

The BBC Persian Service, 1940-1953, and the Nationalization of Iranian Oil

Hossein Shahidi, BBC

Introduction

The BBC's foreign language services, beginning with Arabic, were born out of the Second World War, in response to radio propaganda by Nazi Germany aimed at undermining British influence. The Persian Service was launched on 28 December 1940¹, nearly three years later than the BBC's Arabic Service (3 January 1938),² and ten months after Radio Iran had gone on the air -- with German assistance.³

One of the BBC's first Persian broadcasters was Mojtaba Minovi, a leading Iranian intellectual, who later became a distinguished scholar of Persian literature. He had come to Britain on a study tour, but had stayed on for fear of political persecution by Reza Shah's regime, and was teaching Persian at Oxford University.⁴ Minovi's decision to join the BBC was considered so important that it was reported at the beginning of a confidential memo which concluded that "we are now ready to go ahead with the Persian broadcast."⁵ By mid-September 1941, well before the end of his first year with the BBC, Minovi had read the broadcasts which were "reputed to have driven the Shah from his throne."⁶

Minovi was joined at the BBC a few years later by Mas'ud Farzad, who had been his fellow-member, along with Sadeq Hedayat and Bozorg Alavi, of the *Rab'eh*, or "Group of Four," a title they had chosen to mock a circle of established literary figures known as the *Sab'eh*, or "Group of 7."⁷ The BBC Persian-language team also included a British scholar, Laurence Paul Elwell-Sutton. Having worked for the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the AIOC,⁸ Elwell-Sutton later went on to write a passionate defence of the movement for the nationalisation of Iranian oil as lecturer in Persian at Edinburgh University,⁹ where he ended his career as professor of Iranian Studies.¹⁰ The very first Persian broadcast was made by Hasan Movaqqar-Balyuzi, who presented the BBC's "friendly greetings" to all "*goosh-dahandegan-e Irani* (Iranian listeners) and Persian-speakers, wherever in the world they

may be." The cumbersome term "goosh-dahandegan" was later replaced with the more familiar "shenavandegan."¹¹

The first broadcasts were 15-minute news bulletins, four days a week. Under the guidance of the British Embassy in Tehran,¹² there were soon daily transmissions, consisting mostly of commentaries about the war. There was also music, and readings from classical Persian poetry.¹³ As Iranian oil was fuelling the Royal Navy and much of the British economy, oil was also among the topics that the Embassy wanted the BBC to cover in its commentaries.¹⁴

While the BBC's Persian Service is remembered for its part in undermining Reza Shah, the early programmes were criticised as being too sympathetic to him. Less than two months after the Persian broadcasts had begun, officials of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company warned the BBC "against the dangers of excessive flattery of the Shah" whom many Iranians blamed for the restrictions placed on their liberties, "hordes of officials who surrounded them, and the rising cost of living."¹⁵ The turning point came in June 1941, when the Nazis' attack on the Soviet Union raised the possibility of German access to the oil fields of the Caucasus and Iran.¹⁶ In August, British and Soviet forces occupied Iran, although it had declared neutrality in the War. During the three days of 25-27 August, while the invading troops were fighting the Iranian forces, the BBC's Iranian staff protested by refusing to go on the air. They did, however, assist in translating the news, which was read by Elwell-Sutton.¹⁷

Diplomatic manoeuvres

The BBC's campaign against Reza Shah, "strictly based on despatches" from the British embassy in Tehran, began in September,¹⁸ with the bulletins speaking of the Iranian people's desire for freedom, democracy, and the full implementation of Iran's constitution. A few days later, the BBC said the Crown Jewels were reported to have been removed from Tehran, adding that "it is assumed that the object is to safeguard the jewels, and not to remove from Iranian territory this valuable State possession." There then followed direct charges against Reza Shah, including the use of forced labour in his textile mills, and the allegation that he had caused water shortage in Tehran by diverting the capital's water supply to "properties on which the Shah grows vegetables for the Tehran market."¹⁹

Following Reza Shah's abdication in favour of his son on 16 September, the BBC aimed to dampen the Iranians' expectations for political reform. They were warned that the transition from "despotism" to "a truly constitutional government [...] must of necessity be gradual and will demand [...] considerable patience." "The return of constitutional government," the BBC said, "must be based on co-operation, constructive – not destructive – criticism, and, above all, unselfishness." Otherwise, "there may easily be a return, in one form or another, to the despotism which it has been so difficult to remove."²⁰

In its early months, the BBC's Persian Service had been no match for Berlin radio which attacked Britain and also criticised Reza Shah. Broadcasts by the German station's star announcer, Bahram Shahrokh, they were thought to have led to the murder of his father, the Zoroastrian businessman, Arbab Kaikhosrow Shahrokh, by government agents.²¹ But with the fall of Reza Shah, the BBC, known in Iran as "Radio London," reached such a status that even the Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammad-Ali Foroughi used it to broadcast a statement, albeit anonymously, "attributed to a distinguished Iranian student of foreign affairs who is also a friend of Great Britain."²²

Five years on, the War had come to an end, but increasing political turmoil had led to strikes and food riots; many political organisations had emerged, the Tudeh party being the largest and best organised of them; and there had been centrifugal tendencies in the provinces, notably in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. The Soviet Union's request for an oil concession in northern Iran had led to opposition from Iranian nationalists who were also very critical of the Anglo-Iranian oil agreement of 1933. In the oil producing regions, Iranian oil workers were in protest against the AIOC over pay and working conditions. In July 1946, a general strike by the oil workers ended in violence and British forces were deployed near Abadan.²³

Battleships and broadcasts

In June 1946 British warships anchored in Iraqi waters, the BBC was informed by the British Government that "once again" the Persian Service may be called upon "to take direct action in the way of power propaganda." Information provided by the Foreign Office had made it "quite apparent" that the

situation with regard to Britain's oil interests in Iran "may become critical before the end of the summer and the protection of those interests" would be "secured by whatever means may prove necessary."²⁴

A Foreign Office document entitled "Publicity in Persia"²⁵ explained that should it be "decided to put pressure on the Persian Government by reducing its royalties in retaliation for stoppages or by threatening intervention or by any other measures, our propaganda machine should be ready to support our actions by seeing to it, when required, that the facts and implications are widely known." The BBC, the document said, "can be brought into action at a few hours' notice. The rest must be done on the spot. If the local machine is not adequate for the purpose or if the necessary publicity material is not available H.M. Ambassador should make immediate recommendations with a view to remedying the situation."

The line of publicity, said the Foreign Office paper, "must depend on the policy which is to be adopted. Thus, for example, it would be harmful publicity to attack the whole Tudeh party so long as there is any hope of splitting it; or to attack the Prime Minister [Qavam] for the failure of the Government [which included three ministers from the Tudeh Party] to introduce reforms until we have abandoned hope of working with him."

