

By: Ardeshir Zahedi

Former Iranian Secretary of State, The Last Ambassador of Iran in U.S.A. Clear the Myth in Relations of Iran and U.S.

How Dr. Mussadeq Government Fell and General Zahedi Nominated as Prime Minister

At a time the future of relations between Iran and the United States is, once again, debated in public, it is important that both sides steer clear of myths that have fostered so much misunderstanding between them.

One such myth has been woven around the claim by a few CIA operatives that they hatched a plot to get rid of Prime Minister Dr. Muhammad Mussadeq in August 1953 and propelled my father, the later General Fazollah Zahedi into power with the Shah's blessings over the years found a niche in the historical folklore of both nations. In a recent feature the New York Times gave the claim fresh publicity, relaunching the debate over what actually happened in Iran in those remote days of the Cold War.

Victory, of course, has a thousand fathers while defeat is an orphan. Had the August 1953

efforts to remove Mussadeq from office failed, there would have been no CIA "heroes" claiming the credit.

There is a mass of evidence, including US and Iranian official documents and testimonies by people who played a role in the events that give the lie to the CIA operatives' claim.

Briefly, what happened in August 1953 was as follows:

The Iranian political establishment was divided between supporters and opponenets of Mussadeq's opponents looked to the Shah as a rallying point. My father who had served as Interior Minister in Mussadeq's Cabinet had broken with him and established himself as the leader of the anti Mussadeq faction.

The Shah was thus under pressure from many powerful circles and personalities inside

Iran to dismiss Mussadeq and name my father as the new prime minister. Mussadeq recognized my father as his chief adversary at the time and did all he could to break him.

Mussadeq had been abandoned by many of his former colleagues, among them such personalities as Hussein Makki and Muzzafar Bagai, and opposed by parties that had provided the backbone of his support in 1951.

The most prominent members of the shiite clerical establishment, including Ayatollahs Borujerdi, Hakim, Shahrestani and Kashani were solidly opposed to Mussadeq and wanted the Shah to remove him. They were all in contact with my father and supported him in the struggle against Mussadeq.

A leading member of the Majlis (parliament) Hassan Haeri-Zadeh, who had been one of Mussadeq's strongest supporters until then,

even cabled the United Nation's secretary general to appeal for help against Mussadeq's increasingly despotic rule.

The Shah had already clashed with Mussadeq in 1952 and forced the "doctor" to resign as prime minister. At that time, however, the politics of the street had turned against the Shah and he had been obliged to reinstate Mussadeq. In August 1953 the tide had turned against Mussadeq who had further undermined his own position by disbanding the parliament elected under his own stewardship.

The rest is history, as the saying goes. Or is it?

It is quite possible that the CIA and its British counterpart were engaged in the usual dirty tricks campaign in Tehran at the time. Tehran had become one of the hottest theatres of the Cold War with the Soviet Union enjoying a strong presence through a mass Communist Party (the Tudeh), several front organizations and at least four daily newspapers.

The Communists had also infiltrated the armed forces and the police, recruiting over 700 officers and NCOs.

What is certain is that Mussadeq's fall was not due to any dirty tricks that the CIA might have played. Nor did the CIA have the kind of access its operatives claim to have had to the key figures of the revolt against Mussadeq including my father. The only time my father visited the

US embassy in Tehran was a function in honor of Averell Harriman on 4th of July 1951, and in his capacity as Interior Minister. Harriman had come to Tehran with a mission from President Harry Truman to persuade Mussadeq to find a way out of the crisis over the nationalization of Iranian Oil. (Cf. Veron Walters in "Silent Missions").

My father never had any meetings with any CIA agents. One operative has claimed that he spoke to my father in German, ostensibly during secret meetings. The fact is that the only foreign languages my father spoke were Russian and Turkish, not German or English.

Iranian history remembers my father as a true patriot who wore the wounds he had won in battle like so many badges of honor. Fazollah Zahedi had fought for virtually every inch of what he regarded as the sacred land of Iran, against a Bolshevik-sponsored regime along the Caspian coast to British-sponsored secessionist movement in the oil-rich province of Khuzestan. During the Second World War he had become a war prisoner of the British and sent into captivity and exile in Palestine, then under the British mandate. Fazollah Zahedi was always big enough to fight his own fights, backed by his own loyal friends. To try and portray such a giant of Iran's contemporary history into a

bit player in a scenario fit for "Mission Impossible" requires a degree of cynicism that only frustrated egomaniacs might master.

