D. and the F.C.O. News

¹⁷⁵⁴ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 96 & Buchan, *Days*, p. 247.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 124.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 126.

¹⁷⁵⁷ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 129.

¹⁷⁵⁸ PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 31 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 1044.

¹⁷⁵⁹ Buchan, *Days*, p. 270-294.

¹⁷⁶⁰ Buchan, *Days*, p. 247.

¹⁷⁶¹ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 4.

¹⁷⁶² Parsons, *Pride*, p. 5.

¹⁷⁶³ Denis Wright, ‘The restoration of diplomatic relations with Iran, December 1953’, in Vanessa Martin ed., *Anglo-Iranian Relations since 1800*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 161-167 (p. 164).

¹⁷⁶⁴ FCO8/2262, Ramsbotham to Douglas-Home, 14 Jan. 1974.

¹⁷⁶⁵ ‘Iran Expels BBC Staff Reports’, *Financial Times*, 5 Oct. 1973 & ‘BBC documentary on Iran’, *Times*, 18 Oct. 1973.

Department accepted an offer from the B.B.C. Persian Service to interview David Ennals, then serving as Minister of State for F.C.O. Affairs.¹⁷⁶⁶ The interview took place April of 1974, when a well-briefed Ennals stressed the closeness of Anglo-Iranian relations whilst noting that criticism, either from the press or backbench M.P.'s, would not affect government policy toward Iran. Moreover the British government saw Iran's "internal affairs as their own problem", which did not merit official comment.¹⁷⁶⁷

In early 1975 it was the press as opposed to the B.B.C. which was causing potential disruption to the M.E.D.'s strategy of maintaining close Anglo-Iranian relations. In February the *Sunday Times* released an expose on the "dark side to Iran's dramatic progress" which claimed that S.A.V.A.K. tortured left-wing activists,¹⁷⁶⁸ "Moslem dissidents" and middle-class intellectuals who criticised the regime. Methods purportedly included "sustained flogging of the soles of the feet...extraction of finger and toe nails" and the "thrusting of a broken bottle into the anuses of prisoners."¹⁷⁶⁹ This prompted Geoff Edge the Labour M.P. for Aldridge-Brownhills, to write to the Foreign Secretary asking if the government had "any knowledge of torture", and would there be an "approach" to the Iranian government on the subject. The M.E.D. were of the opinion that the Shah "would undoubtedly react unfavourably to any suggestion that H.M.G. might be concerned at allegations of torture". The department also argued that they had "no *locus standi* in matters concerning citizens of another country". Furthermore Lucas stated that "although the Iranian Government undoubtedly dealt severely with dissidents" the M.E.D. had "no specific or general knowledge of the use of torture".¹⁷⁷⁰

Internally the assessment was different, with Parsons informing the M.E.D. that there were many "distasteful" aspects to the regime.¹⁷⁷¹ Although he did not explicitly mention torture in 1975, the embassy in Tehran had referred to its systematic use in 1973 and 1974.¹⁷⁷² At the same time the ambassador also noted a growing sense of "malaise"¹⁷⁷³ in Pahlavi Iran which was experiencing heightened levels of political unrest including terrorist attacks from Marxist Islamist groups,¹⁷⁷⁴ compounded by high inflation, an overwhelmed and underdeveloped infrastructure, manpower shortages, "soaring" rents and consumer prices and huge disparities in wealth.¹⁷⁷⁵ More broadly it was thus becoming clear that the boom had been "mishandled",¹⁷⁷⁶ however, despite warning signals Parsons was against giving the Shah "gratuitous advice on how to run his internal affairs". Given the "spectre of

¹⁷⁶⁶ FCO8/2284, Booker to Coles, 22 March 1974 & FCO8/2284, Williams to Coles, 29 March 1974.

¹⁷⁶⁷ FCO8/2284, 'Transcript Ennals & B.B.C Persian', in Dunn to Emck, 26 April 1974.

¹⁷⁶⁸ S.A.V.A.K. was the Persian acronym for Iran's secret police translated into English as the Organization of Intelligence and National Security.

¹⁷⁶⁹ 'Torture in Iran', *Sunday Times*, 19 Jan. 1975.

¹⁷⁷⁰ FCO8/2496, Lucas to Weir, 5 March 1975.

¹⁷⁷¹ FCO8/2496, Parsons, 'Iran – Internal Situation', 14 Aug. 1975.

¹⁷⁷² FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 24.

¹⁷⁷³ FCO8/2496, Parsons, 'Iran – Internal Situation', 14 Aug. 1975.

¹⁷⁷⁴ Afkhami, *Life*, p. 396 & FCO8/2497, I.A.R. – 1975 (p. 3).

¹⁷⁷⁵ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 2, Parsons, *Pride*, p. 8-12, MacLachlan, 'Economic', p. 635-637, Graham, *Illusion*, p. 86-122, FCO8/2496, Parsons, 'Iran...Situation', & FCO8/2497, I.A.R. – 1975 (p. 2-3).

¹⁷⁷⁶ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 164.

British interference” this would only have led to a “colony of fleas” in British “ears”. Instead this was the moment that Parsons advocated greater participation in the Shah’s modernisation programme including moves to curb corruption, improve healthcare, education and infrastructure.¹⁷⁷⁷ The M.E.D. concurred with the economic and political rationale behind this strategy, noting the projected £5bn stake in the Iran up to 1980 which meant the regime’s continued stability was paramount.¹⁷⁷⁸ Given the prevailing mind-set it is unsurprising that in April 1975 the M.E.D. also instructed the Queen Mother to impress Disinterested Impartiality during her visit by providing information on the “points best avoided in conversation” including the B.B.C. and the press.¹⁷⁷⁹ The Queen Mother, who privately thought of the Shah as a well-meaning “dictator”, seemingly followed her brief.¹⁷⁸⁰

Meanwhile during 1976 further B.B.C., press and parliament infractions continued to frustrate the M.E.D.’s strategy of Disinterested Impartiality. In doing so these institutions and the individuals representing them implicitly acted as disruptive and undisciplined members of Britain’s disparate performance team. For instance in March Arthur Stanley Newens, M.P. for Harlow, made a statement in the Commons arguing that Britain should not “close” its “eyes to the fact” that the regime used “torture and execution on a tremendous scale”, merely because of the significant “trade prospects”.¹⁷⁸¹ Newens the “Shah-baiter”,¹⁷⁸² was a “consistent” critic of the Pahlavi regime,¹⁷⁸³ who also supported the C.I.S.¹⁷⁸⁴ and had made contributions for C.A.R.I. and British newspapers.¹⁷⁸⁵ Indeed his statement in parliament had been preceded by a letter to in the *Guardian* calling for the “strongest possible representations” against the Shah’s “barbarous regime”.¹⁷⁸⁶ The Iranian government were also familiar with Newens and regularly tried to combat his invective through Radji.¹⁷⁸⁷ In this instance Conservative M.P.’s interceded in support of Disinterested Impartiality. In particular Douglas Hurd asked:

In what kind of world...does the hon. Gentleman live? What sanctions does he imagine can be imposed against the Shah? Is he not aware that for years the airlines to Teheran have been filled with the executives of British nationalised industries trying to raise money from the Shah of Iran? I can think of only one sanction in this case. It is that we utter the dreaded words “Unless you mend your ways, we shall not borrow from you again”. The hon. Gentleman is living in a naïve world if he thinks that a letter to *The Guardian* and this kind of phraseology mean anything anywhere outside a very narrow circle in this country.¹⁷⁸⁸

As to the press, shortly before Ashraf raised her concerns with the Prime Minister in June the Shah had raged against the “bloody fools” at the *Guardian* and the B.B.C. Persian Service for accusing his

¹⁷⁷⁷ FCO8/2496, Parsons, ‘Iran...Situation’.

¹⁷⁷⁸ FCO8/2496, Lucas to Parsons, 22 Aug. 1975 & Williams Minute in Holloway to Weir, 21 Aug. 1975.

¹⁷⁷⁹ FCO8/2522, ‘Visit ... April ... Background Brief...’.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Shawcross, *Counting*, 23 May 1975, p. 577.

¹⁷⁸¹ ‘FOREIGN POLICY AND MORALITY’, Mr Newens, *HC Deb* 9 Feb. 1976, *vol 905 cc35-99*.

¹⁷⁸² Radji, Entry 21 July 1978, p. 201.

¹⁷⁸³ ‘Iran Protest to British M.P.s’, *Times*, 11 May 1965 & FCO8/2733, Lucas to Weir, 4 Oct. 1976.

¹⁷⁸⁴ FCO8/2506, Williams to Westmacott, 28 Oct. 1975.

¹⁷⁸⁵ FCO8/2981, Lucas to Alston, 28 Jan. 1977.

¹⁷⁸⁶ ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Guardian*, 31 Jan. 1976.

¹⁷⁸⁷ For instance see Radji, Entry 27 April 1977, p. 74-75, Entry 2 May 1977, p. 76.

¹⁷⁸⁸ Mr Douglas Hurd *HC Deb* 9 Feb. 1976.

government of “operating a police state”. He instructed his Court Minister to attend to the matter by telling:

...the British ambassador that if his media and political bosses really feel this way, we shall be forced to reconsider our purchase of weapons from the U.K. Remind him that *The Times* and the *Guardian* are widely regarded as the voice of the British government.¹⁷⁸⁹

This last sentence reinforces the notion that the press were viewed as members of Britain’s performance team, despite the fact that they operated independently. In this “mood of defensive touchiness”,¹⁷⁹⁰ Parsons also thought the main issue was the Persian Service which had broadcast a Labour statement claiming the party was “against” providing weapons or help to “countries which had authoritarian governments such as Iran”.¹⁷⁹¹ Parsons reactively impressed Disinterested Impartiality by informing Alam that although “it was possible that individual members of the Party had expressed such views” there “was no question of a change in H.M.G.’s policy toward Iran”. The ambassador also “went over the familiar ground about the independence of the B.B.C.”¹⁷⁹² Crosland also instructed him to “explain...that the document referred to was produced by...the Party’s N.E.C”, and thus had “no status as Labour Party policy”.¹⁷⁹³ Furthermore Parsons was to “assure” the “Shah that H.M.G’s policy” was “to maintain and develop the closest possible relations with Iran, including the supply of arms”.¹⁷⁹⁴

The situation, however, flared up a second time in late June when Alam complained about a *Financial Times* article which the “terrible” Persian Service had mined for negative statistics on Iran.¹⁷⁹⁵ As a consequence, the M.E.D. and Parsons both advocated a strategy that went beyond mere verbal assurances of Disinterested Impartiality, by seeking to quieten or even silence the Persian Service which was being identified as a disruptive de facto member of Britain’s performance team. For this reason according to Alam, Parsons had said he would “personally undertake either to shut down the Persian language broadcasts” or “at least” bring them “under stricter control”. For this “eagerness to help” the Court Minister was duly “impressed”.¹⁷⁹⁶ The ambassador thus wrote to the F.C.O. about the need for the Persian Service “to be more circumspect about broadcasting material” that was “guaranteed to damage” British interests.¹⁷⁹⁷ In light of Parsons’ concerns the F.C.O. decided to launch an official inquiry to “consider whether” the Persian Service “should be altered” or “indeed abolished”.¹⁷⁹⁸ Failing that the F.C.O. suggested that it be consulted on broadcasts, with the power to make alterations if it was “in the national interest”.¹⁷⁹⁹ This was purportedly the “first time” that the “F.C.O. seemed prepared to

¹⁷⁸⁹ Alam, *Confidential*, Entry, 1 June 1976, p. 489-491.

¹⁷⁹⁰ FCO8/2762, Parsons to F.C.O., 13 June 1976.

¹⁷⁹¹ FCO8/2762, Parsons to F.C.O., 2 June 1976.

¹⁷⁹² FCO8/2762, Parsons to F.C.O., 2 June 1976.

¹⁷⁹³ FCO8/2762, Crosland to Parsons, 4 June 1976.

¹⁷⁹⁴ FCO8/2762, Parsons to Crosland, 6 June 1976 & FCO8/2762, Crosland to Parsons, 8 June 1976.

¹⁷⁹⁵ FCO/2762, F.C.O. to Parsons, 27 June 1976 & Alam, *Confidential*, Entry, 24 June 1976, p. 495-496.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Alam, *Confidential*, Entry, 24 June 1976, Entry, 26 June 1976.

¹⁷⁹⁷ FCO8/2762, Parsons to F.C.O., 30 June 1976.

¹⁷⁹⁸ FCO8/2762, F.C.O. to Parsons, 5 July 1976 & FCO8/2762, Kendall to James, 6 July 1976.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Sreberny, *Service*, p. 81.

consider altering or abolishing a language service because it was causing embarrassment”.¹⁸⁰⁰ Moreover abolition was being contemplated despite the F.C.O.’s opinion that the broadcast in question was actually fairly neutral.¹⁸⁰¹ Given Persian agitation this was, however, beside the point.

During the review process Parsons reiterated that “the sporadic eruptions of ill feeling resulting from some particular misguided transcript tends to affect our whole relationship with the Iranians” who “firmly considered” the Persian Service as an “official organ of the government”. Consequently there was “no doubt” in Parsons’ mind that if the service were to “close down” everyone would “heave a sigh of relief”.¹⁸⁰² His colleagues in the Guidance and Information Policy Department (G.I.P.D.) disagreed, expressing surprise at “the strength and monolithic nature” of the ambassador’s views.¹⁸⁰³ Mark Dodd, the head of the B.B.C.’s Eastern Service was more abrupt, remarking that Parsons was talking “nonsense”.¹⁸⁰⁴ Ultimately the review, published in late January of 1978, rejected M.E.D. complaints and came down in favour of the B.B.C.¹⁸⁰⁵ With this plan scuppered the F.C.O. contented itself working in conjunction with the Iranian embassy in London under Radji. In August Parsons suggested that the ambassador try to “form a close working relationship with” the staff at the Persian Service and the press in general, as a means of facilitating a more positive image.¹⁸⁰⁶ Subsequently in September he argued that growing press criticism also behoved the F.C.O. to “think of ways” to “protect” Iran’s reputation.¹⁸⁰⁷ The issue was not just about Iranian displeasure but also the fact that:

...it would be a disaster if Iran got so bad a name in Britain that we had to conduct our dealings with her either under the counter or against a barrage of hostile criticism thus obliging us to minimise overt closeness of relationship to which the Shah himself attaches great importance.¹⁸⁰⁸

Parsons thus suggested “discreetly feeding” information to the press highlighting Iranian progress and the “importance” of Anglo-Iranian trade.¹⁸⁰⁹ The M.E.D. had already attempted this earlier in the year prior to the Foreign Secretary’s visit in March, when they made “a major effort to get a sympathetic piece” in the *Times* to “set” the negative “impression” about Iran “straight”.¹⁸¹⁰ Lord Chalfont, a journalist known for being more positive about the regime, subsequently penned such an article, bemoaning the “repetitive vilification of Iran” by the “extreme left” which was incapable of praising Pahlavi achievements.¹⁸¹¹

¹⁸⁰⁰ BAC WAC E40/711/1, ‘Confidential Minutes of BBC Board of Governors Meeting’, 8 July 1976 in Sreberny, *Service*, p. 80.

¹⁸⁰¹ FCO8/2762, F.C.O. to Parsons, 5 July 1976.

¹⁸⁰² FCO8/2762, Parsons to Barrington, 4 July 1976.

¹⁸⁰³ FCO8/2762, Barrington to Parsons, 16 July 1976.

¹⁸⁰⁴ BBC WAC E58/25/1 in Sreberny, *Service*, p. 81.

¹⁸⁰⁵ BBC WAC E40/710/1, ‘Review of the Persian Service, 9 Nov. 1977 in Sreberny, *Service*, p. 82-83, FCO8/3212, Barrington to John H.G. Leahy, Assistant Under-Secretary, Information and Public Affairs, 27 Jan. 1978 & FCO8/3213, G.E.H. Mansell, Deputy Director-General, B.B.C. External Broadcasting, to Barrington 27 Feb. 1978.

¹⁸⁰⁶ FCO8/2762, Parsons to Barrington, 1 Aug. 1976.

¹⁸⁰⁷ FCO8/2761, Parsons to Lucas, 30 Sept. 1976.

¹⁸⁰⁸ FCO8/2761, Parsons to Lucas, 30 Sept. 1976.

¹⁸⁰⁹ FCO8/2761, Parsons to Lucas, 30 Sept. 1976.

¹⁸¹⁰ FCO8/2736, Lucas to McCaffrey, 24 Feb. 1976.

¹⁸¹¹ Lord Chalfont, ‘Why we would be wiser to judge Iran by its own standards’, *Times*, 1 March 1976.

The British ambassador also wanted Radji to “broaden his base” outside of the London bubble, by visiting regions where businesses benefitted from Anglo-Iranian trade.¹⁸¹² In response to Parsons’s suggestions the M.E.D. also met with various F.C.O. departments to “decide how best to shoot the anti-Iranian balloon” with a paper delivered to the press “emphasising the importance of Iran” for British exports and employment.¹⁸¹³ Lucas also agreed that Radji should go “out into the provinces” to talk to businesses, journalists, academics and also to Labour M.P.’s, a number of whom were openly expressing their opposition to the Shah’s “intensified” repression in 1976.¹⁸¹⁴ According to later reports Radji, who was well-liked by British officials,¹⁸¹⁵ seemed “receptive to this message”.¹⁸¹⁶ He delivered speeches at the Iranian Society dinner and lunches with journalists from the *Times* and *Sunday Times* in November. The Iranian ambassador also engaged in “dialogue” with senior officials at the B.B.C.¹⁸¹⁷ This strategy moreover persisted throughout 1977 and 1978, during which time contact was also pursued with representatives of critical institutions such as Amnesty International.¹⁸¹⁸

In a more sinister context the Iranians also purportedly put prominent British opponents of the regime including Stan Newens, under S.A.V.A.K. surveillance.¹⁸¹⁹ In another act of Disinterested Impartiality the government refused to take action when Newens complained, by replying that it was not “practice to comment on such matters”.¹⁸²⁰ Meanwhile the F.C.O. was also facing “more frequent public allegations in Britain” about the regime’s injustices in 1976. In answering a “stream of letters” that were similar to those sent around Princess Ashraf’s visit, the F.C.O. employed customary Disinterested Impartiality by deflecting criticism. For instance in July an advisor to the Foreign Secretary argued that the world would not be a better place “if Britain indulged in a series of moral postures which did not change the real situation”.¹⁸²¹ Subsequently in the autumn the F.C.O. also buried both the idea of formulating a comparative league table of human rights abuses in foreign countries and a specific internal review of “repression in Iran”, the reason being fear leaks to the press which would have betrayed the country’s poor record on imprisonment and freedom of expression.¹⁸²²

As 1976 gave way to 1977, internal F.C.O. doubts about Iran’s condition did, however, emerge. In December Parsons had produced a despatch on the “Political Scene” in Iran which noted the Shah’s

¹⁸¹² FCO8/2761, Parsons to Lucas, 30 Sept. 1976.

¹⁸¹³ FCO8/2761, James to Alston, 5 Nov. 1976 & FCO8/2761, S.P. Day, M.E.D., to Lipsey, 1 Nov. 1976.

¹⁸¹⁴ FCO8/2761, Lucas to James, 22 Oct. 1976 & ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Guardian*, 31 Jan. 1976.

¹⁸¹⁵ Lucas, *Decline*, p. 175.

¹⁸¹⁶ FCO8/2761, Lucas to Parsons, 3 Dec. 1976.

¹⁸¹⁷ Parviz, *Peacock*, 14 Sept. 1976, p. 28, 1 Nov. 1976, p. 35, 4 Nov. 1976, p. 34, & 15 Nov. 1976, p. 35.

¹⁸¹⁸ For examples see Parviz, *Peacock*, 5 Sept. 1977, p.104-105, 21 Sept. 1977, p. 107, 24 April, 1978, p. 170 & 3 Oct. 1978, p. 237.

¹⁸¹⁹ FCO8/2768, Charlesworth, ‘Iranian Intelligence (SAVAK) Operation in Britain’, 14 Dec. 1976 & FCO8/2768, Newens to Jenkins, 23 July 1976.

¹⁸²⁰ FCO8/2768, Charlesworth, ‘Iranian Intelligence...’ 14 Dec. 1976.

¹⁸²¹ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 52. Many of these letters are located in FCO8/2724 and FCO82725 both entitled “Repression in Iran”.

¹⁸²² FCO8/2725, Michael Palliser, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, F.C.O., to Luard, 13 Oct. 1976, FCO8/2725, Luard to Owen, 15 Oct. 1976, & FCO8/2725, Alston to Crowe, 30 Dec. 1976.

sense of mission, and his managerial attitude to modernising. It also mentioned unfortunate consequences including the emergence of the “apparatus of a police state” spearheaded by the “nasty and pervasive” S.A.V.A.K. Furthermore it highlighted the tendency for sycophancy amongst the Shah’s officials, and the sovereign’s use of “arbitrary” decision-making made in an “almost irrational” manner. Despite this Parsons saw no obstacle to continued close cooperation with the Pahlavi regime which was watertight due to the loyalty of S.A.V.A.K. and the I.I.A.F.¹⁸²³

Owen, who was serving as Minister of State to Crosland until late February of 1977, expressed some concern, commenting that many of the points raised by Parsons “would be a cause for alarm in other countries”. He even pondered if the Shah might pursue “a nationalistic military diversion” in the wider Gulf region, or face revolution if “growing discontent amongst most elements of society” did not dissipate.¹⁸²⁴ This led to the commissioning of a Cabinet Office Paper touching on Iran’s future.¹⁸²⁵ In his remarks on the paper Parsons was firm in his belief that the Shah was not a “megalomaniac”, nor did he have any territorial ambitions. Instead he was a “lonely” leader most desirous of domestic “modernisation and economic development”.¹⁸²⁶ Regarding the possibility of revolution, Parsons thought this extremely remote given that Shah was in “total command” of the political fate of Iran, having “scotched” the opposition “long ago”.¹⁸²⁷ Crucially none of this internal consultation – which was to be repeated more thoroughly in 1978 – was expressed frontstage to Iranian officials.

Instead in early 1977 F.C.O. preoccupation with Iran’s public image persisted. For instance in January Parsons wrote that he was “distressed by the hostility of British public opinion”, which needed rectification through “better” briefed journalists.¹⁸²⁸ This might put a stop to any recurrence of negative press pieces including several published in the latter half of 1976 focussing on economic failures and the undemocratic nature of the Shah’s experiment with a one party system under the Rastakhiz or Resurgence Party.¹⁸²⁹ Connectedly the proposed paper to help with “better” briefings for journalists was first drafted in February of the 1977, in the form of a five page document stipulating how important Iran was for the British economy. It also noted that critics “paid scant regard to Iran’s efforts to overcome the problems of developing a modern industrial society” and had “largely ignored the violence” of “terrorist opposition”.¹⁸³⁰

¹⁸²³ FCO8/2727, Parsons to Crosland, 6 Dec. 1976.

¹⁸²⁴ FCO8/2981, ‘David Owen’s comments’ in James to Alston, 28 Jan. 1977.

¹⁸²⁵ FCO8/2982, Hervey to Rhodes, 27 Jan. 1977.

¹⁸²⁶ FCO8/2982, Parsons to Weir, 9 March 1977 Parsons reiterated these claims in another despatches later that month (FCO8/2986, Parsons to Owen, 30 March 1977).

¹⁸²⁷ FCO8/2980, Parsons, ‘Is the Emperor Fully Clothed?’, 12 April 1977.

¹⁸²⁸ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 53.

