

When Iran and America were allies: Photographs from 1943 show how the Middle East nation helped with World War Two efforts and even welcomed Polish refugees

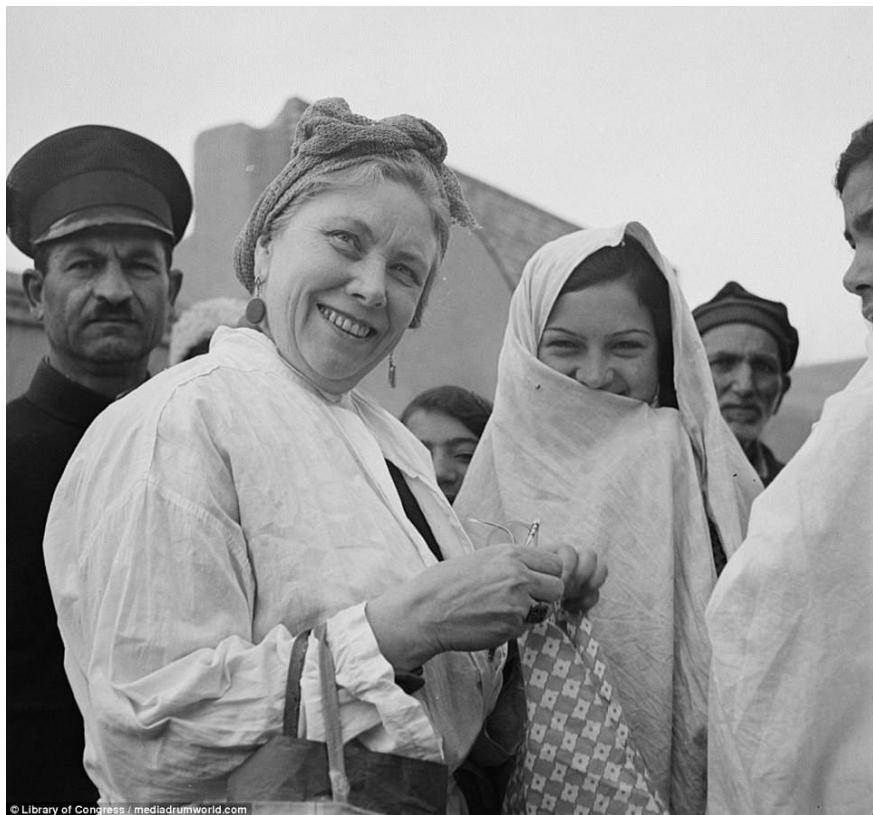
By [CHRIS PLEASANCE FOR MAILONLINE](#)

PUBLISHED: 23 May 2017

Today they are known as the bitterest of enemies, but things were not always this way between America and Iran - as these images from 1943 prove.

Black and white shots taken during the Second World War show the two countries as allies - pulling together to help another unfamiliar friend in Russia.

Dozens of Polish refugees can also be seen in camps around the country, having fled the Middle Eastern nation from USSR, where they had been forcefully deported in 1939.



Today, Iran and America are known as the bitterest of enemies, but back in 1943 they were allies against the Axis powers during the Second World War. In this image Mrs. Louis Dreyfus, wife of the United States Minister to Iran, spends time visiting the locals in Tehran



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

Pictured, Mrs. Louis Dreyfus gives food to poor children in Tehran in 1943. Two years earlier Britain and Russia jointly invaded Iran in order to depose Reza Shah, who was viewed as sympathetic to Axis. He was replaced by his son, Mohammed Reza Shah, who adopted pro-American policies and helped the Allies supply Russia



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

American Mrs Louis Dreyfus feeds the poor in this image from Tehran in 1943. The so-called Persian Corridor allowed weapons and supplies to be shipped from Britain and America to the Persian Gulf where they were taken through Iran to Soviet-controlled Azerbaijan to help Stalin's troops fight Hitler



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

Mrs Louise Dreyfus is photographed spending time among the poor in Tehran. After the Second World War ended, American relations with Iran continued to improve, with almost 1 million Americans visiting the country between 1950 and the revolution in 1979, expressing their admiration for the Iranian people



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

Major General Donald H. Connolly, Commander of the United States Army forces in Iran and Iraq, attends a press conference in Iran. The country was an important staging post for Allied forces in Europe after Hitler conquered France, leaving him virtually unopposed on the continent until he attacked Russia



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

Major General Donald H. Connolly speaks to reporters following his press conference in Iran. By allowing the Allies to equip Russia, Iran forced the Axis powers to divert resources to the eastern front, paving the way for the invasion of Europe at Normandy a year after these pictures were taken