Throughout the dramatic events that led to the fall of Mussadeq, I was at my father's side as one of his principal political aides. Had he been involved in any foreign intrigue I would have known. He was not.

Loy Henderson, the US ambassador to Tehran at the time, makes it abundantly clear in his despatches to the State Department that Mussadeq was overthrown by a popular uprising which started from the poorest districts of the Iranian capital. Henderson's reports have been published in a book of more than 1000 pages, translated into Persian and published in Iran.

The Iranian public, therefore, has a more balanced view of the events than its American counterpart which is fed recycled claims by former CIA operatives. British and Soviet accounts at the time also make it clear that Mussadeq had fallen victim to his own hubris which antagonised his allies and forced the Iranian people into revolt.

More than 100 books, by Iranian and American scholars, give the lie to the CIA operatives' self-congratulatory account.

Barry Rubin writes: "It cannot be said that the United States overthrow Mussadeq and replaced

him with the Shah... Overthrowing Mussadeq was like pushing an open door."

Gary Sick writes: "The belief that the United States had single-handedly imposed a harsh tyrant on a reluctant populace became one of the central Myths of the relationship, particularly as viewed from Iran."

Amir Taheri writes: "What happened was not a successful conclusion of a (CIA) conspiracy but a genuine uprising provoked by economic hardship, political fear and religious prejudice."

Richard Helms, long-time CIA director, told a BBC television program that the agency did not counter rumors of involvement in Iran because the Iranian episode looked like a success. At the time, of course, the agency needed some success, especially to counter fiascos at the Bay of Pigs.

Even Donald Wilber, the CIA operative whose "secret report" has been given top billing by the NYT makes it clear that whatever he and his CIA colleagues were up to in Tehran at the time simply failed.

Wilber writes: "Headquarters spent a day featured by depression and despair... The message sent to Tehran on the night of August 18 said that the operation has been tried and failed and that contrary operations against Mussadeq should be discontinued."

Mussadeq was overthrown on 19 August when hundreds of

thousands of Tehranis poured into the streets to demand his departure and the return of the Shah. This was not a military coup d'etat since there was no change in the constitution or any of the structures of the Iranian state. Nor was the Shah's position as head of state effected. Under the constitution of 1906 the Shah had the power to name and dismiss prime ministers. He simply exercised that power by dismissing Mussadeq and nominating Zahedi in a perfectly legal and constitutional manner. Mussadeq tried to resist his dismissal but was swept away by the masses.

The army played a supportive role in the anti-Mussadeq uprising, and even then only after the people had taken the initiative. At the time my father was no longer on active service, having retired from the armed forces and engaged in political activities as a senator and leader of the anti-Mussadeq coalition. Mussadeq himself held the portfolio of Defence and enjoyed the support of many key officers of the armed forces, including the Chief of Staff appointed by himself.

Anyone who has studied the history of those turbulent years would also know that Mussadeq was the most pro-American senior politician Iran had produced. He was the darling of the Truman Administration which raised the amount of aid to Iran, distributed through Point IV, from half a million

dollars to 23 million dollars. On August 18, 1953, a day before Mussadeq fell, Henderson met Mussadeq and offered him an emergency loan of 10 million dollars on behalf of the Eisenhower administration.

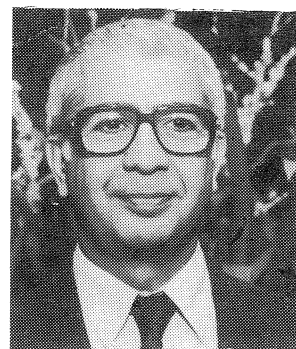
Mussadeq himself never blamed the Americans for his downfall. He was intelligent enough to know why his political career led into an impasse.

The anti-Mussadeq coalition did, of course, look to the United States, as the leader of the Free World, to counter any move that the Soviet might have made at the time to intervene in what was a domestic Iranian power struggle. From a geostrategic point of view, therefore, the anti-Mussadeq coalition regarded itself as part of the Free World. But does that mean that all those who fought Communism and upheld the cause of liberty throughout the Cold War were manipulated by the CIA?