However, the paper recommended that efforts be made to "rebut the vague general accusation that we favour reaction" and to point out "that in September 1941, it was the BBC, not Russian broadcasts, which gave the call for reform" in Iran. "Maximum publicity" was to be given to the social reforms introduced by Britain's Labour government, and there was a recommendation to "openly attack Communism, emphasizing its oppressive character, its foreign inspiration and its indifference to any humanitarian consideration."²⁶

The BBC only expressed concern over the style in which such broadcasts were to be made, and these concerns were easily resolved. The Foreign Office "readily accepted" the BBC's request that "anything in the nature of ultimative [sic] demands on Persia [...] should be attributed to [the British] Government as such and not diluted by the formulae such as 'authoritative quarters', 'an informed correspondent', etc." The Foreign Office also acknowledged the concern raised by the BBC managers that in the immediate post-war conditions "most people – and BBC editorial and production staff are no exception – are extremely sensitive to any special directive

which they feel might be attributable to reactionary antipathy to the Soviet [sic]."²⁷

A few weeks later, the Foreign Office asked the BBC to broadcast as anonymous "open letters" two telegrams from the British embassy in Tehran, which criticised some Iranian newspapers for their "violent and sustained anti-British" campaign. The first "letter" was broadcast in circumstances, the BBC said later, "which had offered no time for discussion."²⁸ However, the BBC declined to broadcast the second "letter," which suggested that the anti-British Iranian newspapers were inspired by the Soviet Union, with "one specific end, namely, the liquidation of British interests" in Iran. This, warned the "open letter," would only lead to a vacuum which "would immediately be filled by a new and sinister form of imperialism." The Embassy's cable also denied that Britain was opposed to the Tudeh Party "whose ostensible proclaimed ideals bear a striking similarity to those of the British Labour Party" which was in power at the time.²⁹

The BBC argued that "purely on grounds of effective broadcast standards" it "could not accept a further anonymous effusion of this kind" and asked the Foreign Office "whether this kind of demarche could not be issued, on modified form, under some official and quotable source of origin." In the meantime, the BBC offered to edit the "letter" "at the BBC's absolute discretion and for attribution to 'a correspondent' (specifically not to 'our Correspondent')" to be broadcast as "an end-of-bulletin-item."³⁰

In further communications with the Foreign Office, the BBC acknowledged that, legally, it could be asked by the British government to broadcast anything for which the government would accept full and open responsibility, although this was "an eventuality to be avoided if it is possible to do so by fair negotiation." Thus, the BBC would "accept special communiqués or comments for broadcast, to be attributed in all cases to 'a British official course'." The Foreign Office was warned, however, that if such statements were "excessively provocative in nature or excessively violent in tone," they would "almost certainly evoke equally violent refutation or other reaction" which the BBC would have to cover, in order to demonstrate the "objectivity and reliability" of its news service.³¹

The Dear Listeners

On a visit to Iran in 1949, the head of the Persian Service, L. A. Woolard, found the BBC in "very high" regard and reported that the BBC news service's war-time "reputation for integrity" had been "fully maintained in the strained years of peace."³² Many listeners said they often heard the first news of events in Iran from the BBC.³³ Some Iranians, "notably" the journalists in Tehran, did suspect that the Persian Service was "regarded by the British government as a convenient channel" to influence the Iranian public opinion. But most people regarded "the mere existence" of the Persian Service "as a gesture of friendship and co-operation on the part of Britain."³⁴

The audience included "doctors, teachers, journalists, civil servants, students (especially those working in the AIOC), shop-keepers, merchants and artisans." Most listeners lived in provincial cities and small villages. With few radio sets around, most listened in cafés.³⁵ On a tour of Isfahan, Woolard found people in "30 to 40 cafés (some of them crammed to the doors) contentedly listening to a talk by Minovi" -- whose "intellectual vigour and bellicose style" had earned him the reputation of the best Persian broadcaster on any station.³⁶

However, many listeners found the programmes "too academic and 'literary'." Several listeners in Rasht said that "all this poetry and literature" was "very well for Isfahan and Shiraz, but we are practical people."³⁷ Even Minovi had his critics, with young listeners complaining that he went "too deeply into the literature of the past." When he did deal with the present, with "attacks on contemporary writers," some of the targets would complain of his "bad manners."

The "graver issues" about Minovi, said Woolard, were his "occasional broadcasts on political themes." These were invariably reported to the Shah, who would then complain to the British ambassador. Woolard suggested that Minovi should devote more attention to contemporary themes, and "exercise greater tact in handling subjects which are directly or indirectly related to Iran's internal politics."³⁸ Soon after Woolard's return from Iran, Minovi left the BBC with an offer to teach at Tehran University.³⁹ Mas'ud Farzad left the following year,⁴⁰ after the BBC had become deeply involved in the oil dispute.

Radios against Communism

While in Iran, Woolard also met the former pro-Nazi broadcaster from Berlin, Bahram Shahrokh, who was now Director of Tehran Radio. Shahrokh praised the BBC's Persian Service, and arranged to relay some of its programmes on Tehran radio.⁴¹ Visiting London in the spring of 1950, Shahrokh agreed to relays from Iran of the BBC's Russian transmissions, which were being jammed by the Soviet Union. He also asked the BBC for anti-communist material, including "a supply of seditious jokes." The BBC agreed to help.⁴²

Shahrokh also met senior AIOC officials, Neville Gass and A. H. T. Chisholm, to discuss a propaganda campaign in support of the Supplemental Agreement on oil, which had been concluded between AIOC and the Iranian government, and which Britain was keen to be passed by the Majlis.⁴³ A BBC news report about the meeting led to Shahrokh's dismissal in June⁴⁴ on charges of treason.⁴⁵ However, he was reinstated in November, when the Prime Minister, General Razamara, decided that he needed "a clever man to help get the Supplemental Oil Agreement passed through the Majlis."⁴⁶

Shahrokh's first act upon return to office was the suspension of both the BBC and the Voice of America relays by Tehran radio.⁴⁷ The decision followed a VOA attack on the Soviet Ambassador to Iran, Ivan Sadchikov, who had taken a leading part in the conclusion of a trade agreement with Razmara's government. The agreement had been "universally praised" in Iran as "heralding new and friendlier relations between the two countries." Referring to Sadchikov's 1946 negotiations with Qavam, which led to the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Iran, and the bloody suppression of the leftist "Azarbaijan Republic," the Voice of America commentary had described the Soviet Ambassador as "the Butcher of Azarbijan."⁴⁸

