Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives: Catalogue (Summary)


Catalogue Reference:
GB0099 KCLMA MFF 11

URL:
http://www.kingscollections.org/catalogues/lhcma/collection/i/xi70-001

Title:

Date(s):
1943-1980, 1990

Level of description:
collection level

Extent and medium of the unit of description (quantity, bulk, or size):
565 microfiche

Context

Name of creator(s):
The National Security Archive, from sources at US national security agencies, principal of which were

Administrative / Biographical history:
The microfiche collection focuses on US foreign policy towards Iran and events in Iran, 20 Jan 1977-29 Jan 1980. This period coincides with the beginning of the relationship between Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Shah of Iran, and the US administration under President James Earl 'Jimmy' Carter, Jr, through to the failure of American policy efforts towards the revolutionary Iranian government, which became symbolised by the seizing of the US Embassy in Teheran, Iran, in which 66 Americans were taken hostage by followers of Shiite cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, 4 Nov 1979. As a result of the embassy seizure, President Carter asked Cyrus Roberts Vance, US Secretary of State, to co-ordinate a secret inter-agency appraisal of US involvement in Iran since 1945. The resulting report, known as the 'White Paper', and its 12,000 pages of supporting documentation, provided the White House with an overview of US relations with an allied Iran, 1945-1978. The microfiche collection ends 29 Jan 1980, the date on which the 'White Paper' was transmitted to Zbigniew Brzezinski, US National Security Adviser, by the US State Department's Policy Planning Staff. This document collection originated from investigations done by newspaper reporter Scott Armstrong for his five-part series entitled 'The Fall of the Shah of Iran', published in the Washington Post, 25-30 Oct 1980. This newspaper series first revealed the existence of the so-called 'White Paper'. With the revelation of its existence, then researchers filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for the 'White Paper' itself and for the background documents used in its preparation. In addition, the Iranians who seized the US Embassy in Teheran captured material therein including official foreign policy memoranda and cables relating to declining relations between the US and Iran. These documents were subsequently published in Teheran, where they became known collectively as 'The Documents From the Den of Espionage', smuggled into the US, and eventually brought to the attention of Armstrong. Armstrong's subsequent five-part series of articles in the Washington Post entitled 'Iran Documents Give Rare Glimpse of a CIA Enterprise', beginning 31 Jan 1982, revealed to the public for the first time the nature of US foreign policy making in Iran 1977-1980. Documents in this microfiche collection are also from US government sources, including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Finally, the US State Department's 'White Paper' and 700 supporting documents detailing US foreign policy decision making is included as are reports originating from the US Department of Defense, the US Department of Justice, the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the US Army, Navy, and Air Force

Immediate source of acquisition or transfer:
The National Security Archive, Washington, DC, USA
Content & structure

Scope and content:

Iran: The Making of US Policy, 1977-1980, is a themed microfiche collection which presents an integrated record of US foreign policy relating to Iran, 20 Jan 1977-29 Jan 1980. Included are memoranda, cabled messages, US embassy and consulate messages, Department of State reports, Central Intelligence Agency reports, US National Security Council reports and studies, and academic historical and political studies of the Middle East generally and Iran specifically, 21 Jan 1943-30 Apr 1980. Although the focus of this document set is on the 1977-1980 period, nearly one-third of the documents listed in the catalogue relate to the period prior to 1977. These are materials that were used in the preparation of the major internal inter-agency review of US-Iranian relations, the US Department of State ‘White Paper’. The collection covers the beginning of the popular protests and mass demonstrations that resulted in the Iranian revolution of Feb 1979, which overthrew the pro-American monarchy of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Shah of Iran, and established the Islamic Republic of Iran. The collection also covers efforts by the US and the Iranian Provisional Government under Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan to normalise relations between Iran and the US, which were frustrated by challenges from Islamic organisations including the Revolutionary Council. The collection records in detail the US reaction to the Iranian Constitutional Assembly, which pitted secular against religious forces during the drafting of the new constitution and which led to the formal establishment of a theocracy and the loss of Iran as a US strategic ally, Feb-Jun 1979. Documents include US Department of State report detailing the stability of Iran under the Shah and the effectiveness of SAVAK, the Iranian domestic and foreign intelligence agency, as a law enforcement agency, 28 Jan 1977; US Embassy, Teheran, Annual Policy and Resource Assessment report identifying US interests in Iran as stable, 4 Apr 1977; briefing paper for Cyrus Roberts Vance, US Secretary of State, for his first visit with the Shah, 30 Apr 1977; Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report affirming the stability of the Iranian political regime, Aug 1977; US Department of State cables relating to the suppression of anti-Shah demonstrations at Qom, the religious centre of Iran’s Shiite community, and the resulting series of mass demonstrations against the Shah, Jan-Dec 1978; US Department of State inspection memorandum describing US relations with Iran as excellent, 4 May 1978; US Department of State memoranda concerning meeting of 13 May 1978, at which chief Iranian military and security personnel devised plans to deal with the rise of anti-government demonstrations, 23 May 1978; cable from William H Sullivan, US Ambassador to Iran, relating to the increasing dissent in Iran and the Shah’s fears of the religious opposition to his monarchy presented by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, 1 Jun 1978; US Department of State airgram relating to meeting held between the Shah and Nasser Moghaddam, Director of SAVAK, in which the Shah ordered that all future demonstrations be broken up by force, 22 Jul 1978; US Department of State cable concerning the Iranian armed forces being put on alert in all major towns in Iran following a series of anti-government bombings, 14 Aug 1978; reports from the US Embassy, Teheran, relating to the ‘Black Friday’ massacre of anti-government protesters in Jelah Square, Teheran, 8 Sep 1978; US Department of State cable relating to riots in Teheran resulting in the destruction of Western businesses and the occupation of the British Embassy, Teheran, 5 Nov 1978; Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report relating to the wave of anti-government protests in Iran during the spring of 1978, 5 Nov 1978; US Department of State cable from Ambassador Sullivan to the White House urging the US government to consider that the Shah may have to abdicate in favour of a coalition government, 9 Nov 1978; Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) profile of Khomeini describing him as the central figure in the anti-Shah movement and his proposed regime as xenophobic and hostile towards Western interests in the region, 20 Nov 1978; US Embassy reports to Washington, DC, relating to the Shah’s departure from Iran, Jan 1979; US Department of State cables relating to the return of Khomeini to Iran from Paris, France, and his subsequent demands for the resignation of the Iranian Provisional Government, Feb 1979; US Embassy reports relating to the establishment of the Islamic Revolutionary Council under the leadership of Khomeini, Feb 1979; US Department of State cables relating to the deteriorating civil situation in Iran and growing anti-US sentiments, culminating in the seizure of the US Embassy, Teheran, and 66 of its employees, Feb-Nov 1979.

System of arrangement:
The collection is arranged in chronological order

Conditions of access & use

Conditions governing access:
Open, subject to signature of Reader’s undertaking form, and appropriate provision of two forms of identification,
to include one photographic ID.

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**Language/scripts of material:**
English

**Finding aids:**

**Allied materials**

**Existence and location of originals:**
National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, federal agency libraries, and printed public sources. The sources are cited in the published catalogue where appropriate.

Compiled Aug 1999

**Description control**

**Rules or conventions:**