Three years ago the CIA announced that almost all of its documents pertaining to the August 1953 events in Iran had been destroyed in a fire. Was someone trying to cover up the CIA's most dramatic "success story"? or did the documents burn because they should that the feel-good ambience created by the Iranian myth had been fabricated by a few individuals with a lot of imagination and very little of scruples? END

Iran and the US: Who Should Apologize and Why?

By Amir Taheri



London, 20 December 2001 - A group of mullahs were on hand the other night to hear what the Tehran media had already billed as "a long overdue confession of crimes" by the United States.

"Albright to apologize for America's perfidy!" one headline had promised.

The expected "confession" came from the former US Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright at a 17 December gala at a New York City hotel organized by a group lobbying to end sanctions against Tehran. The mullahs presented the former Secretary of State with a carpet, with her image woven on it, during an evening to honor her lifetime achievement.

The claim that the United States has committed crimes against the Iranian people has been a key theme of the mullah's propaganda since 1979 when they seized the US embassy in Tehran and held 53 American diplomats hostage for 444 days.

One condition they fixed for releasing the hostages was a

formal apology by Washington that have amounted to an admission that the captives had not been diplomats but spies as the mullahs claimed. President Jimmy Carter rejected the demand as "scandalous". It was renewed during Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush's tenures each time Washington negotiated the release of some American hostages held by Tehran's agents in Lebanon. Both presidents stuck to the position fixed by Carter.

President Bill Clinton changed that.

In 1999 Albright, as Secretary of State, expressed "regret" at the role that the US had allegedly played in Iran. She then ordered that the description of the Islamic Republic as a "rogue state" be dropped.

In April of the same year Clinton went further.

In his "Remarks at a Millennial Evening: the Perils of Indifference", Clinton said:

"I think it is important to recognize that Iran, because of its enormous geopolitical importance,

over time has been subject to quite a lot of abuse from various Western nations. And I think sometimes it's quite important to tell people: Look, you have a right to be angry at something my country, or my culture, or others that are generally allied with us today, did to you 50 or 60 or 100 years ago... So we (the United States) have to find some way to get to a dialogue, and going into total denial when you're in conversation with somebody who's been your adversary in a country like Iran... is not exactly the way to begin."

These remarks came exactly at a time that Iranians were taking to the streets, shaking the regime to its foundations. Clinton's remarks were construed in Iran as a signal that the US, for some obscure reason, wanted to back the mullahs against the popular movement.

Now Iran is once again in what looks like a pre-insurrectionary mood against the mullahs. And any form of apology, even from a former secretary of state, could be

regarded as an attack on Iranians fighting for freedom and democracy.

The remarks made first by Albright and then by Clinton, and again repeated by Albright last Monday night, were astonishing for at least two reasons.

First, they accepted the mullah's claim uncritically. Clinton went further and assumed guilt on behalf of "others that are generally allied with us today", that is to say Britain and Russia that have a history of meddling in Iranian affairs. Also note that Clinton thinks that American culture is capable of doing "quite a lot of abuse", thus endorsing the mullahs' campaign against American literature, music, pop-culture and cinema! (In a special BBC program on last Monday, Clinton described Iran as "a true democracy? and "one of the most stable countries" in the Middle East.)

Secondly, Clinton and Albright overlooked the crimes of the mullahs against Americans. The holding of hostages is a crime under the Iranian Penal Code, and carries the death penalty if a hostage is killed. Also they forgot that the Iranian-controlled Hezbollah in Lebanon murdered three American citizens Dr. Malcolm Kerr, William Buckley and Lt. Colonel Robert Higgins in the 1980s.

The duplicity of the mullahs and the naiveté of the

Clinton-Albright duo becomes apparent when one considers the main claim.

The principal "American crime" the mullahs rail about, albeit outside Iran, refers to an episode in August 1953 when the Shah dismissed his Prime Minister Muhammad Mussadeq. The two men had quarrelled for over a year, and the Shah had fired and then reinstated the populist premier once before. Mussadeq's opponents, led by retired General Fazlallah Zahedi at the time, had been urging the Shah to dismiss Mussadeq for months. The Shah would not do so without an American guarantee to counter possible Soviet military intervention in Iran. At that time the Soviet-sponsored Communist Tudeh (Masses) Party was backing Mussadeq in the hope that the old man would be Iran's Kerensky. The Shah's concern was not fanciful. By the end of 1953 a KGB-controlled network of army officers, numbering over 600, was uncovered within the Iranian armed forces.