Responding to the British embassy's protest against the suspension of the BBC relays, "which had recently given no cause for complaint," Shahrokh said he could not ban the VOA and retain the BBC without giving his opponents an opportunity to call him "a British spy." He further explained that his first and most important task, as instructed by Razamara and the Shah, was to turn public opinion in favour of the Supplemental Oil Agreement. To this end, Shahrokh said, "his first tactics would be to be more nationalist than the patriots of the National Front" -- an approach which the British Embassy considered "very dangerous," as "once

nationalist sentiments are aroused it is difficult to keep them under control.”⁴⁹

The British embassy was soon proved right. The Supplemental Agreement was withdrawn from the Majlis on 26 December 1950. Prime Minister Razmara was assassinated on 7 March 1951. A bill to nationalise the oil industry, introduced by the National Front, was passed unanimously by the Majlis on 15 March and by the Senate five days later. By 1 May, both houses of parliament had passed the Nine-Article Bill for the Implementation of Nationalisation, and the National Front's leader, Dr Mosaddeq had become Prime Minister.⁵⁰

The Post-bag

In April 1951, the BBC was asked by the British embassy in Washington whether a suggestion by the *Economist* magazine, that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company should “enlist the help of the BBC overseas services” was being considered. The aim, the *Economist* had said, would be to explain to the Iranians what the Company was doing for them, and “what would happen if ‘nationalisation’ took place.” Unless the Iranians received such information, the *Economist* had said, “these illiterate people” would “become the helpless tools of nationalist and Russian propaganda.”⁵¹

The BBC said that although the AIOC had been “surprisingly inactive [...] with regard to publicity,” the Corporation had “worked out a line [...] taking into account the Foreign Office briefing meetings.” The BBC had “concentrated on getting information over to the Persians by answering queries about oil and the Oil Company contained in letters from Persian listeners.” The programmes, said the BBC, had shown that the AIOC was “the best employer” in Iran, and that its “greatest service” had “been to give value to the country’s most important natural asset by extracting it from the ground, where it was worthless.”⁵²

In 1946, the BBC had received 17 letters from its Iranian listeners.⁵³ By 1951 there were more than 4,500⁵⁴ -- from “Government employees, students, doctors, merchants, farmers, and landlords.”⁵⁵ The Head of the BBC’s Eastern Service, Gordon Waterfield, said the letters gave “a more comprehensive idea of opinion throughout Persia than any other intelligence received in London.” The letters had been considered so important, said Waterfield, that the Foreign

Office had wanted "to have them replied to individually by letter (possibly signed by the Secretary of State!)"⁵⁶ Waterfield himself wrote an article about the letters for the influential, conservative British newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*, but his superior did not approve the article for publication.⁵⁷ None of the letters quoted in Waterfield's draft article supported Britain or the AIOC.

One listener had asked how England could call "herself the 'Mother of Democracy' and upholder of law and order and deny the same things to us?" Another had wondered why Britain, which had "nationalised her own coal and steel industries," considered it illegal for Iran to nationalise her oil, which was "the property of the people?" Yet another said Britain's oil concessions in Iran were not valid, "just like a contract signed between a child and an adult," because the previous Iranian rulers had been "political sucklings, particularly in their business dealings with the English." Another correspondent suggested that, "if Great Britain wished, she had enough influence to make [Iran] a progressive country and enable the [Iranians] themselves to exploit their own" oil, adding that Iran did "not get one thousandth of the profits."⁵⁸ "There are plenty of answers to these questions," Waterfield said in his draft article, "which we have given in our Persian broadcasts, but I doubt if logical argument is very effective to the Persians in their present mood."⁵⁹

When the AIOC's Iranian employees complained of discrimination, many of them saying they lived in slums, the Foreign Office suggested that the BBC should report the conditions of the Iranian workers at a Russo-Iranian company producing caviar in the Caspian Sea. "It seems," said the Foreign Office, "that the houses of the workers are mud hovels, unlike the brick buildings with porcelain sanitary fittings at Abadan and the fields. There is one small, inadequate hospital, and the pay of the fishermen is below the minimum wage introduced by the Persian Government."⁶⁰ A BBC listener in Golpayegan argued in his letter that, "If Britain had treated us fairly over the oil, the Russians would not have been able to confiscate our gold reserves and plunder out fisheries as the English plunder our oil."⁶¹

In June 1951, while Dr Mosaddeq's government was preparing to take control of Iran's oil industry and Britain was once again deploying military forces in the Persian Gulf, the Foreign Office informed the BBC that the situation in Iran "might at any moment within the next few days become very

serious, and we might have to send Parachute troops into Persia to protect lives." In such a case, "it would be very important to tell the Persians and the rest of the world why we were doing this and the problem that it involved." The BBC was asked if it could "arrange for an extra half-hour of Persian broadcast to Persia, preferably in the morning." The British embassy in Tehran had also asked for an immediate 15 minute increase of the Persian broadcasts,⁶² which at the time consisted of a 45 minute daily transmission starting at 1615 GMT, the same as the Persian Service's main, early evening, transmission today.

The Head of the Eastern Service announced that he could only afford to offer a full-time contract to a part-time Persian language typist who also had "a Supplementary Contract for announcing, news-reading and taking part in features" and also did some translation "under supervision of one of the senior Persian staff." With an expenditure of "something in the neighbourhood of 5 pounds weekly" for these purposes, the BBC would be able to broadcast an extra 15 minute news bulletin, to go out at 1000 GMT, mid-afternoon Tehran time, for "an emergency period which might last a week or a fortnight."⁶³

However, a day after the new broadcast had been launched, the Foreign Office wrote to the highest BBC manager, the Director General, General Sir Ian Jacob, to say that the Government was "most anxious" to increase broadcasts in Persian and that the Secretary of State, Herbert Morrison, had said that this "should be 'intensified'." The ministerial order was coupled with vague promises of Foreign Office funding for a further extension of the broadcasts, if the BBC could prove "up to the hilt that funds could not be found elsewhere without sacrificing something which the Government considers essential."⁶⁴ A week later, a 15 minute dawn transmission had begun. The mid-afternoon transmission was dropped on 27 August,⁶⁵ after Britain had given up plans for military invasion of Iran.