¹⁸²⁹ ‘Test of Iran’s ‘democracy’, *Guardian*, 16 Oct. 1976, ‘Shah is megalomaniac, says CIA assessment’, *Guardian*, 23 Oct.

1976, ‘The Shah-People’s Revolution’, *Guardian*, 20 Dec. 1976 & ‘Iran’s race with time and history’, *Guardian*, 21 Dec. 1976.

¹⁸³⁰ FCO8/2985, ‘Draft: Britain and Iran – Aspects of Economic Relations’, in Spence to James, 10 Feb. 1977.

For the first time, however, the M.E.D. sounded a note of caution about employing such weapons in the interests of Disinterested Impartiality. This was in part because the regime had “overdone” some of its own efforts to burnish Iran’s overseas image and to discredit its critics.¹⁸³¹ With a similar potential for “going overboard in defending Iran”, the M.E.D. argued that the paper for publicising the “better side” to the regime should “not be used”.¹⁸³² Similarly in March when meeting a group of M.P.’s critical of the Shah including Stan Newens and Robin Cook,¹⁸³³ Frank Judd had to concede that “reports of torture were too persistent to discount” any longer.¹⁸³⁴ In departmental “Speaking Notes” for Judd the M.E.D. also agreed that the Amnesty Report published in November of 1976 which was cited by the M.P.’s, was “disturbing”. The government also shared their “concern about” potential “violations of human rights in Iran”.¹⁸³⁵

Rallying to the impression somewhat the M.E.D. did make sure that Judd argued for the reports “to be seen in perspective”,¹⁸³⁶ i.e. that Iran was “emerging from a feudal Islamic society” and that “real efforts” had been made to “improve the lives of millions of Iranians”.¹⁸³⁷ Moreover the department argued that both the Amnesty report on Iran and a C.A.R.I. pamphlet published in January 1977 contained some “gross exaggerations”.¹⁸³⁸ Judd also used typical M.E.D. deflection strategies including the need to consider the “importance” of “economic relations with Iran”, and the fact that intervention “might make things worse”.¹⁸³⁹ Parsons meanwhile carried on robustly adopting the Disinterested Impartiality in Iran, complaining again in March about the B.B.C. who had interviewed Margaret Laing author of a new book on the Shah. Khalatbari had expressed his “astonishment” at the negative “attitude” of the reporter who represented “an official organisation of the British Government”.¹⁸⁴⁰ Parsons agreed that the exchanges were “extremely offensive” and that he would “of course” inform his superiors, though he had to stress that the B.B.C.’s “editorial policy” was “entirely independent of government”.¹⁸⁴¹ Parsons subsequently wrote the G.I.P.D. again noting that “with the best will in the world”, “no-one could describe the general tone” of the interviewer as “objective”.¹⁸⁴² On this occasion the Director General of the B.B.C. Charles Curran did “acknowledge” that the programme in question included “some editorialising phrases” which merited “attention”.¹⁸⁴³

¹⁸³¹ FCO8/2985, James to Westmacott, 2 March 1977 & FCO8/2985, Westmacott to James, 16 Feb. 1977.

¹⁸³² FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 54.

¹⁸³³ FCO8/2997, Robin Cook to Judd, 3 March 1977.

¹⁸³⁴ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 54.

¹⁸³⁵ FCO8/2997, ‘Iran: Meeting of Minister of State and MPs to Discuss the Amnesty Report, 23 March 1977’, n.d.

¹⁸³⁶ FCO8/2998, ‘Human Rights in Iran: Record of Meeting Between the Minister of State and Labour MPs Held in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on Wednesday, 23 March, 1977’, n.d.

¹⁸³⁷ FCO8/2997, ‘Iran: Meeting of Minister of State and MPs...’

¹⁸³⁸ FCO8/2998, Parsons to F.C.O., 14 Feb. 1977 & FCO8/2997, Westmacott to Charlesworth, 14 Feb. 1977.

¹⁸³⁹ FCO8/2998, ‘Human Rights...Record of Meeting...Minister of State and Labour MPs’. For further information the Amnesty report on Iran from 1976, and the C.A.R.I. publication, entitled ‘Iran, the Shah’s empire of repression’, are also contained in FCO8/2998.

¹⁸⁴⁰ FCO8/2985, Abbas Ali Khalatbary to Parsons 2 March 1977.

¹⁸⁴¹ FCO8/2985, Parsons to Khalatbari, 6 March 1977.

¹⁸⁴² FCO8/2985, Parsons to Barrington, 9 March 1977.

¹⁸⁴³ FCO8/2985, Charles Curran to Radji, 4 April 1977.

By April, however, even British officials in Tehran were becoming a little more circumspect in their use of Disinterested Impartiality. This was due to sensing a “change of heart in London” brought on by the frequency of criticism for the regime which had “reached a level” whereby Britain had to “take note of it in the conduct” of Anglo-Iranian relations.¹⁸⁴⁴ For instance Parsons wrote to Owen on his becoming Foreign Secretary in late February, advocating “informal discussions of the problems” which were causing “particular concern”. This was despite his continued belief that criticism was largely unfair, since Iranians were “Orientals” who should be judged by Third World and not Western standards.¹⁸⁴⁵ This subtle new attitude meanwhile occurred within a new phase of U.S.-Iranian relations ushered in by the presidency of Jimmy Carter which put greater emphasis on human rights in the context of American foreign policy.¹⁸⁴⁶ Inspired in part by the U.S., the Shah had also introduced his notion of liberalisation mentioned previously.

In this environment Parsons also felt more able to lessen the strictures of Disinterested Impartiality, choosing to speak informally to the Iranians himself about the need for more openness to dispel unwarranted criticism. As such in April he helped to encourage Vice Court Minister Mohamad Bahadori to adopt open trials with international observers for political prisoners.¹⁸⁴⁷ This tentative move to involve human rights in Anglo-Iranian relations also found expression in Owen’s visit in May of 1977. Both the Foreign Secretary and Carter’s Secretary of State Cyrus Vance came to Iran at the same time. Each touched upon human rights,¹⁸⁴⁸ with Owen noting that:

... that while he did not wish to impose British views on Iran the Shah’s move towards liberalisation had been well received in Britain, and that criticism would be less if the living conditions of prisoners were improved and trials opened regularly to the public.¹⁸⁴⁹

According to Browne the Iranians “took all this well”, presumably because it no longer constituted interference in Iranian internal affairs.¹⁸⁵⁰ Instead it represented tentative support for a policy of the Shah’s own making which he soon expanded with a “flurry of human rights activity” involving amnestied prisoners, and open trials with international observers from institutions including the International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International.¹⁸⁵¹ Martin Ennals, the Secretary General of Amnesty had also been allowed to visit Iran, sharing an audience with the Shah in March of 1977.¹⁸⁵² The two remained in dialogue thereafter, though not always harmoniously. In addition there was greater press and public freedom of expression, with acceptance of some open criticism of the

¹⁸⁴⁴ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 54 & FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. B14.

¹⁸⁴⁵ FCO8/2998, Parsons to Owen, 12 April 1977.

¹⁸⁴⁶ James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion, The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 226 & FCO8/2998, Parsons to Owen, 12 April 1977.

¹⁸⁴⁷ FCO8/2998, Parsons to Owen, 6 April 1977.

¹⁸⁴⁸ ‘Mr Vance hears views of Shah’, *Times*, 14 May 1977.

¹⁸⁴⁹ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 54.

¹⁸⁵⁰ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 54.

¹⁸⁵¹ FCO8/2999, Westmatcott to James, 23 June 1977.

¹⁸⁵² Radji, Entry, 17 March 1977, p. 67.

regime in what Parsons dubbed the “Thousand Flowers”.¹⁸⁵³ Finally the Shah made considerable changes to his cabinet, with the chairman of the Rastakhiz Party Jamshid Amouzegar moving to Prime Minister in August 1977. Alam meanwhile retired on health grounds, replaced as Court Minister by Hoveyda in alterations that were meant to signal a new phase of economic prudence.¹⁸⁵⁴

By the autumn, however, Britain once again faced the Shah’s wrath, bringing renewed adoption of Disinterested Impartiality. On the 25th of October Parsons was “sorry” to report that the Shah was “experiencing a mood of paranoid hostility towards the Western media” which was “worse” than at any time since 1974. In two audiences that month the Shah “launched into the most unreasonable and emotional diatribes” against the British press and the B.B.C. whilst also alluding to an “international conspiracy” against Iran. On this occasion Parsons was less inclined to see the Shah’s point of view, especially since many of the pieces were “inoffensive”. Consequently he employed language more akin to the Great Power Paternalism of Sir Percy Loraine, asking the Shah “in almost offensively incredulous terms” whether or not he believed in this conspiracy theory? When the Shah persisted in his convictions Parsons was “flabbergasted”, and had “difficulty” putting together “sensible arguments to dent the armour of his obsession” which also led him to blame “jealous Western powers” for facilitating recent attempts by Iranian lawyers to affect judicial reform.¹⁸⁵⁵

Despite the confusion, Parsons suggested that the Shah’s annoyance emanated from the fact that he had “received minimal credit in the West” for his liberalising efforts which were in part pursued at the behest of his allies.¹⁸⁵⁶ In addition the greater freedom had not led to increased appreciation from his Persian subjects, more and more of whom were openly denouncing him as a dictator.¹⁸⁵⁷ Having failed to convince the Shah of British innocence Parsons instead adopted simpler methods of Disinterested Impartiality, suggesting that officials keep their “heads down” and wait for the Shah’s “fever to pass” perhaps after his visit to cement relations with President Carter in mid-November.¹⁸⁵⁸ Two weeks prior to this, however, Parsons reported another outburst from the Shah, this time “with some reason”. The cause was a front-page article in the *Guardian* citing an Amnesty Report on an increase in death sentences carried out in Iran.¹⁸⁵⁹ Incensed, the Shah instructed Radji to secure a rectification from Ennals who claimed that Amnesty had not supplied the figure.¹⁸⁶⁰ The Secretary General did then refute the statistic in a letter to the paper, however, he left a sting in the tail by claiming that the number of political activists shot by the Iranian police had “increased considerably”.¹⁸⁶¹ According to Parsons, this was

¹⁸⁵³ FCO8/3191, I.A.R – 1977 (p. 1-6) & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 50.

¹⁸⁵⁴ Milani, *Shah*, p. 384.

¹⁸⁵⁵ FCO8/2999, Parsons to Lucas, 25 Oct. 1977.

¹⁸⁵⁶ FCO8/2999, Parsons to Lucas, 25 Oct. 1977.

¹⁸⁵⁷ Afkhami, *Life*, p. 447.

¹⁸⁵⁸ FCO8/2999, Parsons to Lucas, 25 Oct. 1977.

¹⁸⁵⁹ ‘Rights report poses a puzzle’, *Guardian*, 30 Sept. 1977.

¹⁸⁶⁰ Radji, Entry, 5 Oct. 1977, p. 111 & Entry, 8 Oct. 1977, p. 112-113.

¹⁸⁶¹ ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Guardian*, 18 Oct. 1977.

“patently untrue”. Furthermore he also agreed with the Shah that assertions in the British press about the existence of 20,000 political prisoners in Iran were inflated perhaps as much as tenfold.¹⁸⁶²

Meanwhile the British government still had to fend off home-based criticisms of Anglo-Iranian relations. For instance on the 11th of November the University of Kent at Canterbury Students’ Union informed the Prime Minister that they had passed a motion declaring the Shah’s regime “fascist” due to its use of torture, political imprisonment and denial of democratic rights. Furthermore they looked on Labour’s links to the regime “with disgust”, demanding that the “imperialist” British government “cut all” economic and political links to the Shah.¹⁸⁶³ The M.E.D. responded for Callaghan, stating that Britain valued its “close economic links” with Iran, which was its “largest market” and oil provider in the Middle East. Furthermore the department highlighted Britain’s obligations to her C.E.N.T.O. ally who helped maintain regional “stability”. Lastly although Britain had raised the issue of human rights in Iran several times, the M.E.D. did “not accept many of the allegations” raised by the student’s union which also ignored Iran’s “marked improvement in civil and economic conditions”.¹⁸⁶⁴

This position was, however, becoming harder to defend due to developments in Iran following the Shah’s visit to Washington. Despite the Shah’s apprehension over Carter’s allusions to human rights, U.S.-Iranian relations actually proceeded much as before, with close partnership and arms sales including the latest General Dynamics F-16 fighter jets.¹⁸⁶⁵ James Bill argues that Carter’s lack of pressure on the Shah in part facilitated a more reactionary approach to growing discontent in Iran’s newly liberalised environment.¹⁸⁶⁶ The ‘Thousand Flowers’ thus began “withering” in the late winter of 1977 when “savage police brutality” was used to put down largely peaceful protests.¹⁸⁶⁷ British officials were thus finding it increasingly hard to refute press reports regarding repression in Iran.¹⁸⁶⁸ Meanwhile it had also become “tactically difficult” for the F.C.O. to encourage liberalisation or mention concerns about renewed repression due to a damaging corruption trial involving the Iranian government, the D.S.O. and Millbank Technical Services Ltd. (M.T.S).¹⁸⁶⁹ The latter was a “secretive subsidiary of [the] Crown Agents”, officially a government body but one which escaped usual levels of public scrutiny. It could thus stealthily earn sales commissions and revenue by providing “support services for British defence exports”.¹⁸⁷⁰

As we shall see in the next section on Great Power Survivalism, M.T.S. played a significant role in facilitating British arms sales to Iran. In this instance, however, it caused embarrassment due to

¹⁸⁶² FCO8/2999, Parsons to Lucas, 3 Nov. 1977.

¹⁸⁶³ FCO8/2999, B. Robathan to Callaghan, 11 Nov. 1977.

¹⁸⁶⁴ FCO8/2999, Tatham to Robathan, 23 Nov. 1977.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Bill, *Eagle*, p. 226-233.

¹⁸⁶⁶ Bill, *Eagle*, p. 228.

¹⁸⁶⁷ FCO8/3191, I.A.R – 1977 (p. 5) & FCO8/2999, Westmacott to M.E.D., 24 Nov. 1977.

¹⁸⁶⁸ ‘Iran’s trained thugs beat up student crowd’, *Guardian*, 22 Nov. 1977.

¹⁸⁶⁹ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 54.

¹⁸⁷⁰ ‘but they’ve a good friend in the Shah’, *Sunday Times* 16 May 1976.

accusations of bribery involving the Shah. In late 1977 British Army Officer Lt. Colonel Randel appeared in court charged with “conspiring to receive money” from Racal Ltd., an electronics company which had won a multimillion pound contract to provide radio equipment for I.I.A.F. Chieftains in 1972.¹⁸⁷¹ A Racal executive also on trial alleged that monies sent to the colonel were actually destined for an Iranian middleman and ultimately the Shah who customarily took a financial cut.¹⁸⁷² Randel meanwhile requested government documents which purportedly proved the existence of such arrangements.¹⁸⁷³ This had the potential to severely damage Anglo-Iranian relations, not least because the accusations were true. The British government *did* use a middleman to secure its defence contracts in Iran, namely Shapoor Reporter, an Anglo-Indian of Parsee descent with historic ties to the Pahlavi family. He served as an M.T.S. consultant as well as an occasional British intelligence agent.¹⁸⁷⁴ Reporter, who was knighted for his services to British export promotion in 1973, received a one percent commission on various defence contracts amounting to £6.7m from 1970 to 1977.¹⁸⁷⁵ A significant portion of this sum was then transferred to the Shah’s charitable Pahlavi Foundation which also served as a personal “vehicle” to “amass vast sums” of money.¹⁸⁷⁶

Unsurprisingly the F.C.O. wanted the case dropped, however, they had to face the consequences of Sir Lester Suffield, the former head of the D.S.O., going into the dock to give evidence on the use of middlemen and commissions. Suffield revealed that Reporter had indeed been used in this capacity, however, in a strong nod to Disinterested Impartiality he spuriously denied that payments were for the Shah, thereby protecting the Iranian sovereign’s reputation.¹⁸⁷⁷ Suffield’s reference to Reporter as a “trusted confidant of the Shah”, did however, anger the Iranian government.¹⁸⁷⁸ The Shah claimed to have no relationship with Reporter, whilst Hoveyda demanded that the British government make a statement declaring that Reporter was a British subject working for the M.O.D. and that the Iranian government had no knowledge of any payment. Much of this was untrue, however, Posnett claims the British government “decided to play along...in order not to cause offence”.¹⁸⁷⁹ There was also concern about a trade boycott that the Iranian Prime Minister “threatened”.¹⁸⁸⁰ British officials thus impressed Disinterested Impartiality by declaring in parliament in mid-November that Reporter was a “British subject” who had been working for M.T.S. and receiving payments for his services. Any reference to Reporter’s interactions with the Iranians was pointedly omitted.¹⁸⁸¹ This neatly covered all aspects demanded by the Iranians. Subsequently in January 1978 Randel and two Racal executives were also convicted, concealing the true extent of the use of bribery and commissions payments in Anglo-Iranian

¹⁸⁷¹ ‘Racal wins £11m military radio contracts...’, *Times*, 29 March 1972.

¹⁸⁷² Phythian, *Arms Sales*, p. 88-89.

¹⁸⁷³ Posnett, ‘Treating’, p. 126.

¹⁸⁷⁴ Posnett, ‘Treating’, p. 123.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Posnett, ‘Treating’, p. 124.

¹⁸⁷⁶ Owen, *Declare*, p. 392.

¹⁸⁷⁷ DEFE13/1176, Sir Lester Suffield cross-examined by Mr Popplewell, 9 Nov. 1977 in Posnett, ‘Treating’, p. 126

¹⁸⁷⁸ Posnett, ‘Treating’, p. 127. For instance see ‘Go-between Paid £1m in Tanks Deal with Iran’, *Financial Times*, 9 Nov. 1977.

¹⁸⁷⁹ Posnett, ‘Treating’, p. 127.

¹⁸⁸⁰ Owen, *Declare*, p. 394.

¹⁸⁸¹ ‘Sir Shapoor Reporter’, Mr Gilbert, *HC Deb* 17 Nov. 1977 *vol 939 c368W*.

defence contracts.¹⁸⁸² In a final act of Disinterested Impartiality the British government and M.T.S. also severed all ties to Reporter.¹⁸⁸³ The whole episode left Anglo-Iranian relations in a “bad patch” however, meaning Britain was “constrained” and unable to encourage liberalisation at a time when the Iranian government was reversing the trend.¹⁸⁸⁴ The court affair also demonstrated the degree of “bargaining power that the Shah possessed” in his dealings with the British government, which effectively endorsed perjury in the interests of maintaining good commercial and political relations.¹⁸⁸⁵

The hangover from this ‘bad patch’ ensured that Disinterested Impartiality continued to be adopted in the early part of 1978. By far the most important motivation behind its prevalence during the year, however, was the B.B.C. and the Persian Service. There were continual problems with the press which reported extensively on the revolution. This prompted Iranian government complaints and even the expulsion of Liz Thurgood from the *Guardian*,¹⁸⁸⁶ however, it was the preoccupation with the B.B.C. which dominated 1978. This constant source of Anglo-Iranian irritation first came to attention again on January the 5th when Lucas reported that the Iranians were “going through one of their hyper-sensitive cycles” about B.B.C. coverage, this time relating to Iranian student demonstrations in Washington and the first signs of unrest in Qom.¹⁸⁸⁷ Parsons consequently informed Andrew Whitley, the B.B.C. correspondent in Iran, “just how unpopular” he and his organisation were with the Shah. Following the meeting the ambassador thought Whitley had “taken the point about the generally hostile tone which” had “characterised some his recent reports”.¹⁸⁸⁸ In a less combative manner than in 1977, the embassy also suggested that the B.B.C. be told that they should be more “certain of their facts” when reporting on Iran.¹⁸⁸⁹

Both the F.C.O. and Judd were, however, wary of doing anything to “choke off” the B.B.C. at this point, especially after the internal review of 1977. Furthermore Judd in particular did not want the government to be accused of “boot licking” the Shah.¹⁸⁹⁰ As such only a very subtle approach was made by John Leahy at the Information and Cultural Affairs Department, an F.C.O. body that often liaised with the B.B.C. Leahy “carefully” informed Gerry Mansell,¹⁸⁹¹ the Managing Director of the B.B.C.’s External Services, that the Iranians might take their latest frustrations out on British commercial interests.¹⁸⁹² Although this was taken into consideration, Dodd again defended the broadcaster’s “commitment to truth and objectivity” in the face of purportedly unjustified criticism from the regime.¹⁸⁹³

¹⁸⁸² Phythian, *Arms Sales*, p. 103 & FCO8/3212, Squire Barraclough, ‘The Business of Corruption’, 20 Jan. 1978.

¹⁸⁸³ Posnett, ‘Treating’, p. 128.

¹⁸⁸⁴ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 54.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Posnett, ‘Treating’, p. 125.

¹⁸⁸⁶ FCO8/3214, Owen to Parsons, 15 Sept. 1978.

¹⁸⁸⁷ FCO8/3212, Lucas to Tehran, 5 Jan. 1978.

¹⁸⁸⁸ FCO8/3212, Parsons to Lucas, 15 Dec. 1977.

¹⁸⁸⁹ FCO8/3212, Miers to Lucas, 11 Jan. 1978.

¹⁸⁹⁰ FCO8/3212, Lucas to Weir, 24 Jan. 1978.

¹⁸⁹¹ FCO8/3213, Leahy to Weir, 22 Feb. 1978.

¹⁸⁹² FCO8/3212, Leahy to Lucas, 23 Jan. 1978.

¹⁸⁹³ FCO8/3212, Dodd to Lucas, 18 Jan. 1978.

Such criticism meanwhile, continued unabated. For instance, in late January the Shah accused the B.B.C. of exaggerating the “importance of reactionary religious bigots” behind the disturbances. He also threatened to undermine British commercial interests if the government refused to put pressure on the broadcaster. Parsons reiterated the general point about B.B.C. independence, however, in a nod to Disinterested Impartiality he noted that officials were “already” in “discussion” with B.B.C. management.¹⁸⁹⁴ Subsequently in February Parsons and M.E.D., went for an informal dialogue about reporting in Iran with B.B.C. management. Bush House purportedly “took the point” about Iranian complaints, and “all agreed that it was necessary to take extra care in reporting Iranian affairs”.¹⁸⁹⁵ Despite momentarily smoothing relations,¹⁸⁹⁶ this did not end the ongoing B.B.C. drama which dragged on due to the dramatic surge in the broadcaster’s popularity during the course of the year. Indeed the Persian Service became the main source of news regarding ongoing disturbances, especially after the Iranian government began to censor the local press again by September.¹⁸⁹⁷ Less than a month after the February meeting, Parsons had already seen Persian Service broadcasts on the Tabriz riots that were bound to “infuriate the Shah”. Consequently the ambassador had Whitley come to the embassy, where he told him that he “regarded it as preposterous that” his staff “should have to spend an inordinate amount of time guarding” their “own goal mouth while the B.B.C. drove balls into it”. Parsons felt “there was no doubt that Whitley got the message” this time.¹⁸⁹⁸

Further Iranian complaints in April seemingly belied the ambassador’s optimism, prompting him to inform the M.E.D. that the B.B.C. was “not respecting” the “general understanding” reached in February. Specifically the B.B.C. was focusing too much on the opposition and not enough on the Rastakhiz counterdemonstrations in Tabriz.¹⁸⁹⁹ Annabelle Sreberny deduces from this correspondence that the M.E.D. had reached a confidential “verbal agreement” which ostensibly gave the department a degree of influence over the broadcaster.¹⁹⁰⁰ This constitutes a further elaboration of the previously mentioned M.E.D. attempts to direct and control the B.B.C. as a de facto member of Britain’s performance team seen capable of disrupting desired impressions. As noted above, Parsons also tried to dramaturgically discipline Whitley for letting the side down.