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

Brigadier General Stanley Scott in Iran in 1943. Positive American-Iranian relations would continue for almost a decade after this image was taken, until a CIA-backed plot to depose Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq bred resentment towards the US and eventually led to the 1979 Revolution



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

Pilots from the British, American and Russian airforce share a cigarette at an airfield somewhere in Iran. The four countries worked hand-in-hand to destabilise Germany's hold over Europe under the leadership of Mohammed Reza Shah, who remained loyal to America for decades afterward



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

United States Army nurses being helped into the back end of a truck somewhere in Iran in 1943. Mohammed Reza Shah remained a friend to America having helped during the Second World War, meeting at least five Presidents and was praised by Jimmy Carter shortly before he was deposed in 1979



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

American troops working on their billets somewhere in Iran in 1943. Relations between the two countries remained relatively stable right until the Shah was deposed in 1979, which came as a complete shock to Washington and plunged relations into a deep-freeze which exists to this day



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

An American plane mechanic assisted by an Iranian boy working on a light bomber before it is delivered to Russia, 1943. The Allies viewed Russia as the easiest way to break Hitler's control over

Europe, and after the Nazis betrayed their alliance with Stalin and attacked in 1941, they worked hard to supply Russian forces through Iran



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

In what would be an unthinkable alliance today, an Iranian mechanic is pictured working on an American warplane about to be turned over to the Russians, in 1943. US relations with Russia fell apart during the Cold War, while Iran continued to have a good relationship with America until 1979, when the Shah was replaced with Ayatollah Khomeini

British and Russian pilots were photographed repairing their aircraft in Tehran - just two years after both countries invaded in order to depose King Reza Shah, who was seen as sympathetic to Axis powers.

His son, Mohammad Reza Shah, took the throne in 1941 and adopted a pro-American stance, allowing supplies to flow through the so-called Persian Corridor to support Stalin's fight against Hitler.

Throughout his reign, which lasted until the 1979 Revolution, the Shah remained loyal to America and its allies, meeting with every President from Harry S Truman to Richard Nixon.

But a CIA operation to destabilise and replace the government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq in the 1950s bred anti-American sentiment among the people of Iran, while the Shah's burgeoning oil wealth through the 60s and 70s fostered resentment against him.

In 1979 the Shah, who had already fled the country, was deposed and replaced with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who referred to America as the 'Great Satan'.

America's subsequent decision to admit the Shah for cancer treatment incensed Iran, which wanted him extradited and executed, and led to protesting students storming the American embassy in Tehran.

This sparked the hostage crisis which saw 52 American diplomats held for 444 days. Despite their eventual release, the incident placed relations into a deep-freeze from which they have never recovered.



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

American train drivers swap provisions with Iranian boys beside a railway as they take supplies through Iran to Russian troops, in 1943. Over the course of the war, the Americans used the Persian Corridor to supply 16.3million tonnes of food, ammunition and weapons to the Russians