News, Views and Propaganda

The BBC Foreign News Department instructed its staff to provide the new transmissions with "a general world news bulletin – although obviously news about Persia will occupy a considerable portion of its total space as long as the present crisis lasts." At all times, "major news from other parts of the

world” would have to be included, “even if we can do no more than briefly summarise it at the end.” News about Iran itself had to “be objectively written, and should not differ fundamentally from the stories put out by other BBC news services.”⁶⁶

At the same time, the Foreign Office was issuing instructions to the BBC on what line it was to take in broadcasts, and was also supplying the BBC with scripts for transmission and confidential documents to be used as background information. Among others, on 12 July the Foreign Office sent the BBC “a copy of a set of papers which were originally prepared for the use of the Oil Company delegation which went to Tehran last month.” The BBC was advised that “except for the purely historical material, these should be treated as confidential. They may however, even at this stage, help fill in the background.”⁶⁷ The BBC replied that the papers had been “passed on to David Mithcell,” a writer of commentaries, “and will be useful to him.”⁶⁸

On the same day, the BBC was informed in another letter that British “publicity towards Persia” should aim to “destroy Persian confidence in the present policy of the Persian Government on the grounds that” it would “ruin Persian economic, political and social structure,” “alienate British friendship” and “play straight into the hands of the Russians by whom it may even be inspired.” Iranians were also to hear of “British disgust with the composition and conduct of Persian Governments since 1941 on the grounds that: they have been unrepresentative of the people; they have been indifferent to the people’s needs; they have encouraged the idea that they had the support of Britain; they have not made proper use of the revenues received from the oil; they have failed to manage properly such State industries as railways, textiles, silk, canneries and cement. These have either failed to show a profit or have been closed.”

Referring to the order by the International Court of Justice at the Hague for Iran’s suspension of the repossession of the oil industry, which Iran had rejected arguing that the case was not within the Court’s jurisdiction,⁶⁹ the Foreign Office said that it “should like to stress that: (1) No reasonable country or concern is going to buy from the Persian Oil Company oil which should, under the terms of the Hague Court injunction, be sold only by the AIOC; (2) Persia can hardly expect sympathy from the United Nations Organisation if it flouts the ruling of one of its organs; (3) It is odd that Mussadiq should

have said on his accession to power that he adhered to and supported the United Nations Organisation."⁷⁰

Some ten days later, the British ambassador in Tehran, Sir Francis Shepherd, cabled a long and detailed "publicity directive" for the BBC, which aimed "to convince the Persians that however natural and praiseworthy their desire for nationalisation may be, the policy of the present Government can only result in: (a) the collapse of the oil industry and thus of the Persian economy; (b) the destruction of Anglo-Persian friendship and thus of Persian independence; (c) the relapse of Persia into anarchy and communism."

Having prescribed that "all publicity must contain a positive as well as a negative element," the ambassador then offered two sets of "General Themes." The "positive" themes included the assertions that "without Britain's constant support, Persia would not now be independent," and that "Britain has always been on the side of the people as opposed to the selfish and reactionary governing class. The latter has for obvious reasons always claimed to have British support."

The "negative" themes described the nationalisation of the Iranian oil as an action "contrary to international custom" and warned that the Iranian Government's policy would "result in the permanent alienation of Britain," which could "only end in the destruction of Persian independence." The Iranian Government was also described as having followed a "purely negative" policy that had resulted in "stopping the output and distribution of oil, disgusting the British technicians by the interference and discourtesy of government agents and infuriating British public and world opinion."

Another "negative" theme portrayed the Iranian government's policy as being encouraged by the Soviet Union, with the aim of "removing the two principle obstacles to Russian designs, namely British friendship and Persian economic and political stability." And, finally, the BBC was to "deplore the evident indifference of the Persian Government to the dangers of communism," and to warn the government that "if they persist in this indifference to the Soviet menace it is Persia and the Persians who will suffer far more than Britain and the West."

As far as style was concerned, personal attacks on Dr Mosaddeq were to be "avoided altogether" because of "the emotional state of public opinion" in Iran and Dr Mosaddeq's "widespread acceptance" as a national hero. "Castigation of present Government policy and of the self-seeking elements

who are behind it" had to "be accompanied by appreciation of the sufferings, courage and genuine nationalist spirit of the Persian people." There was also advice on the style of writing, with the ambassador saying that "British official statements directed towards world as well as Persian opinion often appear as equivocal when translated into Persian. They should therefore invariably be followed by paraphrase and commentary in clear and unequivocal Persian."⁷¹

Similar advice came in a covering letter from Colonel Geoffrey Wheeler, the recently arrived counsellor at the British embassy, to the Head of the Eastern Service, Gordon Waterfield. Wheeler said he had found that "Mussadiq still remains a popular hero to a degree which I had not myself realised in London" and suggested that personal attacks on such a figure who had "undoubtedly captured the Persian imagination," could isolate his potential opponents. But this did not mean that "we should not attack the adventurers who are manipulating Mussadiq for their own advantages." Wheeler also suggested to Waterfield that "it may be useful for you to have more regular guidance from us in which we can indicate what themes should be reiterated or soft-pedalled."⁷²

In internal BBC comments, Waterfield said he had found the contents of the cable and the letter "unobjectionable" but was not happy with the use of the word "directive" as "the BBC did not receive directives."⁷³ Writing to Wheeler himself, Waterfield said the use of the word "directive" would involve "all sorts of constitutional problems, and if it could be changed to some word like 'suggestions', everything would be fine."⁷⁴ Wheeler agreed to "refrain from using it in future."⁷⁵

Occasionally, there were disagreements over substance between the two sides. One notable case concerned yet another fictitious "open letter," this time against the nationalisation of oil, written at the British embassy in Tehran, and forwarded to the BBC by the Foreign Office in London. The "letter," purportedly written by an Iranian student "in England, the home of world democracy," argued that because of high distribution costs, the Iranian government would have to raise the price of kerosene, and then "the bakers will have to charge more for bread." There could also be "irregularity in the distribution of oil," said the writer, resulting in "discomfort to the people" and "their lack of confidence in the Government's promises."⁷⁶

"I would be grateful," Waterfield said in his reply to the Foreign Office, "if you could tell those concerned at the British Embassy in Tehran that we do not think it is a good thing to put out this sort of letter. We have so many genuine letters to answer that it is unnecessary, and I consider would be very unwise. I seem to remember that they have already sent a previous letter on similar lines and it is a pity that they should spend time drafting such letters, when they must have so much to do."⁷⁷

There were also a number of protests from the British Embassy in Tehran against the BBC. Some protests concerned the reflection of Britain's puzzling, if not self-contradictory, argument that while it accepted "the principle of nationalisation" of the Iranian oil industry, "the transfer of ownership and ultimate authority" to the Iranian Government did "not involve the day to day interference with the management of this highly complicated industry."⁷⁸ In its reply, the BBC said the Embassy must have misheard the commentary.⁷⁹

In another serious case, the Embassy asked why the BBC Persian Service had reported, incorrectly, that Ayatollah Kashani had been arrested on Ahmad Qavam's orders, during the latter's brief appointment as Prime Minister. Being untrue, said the embassy, the report could only be taken as an expression of what Britain "would like Qavam to do. It would thus be more difficult for Qavam to arrest Kashani, while if Kashani was not arrested, this could be claimed as another victory for the National Front and a blow to the British."⁸⁰

