



Former Iranian Foreign Minister Zahedi Recognized

IRAN HAS RARELY BEEN MORE CENTRAL to global affairs than it had become at the dawn of 2013. At the same time, it has become — because of curtailed international access and internal propaganda in Iran, in many ways distorting the study of its modern history — less understood than at any time in history by those global policymakers expected to formulate strategies with regard to it.

In the modern era, the growing strategic centrality of Iran through World War II, and then particularly through the Cold War, was largely responsible for the stability and success of Western economies and for Western strategic dominance. It was, for the West, the essence of the containment of the USSR, and also the essence of a strategic linkage between the Atlantic states and the Indo-Asian states. The nuances of geopolitics changed with the end of the Cold War, and the 1979 overthrow of the Shah of Iran contributed significantly to the shift in global dynamics.

After the Shah's departure, international perceptions of Iran — which had essentially become a closed society with the dominance of extremist *mul-lahs* — regressed to simplistic unidimensional imagery. Understanding of the enormous depth of Persian and Iranian society, culture, history, and geopolitical importance, which had been growing globally until 1979, evaporated. Today, strategic policy toward Iran is being made by most states on the basis of an ignorance which was not evident during the Cold War.

What is forgotten is that some of the key players who understand Iran, and who were intimately involved in the policies of the country and the international community during the Cold War, are still alive. Their views have not been heard for some time; their knowledge has been forgotten; their counsel not sought.

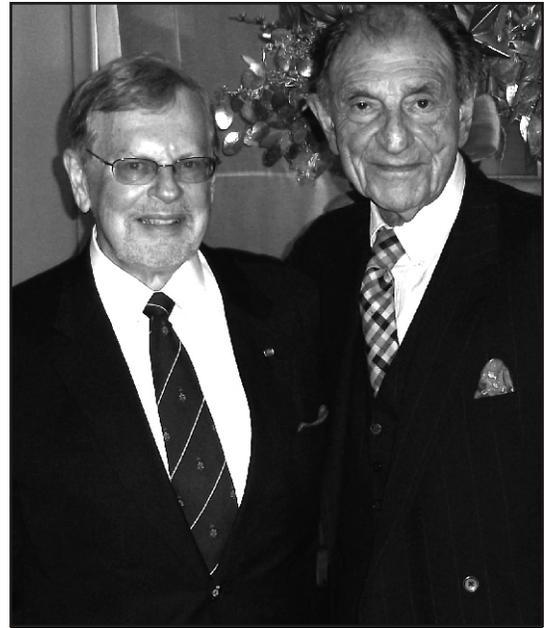
The International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA), the publishers of *Defense & Foreign Affairs*, made the decision in December 2012 to present the ISSA Silver Star Award for Outstanding Contributions — ISSA's highest honor — to former Iranian Foreign

Minister Ardeshir Zahedi, who is now living in exile in Switzerland.

Mr Zahedi was Foreign Minister of Iran under the Shah (1966-73). He also served as Imperial Iranian Ambassador to Washington on two occasions, and once to the Court of St. James. He was uniquely placed, at a critical time in history, to know key US, European, Soviet, Middle Eastern, and Asian leaders, at a time when Iran's re-emergence as an arbiter of East-West politics was critical.

Ardeshir Zahedi, son of soldier, statesman, and Prime Minister, Lt.-Gen. Fazollah Zahedi, and scion of an historically important Iranian family, served not only at the right hand of his father before, during, and after his Premiership; he also was close to the Shah, and worked until the end of the Shah's life to help preserve stability and prosperity for Iran. In so doing, he met with the great world leaders and politicians, and has unique insights into how policies toward Iran developed. All of

this he has begun to memorialize in his new four-volume *Memoirs*, the first of which has been translated from Farsi into English and French. That first volume in English, which benefits from massive documentary support provided by materi-



Former Iranian Foreign Minister Ardeshir Zahedi (right) with International Strategic Studies Association Pres. Gregory Copley in Montreux, Switzerland, in December 2012, at the announcement of the ISSA Award for Outstanding Contributions to Strategic Progress to Mr Zahedi for his endeavors as a diplomat, but even more importantly, for the publication of his *Memoirs*, which provide invaluable insights into Iran at a critical time in Middle Eastern and world history.

als he had declassified in the US and UK (with the lapse of their 30 year classification cycle), will be reviewed in detail in the next edition of *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*.

The contents of the book — even to ISSA Pres. Gregory Copley, who was intimately engaged in Iranian affairs during the Cold War, and who met with the Shah and other Iranian officials — are explosively revealing. There is no doubt that the book, and Amb. Zahedi's perspective, could play a vital rôle in current strategic policy judgments, as well as in shaping the judgment of history. Moreover, his insights will do much for the education of the current generation of Iranians, who now have the Farsi edition of the book to help overcome the three decades of revisionist education in Iran.

ISSA is delighted that Amb. Zahedi has agreed to accept the honor of the Award, and that this dynamic diplomat can continue to have an impact on global policy at a time when Iran remains the central piece on the East-West gameboard. — GRC