The constant breakdowns in this ‘agreement’, however, highlight the B.B.C.’s unwillingness to operate within this context. Importantly Parsons also conceded that even if the broadcaster had towed the line more, it would probably have failed to prevent Iranian government irritation. The mere fact that it was reporting on the demonstrations was enough to cause vexation. As such the “best solution” was to

¹⁸⁹⁴ FCO8/3212, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Jan. 1978.

¹⁸⁹⁵ FCO8/3212, Lucas to Tehran, 8 Feb. 1978.

¹⁸⁹⁶ FCO8/3213, Parsons to F.C.O., 21 Feb. 1978.

¹⁸⁹⁷ Sreberny, *Service*, p. 85 & p. 89.

¹⁸⁹⁸ FCO8/3212, Parsons to F.C.O., 26 Feb. 1978.

¹⁸⁹⁹ FCO8/3213, Parsons to F.C.O., 12 April 1978.

¹⁹⁰⁰ FCO8/3213, Lucas to Barrington, 8 March 1978, & Sreberny, *Service*, p. 88.

“somehow” get the broadcaster “to reduce the amount of their coverage of internal affairs”.¹⁹⁰¹ In this context Owen reintroduced the nuclear option, suggesting abolition as part of a broader ongoing agenda to cut the running costs of the World Service and British Council.¹⁹⁰² When Leahy informed the Foreign Secretary that the Persian Service was not under consideration for the axe due to the review in 1977, Owen apparently “blew his top” in frustration.¹⁹⁰³

Meanwhile in September, Parsons faced more Iranian complaints, including accusations that the Persian Service was implicitly facilitating the efforts of the opposition by providing advanced information on the location and time of planned demonstrations. Given his previous attempts to influence the B.B.C., the ambassador felt unable to make an official complaint, however, he thought another “confidential approach at ministerial level” might convince the broadcaster that it was “threatening” British national interests. Furthermore he encouraged the Iranian government and Radji to monitor the service and produce a “dossier” of transcripts which could be used as evidence when meeting with B.B.C. officials.¹⁹⁰⁴ The Iranian ambassador argued this was not possible from his end since he would need a special receiver. Moreover it was more important to get tape recordings as the root of the problem lay in the use of subtle inflexions that made reports sound supportive of the opposition.¹⁹⁰⁵ The M.E.D. could not record Persian Service broadcasts either, leading to requests for the British embassy to undertake the task instead.¹⁹⁰⁶

Whilst this was under consideration both the Persian Service and the B.B.C.’s John Simpson, had conducted interviews with Khomeini in early November.¹⁹⁰⁷ The F.C.O. had considered trying to prevent this potentially damaging development, however, Disinterested Impartiality had its limits. The government also had a domestic audience to consider. Judd led the way arguing that it was “unwise to pressurise the B.B.C.”¹⁹⁰⁸ Leahy and Owen concurred,¹⁹⁰⁹ though the latter did advocate more unofficial methods of informing the B.B.C. of the “serious potential repercussions” following the interview and their wider broadcasts. This included “representations” against the service by former diplomats, politicians and businessmen including Lord Denis Greenhill, George Jellicoe,¹⁹¹⁰ and later Sir Marcus Sieff and Lord Jacob Rothschild. Sieff first went to Leahy who provided detail on the whole Persian Service fracas, before stating that the F.C.O. could not “interference with the B.B.C.’s independence”.

¹⁹⁰¹ FCO8/3213, Parsons to F.C.O., 12 April 1978.

¹⁹⁰² FCO8/3214, G.G.H. Walden, Private Secretary to the Secretary, to Leahy 26 June 1978 & FCO8/3214, Leahy to Walden, 27 June 1978.

¹⁹⁰³ ‘LEAHY, Sir John Henry Gladstone, KCMG (b.1928)’, C.O.H.P., pp. 1-37, (p. 23-24).
<<https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/bdohp/>> [accessed: 16.1.17].

¹⁹⁰⁴ FCO8/3214, Parsons to F.C.O., 24 Sept. 1978. & FCO8/3214, Parsons to F.C.O., 19 Sept. 1978.

¹⁹⁰⁵ FCO8/3214, Weir Postscript, 14 Nov. 1978 in W.R. McQuillan, Information Policy Department, to Leahy, 13 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹⁰⁶ FCO8/3214, D.E. Tatham to Miers, 15 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹⁰⁷ John Simpson, *Strange Places, Questionable People*, (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 225-227 & Sreberny, *Service*, p. 102-103.

¹⁹⁰⁸ FCO8/3214, R.M. White to Private Secretary (Walden), 2 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹⁰⁹ FCO8/3214, Leahy to Private Secretary (Walden), 1 Nov. 1978 & FCO8/3214, Prendergast to Leahy, 3 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹¹⁰ FCO8/3214, Owen to Parsons, 9 Nov. 1978.

However, “it could do no harm” he went on, if Sir Marcus “were to have a go at the B.B.C.” Sieff agreed stating that he “would not of course mention that he had been in touch with the F.C.O.”¹⁹¹¹ Subsequently during late November Mansell was reported to have complained that he had “never experienced such a powerful lobbying campaign”.¹⁹¹² Writing after the event Christopher Hitchens also castigated Amery, Lord Chalfont and former Labour Foreign Secretary Lord George Brown, for contributing to this “semi-public calumny” against the B.B.C.¹⁹¹³ Strikingly when Owen corresponded with the B.B.C. Chairman Sir Michael Swann over the whole issue of the Persian Service, Leahy briefed the Foreign Secretary to massage the truth by claiming that the “powerful ‘lobbying campaign’” which Mr Mansell had mentioned, had “not been from us”.¹⁹¹⁴ In reality the F.C.O. had certainly assisted the campaign. Moreover Owen also claimed to be a “strong believer in the independence of the B.B.C. and of the value of the B.B.C.’s external broadcasts”.¹⁹¹⁵ Given his previous consideration for abolishing the Persian Service, this would again appear to be softening what was sometimes a hard-headed attitude.

Meanwhile in mid-November Parsons replied to requests over motoring, arguing that this would border on “censorship” of B.B.C., whilst undermining his constant public defence of the broadcaster’s independence. Informal dialogue and encouraging the Iranian ambassador to complain to the broadcaster was all he could do.¹⁹¹⁶ Like Owen’s protestations of innocence, this defence also looks shaky in view of the ambassador’s previous efforts to abolish the service. In essence there was a multi-layered performance underway for different audiences, domestic and foreign. To an Iranian audience British officials had to attest to B.B.C. independence. Meanwhile backstage they attempted to discipline the broadcaster as a de facto and disruptive member of the team. Within a domestic British context, however, B.B.C. independence had to be publically defended as well, leading to more clandestine and unofficial efforts to enforce discipline. Subsequently, in the absence of a forthcoming dossier, Parsons also conceded that he had been unofficially monitoring reports anyway, for the purposes of parrying Persian government complaints. As evidence of B.B.C. foul-play he sent a B.B.C. “commentary” on the Iranian military,¹⁹¹⁷ which had prompted complaints from Azhari on the 28th of November.¹⁹¹⁸ This was also the moment that the situation “boiled over” with an official aide memoire from the Iranian government protesting about the B.B.C.¹⁹¹⁹ Specifically the broadcaster was accused of bias and support for the opposition, whilst the “excuse” about B.B.C. independence was deemed “unacceptable”.¹⁹²⁰ There were also reports of the Iranian security services trying to intermittently jam B.B.C. broadcasts,¹⁹²¹

¹⁹¹¹ FCO8/3214, Leahy to Weir, 16 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹¹² FCO8/3215, Weir to Private Secretary, 30 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹¹³ Sreberny, *Service*, p. 99-100 & p.113- 114. See also ‘BBC Accuse Persia Service Critics of ‘Disinformation’, *Daily Telegraph*, 5 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹¹⁴ FCO8/3215, Leahy to Private Secretary (Walden), 1 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹¹⁵ FCO8/3215, Owen to Sir Michael Swann, 14 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹¹⁶ FCO8/3214, Parsons to Leahy, 15 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹¹⁷ FCO8/3214, Parsons to F.C.O., 24 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 861.

¹⁹¹⁸ FCO8/3215, Parsons to F.C.O., 28 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 880.

¹⁹¹⁹ FCO8/3215, Parsons to F.C.O., 27 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 867 & 868.

¹⁹²⁰ FCO8/3215, Translation of an Aide Memoire from the Imperial Minister of Foreign Affairs, 24 Nov. 1978’.

¹⁹²¹ FCO8/3214, Parsons to F.C.O., 23 Nov. 1978.

which were seen as a threat to national security.¹⁹²² This considerable Iranian concern subsequently prompted the F.C.O. to start recording and monitoring B.B.C. Persian Service broadcasts,¹⁹²³ though it was agreed that the B.B.C. itself should play no official role in this process.¹⁹²⁴

Importantly the F.C.O. agreed to do this despite doubts about the substance of the complaints. Indeed Lucas thought the Iranians were “characteristically over-reacting” to much of the commentary. The fact that it was damaging to Anglo-Iranian commercial and political relations was, however, more important. To Lucas this even justified a “friendly warning” to the broadcaster.¹⁹²⁵ In the meantime the F.C.O. composed a response to the Iranian government’s aide memoire which officially claimed the government could not intervene due to B.B.C. editorial independence. In a nod to Disinterested Impartiality, however, Owen wrote as follows:

...What the British government can do is make sure the B.B.C. appreciate the seriousness with which the Iranian government view what they consider to be the lack of objectivity in Persian Service broadcasts.¹⁹²⁶

They also encouraged the Iranian ambassador to make further contact with the B.B.C.¹⁹²⁷ Finally the F.C.O. relayed the whole correspondence to Bush House and separately encouraged B.B.C. management to liaise with Radji.¹⁹²⁸ This led to further dialogue and the installation of a special receiver at the Iranian embassy to pick up Persian Service broadcasts.¹⁹²⁹ Meanwhile a more significant instance of Disinterested Impartiality following Iran’s official complaint took place in early December. On the 3rd, Afshar contacted Parsons asking him to stop a planned B.B.C. broadcast of a statement from Khomeini. With the country in a “state of virtual insurrection”, Parsons thought the failure to stop the broadcast would result in “a very drastic reaction indeed against H.M.G.”¹⁹³⁰ Consequently Weir and another official “spoke to the B.B.C.” who replied that they had already “decided not to carry” Khomeini’s statement.¹⁹³¹ It is difficult to know whether or not B.B.C. management simply deemed the broadcast inappropriate, or if they anticipated a firm protest from the F.C.O. At any rate, Parsons and the Iranian government were “most grateful” for what was called an “intervention”.¹⁹³²

¹⁹²² In particular the Iranians argued that the B.B.C. had assisted demonstrators during the chaotic protests of November the 5th which nearly precipitated a “total collapse of law and order”.(FCO8/3215, Parsons to F.C.O., 27 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 869).

¹⁹²³ FCO8/3215, C.J. Rundle, Research Department to Easton, Information Policy Department, 27 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹²⁴ FCO8/3215, McQuillan to Leahy, 6 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹²⁵ FCO8/3214, Lucas to Weir, 24 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹²⁶ FCO8/3215, Owen to Parsons, 28 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 621.

¹⁹²⁷ FCO8/3215, Owen to Parsons, 28 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 621.

¹⁹²⁸ FCO8/3215, Walden to Leahy, 29 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹²⁹ FCO8/3215, Swann to Owen, 1 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹³⁰ FCO8/3215, Parsons to F.C.O., 3 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹³¹ FCO8/3215, Owen to Parsons, 3 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹³² FCO8/3215, Parsons to F.C.O., 3 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 913.

Gratitude was short-lived, however, with further Iranian frustration with B.B.C. reporting throughout December, resulting in Whitley's expulsion around the 20th.¹⁹³³ By this time the British adoption of Disinterested Impartiality had also been drastically scaled back, evidenced by Owen's commenting on the 11th that "no need for further representations to the B.B.C."¹⁹³⁴ This was due to the ongoing F.C.O. monitoring being undertaken by Christopher Rundle, a Persian speaking analyst from the Research Department. He made a report of his findings on the 20th of December, in which he stated that he had "not come across any obvious examples of slanting or distortion", nor was there any use of "false inflexions". Furthermore he found the output to be "quite well balanced" and in conclusion thought neither the B.B.C. nor the Persian Service had "been guilty of any blatant transgressions."¹⁹³⁵ Given these circumstances there were no more attempts to dramaturgically discipline the B.B.C., which even ran another interview with Khomeini on January the 5th.¹⁹³⁶

After such a thorough riposte to the litany of complaints about the service, one might question Parsons' professionalism during this elongated spat. Perhaps poignantly, even though the M.E.D. supported their ambassador, there was a suggestion that Parsons and the Persians were "in danger of confusing the symptom with the disease", that is to say, they were attributing too much influence to the B.B.C. which was in reality reporting on developments in Iran driven largely by "popular feelings". Furthermore Lucas thought it unrealistic at such a "late stage" to suggest that the unrest could be reversed by reining in the Persian Service.¹⁹³⁷ That being said, the B.B.C. clearly played a significant role in the Iranian Revolution, a fact Whitley attested to in later years. Despite a strong attempt to remain impartial, the "huge listenership" of the B.B.C., coupled with its detailed reporting, and its access to opposition leaders, ensured the broadcaster had the effect of quickening the pace of the revolution. According to Whitley this was not, however, the B.B.C.'s intention.¹⁹³⁸ Simpson, however, conceded that the broadcaster "had only its past to blame if people thought it had a political agenda", due to its role in the deposition of Reza Shah at the behest of the British government.¹⁹³⁹ In some respects it was therefore understandable for the M.E.D. and the wider F.C.O. to view the B.B.C. as an institution whose actions could alter the state of Anglo-Iranian relations. Connectedly it was understandable that British officials would try to control the B.B.C. in the interests of reducing disruption to impressions like Overt Cordiality and Disinterested Impartiality, which were used to maintain British commercial and political interests in Iran.

Aside from preoccupations with the B.B.C., other major means imparting Disinterested Impartiality in 1978 centred on Britain's persistent refusal to criticise the regime or publically entertain notions of regime change. As in early 1977, there was, however, renewed encouragement for the Shah's stuttering

¹⁹³³ Radji, Entry 19 Dec. 1978, p. 289.

¹⁹³⁴ FCO8/3215, Walde to McQuillan, 11 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹³⁵ FCO8/3215, Rundle to G.A. Pirie, Tehran, 20 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹³⁶ Radji, Entry 5 Jan. 1978, p. 304.

¹⁹³⁷ FCO8/3215, Lucas to Weir, 27 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹³⁸ Sreberny, *Service*, p. 108.

¹⁹³⁹ Simpson, *Places*, p. 227.

drive for liberalisation, including later endorsement for the free elections he announced in August.¹⁹⁴⁰ For instance in May, Newens asked the Prime Minister to “justify” continued arms sales to the Shah, a “flagrant” human rights abuser who was using arms “primarily in suppressing” democracy.¹⁹⁴¹ Callaghan did “not accept” this analysis, arguing that Shah’s arms purchases were to help stabilise the Middle East. Meanwhile regarding human rights he thought it a “difficult process” for the Shah to “encourage more liberalisation while at the same time maintaining a degree of order,” both of which were laudable aims.¹⁹⁴²

This line of argument continued in early November. For instance on the 6th, when asked by Labour M.P.’s about human rights abuses and the moral hazards of selling Chieftains used to sustain a “bloodstained tyranny”,¹⁹⁴³ Owen attempted to soften the blow. He conceded that human rights in Iran had not “been totally satisfactory” – far from it”, however, he “supported” the Shah’s plan for “fair and free elections”. Connectedly he stressed that it was for the “Iranian people” to “determine their own destiny”, though he was tacitly critical of the “anarchic” nature of the demonstrations. Meanwhile although arms sales were a “difficult” subject, it had been right to provide the regime with weaponry.¹⁹⁴⁴ Furthermore on the 16th of November, Newens again questioned the Prime Minister about human rights. Callaghan did not deny that there were regime “shortcomings”, however, since the Shah was trying to put Iran onto the “path of democracy”, “difficulties” had understandably arisen. Significantly at this stage, the Prime Minister did not “condone” the regime, nor was he sure that the Shah would succeed. He did, however, urge his Labour colleague to consider the implications of an alternative government which might be worse.¹⁹⁴⁵

By mid-December however, the tone had changed. When asked if it was inappropriate to use the Queen’s upcoming visit to Iran to show support for the regime, the Prime Minister replied that he was advising Her Majesty “not to proceed” with the visit, which in any case was not to be “regarded as buttressing the regime”. Instead he contended, State Visits were simply standard procedure in interstate relations.¹⁹⁴⁶ This ran counter to the British rationale behind every major ministerial and royal visit to Iran since the 1950s, a fact duly noted by Julian Amery, another pro-Pahlavi Conservative M.P.: who criticised the Prime Minister for his remarks.¹⁹⁴⁷ The Iranians were also aggrieved at this public gesture which would be interpreted in Iran and elsewhere as a “weakening of British support”.¹⁹⁴⁸ Callaghan, however, had no more to say on the subject, rounding off his statement in parliament by announcing

¹⁹⁴⁰ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 68.

¹⁹⁴¹ ‘TEHERAN’, Mr Newens, *HC Deb*, 16 May 1978, *vol 950 cc235-7*.

¹⁹⁴² ‘TEHERAN’, Mr Callaghan, *HC Deb*, 16 May 1978, *vol 950 cc235-7*.

¹⁹⁴³ ‘IRAN’, Mr Flannery, *HC Deb* 06 November 1978 *vol 957 cc504-12*.

¹⁹⁴⁴ ‘IRAN’, Dr Owen, *HC Deb* 06 November 1978 *vol 957 cc504-12*.

¹⁹⁴⁵ ‘SHAH OF IRAN’, The Prime Minister, *HC Deb*, 16 Nov. 1978, *vol 958 cc597-9*.

¹⁹⁴⁶ ‘Prime Minister (Engagements)’, The Prime Minister, *HC Deb*, 12 Dec. 1978, *vol 960 cc227-34*.

¹⁹⁴⁷ ‘Government Policy’, Mr. Julian Amery, *HC Deb*, 14 Dec. 1978, *vol 960 cc920-1051*. Amery was member of the A.I.P.G. (Radji, Entry, 4 Aug. 1976, p. 22).

¹⁹⁴⁸ FCO8/3200, Owen to Tehran, 15 Dec. 1978.

that he “did not believe that expressions of opinion from the Dispatch Box” would “aid the situation in Iran at present”.¹⁹⁴⁹ This was the last government reference to Iran in the Commons until after the revolution.

One can see in this small snapshot of time, how the impression of Disinterested Impartiality changed as the revolution unfolded during 1978. Throughout the summer and autumn, political and importantly commercial “interests were still bound up with” the “survival” of the Shah and his regime.¹⁹⁵⁰ According to Owen this amounted to exports totalling £654m, with orders for a further four years, and perhaps 100,000 jobs.¹⁹⁵¹ As such British officials were careful with their language, making sure to avoid criticism, and to express support for measures which the Shah was already undertaking. This was to prevent accusations of interference in internal Iranian affairs. As November turned to December however, Britain’s commercial interests in Iran began to experience disruption. For instance the Iranian government stopped its payments for its Chieftain Tank contract, and the M.I.C.¹⁹⁵² Meanwhile individual British firms were also experiencing missed payments, whilst preparing for the repatriation of their employees from a country becoming too chaotic for normal commercial operations.¹⁹⁵³ Soon after, by the 21st of December, a consensus was reached by the British government, there was now “no doubt that the Shah would lose power”.¹⁹⁵⁴ Without any clear knowledge of the regime which might result from the revolution, the government thereafter moved to adopt a policy of “neutrality”, with a view to protecting commercial interests in whichever new political system emerged.¹⁹⁵⁵

The Foreign Secretary used the “old naval maxim” of slowing down, but maintaining course when in fog, to describe this development, noting Britain’s inability to “change allegiance” to another regime “without knowing more about the alternatives to Shah”.¹⁹⁵⁶ Some of this lack of knowledge undoubtedly stemmed from the general sense of uncertainty that prevails whenever popular revolutions bring together factions from across the political and social spectrum. It was, however, also facilitated by another aforementioned strategy of Disinterested Impartiality, namely Parsons’ decision to “lay the ghost of British interference in Iranian internal affairs” to rest by avoiding contact with the opposition.¹⁹⁵⁷ The ambassador and the F.C.O. rigidly maintained this policy of non-contact from 1974 until well into 1978. For instance the government “ruled against” any contact with Khomeini or the opposition in late September.¹⁹⁵⁸ That same month Parsons also reiterated that the British “had made a point of severing all connexion with the religious classes” in general, so as to work harmoniously with the Shah’s

¹⁹⁴⁹ ‘Prime Minister (Engagements)’, The Prime Minister, *HC Deb*, 12 Dec. 1978, vol. 960 cc227-34.

¹⁹⁵⁰ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 58.

¹⁹⁵¹ Owen, *Declare*, p. 399.

¹⁹⁵² FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 58.

¹⁹⁵³ ‘Iran: The British Billions at Stake’, *Sunday Times*, 12 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹⁵⁴ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 22.

¹⁹⁵⁵ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 58.

¹⁹⁵⁶ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 58.

¹⁹⁵⁷ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 38.

¹⁹⁵⁸ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 57 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 38.

government.¹⁹⁵⁹ Meanwhile in early November, elements of the moderate opposition went out of their way to contact the British and American embassies regarding the possibility of forming an interim Regency Council and holding a plebiscite on the future of Iran's constitutional monarchy. In these circumstances Parsons adopted Disinterested Impartiality by immediately informing the Shah that he "and the Americans were firmly telling these people that we could not interfere in the internal affairs of Iran and...would not therefore act as intermediaries with the Shah."¹⁹⁶⁰ The ambassador also reiterated this a month later.¹⁹⁶¹ It was only in the second half of December, that British officials began a dialogue with opposition politicians including Bakhtiar.¹⁹⁶²

According to Browne, avoidance of contact with the opposition also contributed to a series of "sins of omission". This included little engagement with or recognition for, the "continuing importance of Shi'a Islam in Iranian political life".¹⁹⁶³ Furthermore there was also "insufficient awareness of the attitudes among the traditional merchant classes in the bazaar", and Iran's intelligentsia, from where much anti-regime sentiment emanated.¹⁹⁶⁴ These omissions or "lapses in analysis", were partly why many British officials including Parsons, did not seriously consider the prospect of revolution in Iran even as it slowly started to unfold in early 1978.¹⁹⁶⁵ Parsons partially accepted this assessment, though he claimed to it was not lack of information on the opposition that left British officials surprised, it was more a failure to foresee how the various anti-regime "rivulets" would "combine into a mighty stream" of unstoppable protest.¹⁹⁶⁶ Connectedly as far back as Wright's period as ambassador from 1963-1971, the last manifestation of Disinterested Impartiality was the decision not to deploy British intelligence operatives in the country, for fear of being accused of "intrigue" due to the "hypersensitivity of the Shah".¹⁹⁶⁷ According to Owen this left British officials overly reliant on S.A.V.A.K., and also the Shah, who either misjudged or misrepresented the scale of the opposition to the regime.¹⁹⁶⁸

¹⁹⁵⁹ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 16 Sept. 1978.

¹⁹⁶⁰ PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 12 Nov. 1978.

¹⁹⁶¹ PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 12 Dec. 1978.

¹⁹⁶² Parsons, *Pride*, p. 115.

