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APPENDIX E

Military Critique
Lessons Learned from TPAJAX
re Military Planning Aspects of Coup d'Etat

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MILITARY CRITIQUE/TPAJAX

Lessons Learned from TPAJAX

Re: Military Planning Aspects of Coup d'etat

I. The Problem of Personnel Assessment

- A. If CIA desires to overthrow a hostile government by employing armed forces against that government, then CIA must identify friendly forces, make contact with them, and successfully employ them.
- B. The decision to attempt a military coup d'etat should only be made after it has been determined that potentially useful forces do exist. Distinction must be made in making this estimate of the situation between "grouzers" and "activists." When attempting to estimate potential assets, experience has shown that it is vital to have as detailed biographical information as possible on all military personnel whose presence might bear upon the problem, including possible enemies as well as friends.
- C. Biographical information cannot be collected in a short period of time. It must be reported on a basis of continuity and must include everything known about individual officers, no matter how trivial. Military

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attaches are the normal channels for these reports, but Military Advisory Assistance Groups, where present, are the best source of this type of information because they work and take recreation side by side with indigenous officers. It has been our experience that too little emphasis is being placed upon this requirement; too often the files of officers contain only short references to an officer's assignments, promotions, decorations, omitting all personalia which could indicate who an officer really is, what makes him tick, who his friends are, etc.

- D. Biographical files on CIA agents in the armed forces are more complete but often these agents are found in G-2 sections and other staffs, and not among troop commanders.
- E. Assuming that sufficient biographical information exists concerning military personnel and their motivations, our next task is to assess the character of each military person under review. The assessment of officers should be done with a clear appreciation of the traditions of the indigenous service in mind. For instance, the Army in Iran has a modern tradition of defeat. The Iranian officer is usually indecisive and covers his inferiority with bombast and chest beating. Therefore the location

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of leaders who are willing to lead and to die is a hazardous occupation. Perhaps the Shah is a good example of the "typical" Iranian officer; his weaknesses are reflected throughout his Officer Corps.

On the other hand, a true leader in the Army is worth his weight in gold for he truly will count for far more in Iran than in other countries where valor is traditional.

- F. After personal assessment of officers has been completed, CIA will find good and bad officers within all factions or groups. Here political and patriotic motivations must be assessed as well as possible. The political milieu will underlay assessment of officers, and non-military operations (KUGOWN) might have to be prevailed upon to create conditions capable of intensifying or weakening motivations in such a way as to create potential assets which at the time of assessments do not yet exist.
- G. Friendship toward "the free world," "the United States," "the United Nations," "white colonialism," and many other political motivations will be found in all countries. In Iran CIA found that officers were generally "pro-Shah," "pro-Mossadeq," or "fence-sitters." The intensity of individual political motivations was different in each

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case, and was often less important than personal motivations such as ambition, jealousy, young officers' resentments of old officers and vice versa. There is no tradition of military revolutions, but Reza Shah did seize control of the government by using military position as the springboard. Hence, the political motivation of officers and personal motivations within the political milieu have been and are factors to be considered in assessment of military personnel.

H. Of equal importance in Iran was the assessment of the Commander-in-Chief, the Shah, who also is the head of State. From the military point of view, assessment had to be made of the Shah as Commander-in-Chief, including his depth of influence, command ability, and courage under fire. His use as a focal point or fusing point around which military persons and groups might rally also had to be assessed.

Without stating reasons, our assessment of his usefulness was positive in these fields:

1. Head of State to dismiss hostile government.
2. Commander-in-Chief as rallying symbol.

Our assessment was negative in these fields:

1. Commander-in-Chief as planner and participant in military action.

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- I. Turning from our assessment of the Shah, we concluded that the Shah as a symbol could be used to incite action on the part of important military personnel.
- J. Our assessments of individual military persons led us to the conclusion that Major General Zahedi was the best suited officer available to lead forces for the Shah against the hostile government for these reasons:

1. He was the only man in Iran openly bidding for the prime ministership.
2. He thus displayed unique courage in that action.
3. He had displayed courage in the past, for as a soldier of 25 years he had been made a Brigadier General in recognition of combat leadership against the Bolsheviki.
4. His life had been saved by an American doctor after four of Zahedi's ribs had been removed.
5. He was known to be pro-American and had permitted his son, Ardeshir, to study in the United States for six years. He was a senior Major General and had won the respect of many senior and junior officers.

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6. His negative qualifications were as follows:
 - a. He had been out of the Army for several years and did not know young junior officers.
 - b. He was identified in some quarters as venal. His capacity for leading a coup d'etat was unknown; he had never distinguished himself as a staff officer, but primarily as a commander.
 - c. Most of his friends were drawn from among the civilian population--few were Army officers.

