

Oslo 24th. December 2002

Under the Surface,

Dear Readers,

Just a few days ago a very kind internet friend whom I may yet have the pleasure of meeting sent me the transcript of a telegram addressed to the private office of Mohamad Reza Shah on 27th October 1949, by our Prime Minister, Mohamad Saed Maragheh who had been dispatched to London by Mohammad Reza Shah under the pretext of medical treatment.

On the surface, this telegram may look insignificant, but to a professional eye each word conveys quite a lot.

Quote

ازلندن
تاریخ ۲۷ اکتبر ۴۹
وزارت دربارشاهنشاهی - تهران

تعقیب تلگراف ۲۹ مهر سوم ابان با وزیر دارایی چهارم با وزیرامورخارجه ملاقات نتیجه مطالعات را خواستم.
وزیرامورخارجه پاسخ کتبی تذکاریه را داده توضیح داده بارسیدگی دقیق ازقبول نظریه ایران راجع به مالیات بر درآمد ازشرکت نفت ایران وانگلیس معذورند زیرا موافقت نامه اخیر باشرکت تمام این موضوعات را حل ومنافع ایران را تامین نموده است درپاسخ نظریات خود را تکرار وخصوصا تذکر دادم که بعد ازانتشار بیلان شرکت چنانکه معلوم شد که دولت انگلیس ازشرکت ۲۸ میلیون لیره مالیات اخذ ودر مقابل نصف این مبلغ با(قرارداد) جدید وثلت ان با قرارداد سابق عاید ایران میگردد

درافکارعامه ایران هیجانی تولید ومخالفت باموافقت نامه جدیدرا تشدید و وضعیت دولت را مشکل نموده است و ایران که ازهیچ نوع کمک از متفقین خود استفاده نکرده امیدش فقط بمنافع نفت بوده است که مقدار کلی ان بعنوان مالیات ازطرف دولت انگلیس گرفته میشود و حق این بود که بیست در صد ان به ایران برگردد. وزیر امورخارجه در پاسخ مشکلات قبول این تقاضا را تکرار نمود و در خاتمه اضافه نمود برای کمک به خاورمیانه و ایران با امریکا در تماس بوده مذاکره مینماییم.
مستدعی است مراتب بشرفعرض ملوکانه برسد.

ساعد

London Original Date 27/10/1949

The Royal Office - Teheran

Following the telegram of 21st October instant, having met the Chancellor on the 25th and the Foreign Secretary on 26th instant I asked for the result of their deliberations. The Foreign Secretary gave a written reply to our *aide-mémoire* and explained that after

a detailed study they cannot agree to the Iranian Government's request as the recent agreement with the Company had addressed all such matters and guaranteed the rights of Iran. I reiterated our position with specific emphasis on the fact it was only after the publication of Company accounts it became known that British Government had charged the Company the sum of 28 million pounds in income tax, a sum which is twice under the new (contract) and a third under the old contract of what the Iranian Government would have earned.

The above fact has caused enormous public resentment in Iran, increasing the opposition to the new contract and it would have been right for Iran who has not received any compensation or assistance from the Allied Powers and its only source of revenue is oil, a large portion of which is paid as tax to the British Government, Iran has to get at least twenty per cent back. The Foreign Secretary repeated their objections to our request and finally added that he has been in contact with the Americans to discuss aid for the Middle East and Iran. I humbly request your informing His Majesty accordingly.

Saed

Notes:

1. On 17th July 1949, the Iranian Government and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had come up with a supplemental contract amending the 1933 contract which had replaced the 1901 D'Arcy concession. This additional contract was never ratified by Iran.

A: This was not an isolated correspondence. Mr. Saed refers to earlier telegrams he had sent about the same subject.

B: It shows that it is part of a lengthy ongoing process between the Representatives of our country in England and the relevant British Authorities to make the British Government reconsider their mean position towards the revenue of the Iranian Government and British Petroleum or Anglo Iranian Oil Company as it was known then. Her Majesty's government had a nasty habit of deferring everything to the 'Company' as and when it suited. Yet they would get fully involved whenever their interests were in danger.



محمد ساعد مراغمانی نخست‌وزیر

C: The Shah had delegated the Prime Minister to finalize the lengthy hard discussion for the following reasons: It is not customary for any Ambassador or head of a delegation to take up such a delicate matter with the local authorities. Mr. Saed must have received adequate instruction from the Shah to bring the ongoing yet fruitless dialogue with the British Government to a conclusion.

D: The Iranian Embassies all over the world had received specific orders that they were not authorized to discuss oil matters. They had to refer any such matter directly to Tehran.

Only Mr. Saed as Prime Minister had the authority to talk direct to the British Authorities in this instance.

E: The telegram is addressed to the Private Office of the Shah, rather than as was customary to the Foreign Ministry. This indicates that nobody was aware of the contact with the British authorities, probably, including the Foreign Minister.

E: The Shah by sending his prime minister under the pretext of medical treatment was using a safe & a subtle way to convince the British that the treatment that Iranian government gets from the British authorities was unfair & unjustified to the Iranian Nation.

G: Mr. Saed does not name the British authorities referring to them by their job titles. At that time, Britain was governed by Labour Party with Clement Attlee as Prime Minister, Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary & Sir Christopher Cripps as Chancellor of Exchequer (equivalent of Treasurer and Finance Minister).

H: Upon his return to Tehran the Iranian journalists pressed the Prime Minister to explain what he was up to while in England? Mr. Saed refrained to answer. One of them even put the question to Mr. Saed in Azarbayjani Dialect. Even that didn't work.

This document indicates to the constant effort of Pahlavi Regime to snatch more revenue for our oil from the British. Since the time that Reza Shah opened one of the oil valves for the oil to pour into the sea for a few seconds at the consternation of the B.P. Officials in 1993, protesting that the amount of oil wasted means millions of pounds loss to the B.P. It is necessary to remember the lengthy discussion in our Majles Shoraye Meli (Parliament) At those days. Mr. Taghi Zadeh who was elected to the Parliament on, 7th. of Bahman 1327 (January 1949) in reply to the accusations of another M.P. Mr. Abbas Eskandri, said "Cancellation & renegotiation of oil concession was part of ongoing program by late Reza Shah to dispose of all the concessions of Iranian Natural recourses to foreigners."

Till the last days of Pahlavi dynasty, they never ceased their struggle to safe guard our interests.

I leave the rest to the history.

**Best regards,
H. Hakimi,
Norway**

P.S. I have the original Telegram. Any historian who is willing to study the original I shall gladly cooperate.