¹⁹⁶³ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 23.

¹⁹⁶⁴ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 24-25.

¹⁹⁶⁵ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 23 & p. 27.

¹⁹⁶⁶ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 134.

¹⁹⁶⁷ Owen, *Declare*, p. 391.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Owen, *Declare*, p. 391. See also Parsons, *Pride*, p. 34 & p. 142-143.



Fig. 61: Post Office Tower (2013)

<<https://iamjamesward.com/2013/06/24/post-office-tower/>>

GREAT POWER SURVIVALISM

As for Great Power Survivalism this impression was fostered in many of the events that Overt Cordiality was used, as in the case of Princess Ashraf's visit. Another example in this context is the visit of the Crown Prince in 1974. On this occasion the M.E.D. had wanted an explicit demonstration of Great Power Survivalism to demonstrate British military capability for the purposes of boosting British business. Indeed despite the young age of the royal children the department argued that "defence sales involvement with Iran" merited the use of H.M.S. *Tenacity* a Vosper Thornycroft fast patrol ship as a stage-prop that would leave the young Crown Prince "impressed" with British military might.¹⁹⁶⁹ Ultimately circumstances would not permit the use of *Tenacity* leaving the British to impress Great Power Survivalism along more implicit lines. This included ceremonial displays of military heritage such as the "Changing of the Guard" at Buckingham Palace which was similar to the Trooping ceremony, though more compact. Furthermore Great Power Survivalism in the context of modernity was facilitated by trips to certain pieces of setting including the Post Office Tower.¹⁹⁷⁰ Opened in 1965 this "tremendous" 620ft "exclamation mark" was London's tallest structure until 1991 (Fig. 61).¹⁹⁷¹

As well as being an "outstanding landmark" the Post Office Tower was also a "machine" conveying ever increasing amounts of telecommunications traffic.¹⁹⁷² It was thus a "symbol" of Britain's progress in "science-based industry using the most up-to-date scientific...techniques".¹⁹⁷³ Great Power Survivalism was also impressed more explicitly through the verbal communications of British ministers visiting Iran during 1974. Shepherd's visit is of relevance here given that it coincided with an International Trade Fair in Tehran. Parsons thought that aside from discussions on commerce the visit could be used "to get across some of the more favourable points about the prospects for the British economy" in interviews with Iranian politicians and the press.¹⁹⁷⁴ When asked by the latter about Britain's dire situation, Shepherd replied that the country faced significant challenges but that he could "see an improvement" with "grounds for optimism" in the context of the country's balance of payment problem and its fraught labour relations.¹⁹⁷⁵ Meanwhile during a meeting with the President of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce Shepherd "emphasised the underlying strength of the country", whilst stressing how things "should look much brighter" by the latter half of the decade.¹⁹⁷⁶ Finally Shepherd supported Parsons' efforts at the British Pavilion at the Trade Fair which formed part of the country's attempt to compete with the "formidable degree of international competition for the vast amount of new business available" after the oil price hike.¹⁹⁷⁷ Although Shepherd and Parsons were of the opinion that greater efforts were

¹⁹⁶⁹ FCO8/2289, Wright to West, 24 July 1974.

¹⁹⁷⁰ FCO8/2289, 'Programme...Children'.

¹⁹⁷¹ 'Post Office Tower', *Financial Times*, 8 Oct. 1965.

¹⁹⁷² 'London's New Post Office Tower', *ILLN.*, 16 Oct. 1965.

¹⁹⁷³ 'GPO', *Financial Times*, 8 Oct. 1965.

¹⁹⁷⁴ FCO8/2260, Parsons to F.C.O., 17 Sept. 1974.

¹⁹⁷⁵ FCO8/2260, 'Lord Shepherd's Press Conference', 25 Sept. 1974.

¹⁹⁷⁶ FCO8/2260, Wilde, 'Notes on a Meeting, president Tehran Chamber of Commerce', 27 Sept. 1974.

¹⁹⁷⁷ FCO8/2260, Shepherd, 'The Challenge to British Commerce and Industry in Iran', 14 Oct. 1974 & FCO8/2260, Parsons to F.C.O., 9 Oct. 1974.

needed to boost British business in Iran,¹⁹⁷⁸ the Trade Fair was deemed a success. It provided a suitable opportunity for Britain to impress Great Power Survivalism through promotional demonstrations by British companies selling all manner of commercial products. Seventy-two companies were present including British Livestock which even exhibited “cattle in the open foreground to the fair”.¹⁹⁷⁹ Meanwhile Great Power Survivalism was also impressed verbally by Mr Lever in December 1974 after he had made use of extensive “Speaking Notes” contained in M.E.D. Briefs for his visit.¹⁹⁸⁰

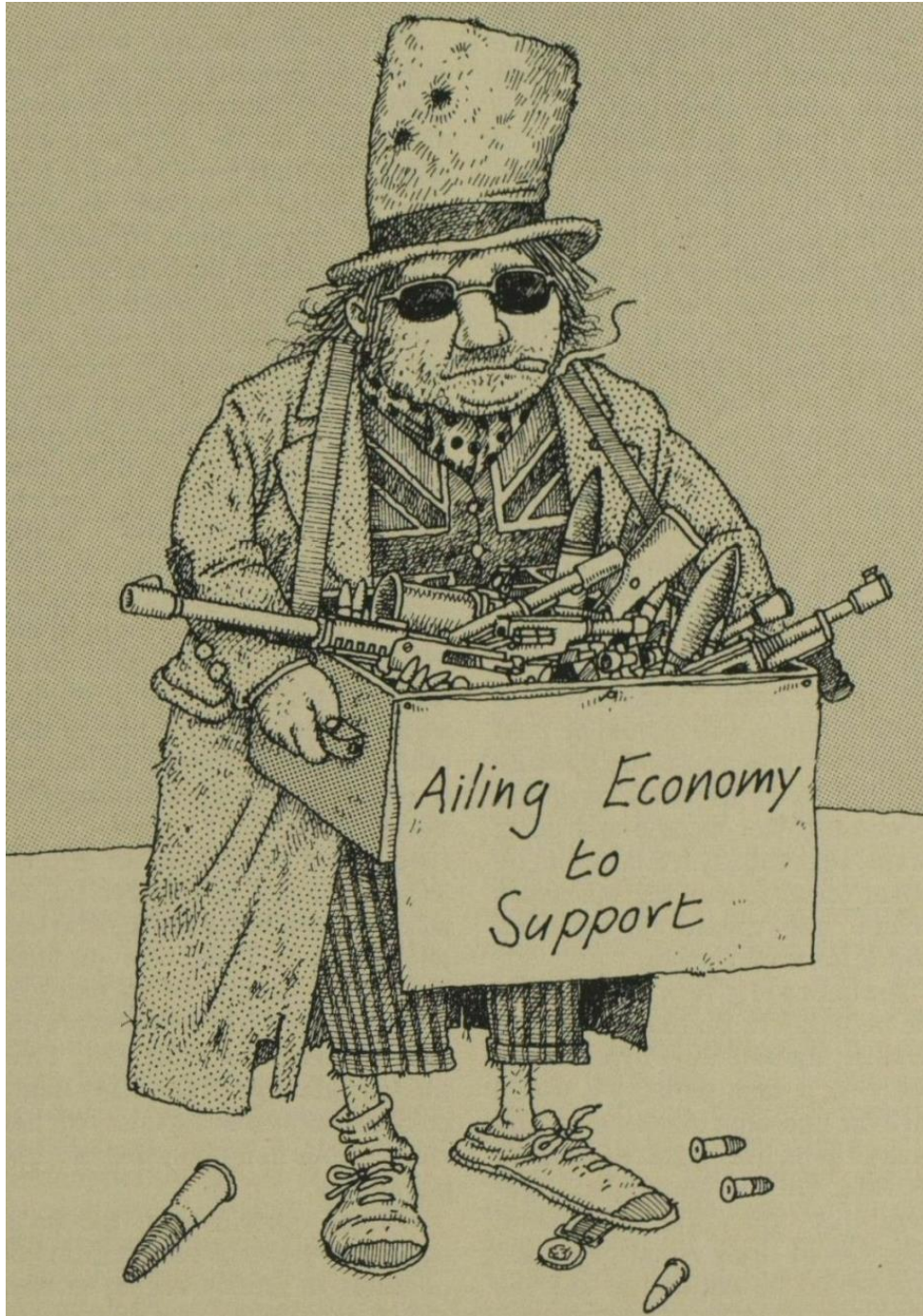


Fig. 62: A desperate D.S.O. salesman (*J.L.N.*, 31 Jan. 1976)

¹⁹⁷⁸ FCO8/2260, Parsons to F.C.O., 9 Oct. 1974.

¹⁹⁷⁹ 'Some Frustration but also Success at Tehran Fair', *Financial Times*, 27 Sept. 1974.

¹⁹⁸⁰ FCO8/2260, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Visit to Iran, Brief: No.6 – Defence Review Speaking Notes', n.d.

Thus despite Britain's economic difficulties entailing expenditure cuts and a reorientation of defence policy away from the east and toward N.A.T.O.,¹⁹⁸¹ Lever stressed that:

...the Defence Review did not in reality amount to a reduction in Britain's defensive capabilities. In fact in real terms, our capability would be increasing. Britain was as determined as ever to maintain adequate forces to meet her defence commitments. The Defence Review proposals essentially amount to minor readjustments.¹⁹⁸²

Furthermore Britain would be "fully maintaining" her nuclear deterrent, as well as the "the level and quality" of "front-line forces and their equipment".¹⁹⁸³ The Shah was not ecstatic about the news but was sufficiently assuaged by Lever's arguments.¹⁹⁸⁴ Unsurprisingly the impression was also fostered in the context of Britain's efforts to sell military hardware to Iran. Some of the best examples of Great Power Survivalism in this context took place before 1974, during the Shah's visit in 1972. Aside from renewing royal links between the Pahlavis and the House of Windsor, the British government had used the visit to let H.I.M. "see lots of new toys" before being "briefed by the experts" on their particulars.¹⁹⁸⁵ The Shah also had discussions and "presentations" at the Ministry of Defence (M.O.D.) with the Secretary of State for Defence and Suffield who was head of the D.S.O. from 1969 to 1976.¹⁹⁸⁶ Subsequently the Shah also attended an equipment demonstration at an M.O.D. testing site at Boscombe Down.¹⁹⁸⁷

He reportedly had "a wonderful time",¹⁹⁸⁸ which further cemented Britain's role as one of the main arms suppliers for the I.I.A.F.¹⁹⁸⁹ Through such tactics the British were able to convince the Iranians to purchase military radio equipment, two British naval support vessels, two amphibious hovercraft in 1972,¹⁹⁹⁰ along with 250 Scorpion light tanks in 1973.¹⁹⁹¹ In Iran itself the sale of weaponry was facilitated by visits from British cabinet ministers including the Defence Secretary who held talks with the Shah in September 1973.¹⁹⁹² Furthermore there were visits from M.O.D. officials and military personnel in the following year.¹⁹⁹³ From 1974 to 1979 defence sales were also facilitated by staff from the D.S.O. in Iran who "formed an excellent relationship" with the Shah.¹⁹⁹⁴ The *I.L.N.* caricatured some of the organisation's twenty senior officials as desperate salesman "travelling abroad constantly on selling trips"

¹⁹⁸¹ FCO8/2260, Chancellor of the Duchy...Brief: No.6...

¹⁹⁸² FCO8/2270, Parsons to Jackson, 5 Dec. 1974.

¹⁹⁸³ FCO8/2260, 'Brief: No. 6 – Defence'.

¹⁹⁸⁴ FCO8/2270, Parsons to Jackson, 5 Dec. 1974.

¹⁹⁸⁵ FCO8/1866, Jones to Allen, 27 April 1972.

¹⁹⁸⁶ Phythian, *Arms Sales*, p. 75.

¹⁹⁸⁷ FCO8/1888, Carrington to the Shah, 27 June 1972 & FCO8/1886, F.C.O. to Tehran, n.d. May 1972.

¹⁹⁸⁸ FCO8/1888, Murray to F.C.O., 28 June 1972.

¹⁹⁸⁹ FCO8/1888, 'Meeting between the Defence Secretary and H.I.M. the Shah of Iran at the M.O.D.', 23 June 1972, & FCO8/1888, Andrew to Johnny, 27 June 1972.

¹⁹⁹⁰ 'Yarrow Wins £10m. Ship Order from Iran', *Financial Times*, 23 Aug. 1972, 'Record £5m. Hovercraft Order from Iran', *Financial Times*, 24 Feb. 1972 & 'Racal wins £11m military radio contracts...', *Times*, 29 March 1972.

¹⁹⁹¹ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 44.

¹⁹⁹² FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 44, & 'Carrington Ends 3-day Talks in Iran', *Financial Times*, 4 Oct. 1973.

¹⁹⁹³ See FCO8/2275 'Visits of U.K. Personnel of M.O.D. to Iran', 1974.

¹⁹⁹⁴ FCO8/2268, Parsons to Callaghan, 'British Interests in Iran', 31 Oct. 1974.

tasked with saving an “ailing economy” (Fig. 62).¹⁹⁹⁵ The newspaper, however, also shed some serious light on the organisation and its methods. With 350 employees the D.S.O. aimed to promote and facilitate British arms exports under Suffield who brought private sector experience from his former employment at British Leyland.¹⁹⁹⁶



Fig. 63: B.D.E.C. (U.K.: Combined Service Publications Ltd., 1975)

¹⁹⁹⁵ 'Arms for Sale', *ILLN.*, 31 Jan. 1976.

¹⁹⁹⁶ 'Arms for Sale', *ILLN.*, 31 Jan. 1976, & 'Wraps off weapon sales', *Sunday Times*, 3 Feb. 1974.

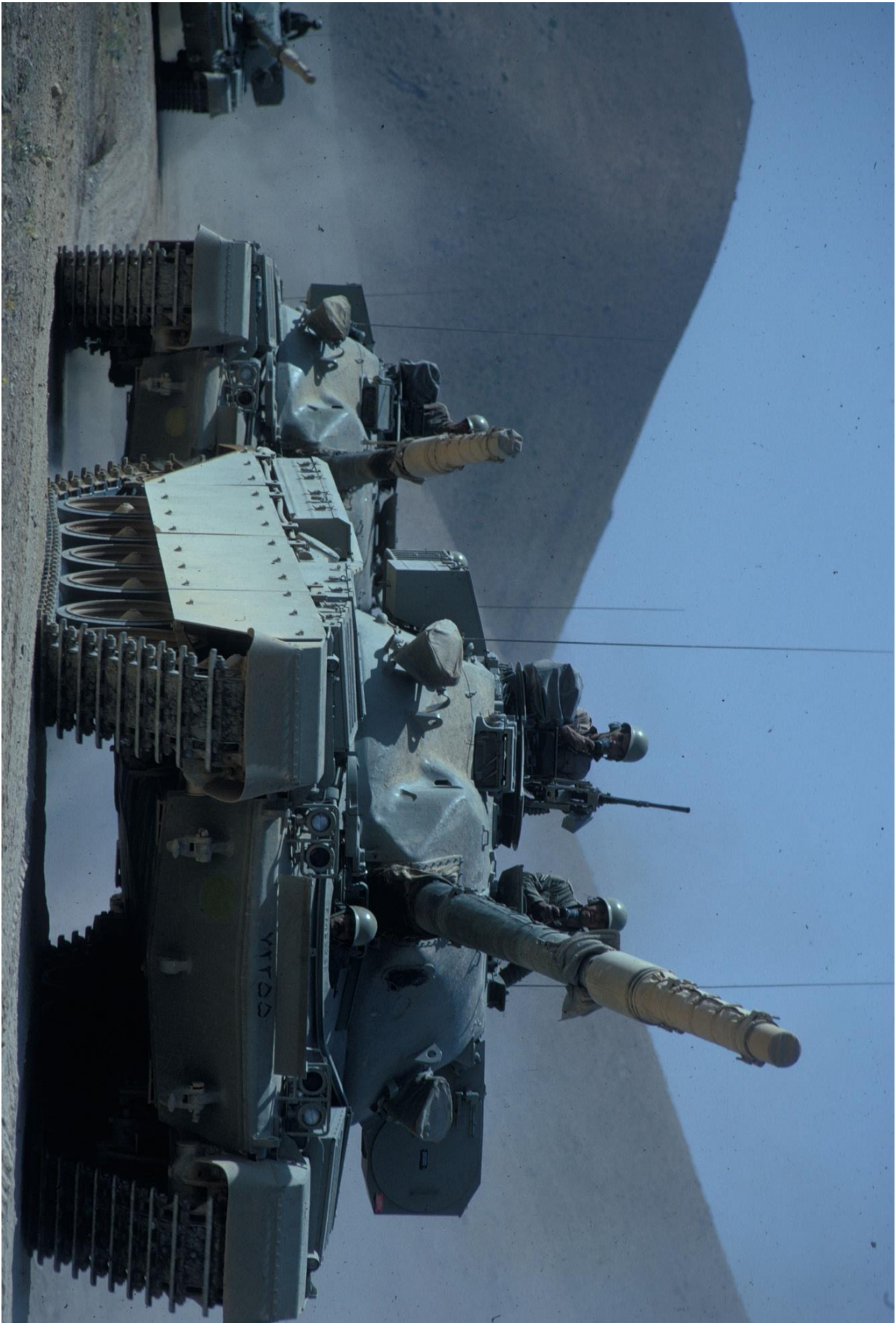


Fig. 64: A Mk. 5 Iranian Chieftain Tank “on manoeuvres in the desert in early 1970s during the regime of the Shah of Iran” <<http://www.alamy.com/>>

In Iran the D.S.O. also worked with M.T.S. which offered support to British exports in the shape of product promotion, training and maintenance of equipment. M.T.S. had some 400 members of staff in Iran, including their most notable consultant Shapoor Reporter.¹⁹⁹⁷ The D.S.O., and Reporter and his colleagues, formed commercial “commando squads” and used various methods to impress Great Power Survivalism as a means of promoting British defence companies and their equipment for the purposes of export.¹⁹⁹⁸ Their tactics included televised presentations,¹⁹⁹⁹ and also the use of a “thick, light brown graceless looking book...called the *British Defence Equipment Catalogue*” (B.D.E.C). This “massive” publication was produced by the M.O.D. each year, sometimes in three volumes of a thousand pages each. It listed military equipment “ranging from attack planes to ambulances” (Fig. 63).²⁰⁰⁰ Promotional literature from B.D.E.C. on B.A.C.’s “Rapier low-level anti-aircraft guided missile system” arguably helped to pave the way for a “multi-million pound order” in January of 1974.²⁰⁰¹ From the catalogue the D.S.O. and M.T.S. staff could confidently assert that the Rapier was “the most important tactical anti-aircraft guided weapon system in production” at that time, with an “extremely accurate guidance system, high missile manoeuvrability and a lethal warhead” ensuring a “high overall kill probability.”²⁰⁰²

The use of B.D.E.C. by the M.T.S. and the D.S.O. had also played a role in one of Britain’s most important military contracts with Iran, namely the Shah’s purchase of over 750 primarily Mk. 5 Chieftain Tanks in 1971 (Fig. 64).²⁰⁰³ British officials were of the opinion that without this deal the whole tank modernisation programme may never have taken off.²⁰⁰⁴ The Shah’s orders even delayed deployment of Chieftains with the British Army,²⁰⁰⁵ which also possessed fewer tanks than the I.I.A.F. in 1977.²⁰⁰⁶ B.D.E.C. promotional literature proudly boasted that the Chieftain gun demonstrated “extreme accuracy and outstanding ballistic performance” with its 120mm gun complemented by armour that gave it “high degree of immunity” from attack, along with an engine that provided high but “economical performance”. As such “when compared with other tanks of its own class, the fighting capability” of the Chieftain was deemed as “outstanding”.²⁰⁰⁷ In reality there was a problem with the engine, however, which was underpowered and prone to breakdowns,²⁰⁰⁸ something the Shah purportedly became “incensed over”.²⁰⁰⁹ In a simultaneous act of both Overt Cordiality and Great Power Survivalism the British responded by endeavouring to upgrade any undelivered Chieftains with an improved version of

¹⁹⁹⁷ but they’ve a good friend in the Shah’, *Sunday Times* 16 May 1976.

¹⁹⁹⁸ ‘Regrouping of Arms Sales Organisation’, *Financial Times*, 2 Oct. 1970.

¹⁹⁹⁹ *Sunday Times*, 16 May 1976.

²⁰⁰⁰ *I.L.N.*, 31 Jan. 1976.

²⁰⁰¹ ‘Iranian Missile Order to BAC’, *Financial Times*, 23 Jan. 1974.

²⁰⁰² B.D.E.C. Sixth Edition: *January 1974, Vol. I: Products* (U.K.: Combined Service Publications Ltd., 1974), p. 594-95.

²⁰⁰³ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit to Iran of the Secretary of State for F.C.O., 4-8 March, 1976 – Brief: No. 12 – U.K. Defence Sales to Iran’, n.d., 1976. See also Dick Taylor, *Chieftain Main Battle Tank, 1966 to present, Owner’s Workshop Manual*, (Sparkford, Haynes Publishing, 2016), p. 108-109.

²⁰⁰⁴ FCO8/3189, Tatham to Lucas, 8 Dec. 1978.

²⁰⁰⁵ Brenchley, *Economic*, p. 263.

²⁰⁰⁶ ‘Where is the punch behind the pomp’, *Daily Mail*, 30 June 1977.

²⁰⁰⁷ B.D.E.C. *Third Edition: October 1970*, (U.K.: Combined Service Publications Ltd., 1970), p. 178.

²⁰⁰⁸ Rob Griffin, *Chieftain*, (U.K.: The Crowned Press, 2001), p. 61.

²⁰⁰⁹ Colonel Sir Harwood Harrison ‘Defence’, *HC Deb.* 07 May 1975, vol 891 cc1432-576 & ‘Questions in the House expected on tank engine’, *Times*, 3 March 1975.

the existing engine. Furthermore some tanks in Iran were also returned the U.K. for engine retrofitting.²⁰¹⁰ In Briefings for Callaghan who visited Iran in March of 1976, the M.E.D. suggested that the Foreign Secretary note how much this revamped engine had “proved much more reliable”.²⁰¹¹ Furthermore the British also designed two upgraded versions of the Chieftain especially for Iran, called the Shir I and Shir II.²⁰¹² The latter in particular was to benefit from the “latest fire control equipment”, “new suspension”, and a powerful 1,200 H.P. Rolls-Royce engine. Crucially it would also receive Britain’s “breakthrough” Chobham armour,²⁰¹³ which used a honeycomb structure of steel and ceramic providing “three times greater protection than conventional steel armour”.²⁰¹⁴

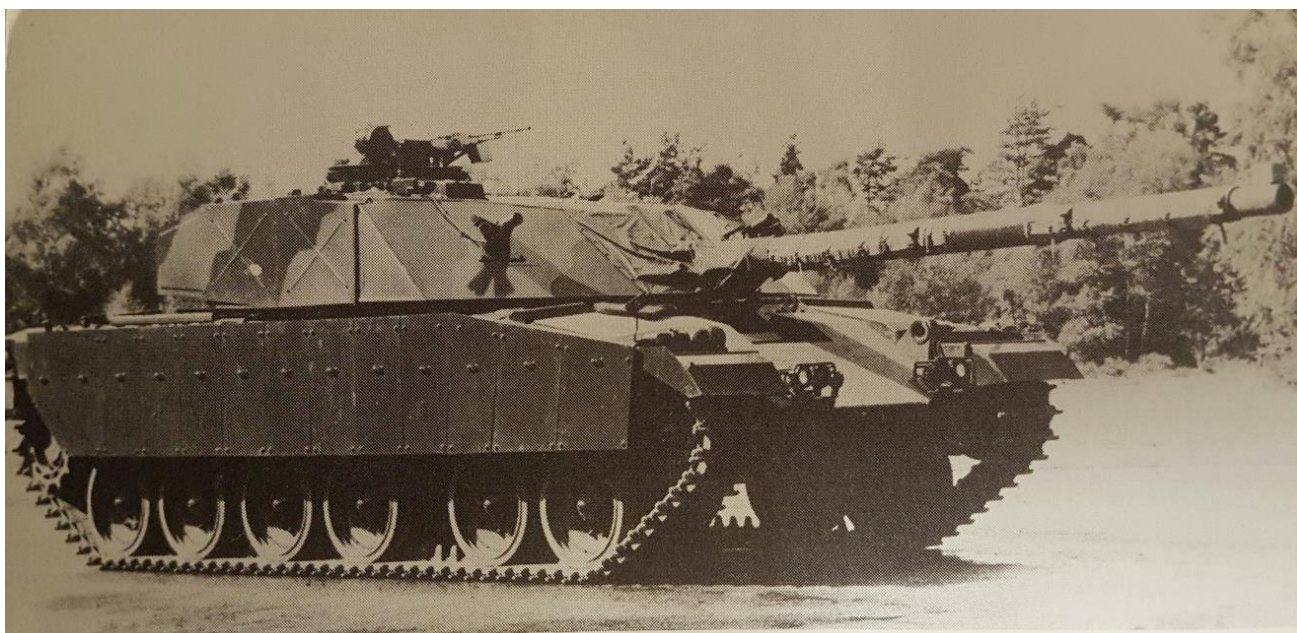


Fig. 65: A prototype Shir II tank with Chobham armour (Simon Dunstan, *The Chieftain Tank*, Picture 72).