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- L. Specific assessment of line commanders in the Tehran garrison could not go forward in Washington until intelligence directives had been laid upon the field station. For instance, Headquarters did not know the

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names of any of the Brigade Commanders in Tehran, and to our surprise, neither did the G-2 Section, Pentagon. Headquarters did not possess any idea of the order of battle in Iran nor did G-2, Pentagon. Before specific assessment of line commanders could be made, therefore, Tehran Station had to report to Headquarters military information which should have been collected by military attaches on a day-to-day basis.

M. While assessment of individual officers was being made in Headquarters, the actual decision had been taken by the Department of State to do everything possible to turn out Mossadeq. This decision to proceed found us with no clear picture of the military situation in Iran, without even a list of officers and their assignments, and with no operational assets among those officers in command positions. It must be understood, therefore, that swifter movement was required in all phases of our military action to such an extent that assessments were made and decisions taken on a much less secure basis than would otherwise have been the case.

N. Our assessment of Mossadeq's Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Taghi Riahi, was done with care. We studied him in the light of his total personal environment, including a study of the persons with whom he lived,

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the persons he had removed from office, the persons he appointed to office, persons he had gathered in his staff, the political persons with whom he associated. From the political point of view, there was no doubt that Mossadeq had chosen his chief of staff very well. (We felt certain that Riahi would follow Mossadeq in a showdown, and not the Shah.) But from the military point of view, Brigadier General Riahi had several weaknesses. We could not be sure, but we had good ground to hope that Riahi's lack of command and combat experience would prove important if a test of military strength could be brought about. We did not question his personal courage and integrity. We found that he was residing with three of the outstanding members of the pro-Mossadeq Iranian Party and that he actually had led a pro-Mossadeq faction within the Army. He and most of his staff had been French-trained and were very thorough in staff work and very green in the field.

- O. As the field began to report personalia concerning brigadier commanders, brigade deputy commanders, regimental and battalion commanders in Tehran and in other parts of Iran, we were able to assess the situation with much greater clarity. It became evident that it would be necessary to arrest or remove most of the brigade

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commanders and to develop operational assets, for the most part, beneath that echelon of command. This assessment later proved to be correct and saved us much time and kept us from harm--from the security point of view. Because of the all-pervading necessity of drum-tight security, we could see from the beginning the necessity for approaching and developing only those persons with whom we stood a very good chance of success.

- P. From all the above it can readily be seen that the possession of all-inclusive biographical information is vital to the success of any operation which includes large-scale use of military personnel. Failure can easily depend upon a mistake in the assessment of one officer and victory hinge upon it.

II. A. Military Intelligence as a Basis for Action Intended to Overthrow Hostile Governments:

1. A war map should be kept by paramilitary officers in each station where revolutionary action may be required. Maps should be assembled of every scale of possible use. The complete order of battle should be posted on a current basis. The supply situation as regards ammunition, gasoline and petrol, clothing and

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equipment, etc., must be watched very carefully. There may be no use sending a brigade into action against a hostile government when that brigade possesses only six rounds of ammunition per man.

2. Defensive measures taken by hostile governments should be watched very carefully. In Iran, Mossadeq's government assembled most of the motor transport into one motor pool; his government permitted only enough petrol for tanks to permit them to operate for one hour; the issuance of ammunition was reduced to an absolute minimum; and ammunition supply dumps were heavily reinforced (guarded). The signal code for the Iranian Army was changed only three weeks prior to the Mossadeq overthrow.

At two critical moments, Chief of Staff General Riahi assembled all officers in the Tehran garrison and made emotional appeals to their patriotism, equated by him with support for Mossadeq. Lists of officers' license plates on vehicles were called for by General Riahi, and in some cases officers were followed. Also, spot telephone checks were made to officers' homes

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in an attempt to learn which officers were spending their evenings away from their homes.

- B. It is also necessary to study all military installations which must be seized or protected. For that purpose it is necessary to have detailed drawings of important headquarters, of important communication centers, etc. In the beginning of TPAJAX we possessed none of this information, except for a few excellent sabotage studies made of civilian installations.
- C. In an action of this sort it must also be appreciated well in advance that key civilian personnel and civilian installations must be seized. It should be possible to call upon many sources of information for assessment of political figures, but the collection of information concerning physical characteristics of telephone offices, radio stations, airports, etc., is a matter that can greatly be assisted when collected under the guidance of a paramilitary officer who understands what he is looking for; that is not to say that an excellent intelligence officer could not do the same but his intelligence directives should be carefully drawn.
- D. Weather conditions may be absolutely vital to success and should be noted at least well in advance. Should fog exist, for instance, time and distance factors in

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staff planning may be thrown off entirely. Rain and storms might do the same. The question of whether or not to begin action by daylight or at night is a vital decision, and it must be made on the ground. In places where curfews exist, conditions may be radically altered by that fact. In other locations the habits of the people may be of extremely important military significance; for instance, the siesta habit, including the closing of most of the shops in business areas, may be important. Also, the day in the week observed as the religious day should be studied for possible usefulness as well as important holidays. Days which neutralize or tend to neutralize opposition groups should be studied with care; for instance, training of military units in some locations is rotated and it might be found that a hostile unit will be sent out of the area of action on a day upon which it may be possible to act.