Waterfield reported that the English text of the news item had said that, "Among those arrested was the right-hand man of the religious leader, Ayatollah Kashani, who is Dr Mosaddeq's main supporter" but "the translator unfortunately left out 'right-hand man'." Waterfield went on to say that the BBC was "tightening up on the checking of news translation. I am quite sure it was a mistake on the part of the translator and nothing sinister."⁸¹

In general, however, throughout the conflict between Britain and Iran over oil, the embassy was happy with the BBC broadcasts and would provide their texts for publication by Iranian newspapers. In July 1951, when a headline in the Iranian newspaper, *Dad*, said "The BBC is threatening us and talking of explosions in the [Abadan] refinery," the embassy described the broadcasts as "admirable."⁸² When a series of commentaries against the nationalisation of oil caused strong

protests in Iran, the embassy said the broadcasts "have shown that we are thoroughly angry and have done more than a little to emphasise the danger of alienating Britain." The embassy did, however, express doubt as to whether the broadcasts, under the pen-name Mohammad Iranjah, "should continue on the same aggressive note."⁸³

By this time, the broadcasts had already led to attacks on the BBC by Tehran radio, which was now in the hands of Mosaddeq's government. On 10 July, a Tehran radio commentary described the staff of the Persian Service as "anonymous so-called Iranians who are really of British origin." The following day, the radio quoted a cable from "many people in Shushtar," who had expressed "hatred against [...] the slaves of the former Oil Company, that is the BBC, and [...] extreme hatred [for] those few Persian-speaking announcers like that man who introduces himself as Mohammad Iranjah." And on 13 July, another commentary described the BBC broadcasters as "barefaced traitors," similar to Lord Haw-Haw -- the American-born Briton who broadcast Nazi propaganda from Berlin and was hanged for treason after the War.⁸⁴

However, a week later, Iranian media quoted the Iranian embassy in London as saying that the Iranian staff of the BBC had had "nothing to do" with "the pungent remarks" broadcast under the name Iranjah. The BBC's Iranian staff, said the embassy, had "favourable feelings towards Iran"; they had protested against the broadcasts and had even "threatened the administration of Radio London with resignation." The Embassy named the broadcaster as "a certain Hakim-Elahi" who had been teaching "Persian at the School of Oriental Languages [the present School of Oriental and African Studies] since a year ago and who had no official post with [the BBC]." The Embassy also said that necessary steps had been taken "to put an end to his remarks."⁸⁵ Later on, the Persian Section staff announced that they had "unanimously declared" to the BBC management that they would no longer "broadcast the talks of the political commentators, the analysis of the day's news or any other talk related to oil or Dr Mosaddegh's Government,"⁸⁶ a threat which they carried out on several occasions.⁸⁷

Another declaration of patriotism came from Abolqasem Taheri, one of the longest serving Iranians on the BBC's staff. Taheri's weekly programme, "The Listeners' Period," with its clear and witty replies to the listeners' questions, was hugely

popular everywhere -- in Isfahan and Shiraz, as well as in Rasht -- and he was described as having "his finger unerringly on the people's pulse."⁸⁸ As early as 1944, with the World War still on, he had caused controversy in the BBC by broadcasting a series of talks on dancing. Expressions of doubt by a senior BBC manager "both to the suitability of the subject and Taheri's claims to a knowledge of it"⁸⁹ led to a strong memo from the editor of the Persian Service, saying that he had approved the talks. Taheri, said the editor, "has done several talks and features in the past which have been favourably received. He is a contributor who should, in my opinion, be encouraged."⁹⁰

Now, in 1951, writing to Dr Hossein Fatemi, Dr Mosaddeq's advisor and editor of the daily, *Bakhtar-e Emrouz*, Taheri recalled that he had been "the first member of Tehran radio," and said he was writing because "two nights ago, I heard Tehran radio calling every [Iranian] member of the BBC staff a traitor." He then went on to say that neither he nor "any other permanent member of the BBC" had been the "person who shamelessly calls himself Iranian and still attacks the interests of Iran." Those "meaningless words," said Taheri, had belonged to Mr Hakim-Elahi.

"On behalf of two or three of my colleagues," Taheri said, "I declare openly that we shall follow our government's attitude, whatever it may be. No matter how backward our homeland is compared with other countries, we still love even its ruins and graveyards." He ended his letter by saying, "The traitors are those oppressive ruling classes which have dragged our homeland to the present state of affairs and have brought about circumstances that decree that I and people like me should live in foreign countries for nine years and be pleased with the few mouthfuls of bread we get."⁹¹

In a curious twist to the tale, on the very same day that Taheri's letter was published in *Bakhtar-e Emrouz*, another Tehran daily, *Ettella'at*, reported that Hedayatollah Hakim-Elahi, "Professor of Oriental Languages at the University of London" had denied that he had ever broadcast anything on the BBC.⁹² The controversial broadcaster had in fact been Nasrollah Elahi, an "anti-communist, British-educated agriculture specialist with an interest in literature, who had been resident in London at the time." Elahi was later to emigrate to South Africa.⁹³ Although Nasrollah Elahi appears to have started writing for the BBC in 1951 on a freelance basis, or in the BBC jargon as an "outside contributor," by

April 1952 his name was officially registered as a member of staff.⁹⁴

In the midst of the controversy itself, the BBC's Iranian staff were able to turn their short-term contracts into permanent employment by the BBC, arguing that they could not return to Iran in such a hostile environment.⁹⁵

The Moving Fingers Write On

As the conflict over oil escalated, Britain's friends in Iran -- described by the British embassy as "members of the landlord class" -- put their faith in Britain "to rescue them from Communism."⁹⁶ Other Iranians -- including those writing to the BBC -- continued to support Dr Mosaddeq and the movement for the nationalisation of Iranian oil.