As a result the then Secretary of State for Defence Roy Mason, proclaimed that the I.I.A.F. would be getting “the most modern, well-protected tank in the world”.²⁰¹⁵ Such rhetoric had also been employed in late 1974 when the Iranians placed an order for around 1,300 of these new tanks, without Chobham, through M.T.S (Fig. 65).²⁰¹⁶ Quite incredibly the government decided not to upgrade its own Chieftains in a similar manner, which “ironically” meant that the British Army would have to wait until the 1980s before acquiring a better tank than the I.I.A.F.²⁰¹⁷ This caused a furore in the press and in parliament, however, Mason argued that improving the balance of payments deficit as well as maintaining the 8,000 jobs which depended on the Iranian contract, necessitated more emphasis on keeping the Shah satisfied with Britain’s ability to provide superior weaponry.²⁰¹⁸ H.I.M. seemed satisfied hailing this “Lion of Iran”

²⁰¹⁰ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State 4-8 March’...Brief: No. 12 – U.K. Defence Sales to Iran’, 1976.

²⁰¹¹ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit...4-8 March’...Brief: No. 12.

²⁰¹² *New Statesmen*, 17 Oct. 1980 & Griffin, *Chieftain*, p. 151.

²⁰¹³ ‘Latest U.K. Tank Armour Could Shift Power Balance’, *Financial Times*, 18 June 1976.

²⁰¹⁴ ‘Tank secret given away’, *Sunday Times*, 7 Nov. 1976.

²⁰¹⁵ *Financial Times*, 7 Nov. 1976.

²⁰¹⁶ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State 4-8 March’...Brief: No. 12 – U.K. Defence Sales to Iran’, 1976 & FCO8/2509, ‘Anglo-Iranian Relations in the Defence Sphere’, in Lucas to Kerr, 27 Oct. 1975.

²⁰¹⁷ ‘Britain invents tough new tank armour’, *Times*, 18 June 1976 & ‘Super tank – but not for Britain’, *Daily Mail*, 18 June 1976.

²⁰¹⁸ *Financial Times*, 18 June 1976.

as the “tank of the future”.²⁰¹⁹ The saga thus demonstrated Britain’s ability to successfully impress Great Power Survivalism with the design and production of state of the art military equipment. The decision to arm the Shah instead of the British Army did, however, concurrently underscore how hollow this impression was, as it demonstrated Britain’s economic limitations.

Aside from D.S.O. and M.T.S. pitches in Iran, the British government also facilitated missions to and from the country on the part of officers of the British Armed Forces and the I.I.A.F., and from the British Defence Secretary and various business organisations from the U.K. For instance in June of 1975 the British hosted General Gholam Reza Azhari, the Chief of The Supreme Commander’s Staff of the I.I.A.F. As part of his week-long visit Azhari was accompanied by Suffield to a “Defence Equipment Exhibition” displaying military hardware for potential purchase. Further to that briefings were given at major military installations,²⁰²⁰ along with inspections of Royal Air Force (R.A.F.) equipment including the Anglo-French “tactical support” fighter, the Jaguar, which according to B.D.E.C., combined “high manoeuvrability” with “advanced” weapon delivery including “bombs, rockets, missiles” and 30mm cannons.²⁰²¹

Meanwhile in November of 1975 Mason visited Iran to brief the Shah on defence matters.²⁰²² In particular he went to promote the Hawker Siddeley Sea Harrier vertical/short take-off jet and the complementary “Harrier-Carrier” concept from Vosper-Thornycroft.²⁰²³ Mason could thus extol the frigate-sized ship that was capable of launching eight Sea Harriers in “fighter, reconnaissance and strike roles” much more affordably than the “ever-increasing” costs of fixed-wing aircraft carriers.²⁰²⁴ He could also note that the successful Harrier, as yet unpurchased by the Shah, was the “only operational aircraft in the world to take off vertically”, whilst also delivering “strike effectiveness” flying at speeds faster than Mach 1.²⁰²⁵ The Shah was purportedly still interested in the idea in 1976,²⁰²⁶ however, due to cost constraints the Imperial Iranian Navy never placed an order, either for Vosper-Thornycroft’s concept or the bigger “Through-Deck Cruiser” that constituted the Royal Navy’s new generation of aircraft and helicopter carriers built by Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd.²⁰²⁷

Furthermore again in November of 1975 Lord Beswick, the Minister of State for Department and Industry also led a promotional mission from the Council of British Manufacturers of Petroleum Equipment to Iran to showcase civil as opposed to military British-made machinery.²⁰²⁸ Subsequently in

²⁰¹⁹ FCO8/2270, Parsons to Jackson, 5 Dec. 1976.

²⁰²⁰ FCO/2512, ‘Visit of His Excellency General G.R. Azhar, Chief of The Supreme Commander’s Staff, Imperial Iranian Armed Forces To the United Kingdom – Friday 13th to Thursday 19th June 1975’.

²⁰²¹ B.D.E.C. Sixth Edition: *January 1974, Vol. I: Products* (1974), p. 470.

²⁰²² FCO8/2497, I.A.R. – 1975 (p. 9).

²⁰²³ Iran (Minister’s Visit), Mr Mason, *HC Deb* 25 November 1975 *vol 901 cc642-4*.

²⁰²⁴ ‘Vosper studies Harrier Carrier’, *Flight International*, 25 Sept. 1975 (p. 435).

²⁰²⁵ B.D.E.C. Sixth Edition: *January 1974, Vol. I: Products* (1974), p. 464.

²⁰²⁶ FCO8/2737, ‘Visit of the Secretary of State 4-8 March 1976 – Brief No. 12.

²⁰²⁷ ‘Navy order for multi-purpose £60m cruiser’, *Times*, 18 April 1973.

²⁰²⁸ FCO8/2497, I.A.R. – 1975 (p. 9).

1976 the British government could impress Great Power Survivalism with more ministerial visits. For instance during Callaghan's trip in March of 1976, the M.E.D. adopt sought for adoption of the impression in briefing documents which were meant to encourage the Shah to "continue to regard Britain as relevant politically and economically".²⁰²⁹ This was necessary at a time when the British economy was facing considerable difficulties prior to the I.M.F. bailout. Thus the Foreign Secretary was given "Speaking Notes" stating that "most of the immediate indicators" showed the "U.K. situation improving rapidly." Inflation was "decelerating", whilst the balance of payments had "done well" of late. Furthermore "industrial production was rising" and "surveys of business opinion" were "showing many more firms with increased orders". In such an environment there was "rising general optimism", despite a recession.²⁰³⁰

Meanwhile in May of the following year Owen's visit featured two aims complementary of Great Power Survivalism. Firstly the visit was to "encourage the Shah to continue to...regard British support for Iran's role [in the Gulf] as worth retaining". This required positive presentations of British political and military strength. Connectedly Owen was instructed by the M.E.D. to "convey to the Shah an up-to-date and favourable picture of the British body politic and economic".²⁰³¹ To this end Owen reported that Britain's financial position had "improved" in Britain by the spring of 1977.²⁰³² He could also inform the Shah that the pound had grown stronger month by month after the I.M.F. loan, interest rates had fallen markedly and finally Britain's balance of payments deficit was abating.²⁰³³ Meanwhile the last example of Great Power Survivalism in 1977 centres on the British Cultural Festival that took place over October and November. It was originally the Shahbanu that had conceived of the idea, however, Parsons subsequently came to see it as a useful strategy for bringing about a "lastingly beneficial effect" on Britain's reputation.²⁰³⁴ Like the use of the N.H.S. during the visit of Princess Ashraf, the festival employed "soft power" and also "cultural diplomacy", whereby a state attempts to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas".²⁰³⁵ The festival employed both strategies, emphasising modern and traditional British social, cultural, and technological achievements. This helped to further foreign policy aims including the maintenance of Britain's reputation as a significant world power, and the possibility of increasing Anglo-Iranian political and commercial cooperation.

To this end there were performances by Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet Company, along with a production of Hamlet from the Prospect Theatre Company. Additionally notable British conductors and classical

²⁰²⁹ FCO8/2737, 'Visit of the Secretary of State for Foreign And Commonwealth affairs to Iran 4-8 March 1976 –Brief No. 1.

²⁰³⁰ FCO8/2737, 'Visit...4-8 March 1976 – Brief No. 1, Brief No. 4.

²⁰³¹ FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. B.

²⁰³² FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. B6.

²⁰³³ Healey, *The Time*, p.432-433, Kenneth O. Morgan, *Callaghan, A Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 574 & FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. C2.

²⁰³⁴ FCO8/3191, I.A.R – 1977 (p. 6).

²⁰³⁵ Nicholas J. Cull, ed., *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2009), p. 19.

musicians including Norman del Mar and John Ogden,²⁰³⁶ worked with Iranian orchestras to put on concerts in provincial towns and cities.²⁰³⁷ Furthermore there was a “major exhibition of gold and silver” organised by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths. Originally a medieval guild dating back to the 13th century Goldsmiths was ranked fifth out of the Great Twelve Livery Companies of the City of London, the important trade bodies that contributed so much to the growth of the capital from the Middle Ages, by regulating, professionalising and overseeing the output of their respective trades.²⁰³⁸

Meanwhile in a more modern context a “contemporary design exhibition” was arranged.²⁰³⁹ This was the job of the Design Council – a charity which aimed to promote improvements in the design of British industrial products – and the Central Office of Information (C.O.I.) – the British government’s marketing and communications agency which was set up to “educate domestic and foreign opinion that Britain still had a major role to play in the post-war world”.²⁰⁴⁰ The C.O.I. also helped with British “public relations” with programmes on diplomatic visits. For instance they had also played a major role in Princess Ashraf’s visit, arranging trips to the National Theatre, the Disabled Living Foundation, and the Guildhall.²⁰⁴¹ Connectedly there were “exhibitions of Contemporary Paintings, Ceramics and Textiles, “Architecture for Leisure, Children’s Books and British posters”. These were organised by the British Council, the body set up in the interwar period to officially facilitate cultural diplomacy for the government by projecting and extoling democratic institutions and “all that was considered best in the British way of life”.²⁰⁴² Aside from its role in “promoting British cultural events” including the festival in 1977, the British Council also worked on improving English language training in Iran, providing advice to universities, schools and government departments.²⁰⁴³

Finally the M.O.D. arranged a tour of military bands in major Iranian provincial cities, “culminating in massed performances in Tehran at the end of the Festival”.²⁰⁴⁴ David Hammond argues that this form of military “soft powering” in particular, was used as a “conduit for expressions of Britishness” featuring the “bearskin, scarlet jacket and martial music”.²⁰⁴⁵ In using such marching bands Britain “punched above its weight” with allusions to the country’s former hard power, all at a fraction of the cost of conventional military demonstrations. It also facilitated expressions of “tradition and the monarchy”,

²⁰³⁶ Robert Matthew-Walker, ‘Ogden, John Andrew Howard (1937–1989)’, rev. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2006 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39912>> [accessed 5.1.17] & John Warrack, ‘Mar, Norman René del (1919–1994)’ <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54854>>.

²⁰³⁷ FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. B15.

²⁰³⁸ William Herbert, *The history of the twelve great livery companies, Vol. II*, (London: Guildhall Library, 1836).

²⁰³⁹ FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. B15.

²⁰⁴⁰ Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the 20th Century, Selling Democracy*, (Edinburgh.: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 230.

²⁰⁴¹ FCO8/2767, ‘Report on Visit by Her Imperial Highness’, K.I.H Whatley.

²⁰⁴² Taylor, *British Propaganda.*, p. 76-77

²⁰⁴³ FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. B16.

²⁰⁴⁴ FCO8/2988, Visit...Secretary of State 13-15 May 1977 Briefs, Brief: No. B15.

²⁰⁴⁵ David Hammond, ‘Soft Powering the Empire’, *RUSI Journal*, 158 (2013), pp. 90-96 (p. 94).

which made it synonymous with the Changing of the Guard and the Trooping of the Colour, in which British troops acted as living stage props embodying past imperial greatness.²⁰⁴⁶

Incidentally, neither the Cultural Festival nor on any other occasion, did British officials from the M.E.D. or the embassy in Tehran express strong support for organisations like Amnesty International, or indeed human rights, though they did support the Shah's drive for liberalisation and later democracy. Nor did they mount many spirited defences of freedom of speech, a free press and an independent public broadcaster. On the contrary institutions such as Amnesty International were often judged to be uninformed and idealistic; whilst the press was seen as a nuisance to Anglo-Iranian harmony. Parsons, as we have seen, was also very robust in his criticism of one of Britain's flagship soft power institutions, the B.B.C. World Service.²⁰⁴⁷ In his view the B.B.C.'s post-war efforts to encourage the indigenous emulation and subsequent formation of "western democratic traditions" in the Middle East had been a total failure. Meanwhile in Iran the B.B.C. had done nothing but damage relations.²⁰⁴⁸ Analysis has shown that the M.E.D. had largely concurred with these complaints, whilst also backing a move to muzzle the country's public broadcaster until accusations of bias had been thoroughly rebutted in late 1978.

Despite the aversion to Amnesty and the sustained attempt to soften press and B.B.C. reporting in Iran, it is questionable as to whether or not Parsons' behaviour emanated from a sense of real disdain for human rights or freedom of speech. Owen, who was a self-professed proponent of human rights himself, thought his man in Tehran was "unquestionably liberal-minded".²⁰⁴⁹ As we shall see in the coming paragraphs, the ambassador did also display his liberal credentials in the dying days of the regime. He also later expressed grave doubts about the efficacy of exporting arms to Iran due to its poor human rights record, though he always maintained it was "Scandinavian" compared to its neighbours.²⁰⁵⁰ The Foreign Secretary meanwhile even published a book on the subject of human rights in 1978, referring to the need for them "to permeate" through British foreign policy.²⁰⁵¹ Significantly, however, Iran does not appear on a single page of the book, perhaps pointing to concern for incurring Iranian government criticism. This would make for a novel adoption of pre-emptive, self-censoring Disinterested Impartiality. Ultimately, it would seem that political and economic exigencies at the time were such that Britain felt compelled to sell weaponry in spite of the buyer's warts, including a poor human rights record and an inability to accept press freedom and editorial independence.²⁰⁵² Lucas was of the same mind, arguing that if Britain did not sell weaponry to Iran, someone else would have done so anyway. It was better therefore, that the British economy benefited, instead of inflicting self harm in the interests of upholding

²⁰⁴⁶Hammond, 'Soft Powering', p. 92.

²⁰⁴⁷Nye Jr., 'Public Diplomacy', p. 99.

²⁰⁴⁸FCO8/2762, Parsons to Barrington, 1 Aug. 1976.

²⁰⁴⁹Owen, *Declare*, p. 387.

²⁰⁵⁰Parsons, 'waste of weapons', p. 25.

²⁰⁵¹David Owen, *Human Rights*, (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1978), p. 2.

²⁰⁵²Parsons, 'waste of weapons', p. 25.

moral principles.²⁰⁵³ Consequently the overriding importance of harmonious Anglo-Iranian relations ensured that British officials chose not to extol freedom of speech and an independent press when projecting soft power images of British strength and modernity to an Iranian audience. Incidentally those politicians, student groups, and human rights organisations that did agitate for more progressive change in Iran, were more inclined to advocate “hard power” strategies like economic sanctions and boycotts to coercively change Iranian internal politics.²⁰⁵⁴

As to Great Power Survivalism in 1978, instances diminished markedly. With the onset the revolution, Britain no longer had to impress its commercial and political power so enthusiastically. Despite the unrest there were still, however, several visits from trade delegations seeking to showcase British goods to prospective Iranian buyers. For instance from the 13th to the 18th of April, a British Pharmaceutical Industry Trade Mission visited the country.²⁰⁵⁵ Subsequently at the end of the month British companies also took part in the Construction, Furniture and Interior Decoration Trade Fair.²⁰⁵⁶ Furthermore the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce send a Trade Mission in mid-May, following a long line of many sent each year by multiple cities across the country.²⁰⁵⁷ In early June there was also an Engineering Industries Association Trade Mission,²⁰⁵⁸ before the Iran Medical Fair and International Education and Training Equipment Fair took place on the 10th.²⁰⁵⁹ Meanwhile in July the new head of the D.S.O Sir Ronald Ellis went to Iran with the Chairman of Rolls Royce, Sir Kenneth Keith, likely for discussions on the Shir II engine, and also stalled talks on the local assembly of a thousand tank transporters using British Leyland chassis and Rolls-Royce engines.²⁰⁶⁰ As noted earlier Parsons was also present at Tehran’s annual International Trade Fair in late September, in which British companies displayed their wares and services. With the increasing unrest thereafter, any similar visits and trade fairs were subsequently cancelled or avoided, curtailing any further use of Great Power Survivalism in this context.

What followed was the last example of the impression, which was not quite Great Power Survivalism. Instead an impression subtly resembling Great Power Paternalism emerged, espoused through the ambassador who the Shah increasingly looked to as a source of traditional British authority. There were signs of this in the autumn of 1977 when the ambassador used more forceful language when questioning the Shah about his belief in media conspiracies. It was late 1978, however, when Parsons adopted a form of Great Power Paternalism more openly. The touchstone was an audience following the embassy attack in November, in which the Shah insinuated that “the people” thought the “British were playing around with the opposition” using the B.B.C. At this Parsons “lost” his “temper” and said:

²⁰⁵³ Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 184 & ‘LUCAS’, (C.O.H.P.), p. 33.

²⁰⁵⁴ Nye Jr., *Soft Power*, p. 31.

²⁰⁵⁵ FCO8/3359, ‘Calendar of Events – 1978’, 13th to 18th April.

²⁰⁵⁶ FCO8/3359, ‘Calendar of Events’, 29th April to 6th May.

²⁰⁵⁷ FCO8/3359, ‘Calendar’, 12th to 19th of May.

²⁰⁵⁸ FCO8/3359, ‘Calendar’, 2nd to 9th of June.

²⁰⁵⁹ FCO8/3359, ‘Calendar’, 10th to 17th of June.

²⁰⁶⁰ FCO8/3359, ‘Calendar’, 10th to 7th to 10th of July & ‘Well-equipped Defence Force’, *Financial Times*, 12 Sept. 1978.

...that the next person who made this accusation to me would receive a very short answer. Anyone who was fool enough to believe that the British government would incur political odium by standing up for the regime in public – I supposed that I must have burnt down my Embassy – when they were really playing games with the opposition, should be in a lunatic asylum.²⁰⁶¹

Furthermore Parsons thought “the people” who “believed this sort did so out of a sense of shame that they could not solve their own problems” thus leaving it “easier to blame the British than to face reality”. According to the ambassador when the Shah said ‘the people’, he was subtly including himself. By not directly admitting so, however, the ambassador was able to fire off a strident vocal salvo which was met by “silence” from the Shah.²⁰⁶²

Try as he might, Parsons could not escape from the fact that the “ghost of British power and influence over Iran’s internal affairs was abroad again”. The ambassador saw this “curious position of disproportionate influence” as a “two-edged weapon” – harmful when related to “misleading impressions” about B.B.C.-government relations, but at the same time “an advantage” since it made the Persians more “prone to ask...and to accept frank advice”.²⁰⁶³ In their final months together the Shah and the ambassador were indeed more frank with one another other, sharing the most “uninhibited” of conversations the ambassador’s candid views were sought.²⁰⁶⁴ In late September senior Iranian government ministers including Sharif-Emami and Hoveyda also “urged” the ambassador to see the Shah in order to lift his spirits after his descent into a long “mood of depression”.²⁰⁶⁵ In doing so, Parsons took the opportunity to subtly cross the line of non-interference into internal Iranian affairs, proffering advice which possibly impacted upon the future of regime. For instance when the Shah asked Parsons for his opinion of the political situation, he informed the Shah that “there must be free and fair elections in June”, as the only alternatives were the “overthrow of the regime or a total military takeover of the country”. Although the ambassador knew “of the dangers inherent in lifting martial law”, he thought it a “gamble that must be taken” if free elections were to facilitate “a liberalised government based on consent with genuine popular participation”²⁰⁶⁶

In his “view” Iran “would be far better off” with this form of government, since “it was impossible...for any modern country with a growing educated population to be ruled by one man disciplinary methods.”²⁰⁶⁷ Such language, with its use of imperatives and allusions to the Iranian modernity so desired by the Shah, was far less disinterested than on previous occasions.²⁰⁶⁸ The Shah was apparently “very glad” that the two were “thinking alike” on this matter.²⁰⁶⁹ Parsons reiterated the same line of argument

²⁰⁶¹ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 103.

²⁰⁶² Parsons, *Pride*, p. 103.

²⁰⁶³ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Sept. 1978, Tel. No. 618 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 77.

²⁰⁶⁴ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 16 Sept. 1978.

²⁰⁶⁵ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Sept. 1978, Tel. No. 617 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 63.

²⁰⁶⁶ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Sept. 1978, Tel. No. 617.

²⁰⁶⁷ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Sept. 1978, Tel. No. 617.

²⁰⁶⁸ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 57.

