

STUDY FINDS IRAN DEPENDENT ON U.S. IN USING WEAPONS

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Panel Says in Event of War
America Would Face Risk
of Becoming Involved

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—

United States experts maintain that Iran is now so dependent on American personnel that it could not go to war "without U.S. support on a day-to-day basis," according to a Senate staff study made public today.

The study concluded that the Iranian armed forces lacked the skills to operate the sophisticated military systems they have purchased "unless increasing numbers of American personnel got to Iran in a support capacity."

Even this, the report said, "may not be sufficient."

The report estimated that by 1980, Americans in Iran could number "50,000 to 60,000 or higher," mostly tied to the arms programs.

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, the chairman of the subcommittee on foreign assistance of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which conducted the study, warned that "U.S. arms sales to Iran, totaling \$10 billion since 1972, have been out of control."

The staff report stated, and Administration officials confirmed, that the arms sales had been made without close policy review because of a decision by President Richard M. Nixon in 1972 to "sell Iran any conventional weapons systems that it wanted."

Faced With Risks

This decision and a lack of concern by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, the report continued, also forestalled a review of the political implications of the new military relationship. On the surface, the report argued, Iranian dependency would seem to give the United States a large measure of control over Iranian decisions to use force. But if Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi were determined to go ahead, the report said, the United States would then be faced with the choice of either assisting him in combat or risking American personnel becoming "hostages" and rupturing American-Iranian relations.

The State Department spokesman, Robert L. Funseth, responding to questions, said that arms sales to Iran had to be seen in the context of the general United States policy of expecting regional countries to assume "greater responsibilities for area defense." He said that a number of decisions on arms sales to Iran had been brought to the attention of senior officials of the State Department "with pros and cons and options; this is in practice policy review." Referring to the managerial problems cited in

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the report, he added that it was "obvious that any such large program would have such problems," but that these were being dealt with and that the situation had improved.

The Senate staff report was prepared by Robert Mantel and Geoffrey Kemp, both widely respected specialists in arms control. Mr. Mantel was formerly

with the White House Office of Management and Budget and Mr. Kemp is on leave from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

The authors used their findings to argue that "there is no such thing as a 'nonbinding' arms sales agreement. Even though most Americans in Iran are private contractors, they said, "U.S. personnel and inevitably the U.S. Government would still be involved."

The report also made the point, again confirmed by Administration officials, that pressures from private industry and the military services to sell arms to Iran reached such pro-

portions that in 1975, then Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger dispatched his own personal representative to Iran to help the Shah ward off the arms merchants.

Mr. Kissinger is scheduled to fly to Iran this week for a three-day visit to discuss mutual relations and world problems. The agenda is expected to include discussion of an Iranian proposal to barter its oil for American arms.

Soviet Threat Cited

The report noted that Iran justified its purchases mainly in terms of its fears of the Soviet Union.

"Iranian officials expressed

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concern at indirect, as well as direct Soviet threats in the future through the latter's ties with neighboring India, Afghanistan and Iraq. These officials are also worried about Soviet support for radical groups on the Arab side of the [Persian] Gulf and Soviet encouragement of separatist tendencies among certain tribes in Iran."

But whatever the perceived threat, the study's authors recited considerable evidence to the effect that Iran had given the highest priority to "prestige" weapons systems such as the F-14 jet fighter, which require technological knowledge that goes well beyond the socio-

economic development of the country. Even the United States has had difficulty operating the F-14.

Iran is now considering purchasing additional sophisticated systems such as the F-16 and F-18, the airborne command post system known as Awacs, and the Spruance Class destroyer. Even without these, the report concluded, "Iran is already the dominant military power in the Persian Gulf area."

'Twin-Pillar' Policy

This is precisely what was intended by decisions made early in the Nixon Administration, according to the report.

Rather than replacing the British military presence in the area, Mr. Nixon "decided to rely on local power to preserve stability in the Gulf area and, accordingly, adopted the 'twin-pillar' policy that presumed cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia and a coincidence of their interests with those of the U.S."

One of the main purposes of the study was to alert Congress that it has been focusing too much of its attention on requests for approval of arms sales and hardly any attention at all on the secondary effects of the sales. After the sales contract has been signed, the

study noted, "the entire spectrum of military operations—procurement, finance, logistics, maintenance, and training—may continue for ten or more years."