- E. Military information concerning G-1 sections may prove extremely useful. In some cases it is possible to arrange for the replacement or reassignment of officers who are in the wrong position from our point of view. The placing of the right man in the right spot at the right time is of course the most important factor in all military operations and should under no circumstances

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be overlooked in operations of this kind.

- F. Actions which might be taken against you should be studied very carefully and you should receive well in advance notice of measures of this kind before they are actually effected. It will also be understood that G-2 sections may be used in various ways. The feeding by you of diversionary information concerning the existence of military cabals to G-2 sections may possibly be used in places where panic may result in the hostile camp. In Iran we were greatly assisted by the fact that many groups of officers were suspected of planning a coup. As tension increased, reports of this sort also increased. Although they served to alert the hostile government, they also served to smokescreen our activities and the activities of our friends. This whole matter is naturally a matter of study under local conditions, but our experience may be of some assistance in places where similar circumstances exist.
- G. It may also be entirely possible that other military groups are being formed to combat the hostile government, and in that case we should know who they are and what they intend to do. It may be necessary to split some of these groups, or it may be necessary to fuse

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them with our forces. In both cases our action must be delicately taken on the basis of very good information. Provocation must be carefully watched for, and remedial steps planned for and taken in the event any of our friends nibbles at the bait.

- H. Information concerning our own friends is perhaps the most important field for collection. The appraisal of our own security situation on a continuous basis is a paramount consideration for current decision-making. In Iran we developed and recruited young colonels after very quick assessment, fully understanding the risk we were taking; at the same time, we attempted to probe and to delve in an effort to find out as much about our new recruits as possible.
- I. If it is at all possible to develop secretly assets which can check upon the actions of our friends, it will be found extremely useful to have them, for it will be found that the military situation can become extremely fluid and it is absolutely vital to know who has been wounded, arrested, doubled, etc. Early warning of a security break should be provided for and a warning then established capable of reaching and warning other assets. This is particularly true during action phases.

- J. Security controls may change from day to day and we should have information concerning that entire field. For instance, in the middle of an extremely fluid military situation it was necessary for one of our officers and for one of our principal agents to make hasty trips after curfew hours to cities eight and ten hours away from the capital. We were able to provide them with forged documents which proved absolutely necessary to the success of their missions.
- K. Information concerning the available radio and telegraphic nets is extremely important. In Iran there is an Air Force radio net, gendarmerie radio net, Army radio net, railroad net, and an oil company telegraphic net. The number and extent of telegraphic nets is often surprising in any country and they must be studied very carefully for obvious reasons. At one stage in operation TPAJAX we used the overt governmental telegraphic system, using simple phrases for operational meaning (over-writing). Telephone systems are easy means for both hostile and friendly forces to communicate with each other, and information should be gathered on the extent to which central tapping services exist and, if possible, targets under tap should be identified. In Iran it was known that the Tudeh Party had penetrated the governmental communication

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system and, despite that fact, we relied upon that system because at one point all other means of communication broke down. The insecurity of that practice was realized but had to be accepted under the circumstances. In the signal center in the office of the chief of staff, or the signal center used by the Army Chief of Staff, is the single most important communication base available to a hostile opposition. If this center cannot be penetrated it should be neutralized and alternate means of communications established for friendly forces.

- L. Information gathering can sometimes be of use during occasions in which it is necessary to fabricate "excuses for action." Good penetrations of the hostile government might possibly turn up actions taken by the hostile government which have not been revealed to the public. In attempting to recruit personnel to your cause, it will always be necessary to provoke them to action when their motivation is insufficient to cause them to act under their own steam.

III. Military Planning as a Basis of Coup d'etat

- A. The science of military planning is too deep and well known to be covered in this paper. Needless to say, those officers who are responsible for military planning should have had qualified experience in the armed forces in preparation for this assignment.
- B. In addition to a background in military planning, officers should also be experienced in clandestine operations. The basis of a coup d'etat is security which permits us to exercise operational surprise. The basis of security is good operational tradecraft which can only come from experience.
- C. It may be assumed that a military bureau composed of indigenous officers will be available for specific local planning, either from within the target country or from without. This military bureau can operate only when it possesses current and complete military intelligence.
- D. The military bureau may be designated by the leader-to-be of the new friendly government or may be composed independently of the leader-designee. In either case, clandestine tradecraft is a vital necessity.
- E. Whether or not a CIA officer shall be exposed to this

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military bureau will depend upon the local situation.