²⁰⁶⁹ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Sept. 1978, Tel. No. 617.

in an audience on the 10th of October, when the Shah again asked for advice. Specifically the ambassador said that the Shah “must accept” that the British government “would face severe problems at home if the process of democratisation had to be halted or worse if there were a total military takeover”. Furthermore when the Shah asked Parsons what he thought about the possibility of replacing Sharif-Emami, the ambassador said he was “impressed” by the current Prime Minister, and that it was best for everyone to “keep their nerve” and “stamina”. Through such tactics the government could let the opposition thrash themselves into exhaustion and capitulation.²⁰⁷⁰ Acting without F.C.O. direction, but with tacit support,²⁰⁷¹ the ambassador wrote that one of his “main objectives” during this audience was to “bolster” the Shah’s “morale” which had “been fairly patchy” in late September and early October. Furthermore he wanted to stress to him that:

...just because...so many aspects of the crisis had erupted simultaneously, this did not mean that all was lost: on the contrary stamina, and strong nerves plus a continuation of the policy of democratisation could still win the day.²⁰⁷²

This was despite the situation becoming “bleaker”, with the increasing “danger of the top military brass” pushing Sharif-Emami aside and taking over in the Shah’s name.²⁰⁷³ Later in the month the Shah sent for Parsons and Sullivan, to discuss the “deteriorating” situation and both ambassadors were again of the opinion “that there was no virtue in considering a military government”, a position the Shah “agreed” with.²⁰⁷⁴ Furthermore at another audience on the 31st of October, with the government in a state of near collapse, Sullivan and Parsons agreed with the Shah’s plans for a replacement administration featuring moderate oppositionists. They also “suggested” that any such government “should concentrate on trying to accelerate the electoral process” shifting public attention away from demonstrations.²⁰⁷⁵

It is difficult to assess how effective the advice of Parsons and Sullivan was during these audiences. The ambassador was of the opinion that the Shah was himself “determined” not to allow a “bloody military takeover” which would have led to much greater loss of life than was already the case with troops on the streets.²⁰⁷⁶ Both the U.S. and British ambassadors endorsed this view until no other option was available after the Tehran riots.²⁰⁷⁷ Even then, Parsons told the Shah he thought the military would not be as effective as it was in 1953, due to the sheer scale of the opposition ranged against the regime, crippling the country with strike action.²⁰⁷⁸

Significantly, however, the Iranian military thought Parsons’ words were effective. When the ambassador asked Azhari to clear protesters out of the British embassy compound during the attack on the 5th, the

²⁰⁷⁰ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 11 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 669.

²⁰⁷¹ Buchan, *Days*, p. 225.

²⁰⁷² PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 11 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 669.

²⁰⁷³ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 11 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 669.

²⁰⁷⁴ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 25 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 708.

²⁰⁷⁵ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 31 Oct. 1978, Tel. No. 726.

²⁰⁷⁶ PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 1 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 734.

²⁰⁷⁷ PREM16/1719, Jay to F.C.O., 2 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 4383 & PREM16/1719, Parsons to F.C.O., 4 Nov. 1978, Tel. No. 740.

²⁰⁷⁸ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 91.

General used to opportunity to criticise the ambassador. It “is your fault” he remarked, “you have been persuading His Majesty for too long to stop us from intervening and restoring the situation”.²⁰⁷⁹ Parsons was even of the opinion that the embassy attack had been orchestrated by the security services as an act of reprisal for encouraging the Shah to avoid a military government.²⁰⁸⁰ Following this the ambassador’s advice was seemingly less forthright. In mid-November he continued to advise the Shah to seek a “political solution” favouring “neither a military crackdown nor abdication”.²⁰⁸¹ In December, however, advice diminished markedly, proving a prelude to more a definitive reassertion of Disinterested Impartiality. Indeed by the end of that month Parson reported that he had “given” the Shah “all the advice that could be given” and was now “keeping away” until called for, as he felt that “any foreign intervention” at such a “crucial stage could be misplaced and misunderstood”.²⁰⁸² This situation prevailed until his final audience in which Parsons, from a purely personal point of view, told the Shah in no uncertain terms that his regime was finished, an opinion shared by the Shah himself by that point.²⁰⁸³

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The revolution and the emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the months following Parsons’ final audience, was a major blow to Western and British strategic, political and commercial interests in the Middle East. At a stroke the West had lost a significant stabilising anti-Communist force in the region, replaced by a radical regime threatening to “export revolution” to neighbouring friendly states. Western and by extension British prestige had also been damaged by the fall of a purportedly “impregnable” ally, which had also robbed Britain one of its “most important customers for civil and military exports”.²⁰⁸⁴ Soon after a new government formed there was “mass cancellation of orders” of British defence equipment, including the Shir II tank contract.²⁰⁸⁵ To Khomeini, Britain’s close relations with the Pahlavi dynasty from the 1950s, which followed decades of imperialist intrusion in the previous century, led him to his famous fitting epithet regarding Britain, “the aged wolf of imperialism”.²⁰⁸⁶ Shortly following the revolution this animosity led to a backlash in Iran including abuse of British life and property. Meanwhile after the U.S. hostage crisis, the British government also took the decision to close its embassy, indicating a decline in bilateral relations to their “lowest ever” state. Until 1988 relations were handled by an Interests Section at the Swedish embassy,²⁰⁸⁷ and it was not until a decade later that the countries agreed to the exchange of ambassadors following the Iranian government’s decision to

²⁰⁷⁹ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 95.

²⁰⁸⁰ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 98.

²⁰⁸¹ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 59.

²⁰⁸² PREM16/1720, Parsons to F.C.O., 30 Dec. 1978, Tel. No. 1035.

²⁰⁸³ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 98.

²⁰⁸⁴ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 65.

²⁰⁸⁵ Mark Phythian, *The Politics of British Arms Sales to the Third World*, (PhD Diss., The University of Liverpool, 1994), pp. 1-401, (p. 11, p. 279).

²⁰⁸⁶ Anthony Parsons, ‘Iran and Western Europe’, *Middle Easter Journal*, 2 (1989), pp. 218-229, (p. 220).

²⁰⁸⁷ Parsons, ‘Iran and...Europe’, p. 222.

distance itself from the fatwa against Salman Rushdie.²⁰⁸⁸ Incidentally despite poor relations during the Iran-Iraq War,²⁰⁸⁹ Iran was still Britain's third largest market in the Middle East in 1986, however, the scale of commercial interaction was much diminished compared to a decade prior.²⁰⁹⁰

Could this situation have been avoided? Was there perhaps a modicum of truth to Azhari's accusations about British interference? Did a late demonstration of Great Power Paternalism bolstering the Shah's liberalisation policy, partially contribute to the downfall of Britain's key political and commercial partner in the Middle East? Not quite it seems. When looking back on the episode Parsons was of the opinion that if the Shah had not initiated his policy of liberalisation in early 1977, he would have retained the throne until his death to lymphocytic leukaemia in 1980, before being succeeded by his son.²⁰⁹¹ It was, Parsons argued, the "gradual" liberalisation of Iran which allowed the disparate elements of the opposition to build up unstoppable momentum. This would otherwise have been prevented if the "lid of repression had been kept as tightly screwed down".²⁰⁹² It would have been, however, "impossible" for Parsons to have recommended opposing the Shah's own decision to pursue liberalisation for two reasons. Firstly it was doubtful that the Shah would have even followed such advice, and more importantly it would have been rejected by Britain's Labour government.²⁰⁹³ Furthermore Parsons was firm in his belief that he and the Shah were "of the same mind" regarding the futility of violent military action in 1978.²⁰⁹⁴ Lucas and Browne concurred with this assessment, though Browne pondered whether or not a crackdown in the autumn of 1977 or even in the spring and summer of 1978, might have worked.²⁰⁹⁵ Again, Browne reports that the chances of the Shah agreeing to this would have been "doubtful" and by October it was "too late" to pursue this option.²⁰⁹⁶

As to Iranian suspicions of Britain's influence over the opposition, Parsons believed that neither Britain nor the U.S. could have behaved as they did in 1953, even with sufficient contacts. Bazaar mobs, merchants and mullahs, he contended, were too independent by the 1970s to be susceptible to British and American influence or bribery.²⁰⁹⁷ Browne and Owen do contend, however, that British officials might have considered plans for the Shah to leave the country around September of 1978, if they had conducted better political analysis in Iran in the years preceding the revolution. Owen also argues that had he known of the Shah's cancer in 1978, he would have pressed for him to have left Tehran in favour of a Regency Government with military backing.²⁰⁹⁸ Browne furthermore, argues that if Britain or the

²⁰⁸⁸ C.J. Rundle, 'Reflections on the Iranian revolution and Iranian-British Relations', *Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, Durham*, (2002), pp. 2-22 (p. 17-19).

²⁰⁸⁹ Phythian, 'The Politics', p. 276-360.

²⁰⁹⁰ Parsons, 'Iran and...Europe', p. 222.

²⁰⁹¹ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 144.

²⁰⁹² Parsons, *Pride*, p. 144.

²⁰⁹³ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 145.

²⁰⁹⁴ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 147.

²⁰⁹⁵ Lucas, *Decline*, p. 169 & FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 74.

²⁰⁹⁶ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 74.

²⁰⁹⁷ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 145-146.

²⁰⁹⁸ Owen, *Declare*, p. 396-397.

U.S. had “remained in touch...over the years” with moderate opposition politicians such as Bakhtiar, Karim Sanjabi and Mehdi Bazargan, “they would have been able to help smooth” a “transition of power” to a democratically elected constitutional monarchy with the Shah as a figurehead ruler.²⁰⁹⁹

This potential strategy was of course hampered by the policy of non-interference in Iranian internal affairs, manifest in the impression of Disinterested Impartiality.²¹⁰⁰ Going against this accepted norm would have required U.S. support, and in Browne’s view “the temptation would have always have been to sit back and hope for the best and not to risk allegations of unjustifiable interference in the affairs of another country”.²¹⁰¹ Additionally this would only have worked prior to September 1978, since thereafter Khomeini came to dominate the opposition. He was implacably opposed to the West, meaning any chance of negotiating for a constitutional monarchy via British or American auspices was highly unlikely.²¹⁰² Lastly as previously noted, a relative decline in engagement with Iran’s internal politics was also caused by Britain’s focus on export promotion to arrest the country’s dire economic problems.²¹⁰³ This eventually left Britain “grossly over-committed” to Iran economically, further reducing the scope for a different approach to Anglo-Iranian relations.²¹⁰⁴

Connectedly Parsons argued that there would have been economic repercussions to abandoning Disinterested Impartiality at any point before the Shah began to speak more freely in September of 1978. Indeed the ambassador was convinced that any advice to the Shah, or even a hint of contact with the opposition prior to this point, would have resulted in “a bloody nose” to British commercial interests, allowing competitors to have “reaped” the benefits.²¹⁰⁵ Even after the start of their more candid discussions, Parsons claimed that he gave only “disinterested advice”, so as to allay the Shah’s suspicion of any “ulterior motive.”²¹⁰⁶ The ambassador had moreover seen a “strong vindictive streak” in the Shah if he felt there were ulterior motives, with commercial penalties imposed on the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway, Italy and Belgium, for mentioning human rights.²¹⁰⁷ Browne questioned this assessment, arguing that the “Shah’s behaviour during the 1970s” suggested “that his bark was probably worse than his bite”. He went on to cite certain incidents during the decade which were supposed to have incurred the Shah’s wrath, but which actually had no impact on Anglo-Iranian relations. This included Britain’s failure to help secure a special relationship with the E.E.C.²¹⁰⁸

²⁰⁹⁹ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 75.

²¹⁰⁰ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 75.

²¹⁰¹ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 75 & p. 66.

²¹⁰² FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 76.

²¹⁰³ Owen, *Declare*, p. 391.

²¹⁰⁴ Owen, *Declare*, p. 400 & Lucas, *Damascus*, p. 182.

²¹⁰⁵ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 145.

²¹⁰⁶ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 146.

²¹⁰⁷ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 145 & ‘Comment by Sir A.D. Parsons H.M. Ambassador, Tehran: 1974-1979’, in FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 86.

²¹⁰⁸ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p. 72-73.

Meanwhile avoiding quarrels with the Shah by impressing Disinterested Impartiality, or by constantly flattering him with Overt Cordiality, was in Browne's opinion, damaging to British interests. Such behaviour purportedly robbed British officials of their ability to provide frank advice to a ruler whose ever-growing ego subsequently led to an inability to take criticism and a proclivity for pursuing "over-ambitious plans" that contributed to his downfall.²¹⁰⁹ Connectedly Browne claims that the embassy and British officials in general also committed "sins of misjudgement" in Iran including a "tendency to overrate the personal popularity of the Shah", and to accept his own performatively enacted self-image as a "strong monarch" at the head of a loyal army and secret.²¹¹⁰

Parsons conceded that he had "generalised overmuch" from his experiences as a diplomat in the Turkish and Arab world, placing too much trust in the army's ability to keep the Shah on the throne.²¹¹¹ Furthermore although he never thought the Shah "popular", he did agree that British officials came to "accept as genuine the character which the Shah had constructed", portraying him as a "formidable autocrat, knowledgeable, skilful, in control of events and fiercely sensitive about his and his country's independence". This was despite knowing of his "vacillations and weaknesses" from earlier in the century, when he was characterised by a "demonstrable lack of charisma".²¹¹² Owen noted in his memoir that British officials had even called the Shah a "coward" when he absconded to Rome during the constitutional tussle with Mossadegh.²¹¹³ On the other hand, the ambassador soundly rejected Browne's allusions to barks and bites stating that he had picked "trivial examples" for evidence which were ultimately of little importance to the Shah.²¹¹⁴ Providing a solid justification for Disinterested Impartiality he also wrote that Browne's report did:

...not emphasise adequately the constraints under which we were acting...After 150 years of gross British interference in Iran's internal affairs, all Persians, including the Shah, were obsessive about the hidden hand of the British. Our only hope of establishing a profitable, working relationship with the Shah was to do everything possible to allow these suspicions and nothing to feed them. Hence the deliberate policy carried out by myself and my two predecessors of avoiding all contacts with the Mullahs and the old politicians.²¹¹⁵

The ambassador "agonised endlessly over this problem" but felt he was right to avoid contact, which would only have been taken as a betrayal by the Shah and as a gesture of support by the opposition.²¹¹⁶ As the analysis has shown Disinterested Impartiality was consequently fostered a great deal during from the period of 1974-1979, with efforts to soften or silence the press and the B.B.C., and to deflect domestic criticism from members of the public, hostile student groups, trade unions and Labour M.P.s. All of these institutions and organisation were also in some sense temporarily seen as part of Britain's

²¹⁰⁹ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 72-73.

²¹¹⁰ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 25.

²¹¹¹ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 145 & 'Comment by Sir A.D. Parsons...', in FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p 84-85.

²¹¹² Parsons, *Pride*, p. 141.

²¹¹³ Owen, *Declare*, p. 388.

²¹¹⁴ 'Comment by Sir A.D. Parsons...' in FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p 86.

²¹¹⁵ 'Comment by Sir A.D. Parsons', p. 84.

²¹¹⁶ 'Comment by Sir A.D. Parsons', p. 84.

performance team either by the British themselves or by the Iranians. Britain went to great lengths to enforce discipline on these errant groups to avoid disruptions and scenes, especially in the case of the long-running B.B.C. drama. This was also despite the fact that Pahlavi complaints were often seen as pedantic. Meanwhile another significant instance of Disinterested Impartiality indicative of the leverage that Pahlavi Iran had over Britain, featured government sanctioned perjury in a British court of law.

Complementing Disinterested Impartiality was the impression of Overt Cordiality, which was used to “butter up” the Shah in order to maintain close political and strategic relations and a burgeoning commercial partnership.²¹¹⁷ This largely featured the use of members of the Royal Family and high-ranking government ministers travelling to Iran with well-prepared speeches, Briefs and Speaking Notes praising the Shah, his country, and Britain’s cooperative relations with it. Iranian royals also came to Britain where they were twice hosted by the Queen Mother with constant input from the Queen herself, signalling Britain’s good intentions toward Iran in visits designed to recognise the legitimacy of the Pahlavi dynasty. In these situations personal front was often brought to bear including facial expressions, and body language. Connectedly it is possible that gender may have played a role in softening and warming Anglo-Iranian relations further still, largely through the use of Queen Mother, a kindly, grandmotherly figure. Britain also expressed Overt Cordiality through political acts including the decision to waive the last tranche of Iran’s sizeable loan, and more controversially, through the sale of CS gas. Statements by senior government officials and by the ambassador in his regular audiences also complemented these aforementioned techniques.

Meanwhile Great Power Survivalism sought to impress Britain’s continued relevance as a world power, both as a modern nation capable of producing high-tech military equipment and commercial goods, and as a traditional Great Power with persistent monarchical and military traditions. Great Power Survivalism thus found expression in the Trooping ceremony, and in the ceremonial marching bands, as well as in modern architecture including the Post Office Tower. Britain also impressed soft power by demonstrating its achievements in art, healthcare and women’s rights in order to project an image of modernity, and to encourage Iranian emulation. This did not, however, extend to extolment of free speech which irked the Iranian government. Britain also used verbal statements from government ministers remarking on the strengths of the British economy and on the potency of its military equipment. Similarly consultants from M.T.S. and salespersons from the D.S.O. used presentations and literature including B.D.E.C., to describe, depict and purvey British arms and munitions. Lastly in a civilian context British companies also attended trade fairs and exhibitions displaying all manner of goods including livestock.

²¹¹⁷ FCO8/3601, Browne, ‘Policy’, p 46.

With regards emphasis on the different impressions, since the main policy was arguably the increase of Anglo-Iranian commercial relations, followed closely by cementing close political relations, one would expect to see equal levels of adoption. In reality, Disinterested Impartiality was most prominent, followed by Overt Cordiality and finally Great Power Survivalism. This hierarchy emanated largely from the Shah's perceived temperament, and the history of Anglo-Iranian relations which prompted British officials to stress non-interference constantly, before complementing this with liberal amounts of Overt Cordiality. Regarding Great Power Survivalism, further archival research into M.O.D. files, or those of other departments involved in business and commerce, might shed more light on the greater use of the impression, which was clearly necessary for attracting Iranian orders.

Perhaps, however, officials did not do enough to impress Great Power Survivalism, evidenced by Britain's struggle to outsell its competitors. The year of 1978 for instance, was not a particularly good year for British firms in Iran, with only around \$180m worth of contracts awarded out of a \$6bn Iranian government budget available for such contracts which went to Europe, Japan and the U.S.²¹¹⁸ Even more disappointing for the world's former naval superpower, was the fact that Britain also lost out to the Netherlands and Germany in 1978, when the Shah ordered twelve frigates from West German and Dutch shipbuilders.²¹¹⁹ Despite these late setbacks, good relations with the Shah were perceived by Parsons to have been a very beneficial gamble which "paid off" handsomely until the revolution.²¹²⁰ British "business and industry", he contended, "made an enormous amount of money out of Iran".²¹²¹ More importantly the ambassador reiterates that if Britain had "adopted a more equivocal attitude towards the Shah" many of the "benefits" from their good relations would have been denied to Britain.²¹²² This proved to be a relatively successful strategy in the short-term, bringing about close relations and a great deal of business, though Britain "performed relatively less well" than principal competitors during the period.²¹²³ Specifically, Britain was only Iran's "fourth largest supplier behind the U.S.A., Germany and Japan".²¹²⁴

A last point centres on the possibility that Britain showed too much cordiality for their level of return, thereby increasing the chances of any post-Pahlavi regime seeking to disproportionately damage British interests. West Germany, Europe's largest exporter to Iran was "liked and respected without resentment" in Pahlavi Iran, though this seemed not to have required the sort of close relationship that Britain, the U.S. and to a lesser extent France, had cultivated with the Shah.²¹²⁵ Arguably for this reason, West Germany "experienced a less stormy passage" through the revolutionary period compared to Britain.²¹²⁶

²¹¹⁸ 'The British Billions at Stake', *Sunday Times*, 12 Nov. 1978.

²¹¹⁹ 'Iran Bid for Dutch, German Frigates', *Financial Times*, 4 May 1978.

²¹²⁰ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 140.

²¹²¹ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p. 86.

²¹²² Parsons, *Pride*, p. 140.

²¹²³ PREM16/1719, 'Iran: Commercial Contingency Planning', n.d. circa 1978.

²¹²⁴ FCO8/2761, 'U.K. Trade with Iran', Lucas to Weir, n.d., 1976.

²¹²⁵ Parsons, 'Iran and Western Europe', p. 222.

²¹²⁶ Parsons, 'Iran and Western Europe', p. 224.

Another reason centred on Germany's relatively uncontroversial history of diplomatic relations with Iran during both the Qajar and early Pahlavi period. Britain, of course, differed markedly with their chequered history in Persia's past. Consequently when Browne considered the possibility that Britain should have withdrawn its support for the Shah earlier in 1978, in readiness for a new regime, he quickly discounted the idea because of past policy in Iran and because Britain was "far too thickly tarred with the Shah's brush to be able to redeem themselves" with the opposition which would have treated Britain with "contempt" for changing sides so late.²¹²⁷

²¹²⁷ FCO8/3601, Browne, 'Policy', p.76.

CONCLUSION

CONTINUITIES AND CONTRASTS

This thesis has analysed the “theatrical side” of diplomacy in the context of British foreign policy toward Persia, broadly combining Raymond Cohen’s I.R. based methodological framework with that of sociologist Erving Goffman.²¹²⁸ Through extensive empirical research the thesis has identified a certain number of impressions – desired images of the British state, or ideas of its intentions toward Iran – that British officials in a performance “team”, often in “state selfhood” identities, fostered as a means of securing the country’s political, military and economic interests. Within these impressions, the thesis also explored different techniques of performance, from the use of costume to policy levers with a communicative function. Such techniques constituted components of a diplomatic language, either verbal or nonverbal, that was both intelligible within the realm of interstate relations, as well as being geared toward concrete objectives. First and foremost this conclusion centres on a comparative analysis of the *continuities* and *contrasts* within the impressions fostered and the connected techniques of performance that were evident in each of the three case studies. These case studies spanned a hundred period from 1872 to 1979, centring on the state visit of Nasir al-Din from 1872-1874, the rise of Reza Khan from 1922-1926 and finally the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty from 1974-1979. Following the assessment of continuities and contrasts, which includes a short critique of Orientalism, the conclusion finishes by considering the potential efficacy of impression management and theatricalised diplomacy.

Before engaging in the aforementioned comparative analysis, it behoves me to state one significant general finding of my research, which lends, as it were retroactively, epistemological credence to my having embarked on this project in the first place. Indeed, it can be said with certainty, that British diplomats and officials were themselves very conscious of the “theatrical side” to their craft. This brings into question a tendency amongst traditionalist diplomatic historians and realist I.R. specialists to overlook or consign evidence of theatricalised diplomacy to an anecdotal footnote. It was not overlooked by its practitioners, instead it was utilised extensively by British officials who were of the opinion that neglecting to do so would have been detrimental to British interests in Iran. Officials and newspaper correspondents sometimes even went so far as to make specific references to theatre and performance when discussing British policy toward Iran. Notable examples include the *Guardian* referring to Shah’s welcome in Manchester as a “show” and a “spectacle”. More significantly Nicolson had also called Loraine a “stage ambassador” who was performing to a Persian audience as a proconsular British gentleman diplomat, manifest in his calculated comportment and costume. Lady Loraine also described the “play” that was unfolding between Percy, Kha’zal, and Reza Khan at Abadan

²¹²⁸ Cohen, ‘Diplomacy as theatre’, p. 267.

in 1924. Meanwhile, Parsons recalled his “part in the drama” of the decline and fall of the Pahlavi dynasty.²¹²⁹

Despite these intimations, it would be wrong to suggest that diplomacy was merely synonymous with the theatre. British diplomats and officials engaging with their counterparts in Iran were taking part in something far more tangible and substantive than a mere theatrical performance. That being said, they were in a sense, constantly ‘performing’. According to Cohen, this stems from the fact that diplomatic representatives unavoidably embody their state in their personhood, and thus have their behaviour “scrutinised” by international “observers” looking for meaning and message in the context of diplomatic relations. A representative must therefore make sure that their behaviour is the “product of careful deliberation”. Connectedly in such a closely watched environment, even innocuous gestures “are essentially political and therefore non-spontaneous” at “the level of the state”. Thus, “when an envoy makes a personal gesture in public” they are, “or should be, acting under instructions or at least in conformity with a predetermined policy.”²¹³⁰

British officials and journalists also seemed to have borrowed from Goffman’s dramaturgical sociology – some of them of course long before Goffman’s work had been published – with terminology reminiscent of present-day analyses of impression management. For instance prior to the Shah’s visit in 1873, Rawlinson had wanted the British government of India to make a “favourable impression” on Iran by despatching military officers to train Qajar troops. Furthermore, according to the *Guardian* the tour of Manchester was aimed at giving the Shah a “very fair general impression” of Cottonopolis. Thomson had also thought it desirable to make a “strong impression” on the Shah when he first reached Britain, given that “first impressions” were “not unimportant.” The *Times* agreed with Thomson’s idea of using the Royal Navy which produced a very “peculiar impression” of British power. Meanwhile the *Morning Post* thought the men at the Woolwich furnaces “conveyed a very satisfactory impression of the British workman”. Another occurrence in 1873 featured Rawlinson’s hope that the Shah would carry away an “impression” of the cordial welcome he had received in Britain “stamped indelibly on his mind”.