One listener, writing in early 1952, described the movement as "more valuable for Iran than the Constitutional Revolution." Another listener said that, when employed by the AIOC in 1920, he and his brother had been "working like animals. What we ate was a handful of flour and a bowl of hot water. There was no house, no room, not even a tent to sleep in. We were working under burning sun, and at night sleeping in the shadows of rocks like insects. A hundred were dying everyday." The writer then said that 10 years later, on a visit to Britain, he had seen "English workers earning 3 or 4 pounds a week" and he had then understood that "there is no justice in what you [the British] do, you don't believe in equality."⁹⁷

Other listeners blamed the AIOC for Iran's difficulties and countered the arguments about oil that they had heard in BBC programmes. If it was true, asked one letter, that nationalisation was costing Iran more than Britain, why was "Britain making such a fuss about it?"⁹⁸ One listener asked, "Why do all the people in the Middle East hate England?" while another expressed the hope that Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne would help settle the oil question peacefully.⁹⁹

While some letters expressed sympathy towards the Soviet Union, one listener wondered "why people are not allowed to come and see the so-called 'promised paradise' for themselves."¹⁰⁰ A listener from Sari, near the Caspian coast, reported that he and his "friends in school" had distributed "a few books containing the truth about communism" to counter "communist propaganda" by the Society of Peace Lovers, a front for the Tudeh Party. "But alas," said the listener, "we

have not got enough books. If you could send a few anti-communist books (in every possible language) we shall be very grateful."¹⁰¹

A listener from Kazeroun, in southern Iran, described himself as "a high school student" and one of his teachers as "a member of the Tudeh Party - a traitor towards his country," who was "trying to delude the boys in his class." "Only my friend and I," said the writer, "stand up against him and try to open the other boys' eyes to what he is doing." This writer too wanted the BBC to send him "a book, in Persian" to help with the arguments against his teacher, but did not wish his name or his request to be broadcast. He declared, "I will willingly carry out any task you may wish me to perform here."¹⁰²

The British Foreign Office asked the BBC for the writer's name and address, saying, "it is possible that this student may also be able to help us." "Naturally," said the Foreign Office, "we would take every precaution to see he was not compromised."¹⁰³ The Foreign Office also offered to send the listener "some literature from the British Embassy" in Tehran.¹⁰⁴ The BBC asked for the material to be sent from London, through the Corporation.¹⁰⁵

"The Sleeping Colonel"

In 1952, most letters still displayed respect towards the British people and affection for the BBC Persian Service. A listener in Isfahan said the BBC's programmes were "a source of delight," as different from other countries' Persian programmes as "my terrestrial moon is different from the moon in the sky." A listener in Nahavand, in western Iran, said "the good thing about your programme is that it suits every taste." Another in Shiraz praised the staff of the Persian Service because "they broadcast the best and most artistic aspects of Persia's ancient culture from the most important radio station in the world."¹⁰⁶

But there were also angry letters, mostly about news and commentaries on the oil dispute. A BBC report that had said Dr Fatemi was in poor health, was followed by a letter from a listener saying that "in spite of the corrupt and lying propaganda of Radio London," Dr Fatemi was "quite well." "Thank heaven," said the writer, "that the bullet fired from the London terrorists' gun missed its mark. Down with the shameless lie-mongers of London!"¹⁰⁷

One BBC commentator, Colonel Pybus, who had worked at the Political Information Department of the Foreign Office,¹⁰⁸ was a particular cause of rage, especially after writing that "Dr Mossadeq had interfered with the free expression of opinions in elections," had "wasted the currency reserves" and had "offended the Shah's Court, the Senate, the USA and world opinion."¹⁰⁹ "Mr Colonel," said one listener, "you cannot throw mud on our great leaders, whose names are already printed in block letters in the most important newspapers in the world. I repeat again and again that Mossadeq and other [Iranian] leaders are neither communist nor terrorist and our election this time is one of the freest and fairest that Iran has ever had. For us, Russia, America and Britain are all the same. We won't permit any foreign country to interfere with our internal affairs anymore."

Another listener had a message, which he wanted "the sleepy BBC announcer" to translate and read for Colonel Pybus "as a morning song" and to tell the Colonel that "he is asleep." "You old perverted mislead Colonel," the listener said, "Iranians won't not be led astray by your preaching [...] we no longer want either the deceiving English, nor the foolish Russians, nor the conceited Americans." The writer then warned the British, who by this time had left Iran, that "if they set foot in Abadan we will cane them."

The letter then addressed the British directly, saying "You foolish foxes, you never thought that one day we would be angry and cut your throat with our teeth." Finally, though, the writer adopted a plaintive tone, saying, "Please let us clothe ourselves and feed ourselves. Why do you try to be so inhumane? Why don't you want us to have a thousandth of what you have, and feed ourselves with the leftovers?"¹¹⁰

Another listener with mixed feelings began by addressing the Iranian staff of the BBC "as descendants of Darius" who "for some unmentionable cause" were showing their "treacherous nature." But the listener ended his letter by saying, "Because I do not want to leave the impression that I am angry with you, I will ask you to play a record for my niece."¹¹¹

There were many more requests for music, mostly Iranian, as well as letters on issues other than politics and oil. A listener in Qom found the English language lessons boring and wanted them stopped; others wanted the number of lessons to be doubled.¹¹² One listener reported that he was compiling the

medical talks by an Iranian doctor and binding them in book form.

Some letters were in praise of the Persian Service's plays, such as the dramatisation of the story of Bijan and Manijeh; others asked for more comedies. A listener in Kerman wanted a comedy to be broadcast for the benefit of his uncle "who never laughs and is always worrying."¹¹³ Three years earlier, during the visit to Iran by the head of the Persian Service, L. A. Woolard, a listener in Abadan had said, "Iran is a sad country – you should try to make us laugh." "I am sure," Woolard had said in his report, "that the infusion of a leavening of humour into the programme is a reform for which many other listeners would be grateful."¹¹⁴

Defeat and Dejection

A year after the 1953 coup, the new director of Tehran Radio, Esfandiar Bozorgmehr, travelled to Britain for a two-week tour which included visits to the BBC and the Houses of Parliament, as well as Cambridge University, various museums and art galleries, and the London Zoo.¹¹⁵ Discussing the possibility of the visit, the Foreign Office asked the British Embassy in Tehran whether Bozorgmehr was likely to have "odd domestic habits" similar to those possessed by "our last visitor from a Middle Eastern country who turned out to be a drug fiend with an obsession for women."¹¹⁶ The Embassy replied, "He is by no means a strict Muslim, likes his glass of whisky and has no objection to visiting places on a Friday. He has the look of a bon viveur, but we think it unlikely that he will disgrace himself," in the manner described by the Foreign Office.¹¹⁷

Meanwhile, the BBC's Persian Service was faced with jamming from the Soviet Union¹¹⁸ and a change of attitude among its listeners. Visiting Iran in October 1955, Woolard discovered that the Service had "to all intents and purposes been blotted from the radio map of Persia by poor reception." He heard "a chorus of complaints" about the signal, "some delivered more in sorrow than in anger, others with an undercurrent of malicious satisfaction." Iranians were reluctant to search for the BBC which was often "a torture to the ear" when they could listen to the powerful transmissions of Radio Tehran or Russian stations, or even the Voice of America, which was "troubled by interference but not to anything like the same extent as" the BBC.