The Truman administration had backed Mussadeq to the hilt, refusing to provide the guarantee demanded by the Shah. The Eisenhower administration changed Washington's policy and informed the Shah that the US would counter any attempt by Moscow to intervene in Iran's internal politics.

The Shah fired Mussadeq, as

was his constitutional right, and appointed Zahedi. Mussadeq refused to abide by the royal decree for two days, but was forced to submit when the people of Tehran rose against him. At that time the mullahs, including Khomeini, then a junior cleric, sided with the Shah because they saw Mussadeq as a Trojan horse for Communists.

Those who have interviewed the key players in the August 1953 events, examined the relevant documents and seen the more than 20 hours of newsreels of the Tehran uprising would have little difficulty in dismissing the absurd claim that the ouster of Mussadeq was the result of a CIA plot. Mussadeq himself never accused the US in connection with his ouster. The only "crime" that the US committed at the time was to assure Iran's legal leader, the Shah, that his country will not be alone in case of Soviet aggression.

While the mullahs demand a US apology on behalf of the long-dead Mussadeq, they have banned any mention of him in their Islamic Republic. Mussadeq's name has been taken off streets and his native village, where he is buried, is sealed off by Islamic Revolutionary Guards. The mullahs in their Friday sermons routinely vilify Mussadeq, often as "an American agent"! Right now dozens of Mussadeqists are in the mullahs' jails.

Before she makes her

advertized "confessions and apologies" to the mullahs dispatched by Tehran, Mrs. Albright would have done well to study Irano-American relations more carefully.

She would have found that, contrary to the mullah's claims, the US was the only major Western power to be a genuine friend to Iran between 1945, when the two sides elevated their relations to ambassadorial level, and 1979 when the mullahs raided the American embassy. The US helped Iran drive Stalin's armies out of the northwestern provinces of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in 1946. In the two decades that followed the US injected more than \$1 billion in aid into Iran, building schools, clinics, dams, and other infrastructure. In the same period some 200,000 Iranians graduated from American universities. Contrary to common perceptions, the US is easily the most popular foreign power in Iran even today. Tehran was the only Muslim capital where thousands of young men and women gathered, candles in hand, to manifest their sympathy with the American people after the September 11 tragedies.

Having defeated the mullahs of Kabul it would be odd if the US were to court the equally obnoxious mullahs of Tehran.

The people of Iran do not demand any apology from the United States, a good friend in the

past and, hopefully, an equally good friend in the future.

If anyone has to confess and apologize it is the mullahs who have deprived the people of Iran of their freedom, have murdered and/or held American hostage, and who shout "Death to America"

and burn the US flag almost daily.

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* Amir Taheri is the author of "Nest of Spies: America's Journey to Disaster in Iran", Pantheon, NYC, 1989.

Prince and Princess Orlof
Prince of Russia and Daughter of Late Malek Farough of Egypt



**His Excellency Ambassador Of Iran
Ardeshir Zahedi Grants an Interview
to Alan R. Ackerman of Finance
Magazine of Money and Finance**

Without Portfolio

By: Alan R. Ackerman

A Conversation with The Man from Tehran



Alan Ackerman is director of foreign research and investment for one of the leading NYSE member firms. Widely recognized as an expert in his fields by Wall Street, he has also served as a consultant to corporations and to the White House. In launching this newly expanded feature, FINANCE asked Contributing Editor Ackerman to interview his old friend, the veteran Iranian Ambassador to the United States. Ardeshir Zahedi the U.S. educated, globally honored "master diplomat of the Middle East," That exclusive, in depth Q & A follows.

Q. Mr. Ambassador, we first met almost at the beginning of the petro-political period. You have proven to be a most keen and accurate observer of both the United States and the Middle

East. In the last 10 years, what changes have you perceived in the mood of the United States?

A. I think in the last 10 years there is no doubt that America has been going forward. At the same time you have problems which I think are part of the frustrations of the Vietnam War and Watergate.