As to the 1920s, the Foreign Office thought the use of the Royal Navy would “probably do much to impress Reza Khan” about Britain’s intentions to stand by Sheikh Khaz’al. In that same year Loraine felt that his “frankness” on the subject of Arabistan “evidently made an impression” on the Persian Prime Minister. The envoy also previously lamented the negative “impression” formed by the Persians on account of past British interferences in the early 20th century. Connectedly he thought his successful attempt to get government recognition of Reza Shah’s new regime made a “deep impression” on the Persian strongman, going some way to dispelling formerly negative views of Britain. Moving to the 1970s and it was the M.E.D. which wanted to make sure that Prince Reza Pahlavi was “impressed” by

²¹²⁹ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 146.

²¹³⁰ Cohen, ‘Diplomacy as theatre’, p. 265-266.

Britain's military capacities. Parsons was also concerned by "misleading impressions" resulting from B.B.C. misreporting. Finally, the M.E.D. also wanted to counter the negative "impression" of Iran harboured by much of the British press.

Although most if not all, British officials, even those of the 1970s, would of course have been unaware of Goffman's methodological framework, it is significant to observe the emphasis they placed on particular images of Britain, British power or British intentions, as a means of furthering foreign policy. There were also many further, albeit more implicit, references to theatricalised diplomacy, evident in the ways through which British officials fostered certain impressions using various techniques of performance across all three case studies. How is this all to be compared? First one can turn to the impressions themselves, before delving into the connected techniques. This research revealed that Britain fostered five impressions in the case studies analysed in this thesis, Overt Cordiality, World Power Vitality, Great Power Paternalism, Great Power Survivalism and Disinterested Impartiality.

OVERT CORDIALITY

Regarding Overt Cordiality, the British government adopted this impression to complement a consistent policy of maintaining friendly relations with Iran. There were instances in the hundred and seven year period under review when Britain fostered more hostile impressions and policies toward Iran, however, these were rare and short in duration. This included 1941, when the British government used the B.B.C. to launch a propaganda campaign against Reza Khan, signalling British dissatisfaction with his government and his supposed German sympathies.²¹³¹ This was followed by a swift Anglo-Soviet military occupation leading to the voluntary abdication of the Shah, though not without some allied encouragement.²¹³² Even then, Britain did not seek to prolong its belligerent attitude to Iran or the ex-Shah, agreeing to escort him to relatively comfortable exile in South Africa.²¹³³ Secondly, a more hostile period of relations erupted during the 1951 oil crisis and Mossadegh's nationalisation of the A.I.O.C., leading to a break in Anglo-Iranian diplomatic relations in 1952 for only the second time during the 20th century, the other being in 1980.²¹³⁴ Again, this was a short-lived episode, with the resumption of normal diplomatic relations in December of 1954.²¹³⁵

For the most part, cordial Anglo-Iranian relations were thus the cornerstone of British policy in Iran, matching Harold Nicolson's "shop-keeper" conception of British diplomacy. Significantly, there was

²¹³¹ Sreberny, *Service*, p. 39-47 & F. Eshraghi, 'Anglo-Soviet occupation of Iran in August 1941', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 20 (1984), pp. 324-351 (p. 336-342).

²¹³² Richard A. Stewart, *Sunrise at Abadan, The British and Soviet Invasion of Iran, 1941*, (New York: Praeger, 1988), p. 94-218.

²¹³³ Sir Reader Bullard, *The Camels Must Go, An Autography*, (London: Faber and Faber: 1961), p. 216-231.

²¹³⁴ Ronald W. Ferrier, 'The Anglo-Iranian oil dispute: a triangular relationship', in James A. Bill, and W.M Roger Louis, *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism and Oil*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1988), pp. 164-203, (p. 189).

²¹³⁵ Denis Wright, 'The restoration of diplomatic relations with Iran', in *Anglo-Iranian Relations Since 1800*, ed. Vanessa Martin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005) p. 161-166.

also a pattern of surprising Persian leverage, which necessitated Overt Cordiality and good relations in each case study. Indeed, despite having no interest in pursuing tangibly closer relations with Persia in 1873, Britain could not allow Russia to seize the advantage, and so accepted the Husain Khan's request for a state visit which featured a thoroughly thick coating of Overt Cordiality with heavy recourse to the Royal Family. Significantly, Persia possessed this leverage even though Britain was at her imperial zenith. Meanwhile in the early 1920s, Britain could no longer use the sword or the purse to persuade the Persians to cooperate in protecting British commercial and strategic interests, thus she was compelled to adopt an amicable attitude. Finally in the 1970s, Britain was literally "dependent" on the Shah's business and so had to keep him "sweet", all of which encouraged the extensive use of Overt Cordiality with emphasis on the Anglo-Iranian royal connection. This rather inverts the notion that Western imperialist powers were free to do as they pleased in the Orient and in Iran. In reality, it was often a case of the tail wagging the dog, though the dog could and did – at least until 1953 – bear its teeth or even bite, when absolutely necessary. Significantly, after the failure to independently thwart Mossadegh's unilateral seizure of Britain's most lucrative asset in Iran, British governments' could no longer contemplate any interference in Iranian internal affairs.

As to the techniques of performance used in the context of Overt Cordiality, there were regular verbal or written expressions of support that extolled the historic closeness and warmth of Anglo-Iranian relations across all case studies, though with differing intensity. In the uncertainty surrounding Reza Khan's intentions and the fate of British interests in southern Persia, British officials were slightly less disposed to use this method from 1922 to 1925. This was until Reza Khan was about to seize the Qajar throne, by which time Loraine had successfully persuaded his superiors that supporting the first Pahlavi monarch was in Britain's best interests. By contrast, verbal and written praise for Persia in the 1970s was readily forthcoming, often reflective of real progress in Iran under the Shah. This was until the regime was perceived to be in terminal decline by November of 1978. Thereafter a partially new impression briefly emerged in the shape of Covert Cordiality, with Parsons and Owen still pledging their support to Iran, though in private, in order to avoid a backlash from elements of the British press and public, and the Iranian opposition. Meanwhile, a notable feature of verbal and written expressions of Overt Cordiality the 1970s, was the M.E.D. production of "Drafts", "Speaking Notes" and "Briefs" which were given to different state actors from various government departments playing their part in foreign policy formulation and execution. Using concepts taken from Cohen and Goffman, I argue that the M.E.D., acted as a collective "*metteur-en-scène*" and used these scripts to exert greater control over a much wider-ranging group of officials sharing face-to face-meetings with their Iranian counterparts, often discussing complex commercial and political subjects over which the British had to tread carefully. Meanwhile in 1873, the stream of complementary Corporation or government addresses and statements about Persia was equally constant. These were, however, far less complex in nature, focussing on effusive yet broad and noncommittal expressions of cordiality, which negated the need for robust

briefing. The also reflected the reality of Anglo-Persian commercial and political interactions, which were not as entwined during the 1870s, even though Britain was Persia's biggest trading partner.

What was not evident in that first state visit, was the use of what Cohen calls acts of "nonverbal communication at the international level" used to impress Overt Cordiality. In both the 1920s and the 1970s British governments had made decisions affecting commerce, or formal political relations, which also served to signal good intentions toward Iran. This included Loraine's offer to halve Persian government debt, and his call for rapid government recognition of Reza Khan's new regime in late 1925. Meanwhile during the 1970s, Britain had accepted the Shah's wish to exchange cash for oil to purchase defence equipment. The British had also seen fit to waive the last tranche of Iran's sizeable loan to Britain and finally agreed to provide CS gas. It must be noted that all of these decisions were of course all substantive – having material effect – however, British officials *also* saw them as having a secondary communicative function as part of that diplomatic language system.

The absence of similar acts in 1873 emanated from Britain's reluctance to constitute professions of Anglo-Iranian friendship with political, economic or military policies that would serve both a communicative and substantive function. Instead, as a means of maintaining the Anglo-Russian status quo in Persia, Britain used more ephemeral, inconsequential and compensatory methods of impressing Overt Cordiality, including personal intimacy with the Royal Family and royal means of transport and habitation that served as stage-props, that is to say items that complemented Britain's impression management. In addition, the British slowly introduced the Shah to higher ranking members of the Royal Family, inverting Goffman's notion of "mystification" by slowly reducing the social distance between the Shah and Her Majesty. This served to increase intimacy whilst also maintaining a sense of British supremacy. British royals also wore Persian royal orders and gifts given by the Shah to undertaken what Cohen calls "identification" with another's "ideology or culture" as a sincere form of flattery. The British also used what Cohen identifies as "gestures of salutation" whereby the government and the Queen went out of their way to welcome the Shah with a large Royal Navy escort, or by smaller acts of salutation such as walking H.I.M. to the entrance of Windsor Castle.

Furthermore, utilising Michel Panoff, Marcel Mauss, Judith Butler I have been able to conclude that the British used "ritual reciprocity" in membership ceremonies for sacred yet symbolic royal orders, along with facilitated "performative" enactment of aristocratic status. The Shah also went through a rather painless "rite of passage", a notion that I lift from the work Orin Klapp, Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner. This was also used to give the Shah and his dynasty its sought after recognition as a member of a fraternity of European monarchies. Meanwhile with reference to James Combs's work in "reification" and "political rituals", I found that there were also ritualised expressions of unending friendship in Corporation addresses, along with celebratory "festivals" and "processions" with extensively decorated

pieces of setting. These were all employed to “reify” a cordial, mythical or idealised nature of Anglo-Persian relations.

Goffman makes an interesting observation here regarding the features of such a performance and their connection to “temporal length”. He notes that “if the audience is to see only a brief performance”, it would be “relatively safe for the performer...to maintain a front that is rather false”.²¹³⁶ Britain laid on a short performance in 1873 that was packed with professions of cordiality which in reality led to no tangible alteration of Anglo-Iranian relations. Arguably, the shorter length of Britain’s performance allowed them to adopt a “rather false” front, one exhibiting dramatically heightened levels of what Cohen calls “disclaimable” cordiality that sought to substitute substantive manifestations of closer relations – including treaties or guarantees of Iranian sovereignty – for an emotionally ‘staged’ friendship akin to the meeting of Mussolini and Hitler in 1937, assessed by Christian Goeschel. As soon as the performance and spectacle ended, the apparent force of this friendship rapidly dissipated, since it could not be sustained in reality, that is to say, beyond the confines of a condensed, symbolic and very theatrical celebration of an idealised relationship between two nations and their monarchs. Unsurprisingly of all the case studies, it was the state visit of 1873 that most extensively featured theatricalised diplomacy.

This differed somewhat from the 1970s when Britain’s performance was sustained for a far longer period of time, requiring more sincerity, something that was fortunately forthcoming due to close Anglo-Iranian political and economic connections. Both the state visit of 1873, and the visits of the 1970s, did, however, both exploit the perceived Qajar and later Pahlavi desire for royal recognition and intimacy and equality with the British Royal Family. Queen Victoria and later the Queen Mother in particular, performed admirably in this context, using Goffman’s notion of “personal front”, along with paralinguistic communication such as touch, and Cohen’s concept of the diplomatic smile, to impress Overt Cordiality despite private reservations about Iran and Iranians. Both Queen Victoria and the Queen Mother also demonstrated what Goffman terms “dramaturgical discipline”, suppressing private opinions of Iran which might disrupt desired impressions. Meanwhile, with reference to Johannes Paulmann, David Motadel and again Cohen, other members of the British Royal Family also acted as personifications of the state, serving as “instruments” in a “signal system” indicated the nature of interstate relations.

British officials in 1873 and the 1970s also went out of their way to accommodate perceived Persian habits, acquiescing to many suggestions about dietary requirements, preferred itineraries and points of protocol. As a consequence of relative unfamiliarity with Orientals, officials in 1873 probed deeper. However, during the 1970s, the onus was on acquiescing to practically all demands made by Pahlavi

²¹³⁶ Goffman, *Presentation*, p. 221.

visitors such as Princess Ashraf. This reflected the altered Anglo-Iranian power relationship, and Britain's increasing need for the Shah's business. Indeed, whereas in 1873, British hospitality seemingly precipitated little loss of dignity, in the 1970s there is a slight air of desperation in Parsons' plea for pleasing the Pahlavi regime at all costs. Connectedly, another difference between 1873 and the 1970s in this royal context was to the extent to which the Iranian dynasties were *actually* recognised as a member of the fraternity of monarchies. In 1873, Queen Victoria used subtle means of ensuring the Oriental monarchs were still in a separate category. By contrast, in the 1970s it seemed as if a genuine notion of dynastic equality was being entertained. Loraine, meanwhile, was largely denied recourse to the powerful and seemingly effective tactic of using the Royal Family, though he did elicit a congratulatory telegram from King George V on Reza Shah's accession.

The British also implicitly exploited gender in the case of the Queen Mother, who used her grandmotherly kindness to keep up the close Anglo-Iranian royal connection. Similarly Nasir al-Din Shah recalled Victoria's "kindness", a word he might not have used if discussing interactions with a male sovereign. Despite the Shah's suspicion of females in positions of power, Victoria's respectable and matronly widowhood was also such that he found it less odious to treat her as an equal than in the case of the German Empress Augusta. Finally, Nicolson's wife Vita Sackville-West, and Louise Loraine, arguably brought their Edwardian gendered habits to bear on the aesthetic components of Reza Khan's coronation, adding a new dimension to British diplomacy and to Overt Cordiality that Loraine and Nicolson themselves might not have been so suited to.

Other interesting features evident in 1873 include the civic authorities and the government using the visit to increase monarchical popularity or to celebrate the achievements of provincial cities and their Corporation authorities. Thus, by celebrating Nasir al-Din Shah, Victorian Britain simultaneously celebrated itself. By contrast, during the 1970s, there was no such domestic purpose to hosting Pahlavi royals. On the contrary, their presence was as likely to damage the Royal Family through association with a regime that was unpleasant to many left-wing students, M.P.s and quite possibly a great many of their constituents. The Victorian citizens of Manchester and London however, saw the Shah's trip far more positively. Indeed, 1873 was special in that the British government could call upon the urban working and middle class populations of Victorian cities to act as massed living stage-props and embodiment of the state, welcoming the Shah with almost universal acclaim. As Naoko Shimazu argues, such a crowd gave "credence" to Britain's welcoming receptions for the Shah. This explained why British officials even facilitated the crowd's presence with the use of specially constructed stands or galleries to watch the performance of Anglo-Persian friendship. Furthermore, at the height of imperial power in 1873, the British state also had the wealth and the resources to roll out the red carpet for the Shah in a most opulent fashion.

In both 1873 and during the 1970s, all of these features were, moreover, facilitated by what Goffman terms “dramatic prominence” within a setting. Since proceedings were conducted almost entirely in Britain, officials had complete control of setting, props, and performers. By contrast in the 1920s, Loraine and his staff only had dramatic prominence within Britain’s late 19th century Ministerial residence and compound, which although palatial and spacious, was infinitesimally insignificant compared to the sumptuous settings of London and Manchester. Loraine compensated for these deficiencies by hosting dinner parties and polo matches, or playing poker with the Persian premier into the early hours. Along with Vita Sackville-West and his wife and Louise, Sir Percy also impressed Overt Cordiality by bringing a touch of British royal class to the Shah’s own coronation, overseeing dramatic prominence in a purely Persian setting by acting as joint directors.

Meanwhile, although the government often had dramatic prominence in the 1970s, times had changed. Britain was no longer as powerful as she once was, leading to less ostentatious receptions for foreign dignitaries and royals. The visits of the Shahbanu and Ashraf were not full state visits making them less comparable to events in 1873, however, even the state visit of Mohammed Reza Shah in 1959 seemed palpably less extravagant. In images of the procession in 1959 there are also fewer spectators, whilst in the 1970s waving and smiling crowds had often been replaced by protestors holding placards shouting obscenities. Connectedly press attention in 1959, and in the later visits of Empress Farrah and Princess Ashraf, was minimal compared to 1873.²¹³⁷ In the 1970s newspapers were also often more inclined to criticise the arrival of a member of the Pahlavi Royal Family. Such a trend had an impact on the structure of this thesis itself in that thick descriptions of the Shah’s visit in 1873 were precipitated by the verbosity of journalists during the Victorian era. Indeed, such was the detail of their descriptions that separate thematic sections had to be employed.

There are several potential causes for the difference in press and public reaction to 19th and 20th century visits of Iranian royals. First it is evident that in 1873 the novelty of an Oriental monarch was such that the Qajar Shah’s momentous visit to Britain was always going to attract huge numbers of spectators, as well as a great deal of press attention. As the 19th century progressed to the 20th, Oriental monarchs visited more frequently and as such became less fascinating. Working class Britons were also more accustomed to people from distant parts of the globe, following immigration from the West Indies and the Indian subcontinent during the 1950s and 1960s.²¹³⁸ Television news and documentaries also familiarised Britons with the east. For instance, the B.B.C.’s popular *Panorama* show had produced a documentary on Iran in 1973.²¹³⁹ Meanwhile with respect to press attention, the 1970s was the era of the

²¹³⁷ See ‘Shah of Persia: Arrives in Britain on a Semi-Private Visit’, *Guardian*, 20 July 1948, ‘The Shah’s Visit’, *Times*, 21 July 1948, ‘An Arabian Nights Welcome for the Lonely King’, *Daily Mail*, 6 May 1959, ‘Shah’s State Visit Begins Today’, *Times*, 5 May 1959, ‘Shah Impressed by Welcome’, *Guardian*, 6 May 1959 & ‘London’s Welcome to the Shah’, *Times*, 6 May 1959.

²¹³⁸ Clarke, *Hope*, p. 324-329.

²¹³⁹ ‘BBC documentary on Iran’, *Times*, 22 Oct. 1973.

tabloid, epitomised by the *Sun* which became Britain's best-selling paper.²¹⁴⁰ With greater attention on "celebrity stories and gossip",²¹⁴¹ there was consequently a "dumbing down" of reportage.²¹⁴² There was seemingly a similar, though less severe process underway in the elite press, making it unlikely for the same number column inches to be devoted to Pahlavi visits. Connectedly, it has already been noted that the regularised comings and goings of dignitaries in modern diplomacy were such that visits had become commonplace, and thus less newsworthy, especially when there were also so many dramatic domestic incidents in Britain to report on.

Finally the jingoism of the late 19th century had diminished markedly following two destructive world wars and consequent decline of British status and self-confidence. Although the Royal Family was still very popular during the 1970s, the public could thus no longer be relied upon to come out in droves to cheer a passing procession of a Persian potentate visiting the imperial capital or its provincial metropolises. That some Britons might come out and do the exact opposite by protesting and causing "disruption" or worse in Goffman's terminology a "scene", was also indicative of changing times. During the 1960s and 1970s student activism had flourished, focussing on fights against racism, sexism, homophobia, fascism, authoritarianism, imperialism, and human rights abuses, the latter three of which related to Pahlavi Iran. Similarly as previously noted, there were militant socialist or left-wing trends present within the Labour Party and the trade union movement which objected to close relations with an authoritarian dictator.²¹⁴³ Newspapers also had sharply defined political leanings, with left-wing papers critical of the Pahlavis. This differed from the 1870s when both Liberal and Tory publications were enthusiastic about the visit of the Shah.

With respect to crowds during the 1970s, this led to the use of Goffman's notion of "circumspection" on the part of British officials, involving purposeful avoidance of protestors, a strategy totally unnecessary in 1873. This necessarily prevented any ritual festivals or processions with massed public audiences. It also dramatically impacted upon Britain's impression of Disinterested Impartiality, with constant efforts to police the actions of errant, disruptive and undisciplined members of Britain's performance "team", that is to say, the performers or actors contributing to impressions of the British state for an Iranian audience. Whereas Goffman argues that performances in a team have to be cooperative ventures with self-identifying teams, I argue that team membership often centred on Iranian perceptions of British nationality and British government authority. Thus, along with Britain's ambassadorial staff, the M.E.D. the cabinet, and Labour M.P.s, Britain's team often had *Guardian* journalists and the B.B.C. correspondents, as well as British public. Parsons could never fully convince the Shah that left-wing Labour M.P.'s, newspapers and the B.B.C. were separate of government and the

²¹⁴⁰ Kevin Williams, *Read all About it!: A History of the British Newspaper*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p. 197.

²¹⁴¹ Adrian Bingham and Martin Conby, *Tabloid Century, The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the present*, (Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd., 2015), p. 18 & p. 21.

²¹⁴² Williams, *Read* p. 197.

²¹⁴³ Sandbrook, *Seasons*, p. 218 & p. 289-314.

team. Indeed, in particular the latter's editorial independence was incessantly questioned by the Iranian government.

This added to the M.E.D.'s already expanded direction duties over officials from various government departments necessarily co-opted into the process of foreign policy formulation. Meanwhile Loraine, with a much smaller performance team to direct, faced far fewer problems of indiscipline and impression disruption, bar the pro-Kha'zal proclivities of Indian consular officials, swiftly brought into line by Clement Attlee. Furthermore, it appears that neither the press nor the British public played a significant role in the formulation of British foreign policy in Persia in the early 1920s. Connectedly, even though the crowd and the press were a useful addition to British techniques of performances in 1873, foreign policy was still largely the preserve of the Foreign Secretary. This differed sharply to the situation a century later when public opinion had to be carefully considered by British foreign policymaking officials.

IMPRESSIONS OF POWER

Turning to those impressions centring on the theme of power, it was the changing trajectories of Britain and Iran that had a significant impact. In the 1870s, Britain could bring to bear the great engines of commerce and destruction including its cotton mills and revolutionary ironclads that had propelled the country to its "World Power". It also used structures as pieces of setting for their "expressive intent", one of Cohen's concepts whereby a community shows off its values or achievements in architecture. Such was the extent of this broad repository of impressing power, that my thesis was unable to cover all examples of Commercial and Capitalist Power. In conjunction with military reviews, Britain was thus able to demonstrate its strong *vitality*, though the early warning signs of relative decline were just starting to show in the outdated muzzle loaders of the Woolwich Arsenal.