In Iran we found it necessary to commit the CIA planner, who later found it necessary to participate in the operation itself on an equal basis with indigenous officers. It is obvious that this practice is an additional security risk which should be avoided if possible.

- F. Political arrest lists should be furnished the CIA military planner, and it is his job to designate forces to execute such lists. Military and civilian targets for neutralizing and seizure by friendly forces should be drawn up by the CIA military officer and the military bureau.
- G. If possible, a CIA radio net should be created specifically for the coup d'etat tying in our CIA field officer with the military bureau which in turn should be tied in to the headquarters and command units for friendly forces. Where this practice is not feasible, other means of communications should primarily be relied upon. But in all situations a primary and alternate means of communication among these elements should be created.
- H. Military planning should be based upon the principle that some elements within our friendly forces will be exposed, and that our operation must not collapse on that account. Therefore, danger signals should be

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included which automatically call for movement from one phase to the other depending upon who or what units have been exposed to the hostile government. In Iran there was good reason to believe that danger signals so noted prior to the change of government were instrumental in keeping alive an operation which, to an outsider, appeared to have failed.

- I. The possibility of civil war must be accepted by our military planners and measures taken within the plan for that eventuality. Such an eventuality might possibly include the necessity for establishing a safebase for the new friendly government. Possibilities and eventualities stemming from civil war can only be seen upon the analysis of each local situation, but they are not difficult to foresee and should certainly be planned for.
- J. The creation of safehouse bases for operational contacts must be planned for and executed well in advance of the commitment of our friendly forces. Several safehouses or safebases should be found in order to maintain contact with friendly elements in the event one or more of our safehouses are blown. In cases where CIA personnel are all stationed within an embassy the operational situation demands that safehouses and safebases be

established. These safehouses should ideally include radio, independent telephone, or other means of communications, depending upon the local situation. In situations in which it is necessary to cache money, ammunition, arms, clothing, food, and documents, safehouses should be found with secure keepers capable of securing those items.

- K. Support items such as automobiles, taxicabs, and other vehicles should be procured and kept sterile well in advance of the operational situation.
- L. Compartmentation of persons and units who compose our friendly forces should be made wherever possible. In the event a part of our operation be exposed, it is vital that interrogation not disclose our entire assets.
- M. Members of the military bureau should under no circumstances actively participate in the operation because under interrogation they would be in a position to disclose too much.
- N. The military board should include both staff officers and line officers, and as many functional specialists as may be necessary under local conditions. A communications staff officer will be found very useful.
- O. Possibilities of blowback against the United States should always be in the back of the minds of all CIA

officers involved in this type of operation. Few, if any, operations are as explosive as this type. This fact makes it imperative that the best trained and experienced officers who can be found be assigned.

- P. Military planning should include the possibilities of complete failure and, therefore, should include an evacuation scheme for CIA and indigenous personnel who might be exposed. Aircraft of American military attaches, evasion and escape nets, and other operational assets might have to be employed. If none of these assets exists then hiding places should be created in advance of the operation which are kept sterile throughout.
- Q. Commitments to friendly persons should be kept well within our ability to make good. In Iran we did not rely upon bribery because we felt that those officers who would accept bribes would probably betray the operation in the event of extreme difficulty, i.e., torture. In Iran we did not spend one cent in the purchase of officers.
- R. Forethought should also be given to the problem of care and keep of wives and families of friendly officers.
- S. The possibility of using weapons of foreign make should be kept well in mind in cases where American arms are not indigenous to the local area.

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way as to neutralize entire cities through the use of road blocks, strong points, traffic control, curfews, new documentation, etc.

- X. Needless to say, a complete roster of officer assignments in the new army should be drawn well in advance in order that there be no confusion.
- Y. Wherever possible it is much better to use the local army supply system than it is to create a new clandestine one. It also follows that it is much better to conduct the operation from within the country than it is to attempt a cross-border operation. It is also much easier to execute the operation when CIA officers are present than it is when CIA officers are outside the country. Deep cover personnel should be used in order to prevent severe blowback whenever it is possible to do so.

[The C.I.A.'s secret history of the 1953 coup in Iran was a nearly 200-page document, comprising the author's own account of the operation and a set of planning documents he attached. The New York Times on the Web is publishing the introduction and many of the planning documents. But the Times decided not to publish the main body of the text after consulting prominent historians who believed there might be serious risk that some of those named as foreign agents would face retribution in Iran.

Because the introductory summary and the main body of the document are inconsistent on a few dates and facts, readers may note discrepancies between accounts. In its reporting, the Times has relied upon details in the C.I.A. document not published here. In addition, certain names and identifying descriptions have been removed from the documents available on the Web.]

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