As I said long ago, the U.S. has not recognized the economic value of energy. You have not been thinking about it as seriously as you should have been. Despite the shock of the 1973-74 oil embargo, which continues to have social as well as economic effects, you are still importing about 50 per cent of your oil. You are just now getting worried: why did you not look into it earlier, find out what sources of energy you could have? Whether you are going to use atomic or solar energy, or shale? It now

appears that you may not have the answer for many years.

At the same time, you have been helping other nations in the past, and suddenly those nations have started to compete with you, and because of that there has been a loss in the value of the dollar and unemployment in some of the States. Today you are facing big competition for world markets with Europeans as well as the Japanese. I believe all this has a kind of moral, social, economic impact on your country's outlook.

Q. Have you noticed any major difference in approach by the Carter Administration toward the problems of the Middle East?

A. The Middle East is a problem which has not been created just by one or two or three presidents. Ever since the 1947 War, and continuing through the

Ford Administration, we had what is called shuttle diplomacy. I think that President Carter is trying to create a more basic, continuing dialogue among all the parties, through his people like Cy. Vance, and to see if they can solve the underlying problems, because there is no doubt that we have to have peace in this area.

If we don't have peace, the result would be very dangerous. Another war might be a kind of challenge between the superpowers. So I think everybody is searching for peace. I think the United States is doing its utmost to find the way for peace.

Q. Do you believe we will finally get to a Geneva Conference?

A. I used to be rather optimistic but it's very difficult to predict right now. I don't know. I hope so. But you have to have not only the parties directly involved - Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Israel - but also the other countries, especially Saudi Arabia, which has so big a voice in the economic distribution of oil.

So what are the problems? What is a Palestinian? If you can't solve the problem of the Palestinian, I don't think you will ever be able to go to Geneva. It's a big question. Israel will not accept the PLO as represented, yet many of the Arab nations have said that the PLO is still the representative of the Palestinians. So this is an obstacle. Whether we

have enough time to solve it or not, I don't know.

Another thing: when and if we go to a Geneva Conference, the agenda must include most primary questions, such as giving back the lines, the security, the recognition which is based on U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338. It is very difficult right now. I hope that I should not be so pessimistic: a lot of people hope that it will be possible still to go to Geneva.

Q. Do we face a new conflagration in the Middle East?

A. It is true that this situation of no-war-no-peace has been going on for a long time. If it persists indefinitely, there could be a lot of consequences.

First of all, most of these countries like Saudi Arabia or Egypt or Syria, which have a rather moderate approach to the problems of today, could get into trouble internally. It's possible that some of these governments will be replaced by more radical regimes. If that happened, naturally I think we would have a rather dangerous situation on our hands.

Q. You have negotiated, personally, with terrorists, and rather successfully. Do they have clearly defined objectives other than the release of political prisoners?

A. Unfortunately, you do not realize the danger of terrorism until something happens to you or very close to you. We have been fighting against terrorism ever

since 1967. We've come to the conclusion that you cannot fight terrorism unless all the nations cooperate. Giving in to terrorists will only create a bigger problem. What am I referring to?

There are things which I don't want to discuss publicly. You know how sophisticated weapons technology has become. If certain armaments were to come into the hands of terrorists, the whole human race is going to be in a terrible mess.

Q. Do you believe other governments are not tough enough with terrorists?

A. I think some of them have not recognized the danger - or they are indifferent to it. In the United Nations, some of the countries believe "political" terrorism to be their right, when they are fighting for what they see as their national freedom, their honor.

We are all human beings, after all - we're all responsible - so we must do something about stopping it. How can the world prevent murder in the name of "terrorism" when the punishment would be just a few days in prison? Naturally any lunatic would be encouraged. But if I know I am going to be severely punished, then I am going to think twice.

We have to have the law, but we have seen in too many cases what has happened when we have given in to their demands. Where we have shown toughness, we

have been able to eliminate the problem - and after all how many terrorists are there? This is a very small group, which have made a lot of people their prisoners.

Q. Ambiguity is often termed the stock-in-trade of the diplomat. Neither you nor your government has hesitated to answer questions boldly and directly. What is Iran's reaction to the Carter Administration's human rights interest in countries other than the United States?

A. I don't think anyone can teach as much about human rights as we in Iran. We are proud of our heritage, our history. As you remember, when Cyrus the Great freed the Jews 2,500 years ago, he said those who threw the Jews into the mouth of the lion were the ones who should actually be thrown into the mouth of the lions.