Once again, he was able to meet people "high and low: one evening dining with the Governor of a Province; the next sharing the humble fare of the villagers in some little chaikhaneh." "If I have to sum up my impressions of both parties," he wrote from Hamedan, "I should say: for the ordinary man, mental apathy, disillusionment and fear of tomorrow; for the governing classes, a slightly apologetic repudiation of responsibility for the present state of affairs.

"There is a total lack of trust between government and people, class and class and man and man which is quite desolating. Even two friends talking across the table in a restaurant garden have a slightly conspiratorial air, and some of the melancholy faces one sees in the streets and cafes cry aloud for an El Greco, a Rembrandt or a Goya. A portrait painter without a social conscience would find this country a paradise! For those whose approach to life is not purely aesthetic the only thing to do is to grow an extra skin and observe the Persian scene with clinical detachment."¹¹⁹

Endnotes

- ¹ BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), "BBC PERSIAN SERVICE – General Background, and specific notes on the operational, abdication and post-abdication periods – Confidential," no date, page 1. (Unless otherwise stated, all BBC documents quoted in this paper have been obtained from WAC.)
- ² *Voice for the World – The Work of the BBC External Services* (London, BBC External Services, 1982), page 7.
- ³ Sasan Sepanta, *Tarikh-e Tahavoll-e Zabt-e Moussiqi dar Iran (The History of Development of Music Recording in Iran)* (Tehran, Sadra, 1987 [1366]), pages 301-303.
- ⁴ Mah-Monir Minovi, "Mokhtasari dar barheh-ye Zendegani-ye Ostad" (*The Professor's Brief Biography*), in *Azadi va Azad-jekri* (Freedom and Free-thinking) (Navid Publications, Saarbrücken, Germany, 1988 [1367]), pages 135-136.
- ⁵ WAC, Confidential BBC memo, 12 December 1940.
- ⁶ BBC memo from Miss E. Burton, to Miss Edmond, Secretariat, 23 September 1941.
- ⁷ Homa Katouzian, *Sadeq Hedayat – The Life and Legend of an Iranian Writer* (I.B. Tauris, London & New York, 1991), pages 52-58.
- ⁸ L.P. Elwell-Sutton, *Ghesseh ha-ye Mashdi Gelin Khaanom* (Mashdi Gelin Khanom's Tales, Nashr-e Markaz, Tehran, 1376=1997), page 13.
- ⁹ L. P. Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil* (London, Lawrence and Wishart Ltd. 1955).

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- ¹⁰ See further, Floreeda Safirie's obituary for L.P. Elwell-Sutton, *Journal of Iranian Studies*, autumn 1984.
- ¹¹ BBC Persian Service sound archives.
- ¹² Ministry of Information to BBC, 17 January 1941, reporting the Embassy's view "that a fifth transmission would be useful." A.K.S. Lambton, British Legation, to Professor Rushbrook Williams, Ministry of Information, 17 February 1941, expressing the hope "that your efforts to institute a daily service will be successful."
- ¹³ BBC Persian Service, "General background," page 1.
- ¹⁴ Ministry of Information to the BBC, 17 January 1941.
- ¹⁵ Confidential BBC memo, 4 March 1941, on a meeting with E.H.O. Elkington and Clegg.
- ¹⁶ BBC Near East Department, confidential Monthly Intelligence Report Supplement No. 1, *Broadcast Propaganda to Iran*, 21 August 1941.
- ¹⁷ Confidential memo from L.P. Elwell-Sutton to the Head of Eastern Service, Gordon Waterfield, November 1950. Elwell-Sutton's memo was an account of the 1941 events in the Persian Service, including the strike by the Iranian staff, written for Waterfield who had not been there himself at the time. There was another strike in the Persian Service during the oil dispute in the early 1950s which will be mentioned later in the paper.
- ¹⁸ Elwell-Sutton, confidential memo.
- ¹⁹ BBC News Bulletins, 6-17 September 1941.
- ²⁰ BBC News Bulletin, 19 September 1941.
- ²¹ Tehran daily newspaper, *Iran*, 11-12 Mordad 1378 (12-13 August 1999), page 7.
- ²² Controller, Overseas Services, to Director General of the BBC, Secret BBC memo. 14 November 1941
- ²³ L. P. Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil*, pages 104-149.
- ²⁴ Private and Confidential memo, from the Director of Eastern Services, D. Stephenson, to Controller, (Overseas Services), J. B. Clark, 20 June 1946.
- ²⁵ The BBC continued to refer to Iran as Persia until 29 January 1957 when, under Foreign Office guidance, it was "decreed that henceforth the country to be known as Iran, people to be called Iranians. Language continues as Persian." (Source: BBC note on duration of Persian Service programmes, dated 26 January 1973.) Accordingly, all references to Iran as Persia have been retained in official documents quoted here. When quoting material of Persian language origin, Persia has been substituted with [Iran].
- ²⁶ Draft Foreign Office Paper, *Publicity in Persia*, attached to Stephenson's 20 June 1946 memo.
- ²⁷ Stephenson to Clark, 20 June 1946.
- ²⁸ Stephenson to Clark, 15 August 1946.
- ²⁹ Telegram from the British Ambassador, Le Rougetel, for Cabinet Distribution, 15 August 1946.
- ³⁰ Stephenson to Clark, Confidential memo, 15 August 1946.
- ³¹ Stephenson to Foreign Office, Confidential, 28 August 1946.
- ³² L. A. Woolard, "Report on Tour of Iran," 22 December 1949, page 1.

