

CHAPTER 5

The CIA, SAVAK, and Mossad Connections with the Forqan

During the deadliest period—in Iran’s history—for clerics, between April and December 1979, the clerics regularly accused the Forqan of having connections with other domestic and foreign intelligence services such as the SAVAK, the Israeli Mossad, and the American CIA. These accusations mainly arose from the reputations of these agencies, the fear they raised among the clerics, and the knowledge that the above agencies were not only professional, sophisticated, and efficient but that, probably, only they could have carried out such professional and deadly operations against such prominent religious figures as the Forqan allegedly had done.

As we have seen in the previous chapter that dealt with the Forqan’s assassinations, they were carried out with the assassins riding on motorcycles. All the six were successful and the only attempt that failed was carried out when the gunmen were driving a car. If we look at these attempts as one cohesive pattern of events, we could come to the conclusion they could not have been carried out by unprofessional revolutionaries, no matter how much they hated the religious clerics, how devoted they were to the mission, and how determined they were to get rid of the elite group of clerics. The harried clerics, who for years had fought the Shah, his agencies, and his allies in the United States and Israel—and had also chanted and preached against the connections the Shah had maintained with these agencies—also came to this conclusion, and it made them frantic and suffer from phobias concerning the SAVAK, the CIA,

and the Mossad. Over the years, they had also seen several respected clerics taken away at night by the SAVAK, who had never returned to their families and their community. Now, they assumed that the Shah, in cooperation with his intelligence allies, would try to settle accounts with those clerics who had initiated the Iranian people's uprising and his fall. The Forqan could not evade these accusations since the fears and anxieties of the clerics did, in fact, have a basis in history.

Since the Mossadeq crisis in August 1953, the US's presence in Iran had only increased. During the decade between 1953 and 1963, up till the declaration of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's White Revolution, it was important to the Shah and the United States to quickly strengthen their relations—strategically, militarily, and, no less important, culturally-spiritually. On the other side of the political map were the National Front of Mossadeq and the Ulama “traitors” led by Ayatollah Kashani, who had abandoned Mossadeq and sided, although unwittingly, with the Americans and who had chosen to see the toppling of Mossadeq as a real interference by the United States in Iranian politics and, no less, a harmful infringement of their sovereignty.

During the period between the end of WWII and the Mossadeq crisis, the *Mojtaheds*, led by *Marja' Taqlid* Grand Ayatollah Borujerdi, maintained a kind of dual relationship with the Shah and his government. After the exile of Reza Shah to South Africa by the British, the religious circles knew that his reforms, the secular process, and modernity would have to wait, or just be dissolved. The crowning of his son did not change anything for the *ulama*, since they saw him as a weak and untalented Shah that would do whatever the British and the Russians told him to do. More than that, they were sure that he would also have to listen to the clerics and suspend all his father's programs, especially those that were inappropriate to the Shia religion.

Notwithstanding his inexperience in politics, however, the young Shah wanted—and this time aggressively—to renew his father's reforms for Iran and, considering the current political situation, he understood the difficulties he would face in order to re-introduce them. The Mossadeq Crisis, as far as it was a real concern to the Shah, found the Shah experienced enough, although with American help, to use it as a platform to increase his influence in