Meanwhile, by the turn of the century, Britain's time at the top was over. Instead she was one among many Great Powers, and although that status easily survived the First World War, the 1920s saw Britain's power around the globe diminished further, despite victory over the Central Powers. One result was severe loss of leverage in Iran due to the need for demobilisation and a reduction in costly military and financial commitments. Loraine was thus left to use what meagre resources he had at his disposal. This started opportunistically with the H.M.S. *Renown*, a modern battlecruiser and stage-prop with which to impress the Persians who had never seen such a vessel. Furthermore, using the work of Judee Burgoon, Michael Argyle, Kimberley Mullins, and Keir Elam, one can note how Loraine used brusque paternalistic language, paralinguistic communication techniques and personal front including his steely stare, controlled yet "stern manner", and his powerful physique. This was complemented by his Edwardian moustache, and his fastidious "idealisation" and adoption of the accoutrements of the proconsular gentleman diplomat; the top hat, camel coat and suit, or the full diplomatic dress. In this

sense Loraine conformed to Cohen's notion of the "leader as a paragon". Britain's Envoy Extraordinary Minister Plenipotentiary would also use the "enormous" staff of the Legation, including Nicolson, obstinately wearing his trilby, along with a mounted *sowar* escort and a motorcade which drove around Tehran in a ritual procession of reified imperial power. Loraine thought this small colony was "as good as four divisions" of troops for projecting a persistent sense of British power. Finally, Jebb and Nicolson both alluded to the use of other components of Britain's diplomatic footprint in Persia including the impressive buildings of the British Legation, the "*Sifarat-i-Ingliz*", and its large compound which reminded visitors of an English public school. Through these techniques, which again incorporated Cohen's concept of "expressive intent" and Combs' "reification", Britain could compensate for its relative decline and financial and military retreat from Persia, through a broad strategy evincing *paternalism*. It must be stressed that this understanding of Britain's 1920s power projection was only made possible by the accounts of Nicolson, Jebb and Loraine, along with the latter's biographer Gordon Waterfield. Such individuals felt compelled to mention the envoy's proconsular countenance, the dimensions of the embassy and the significance of its "colourful protectors" from the Indian Army.

Unfortunately, Tony Parsons has not been the subject of a biography like his forerunner Loraine, nor are his private papers so readily available. This largely closes the door to any assessment of Parsons' potential use of paralinguistic communication, however, one might have expected some reference to clothing or ambassadorial cars within published accounts and official correspondence. Parsons did very infrequently recall how he drove through Tehran in a bullet-proof Rolls-Royce replete with "Union Jack flying", however there was no sense that it was used to impress anything more than necessary ambassadorial dignity.²¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the only time the ambassador mentioned formal attire was before his final audience with Empress Farrah, when he had to conceal his top hat and morning coat from Iranian demonstrators by wearing his wife's coat.²¹⁴⁵ Incidentally, Sheila Emily Parsons is never called by name in the ambassador's *Pride and the Fall*, thus her role, if any, remains a mystery. She was strikingly less visible than Louise and Vita, though this may be due to a paucity of source material. As to escorts or guards, the process by which the embassy became totally reliant on the Iranian police and the I.I.A.F. in the 1970s, began fifty years earlier with staff reductions facilitated by Loraine. This differed to America which retained "U.S. Marine Corps security personnel" at their embassy.²¹⁴⁶

There are several reasons for this change in power projection. First, the conditions of Iran in the 1920s were such that a well-kept and elegant embassy, a large staff and more importantly, a small fleet of motorcars, would have been impressive to a Persian audience. Horse-drawn carriages were still the order of the day until after Reza Shah's road-building projects starting in the late 1920s.²¹⁴⁷ Even during the

²¹⁴⁴ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 66.

²¹⁴⁵ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 118.

²¹⁴⁶ Parsons, *Pride*, p. 117.

²¹⁴⁷ Hambly, 'Pahlavi Autocracy – 1921-1941', p. 229.

Second World War, however, Persian unfamiliarity with motorised vehicles had led to a high number of road accidents involving pedestrians and U.S. military trucks transporting supplies to the Soviet Union.²¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, from Vita's accounts of Iranian palaces one gains the impression that they were often in a dilapidated state, making Britain's well-constructed embassy compound stand out further still. According to Curzon and Jebb, Tehran itself was also tired and dishevelled. By the 1970s this situation had changed dramatically. The whole of Tehran was choked with traffic composed of imported cars, some of which were luxurious models owned by the ostentatious nouveaux riches who lived in the north of what was now a burgeoning modern city of "new apartment blocks, motorways, international hotels, department stores and boutiques".²¹⁴⁹ In such circumstances, one Rolls-Royce was hardly going to make an impression, nor was the embassy, which bore little comparison the Shah's ostentatious Niavaran Palace complex.²¹⁵⁰

Finally, by the 1970s the Edwardian and Victorian conception of the gentleman was far less prevalent in modern British society, both publically and professionally.²¹⁵¹ Although Parsons was urbane, and like Loraine, ex-army, he was not cut from the same aristocratic cloth.²¹⁵² Such cloth was also seemingly less relevant in the context of impressing British power in the 1970s, though more traditional notions of Britishness remained with respect to the country's monarchy. Thus, whilst Loraine it was said "genuinely thought of himself as a representative of the King", Parsons felt mildly embarrassed about his pride in the Queen Mother's conduct. Meanwhile, during Parsons' period as ambassador, Britain had to expand its notion of Great Power Survivalism, demonstrating a blend of survivability, modernity, and commercial viability, in order to further foreign policy aims in Iran. British officials thus used traditional ceremonial displays of military power with a uniformed sovereign at the Trooping ceremony, juxtaposed by the use of glossy catalogues and video presentations about cutting edge British manufactured military hardware. They also used bear-skinned marching bands along with modern skyscrapers, cultural diplomacy and soft power demonstrations of the country's latest cultural, medical and social advances. This served a dual-purpose, including the need to appear as a Great Power despite decline, and to convince the Iranians that they should send their custom to British business.

DISINTERESTED IMPARTIALITY

We now turn to the final impression, that of Disinterested Impartiality. Notably this was entirely absent during the first case study, due to relatively benign Persian perceptions of Britain at that time. Indeed, despite several political and even military conflicts over Herat in the mid-19th century, Britain was still viewed fairly positively by Persia's elite, including Husain Khan and Nasir al-Din Shah. Moreover, many other Iranians admired the British "for their power and their sense of justice". Though the seeds of

²¹⁴⁸ Bill, *Eagle*, p. 47.

²¹⁴⁹ Hambly, 'Pahlavi Autocracy – 1941-1979', p. 268 & Parsons, *Pride*, p. 9.

²¹⁵⁰ Buchan, *Days*, p. 49-50.

²¹⁵¹ Philip Mason, *The English Gentleman, The Rise and Fall of an Ideal*, (London.: André Deutsch, 1982), p. 227.

²¹⁵² 'Obituary: Sir Anthony Parsons', *Independent*, 13 Aug. 1996.

suspicion over British imperialist machinations were still evident, especially amongst religious zealots, they did not surface fully until after the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.²¹⁵³

As the analysis has made perfectly clear, Disinterested Impartiality was by contrast, absolutely necessary during the 1920s, due to Britain's loss of leverage and her refusal to countenance any further use of force against the Iranian government whose cooperation was vital for Britain's commercial and strategic interests. The impression was also compelled by heightened levels of Persian distrust and antipathy toward Britain following occupation during the First World War, the stillborn Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919, and Britain's tacit ground support for the coup of 1921. Such was the poor state of diplomatic relations that Loraine even specified that one of Britain's primary policies was to be non-interference in Iranian internal affairs. Hitherto this point, non-interference had usually been an unstated aim, however, it had been identified and made a specific policy on this occasion.

Disinterested Impartiality was thus manifest throughout Loraine's tenure, in verbal and written statements testifying to British non-interference, complemented by the envoy's refusal to be drawn into subjects including Reza Khan's plan to take the crown or alternatively to abolish the Qajar dynasty in favour of a republic. It was also evidenced by Loraine reining in and finally abandoning Britain's client Sheikh Kha'zal of Mohammerah, and by international level acts of nonverbal communication including an end to Royal Navy sabre rattling in the Gulf, along with the reduction of consular escorts, and road and commercial installation guards in southern Persia in 1924. He also saw to the handover of the administration of Persian post offices a year earlier. Two other interesting features of Disinterested Impartiality during the 1920s included the use of the impression to tacitly allow capable Persian politicians like Mostofi al-Mamalek and Reza Khan to flourish without being tainted by connection to the British. Lastly, whereas in 1873 British officials had to carefully regulate Overt Cordiality to avoid increased Anglo-Iranian cooperation, during the 1920s Loraine had to juggle between jarring shows of Great Power Paternalism and Disinterested Impartiality, reflecting the need for simultaneously coaxing and threatening the Iranians.

Finally, moving to the 1970s and Disinterested Impartiality had been further intensified due to the Shah's almost paranoid levels of suspicion of the British government and the B.B.C., following their role in the abdication of Reza Shah, and in the fall of Mossadegh. British commercial interests were also such that any suspicion of interference of Iranian affairs had to be completely dispelled. Parsons thus refrained from all contact with the opposition, possibly undermining his ability to predict the revolution. The task of dispelling suspicion was however, made more difficult in Britain by Labour Party M.P.s,

²¹⁵³ Rudi Mathee, 'Between Sympathy and Enmity: Nineteenth-Century Iranian Views of the British and Russians', in Beate Eschment and Hans Harder, eds., *Looking at the Coloniser Cross Cultural Perceptions in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Bengal and Related Areas*, (Wurzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2004), pp. 311-339 (p. 336 & p. 338).

student groups, trade unions and a robust press, all of whom were willing to publically criticise the Pahlavi regime for its perceived human rights abuses. The B.B.C. was also unwilling to undermine its objectivity by softening what they saw as truthful reports on the situation in Iran. The impression consequently also manifested itself in a constant strategy of deflecting criticism away from the regime, and apologising for the press and the B.B.C. More robust methods also involved working with the Iranian ambassador to facilitate more positive portrayals and to quieten or even silence the B.B.C.'s Persian Service, either by officially abolishing it, or encouraging a clandestine smear campaign. The British government also even sanctioned perjury in court to avoid Pahlavi perturbation, a possible reduction in the purchase of British goods. The fact that the Shah's regime *did* commit human rights abuses was also not enough to precipitate a single official complaint to the Iranian government or a public condemnation, though in late 1978 the British became less inclined to privately criticise the B.B.C. or to robustly defend the regime.

ORIENTALISM OR EQUALITY

From this comparative analysis one can discern a number of contrasts in Britain's engagement with theatricalised diplomacy from 1872 to 1979, emanating from socio-economic, political or military factors, either in temporary time-specific circumstances, or due to slow changes in the socio-economic fabric of each nation. One can also understand why there were different levels of emphasis on particular impressions from 1873 to the 1970s. Two somewhat contradictory continuities remain. There is a thread running through the case studies in the context of Goffman's concept of backstage "derogation" and connectedly, the ostensible perpetuation of Orientalist stereotypes. Most notable in this category was a belief in the Persian predilection for display and flattery. This had a direct impact on the techniques of performance that British officials utilised, with an emphasis on impressing the Persians visually in the context of power related impressions and Overt Cordiality. There were also cruder and more negative characterisations of the Iranian "race" as avaricious, corrupt and cruel, especially in the 1920s. Persians were also purportedly want of punctuality and prone to sycophancy. The increased intensity of this derogation during Loraine's time in Persia may have been a symptom of the tendency for more racially based imperialist chauvinism in the early to mid-twentieth century. Such views, however, also persisted into the 1970s, with accusations of Oriental despotism,²¹⁵⁴ corruption, and martial weakness, coming from the ambassador, the M.E.D. and cabinet ministers.²¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, since Iranians were mere "Orientals", they could also not be expected to have a Western attitude to human rights, though they were purportedly better than Arabs.

Alongside Sir John Malcolm's influence in early 19th century referred to in the first chapter, these set of ostensibly Orientalist and Persian stereotypes were influenced by James Morier. The latter was a

²¹⁵⁴ Westmacott said he had "very Persian way" of dictatorially ruling Iran (FCO8/3184, Westmacott to Miers, 15 March 1978).

²¹⁵⁵ FCO8/2997, Alston to James, 13 March 1977.

diplomat and travel writer who gleefully regaled his readers with the adventures of his fictitious caricatured Persian protagonist Hajji Baba, who exemplified and encountered many of the vices mentioned above.²¹⁵⁶ Such was the popularity of the book and its perceived accuracy that in 1895 Curzon praised it for its “intrinsic merit”, and its ability to “reflect after a lapse of a three-quarters of a century, the salient and unchanging” nature of Oriental people.²¹⁵⁷ Meanwhile, in 1924, Ovey even quoted from the book when discussing Reza Khan’s purported failure to grasp the significance of allowing the Persian press and clerical elite to blame the British for the murder of U.S. Consul Robert Imbrie in 1924. The Persian Prime Minister, Ovey claimed, was not motivated to respond favourably British complaints because like the Persians in *Hajji Baba*, he had no conception of patriotism or morality in politics.²¹⁵⁸ Gail Marzieh contends that even during the 1950s, the West could not:

...approach Persia except under the influence of an Isfahan barber [Hajji], who emerged into words more than hundred years ago and refuses to disappear. His presence invests the soberest diplomatic parleys with a kind of craziness; hysteria is always too close in the Western mind, as the Persian exhibits one or another of the Hajji’s well-known traits.²¹⁵⁹

Morier was in effect making a statement on the national character of Persia and its people, through his fiction, which informed British official opinion, potentially across all case studies.²¹⁶⁰ Perhaps cutting across the grain, I would contend that British perceptions were not quite as Orientalist as they seem. Morier’s *Hajji Baba* was certainly a work of fiction, full of exaggerations and caricatures. Malcolm, who did much to influence British perceptions of the Persian penchant for display, is however, more difficult to discount. A criticism often levelled at Said is his failure to allow Orientals to speak of their own existence.²¹⁶¹ In the case of Malcolm, the Oriental and the Persian Nubbee Khan ostensibly did speak through the British author. Of course this could be construed as another instance of the Orientalist’s irresistible urge to misrepresent, however tempering this accusation is the opinion of Ali Ansari, a prominent modern historian of Iran.²¹⁶² Ansari contends that Malcolm was not inclined to misrepresent Persia, on the contrary he was a “refreshingly un-judgemental” author responsible for “one of the most acute observations of the Iranian character” ever written in English.²¹⁶³

Abbas Amanat the much respected Qajar historian and biographer of Nasir al-Din, also noted that Persia actually saw a profusion of elaborate military displays the late 19th century, used in the face of

²¹⁵⁶ James Justinian Morier, *The adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, (London: John Murray, 1824) and Hossein Peer najmodin, *Orientalist Representations of Persia in the works of Spenser, Marlowe, Milton, Moore, and Morier*, (PhD Diss., The University of Birmingham, 2002), pp. 1-299 (p. 144-224).

²¹⁵⁷ The comments were made in the introduction of the 1895 edition (Abbas Amanat, ‘Hajji Baba of Ispahan’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 15 Dec. 2003, <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hajji-baba-of-ispahan>> [accessed: 12.1.16].

²¹⁵⁸ FO416/75, Ovey to MacDonald, 10 Aug. 1924.

²¹⁵⁹ Gail, Marzieh, *Persia and the Victorians*, (London; George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1951), p. 63-64.

²¹⁶⁰ Terry H. Grabar, ‘Fact and Fiction: Morier’s Hajji Baba’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 3 (1969), pp. 1223-1236, (p. 1223).

²¹⁶¹ Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies*, (London: Penguin Group, 2007), p. 292-293.

²¹⁶² Irwin, *Lust*, p. 285.

²¹⁶³ Ali Ansari, *Iran: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 115-117.

palpable military weakness as compensatory “symbols of monarchical power and legitimacy” by Nasir al-Din.²¹⁶⁴ As such a British belief in the efficacy of military display for Persian edification was not necessarily an Orientalist stereotype. Similarly one cannot help but notice that the perceived Persian predilection for avarice and display had some resonance when considering the Shah’s famous gemstone buttoned coat and aigrette that surpassed the extravagance of British royal costume. Amanat also claims that the Shah had a “love of luxury, flattery, titles, decorations” and protocol.²¹⁶⁵ Finally Nasir al-Din did indeed demonstrate a rather persistent problem with punctuality throughout his time in Europe.

Meanwhile, the Pahlavi regime was known for its extravagance in costume and ceremony. For instance, the 1967 coronation had featured horse-drawn coaches made of glass, a platinum crown and fine food flown in from Paris.²¹⁶⁶ Of course British coronations were arguably comparable, however, if one looks at images from 1953 and 1967, it would not be unfair to suggest that the Pahlavis had an even greater penchant for gold lace, bejewelled crowns and thrones. Meanwhile, in the context of protocol one can refer to Alam’s extra pleas for Farah to be treated with “appropriate” ceremony. Importantly, this was motivated by the microscopic attention that the Iranian public would pay to such matters, which if dealt with unsatisfactorily, would even go so far as to “mar” the whole. Nor it seems was Parsons partaking of any Orientalist misrepresentation in this instance, since Alam noted in his diary that he would “insist on cancelling the arrangement if HMQ [Farah] has to walk behind Queen Elizabeth at the opening ceremony”.²¹⁶⁷ In addition, if one takes Parsons’ accounts to be accurate, Ashraf was also very demanding about protocol. Turning to corruption, Amanat argues that it was “intrinsic” and “institutionalised” at “every level of government” in Qajar Persia.²¹⁶⁸ Meanwhile, even in the 1970s, the problem persisted, evidenced by Alam’s numerous references to government attempts to “combat” corruption.²¹⁶⁹ Radji also referred to the subject fairly frequently. For instance in 1978 he recorded in his diary that Hoveyda had said “corruption at the top” of the Iranian government was “rampant on a shameless scale”, involving the Shah’s family and Pahlavi Foundation.²¹⁷⁰ Even the Shah himself recognised the problem, referring to the need for eradicating corruption in his 1977 book *Toward the Great Civilization*. In the end, it was one of grievances that aggravated the opposition and contributed to his downfall.²¹⁷¹

Finally, regarding accusations of sycophancy, Alikhani said it was the “order of the day” during the time of the Shah,²¹⁷² whilst Radji hated himself for his “attitude of complete sycophancy” during audiences

²¹⁶⁴ Abbas Amanat, ‘Courts and Courtiers: In the Qajar Period’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 5 Dec. 1993, <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/courts-and-courtiers-vii>> [accessed: 26.10.16].

²¹⁶⁵ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 202.

²¹⁶⁶ Buchan, *Days*, p. 51.

²¹⁶⁷ Alam, *Confidential*, Entry, 17 March 1977, p. 473.

²¹⁶⁸ Amanat, *Pivot*, p. 4-7.

²¹⁶⁹ See for instance, Alam, *Confidential*, Entry, 2 Feb., 4 Feb., 9 Feb. 1976, p. 466-470.

²¹⁷⁰ Radji, Entry, 5 Aug. 1978, p. 208.

²¹⁷¹ Afkhami, *Life*, p. 333.

²¹⁷² Alam, *Confidential*, p. 18.

with his sovereign.²¹⁷³ Alam meanwhile thought the Shah had no complexes, save for “an occasional liking for flattery”, and a tendency to accept the lies from sycophants that Iranians were “so accustomed to”.²¹⁷⁴ The British were no paragons of honesty, and they even participated in system of Pahlavi corruption, whilst also perjuring in court. It would appear, however, that wholesale digestion of Said’s often useful polemic is not necessarily prudent, especially with respect to Persian elite culture. In other words a longstanding British stereotype of Persian habits might occasionally have been a relative truism, which Iranians themselves attested to.

As to the last continuity prevalent within the case studies, there was a genuine respect and friendship which often pervaded Anglo-Persian interactions, despite the derogation and the generalisations. This was particularly the case in the 1970s when British officials often treated their Iranian counterparts as their professional equals. This was certainly the case with Alam, Hoveyda and Radji. Parsons meanwhile, developed a close and emotional relationship with the Shah, as well as a genuine respectful friendship with Hoveyda and Khalatbari. Indeed, the former ambassador even dedicated his book to their memory, after they “went to their deaths with exemplary courage and dignity” after the revolution.²¹⁷⁵ Meanwhile, Loraine had “cried like a kid” on leaving his staff and also the “Persians, with whose life” he had “become so much intertwined”. Finally in 1873, Her Majesty and His Majesty seemed to build a genuine monarchical rapport, evidenced by their positive accounts of each other in their diary and memoir respectively.

THE EFFICACY OF PERFORMANCE

We now come to the final section of the conclusion which seeks to tentatively determine whether or not theatricalised diplomacy had the ability to produce the desired or intended result, that is to say, did it further Britain’s foreign policy aims in Persia. Such a conclusion can only be provisional, due to the absence of many Persian sources which would have provided an official Iranian perspective on the effects of Britain’s impression management. By assessing Anglo-Iranian relations in the immediate aftermath of each case study in relation to the objectives and foreign policy aims that Britain was pursuing, one can however, shed some light on the efficacy of performance in international relations. Furthermore, British government documents, including Browne’s post-mortem, shed light on Britain’s own assessment on their foreign policy strategies in Persia. In 1873, it would appear that the British did not take into consideration the possibility of the Shah looking up the country’s industrial achievements and seeing only its soot covered poor suffering in poverty in cramped urban environments. Since Victorians were seemingly wedded to the idea that industrialisation meant progress, this could not be avoided. Precipitating a Persian push for cotton factories was not, however, the British foreign policy aim in Persia. The primary aim was to maintain good relations with Persia as a buffer state, without

²¹⁷³ Radji, Entry, 19 July 1976, p. 18.

²¹⁷⁴ Alam, *Confidential*, Entry, 13 April 1974, p. 364.

²¹⁷⁵ Parsons, *Pride*, p. x.

having to commit to closer cooperation. Although relations in the 1870s were cordial enough, the lack of substance behind Britain's Overt Cordiality did mean that Russia became more influential in Iran until the charm offensive of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff in 1889. That being said, Iran remained as an independent buffer state. Furthermore, I contend that had Britain refused to engage with the theatrical side of diplomacy in 1873, by either declining the Shah's request to visit the country, or by laying on a lacklustre reception, the damage to British interests would have been far more palpable.

With respect to the 1920s, it would seem that Loraine's performance was the key to holding Britain's performance and position in Iran together. Despite continuing with his programme of centralisation, which necessarily meant a reduction of British influence, Reza Khan seemingly had some respect for the British envoy. By his departure Loraine had also gone some way to repairing Britain's damaged image in Iran, at least amongst elite circles. Through the use of sabre rattling and Loraine's stern, yet gentlemanly remonstrations, Reza Khan had also come to know where Britain's red lines were, most notably in the context of A.P.O.C. which he did move to nationalise. He never crossed this line, however British professions of power were clearly not sufficient enough to prevent the persistence of Persian "pin-pricks" which precipitated a strategic re-orientation to the Arab Littoral. Finally the case for efficacy during the 1970s is perhaps more certifiable. Despite lagging slightly behind competitors like Japan and Germany, Britain successfully managed to secure close and lucrative relations with the Shah, mostly dispelling former suspicions of foul-play. The country also managed to cut an image of persistent power, despite the Shah's penchant for poking fun at Britain's post-imperial decline. It is also clear that if Britain had not gone to such great lengths to please the Shah with shows of Overt Cordiality, British interests would likely have suffered as a result. In this sense I err on the side of Parsons as opposed to Browne, who argued that the Shah's bark was worse than his bite. On the contrary, if not petted appropriately, Parsons was probably right in thinking that the Shah could bite into Britain's vital business ventures with Iran.

As a final observation I would stress again that diplomacy is *not* theatre, however diplomacy without theatre, is equally *not* diplomacy. The management of international relations rests fundamentally on an appreciation for the theatrical, and the use of various extra-linguistic forms of communication. This was recognised by its practitioners over a hundred and fifty period of Anglo-Iranian relations. Moreover, this was a reality irrespective of Britain's material economic, political and military condition. Even at the height of its imperial power diplomatic representatives of the British state had to theatricalise their diplomacy when trying to further their foreign policy aims with Persia, which was to the British, a mere "second-rate Oriental power".

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