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- ³³ Woolard, "Report," page 5.
³⁴ Woolard, "Report," page 1.
³⁵ Woolard, "Report," page 2.
³⁶ Woolard, "Report," page 7.
³⁷ Woolard, "Report," page 6.
³⁸ Woolard, "Report," page 7.
³⁹ Minovi, *The Professor's Brief Biography*, page 137.
⁴⁰ BBC Persian Service Staff List, April 1951.
⁴¹ Woolard, "Report," pages 12-13.
⁴² Assistant Head of BBC European Services, D. M. Graham, to Shahrokh, 1 May 1950.
⁴³ Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil*, page 175.
⁴⁴ British Embassy, Tehran, to Foreign Office, Confidential, 20 November 1950.
⁴⁵ Graham to Head of European Presentation, 27 June 1950.
⁴⁶ British Embassy, Tehran, to Foreign Office, 20 November 1950.
⁴⁷ Tehran Radio, 15 November 1950, monitored by the BBC.
⁴⁸ Associated Press report from Tehran, 16 November 1950.
⁴⁹ British Embassy, Tehran, to Foreign Office, Confidential, 20 November 1950.
⁵⁰ Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil*, pages 201-217.
Mostafa Elm, *Oil, Power and Principle* (New York, Syracuse University Press, 1992), pages 72-93.
Homa Katouzian, *Mussaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, pages 92-94.
⁵¹ British Embassy, Washington, to Foreign Office, 23 April 1951.
⁵² Head of Eastern Service, Gordon Waterfield, to Foreign Office, Confidential, 4 May 1950.
⁵³ BBC, "Audience for the BBC Persian Service, 1950-1951," Confidential report, 3 January 1952, page 1.
⁵⁴ Confidential "Bi-Monthly Service Report – Persian Broadcasts," 15 March 1952, page 1.
⁵⁵ Waterfield, "Letters from Persia," unpublished article, 17 May 1951, page 1.
⁵⁶ Waterfield to Controller, Overseas Services, Confidential, 6 June 1951.
⁵⁷ Waterfield to H. Eur.T.E.D., 20 June 1951.
⁵⁸ Waterfield, "Letters," page 4.
⁵⁹ Waterfield, "Letters," page 2.
⁶⁰ Foreign Office to Waterfield, 11 May 1951.
⁶¹ Waterfield, "Letters," page 4.
⁶² Waterfield to Controller, Overseas Services, Confidential, 18 June 1951.
⁶³ Waterfield to Controller, Overseas Services, Confidential, 19 June 1951.
⁶⁴ Foreign Office to Jacob, 21 June 1951.
⁶⁵ BBC note on duration of Persian Service transmissions, 26 January 1973.
⁶⁶ Assistant Head of Foreign Services News Department, circular memo to the news staff, 20 June 1951.
⁶⁷ Foreign Office to Waterfield, Confidential, 12 July 1951.
⁶⁸ Waterfield to Foreign Office, Confidential, 13 July 1951.

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- ⁶⁹ Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil*, page 233-4.
Elm, *Oil, Power and Principle*, pages 122-23.
- ⁷⁰ Foreign Office to Waterfield, Personal and Confidential, 12 July 1951.
- ⁷¹ Shepherd to Foreign Office, Confidential, 23 July 1951.
- ⁷² Wheeler to Waterfield, Confidential, 23 July 1951.
- ⁷³ Waterfield to Controller Overseas Services, Confidential, 27 July 1951.
- ⁷⁴ Waterfield to Wheeler, Confidential, 3 August 1951.
- ⁷⁵ Wheeler to Waterfield, Unclassified, 18 August 1951.
- ⁷⁶ Draft letter attached to "Personal and Confidential" letter from C.F.R. Barclay at the Foreign Office to Waterfield, 12 July 1951.
- ⁷⁷ Waterfield to C.F.R. Barclay, Confidential, 13 July 1951.
- ⁷⁸ British Embassy, Tehran, to Foreign Office, Confidential, 29 July 1951.
- ⁷⁹ Waterfield to Foreign Office, 30 July 1951.
- ⁸⁰ Foreign Office to Waterfield, Confidential, 23 July 1952.
- ⁸¹ Waterfield to Foreign Office, Confidential, 25 July 1952.
- ⁸² Foreign Office to Waterfield, 7 July 1951.
- ⁸³ Wheeler to Waterfield, 23 July 1951.
- ⁸⁴ Tehran Radio, monitored by the BBC.
- ⁸⁵ *Ettella 'at*, 29 Tir 1330 (19 July 1951), page 7.
- ⁸⁶ *Ettella 'at*, 6 Mordad 1330 (28 July 1951), page 7.
- ⁸⁷ Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil*, page 242.
- ⁸⁸ Woolard, "Report," page 8.
- ⁸⁹ Near Eastern Programme Organiser, E.H. Paxton, to Persian Editor, V.H. Glendenning, 2 October 1944.
- ⁹⁰ Glendenning to Paxton, 4 October 1944.
- ⁹¹ Tehran Radio, 30 July 1951, quoting *Bakhtar-e Emrouz*, monitored by the BBC.
- ⁹² *Ettella 'at*, 8 Mordad 1330 (30 July 1951), page 5.
- ⁹³ Interview with Nasrollah Elhai's cousin, Dr Sadreddin Elahi.
- ⁹⁴ BBC Persian Service Staff List, April 1952.
- ⁹⁵ Interviews with two former members of staff of the BBC Persian Service. Lotf-Ali Khonji and Hazhir Teimourian.
- ⁹⁶ Foreign Office to Waterfield, Confidential, 18 August 1952.
- ⁹⁷ Persian Programme Organiser, memo on "Questions from Persia," 3 April 1952.
- ⁹⁸ BBC Bi-monthly Service Report on Persian Broadcasts, Confidential, 15 March 1952. page 2.
- ⁹⁹ Persian Programme Organiser, memo on "Questions from Persia," 15 May 1952.
- ¹⁰⁰ Persian Programme Organiser, memo on "Questions from Persia," 22 May 1952.
- ¹⁰¹ Persian Programme Organiser, memo on "Questions from Persia," 3 April 1952.
- ¹⁰² BBC Bi-monthly Service Report, 15 March 1952, page 1.
- ¹⁰³ Foreign Office to BBC, 13 May 1952.
- ¹⁰⁴ Waterfield to Controller, Overseas Services, 22 May 1952.
- ¹⁰⁵ Waterfield to Foreign Office, 27 May 1952.
- ¹⁰⁶ BBC Bi-monthly Service Report, 15 March 1952, page 1.

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- ¹⁰⁷ Persian Programme Organiser, memo on "Questions from Persia," 15 May 1952.
- ¹⁰⁸ Waterfield to Controller, Overseas Services, 20 November 1950.
- ¹⁰⁹ BBC Bi-monthly Service Report, 15 March 1952, page 2.
- ¹¹⁰ Persian Programme Organiser, memo on "Questions from Persia," 22 May 1952.
- ¹¹¹ BBC Bi-monthly Service Report, 15 March 1952, page 4.
- ¹¹² BBC Bi-monthly Service Report, 15 March 1952, page 4.
- ¹¹³ BBC Bi-monthly Service Report, 15 March 1952, page 3.
- ¹¹⁴ Woolard, "Report on Tour of Iran," 22 December 1949, page 7.
- ¹¹⁵ Central Office of Information, Tours and Facilities Section, Programme of Arrangements made on behalf of Foreign Office, for Mr Esfandiar Bozorgmehr, 25 August-10 September 1954.
- ¹¹⁶ Foreign Office to British Embassy, Tehran, Confidential, 16 June 1954.
- ¹¹⁷ British Embassy, Tehran, to Foreign Office, Confidential, 26 June 1954.
- ¹¹⁸ British Embassy report, 19 June 1954.
- ¹¹⁹ Woolard to Waterfield, Confidential letter from Hamadan, 4 October 1955.