But human rights are something we should all fight for. We have all been fighting for it, it depends on how we define it and where we look. More are dying of hunger and diseases. The humanitarian thing is to help them, so that they will be able to fight against disease, against illiteracy.

Q. When did the United States and Iran establish their close friendship?

A. Our relationship goes back about a hundred years. In the early days, our relationship was through missionaries, and the universities and colleges. From the

time of the second World War, we were in effect one of the Allied countries: when Churchill and President Roosevelt came to Iran, for the famous Tehran Conference.

We continue to be closely allied, because we have a mutual interest in the Middle East and, indeed, in the whole world.

Q. Is Iran's growth limited by the fact that it is a single-commodity nation?

A. It's true that in the past, our economy was based almost entirely on oil. Today we derive about 25 per cent of national income from non-petroleum sources, and we hope to reduce the 75 per cent dominance of oil still further. Because sooner or later, the oil will be gone - just as it

" We have 65 to 75 billion barrels of oil reserve. If you're going to continue to take six million barrels a day, we won't have enough to last more than 40 or 45 years. But if you start taking less - and meanwhile put more of your oil into petrochemicals, where you can make 70,000 different by-products - then of course of outlook becomes quite different. I think you're wasting oil... you should find other sources of power."

will be in the other oil producing areas of the world.

We have maybe 65 to 75 billion barrels of oil reserve. If you're going to take as much as you are taking today, 6 million barrels a day, we would not have oil to last more than 40 or 45 years. But if you take less, and put more oil into petro-chemicals - you make 70,000 different by-products from oil - then the outlook is different. I think you are wasting it on the wrong things today.

And you should find other sources of energy. We have signed agreements with both France and Germany for nuclear reactors. We hope that by 1990 we will be getting as much as 50 per cent of our energy requirements from atomic power. This, obviously, will help, but also by building our country, and making it still more industrialized, we expect to be able to export considerable industrial capability. Hopefully, too, in the next 10, 15 years, although we have been bringing in agricultural products, instead of being an importing nation we could be exporting even these.

Q. About that industrialization, you currently have a five-year, \$69 billion developmental program which includes the creation of a 150,000-ton-a-year copper industry and four new steel mills. Can you comment?

A. We believe that in order to reach the standards of Western

Europe, or later on of the United States, we have to go three or four times faster. Since we have credit, we can borrow funds.

Take copper, for example. We have more of it than Zambia and Chile. Anaconda is developing the project as our technical advisor.

As for the future, we are going to finish all the developmental projects we have in mind, first. And only then do we intend to proceed with new ones.

Q. Productivity in Iran is among the lowest in the world. What is being done to stimulate it?

A. A decade ago, the per capita income was about \$50, almost \$60. Today it has reached over \$2,000. One of the things which the Shah has done is to encourage labor by offering more security. We have not only been raising wages, but also are permitting workers to become shareholders in the factories where they work. They get 20 per cent of the net profit at the end of every year, divided among them.

Q. Iran has been considered a "lawk" among the 13 oil-producing members of OPEC. Yet only last July, Iran joined with Saudi Arabia in calling for a price freeze in 1978. With the U.S. dollar falling in value as sharply as it has in recent months, is it likely that Iran will now seek an oil price increase in 1978?

A. Let me make it very clear,

first of all that I think it has been very unfair to call Iran a hawk, because if you did not have us as a member of OPEC you would have had a very unreasonable price ever since our Tehran conference more than a year ago. At Tehran, it was Iran really that tried to bring reason.

There were countries that were asking for 35 per cent, even 40 per cent higher prices: the result was only about a 10 per cent increase. I would say that Iran was not among the hawks but among the realists. Second, the higher price, we noticed, was not actually any advantage for the consumer

or the producer. A special group was really the one which gained.

Now you're asking me about the price in the future. That is something about which there are many factors we have to bear in mind. How much the inflation is going to be, in the next year or so, what would be the cost of other materials which OPEC nations are going to buy, and anyway the most important thing is the unwritten law of demand and supply.

This is a 13-nation group - they have to get together, and no nation alone will have a controlling voice on higher or lower prices.

Ardeshir Zahedi, Liza Minelli and Eliot Richardson,
Nixon Secretary of Defense