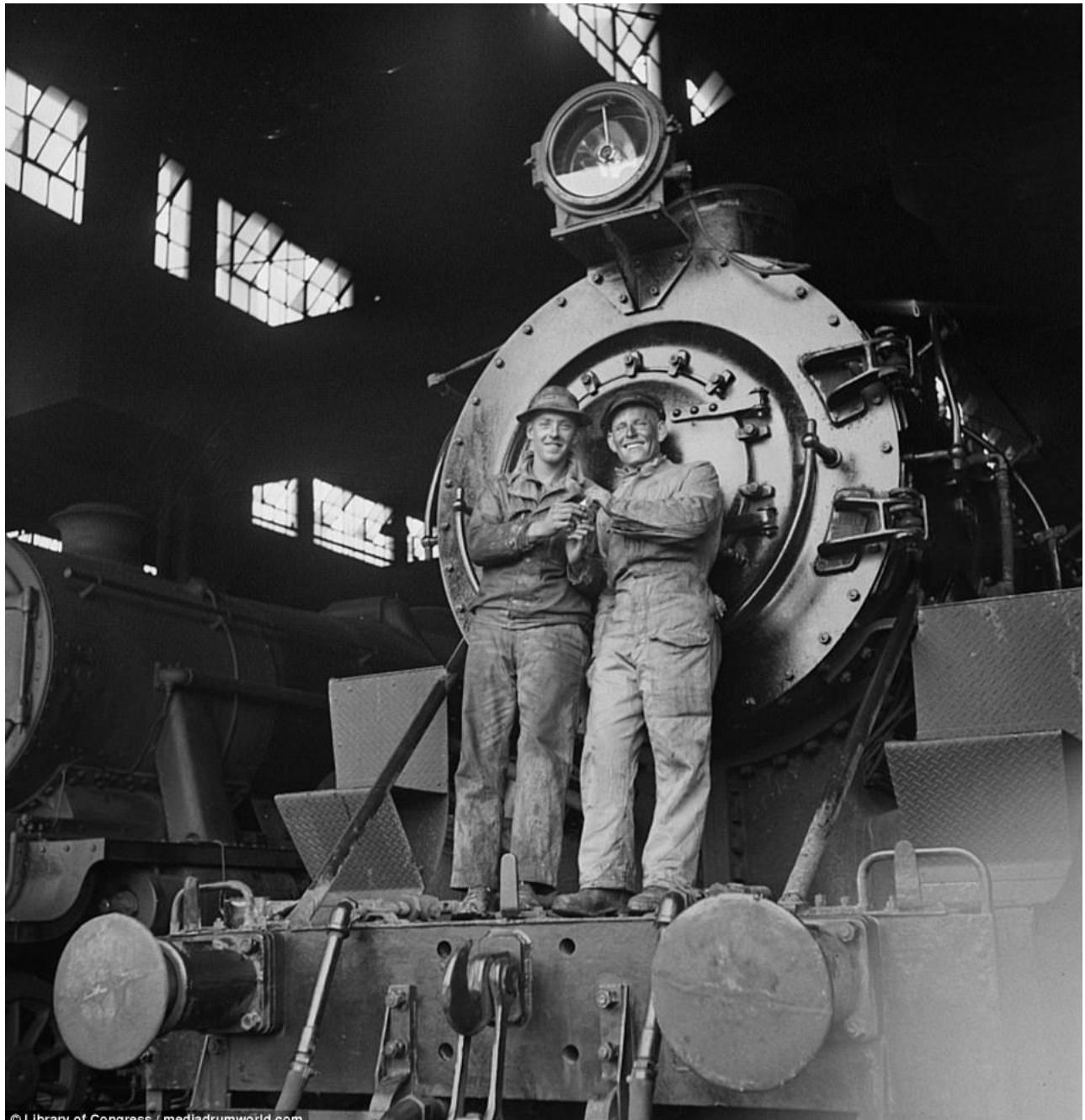
© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

In order to transport goods to the Russians, Americans built miles of railroads across Iran and brought hundreds of diesel engines to be used, as they were more suitable to the climate than steam ones. Here, British and American railroad crews are pictured in 1943 as they help transport supplies to Russia



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

As well as building railroads for the Iranians and supplying them with rolling stock and locomotives, the Americans helped train their military and provided expertise to help stabilise the young Shah's government. That cooperation would continue for decades afterward. Pictured, Colonel Johnson oversees transport operations in Iran in 1943



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

British and American railway engineers take a smoke break on the front of a locomotive in Iran in 1943. While the Soviets and British helped transport goods through Iran during the Second World War, America was the preferred partner, having no colonial history in the region



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

As well as helping to supply Russian troops, Iran also helped with the refugee crisis in Europe at the time, helping to shelter thousands of Polish who had been forcefully deported by the USSR in 1939. Pictured, a Polish boy delivers bread and a Polish woman walks the streets of Tehran in 1943



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

Starting in 1942, more than 100,000 Polish citizens who had been deported with force to the Soviet Union were then transported to Iran, which facilitated their arrival. Up to 2,500 per day arrived in the Middle Eastern country. Here, Polish refugees are pictured in the capital Tehran in 1943



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

Most Polish refugees arrived in Iran through the port of Pahlevi before they were transported to Tehran. There, the women, children and elderly were allowed to settle and provided with support. Men of fighting age were sent for training before joining Allies forces in Europe. Pictured, women and children wash clothes in Tehran in 1943



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

In total some 116,000 Polish refugees were accepted into Iran during the war, of which roughly 6,000 were Jewish. There are still large Polish cemeteries in Iran, as around 3,000 died shortly after arriving in the country. Here, Polish women work at sewing machines to help the war effort in Tehran



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

While many thousands of refugees remained in Iran, the country could not handle all of them, and so from late 1942 many were sent on to former British colonies such as India, Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa. Here, refugees wait to be transported out of Iran in 1943



© Library of Congress / mediadrumworld.com

After cooperating during the Second World War, Iran and America remained on good terms for decades afterward, until the Shah was deposed and replaced with Ayatollah Khomeini. Pictured, President Lyndon B. Johnson and Mohammad Reza Shah are pictured together in 1964