



Former Imperial Iranian Foreign Minister Ardesir Zahedi (center), wearing the ISSA Silver Star for Outstanding Contributions to Strategic Progress, is presented with a Certificate memorializing the honor, by ISSA President Gregory Copley. ISSA Executive Director Pamela von Gruber (right) shares the joy of the occasion in Vevey, Switzerland, on May 18, 2013.

Former Iranian Foreign Minister Zahedi Honored

Former Iranian Foreign Minister Ardesir Zahedi was honored at a dinner in Vevey, Switzerland, on May 18, 2013, by the International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA), publisher of the Defense & Foreign Affairs reports. He was presented with the rare ISSA Silver Star for Outstanding Contributions to Strategic Progress for his lifetime of muscular diplomatic activity, which included two periods as Imperial Iranian Ambassador to the US, and one to the Court of St. James's, in London. ISSA President Gregory Copley and ISSA Executive Director Pamela von Gruber presented the medal (made by Garrard, when that company was Crown Jeweler to the British monarch), along with a certificate and life membership of the Association.

The presentation made particular note of Amb. Zahedi's recent and ongoing publication of a series of volumes of memoirs which outline substantial new information on the history of Iran and its region in the 20th Century, essentially transforming many long-held beliefs as to how the counter-coup of 1953 occurred, removing the Mossadegh Administration.

The formal remarks accompanying the Award were as follows:

FEW INDIVIDUALS HAVE the opportunity and privilege to serve their societies in positions of leadership and responsibility. Most who do so pursue careers in politics, the armed forces, or in diplomacy, and are, in return, usually paid well and provided with economic security, healthcare, prestige, and pensions. That some may make sacrifices in material terms and the risk to their lives is also repaid in the security given to them and to their families in life.

So it is not merely the attainment of high public office which transforms history, but the rare individuals who transcend whatever public office or platform they may have been given.

What true public service can and must provide — and what can usually only be provided by iconic public service or by solitary inspiration — is leadership, legitimacy of purpose, and sovereign authority. The faith and hope of any society is vested in those who are not only placed in a position of leadership, but who accept on their own shoulders and with their own life the burden and risk of a society's success.

As a result, The International Strategic Studies Association's occasional investiture of the Silver Star for Outstanding Contributions to Strategic Progress is not to honor those who have merely been elected or appointed to high office, prestige, and recognition. Most such individuals, worthy as they may be, are al-

ready well-rewarded by the status afforded them by society. These are men and women who, like most men and women, receive a reward commensurate with their service.

But what of those whose contribution far exceeds the rewards of a career and a life financed by the taxpayer? What of those who risk all, including the safety and comfort of their prestigious positions, to achieve justice, prosperity, security, and victory for their societies and for humanity at large? These few, whether they come from the ranks of state or military society or from the public at large, walk a lonely path, and follow their consciences before they bow to convention, or the need for their own safety.

Who walks with them? Who is there with them when they step so far ahead of their societies that they are exposed and vulnerable? Who is there to burnish their name when they have gone?

It is the aim of The International Strategic Studies Association to recognize and honor those who achieve, through unique commitments of intellect, courage, and vision, what no others have been able to achieve.

And it is for this reason that the Association has chosen to honor His Excellency Ardesir Zahedi, who not only carries a distinguished record as a Foreign Minister of Iran from 1966 to 1973, but also the life-long courtesy title of Ambassador following his service twice as Imperial Iranian Ambassador to the United States, and once to the Court of St. James's, as well as his consistent activities as a high emissary for the Shah's Government. He has been an Ambassador, indeed, in the true and greater historical meaning of the term. He brought his country into closeness with other countries; he navigated his country away from crises; his skill helped bring prosperity to, and an international understanding of, his country, its people, its history, and its unique and vital culture.

But Ardesir Zahedi saw no formal confines or constraints to his service to Iran, to the historical Persia, or to the culture and leadership of his society. He served where-ever he could be of service. He honored not only his nation and his leader; he honored his father, who also walked a singular and solitary path — determined by his conscience — as a towering military and political leader who helped salvage and unify the Iranian population and State.

Ardesir Zahedi did not end his service to his homeland and people when the Government of the Shah fell in early 1979, and when he was cast out from Iran by those who sought to destroy all which had gone before in the country. He has persevered, from his position in exile, to honor his nation and to help shape the hope of his countrymen, and the policies of those in other countries who must deal with the new Iran.

Ardesir Zahedi's most recent contribution has been to write, in autobiographical terms, the history of modern Iranian governance, at least through much of the 20th Century and until the exit of the Shah in 1979. These writings have offered a profound and lasting legacy for any Iranians or non-Iranians who wish to understand the history, centrality, and future rôle of Iran. Ardesir Zahedi's volumes, first in Farsi, and then in French and English, are a compelling and unique historical record which show an aspect of history and geopolitics vital to any future governance of, or relationship with, Iran.

My great and esteemed friend, Ardesir Zahedi, may have done as much for his country from his position in exile than he could have done had he still been in a position of government authority within Iran. His writings tell not only of a life of activism and courage, but one which placed him at a pivotal position within many of the events which shape the 21st Century world. It is the hope of the Association that this Award will attract new attention to him and his writing, so that his words will continue to have impact.

Let me close by reading you a verse which was written for another Iranian exile, Ambassador Zahedi's close colleague and friend, Dr Assad Homayoun, who also works — like Ardesir Zahedi — heroically and selflessly from exile for the Iranian people, and to help retain the territorial and cultural integrity of Iran even as they challenge the present governance of their State. I wrote the following verse on a flight from Karachi to London, on April 15, 1997, while flying above Iran, looking down on the mountains, and thinking of the great hope which Persian poets such as Omar Khayyám and Ferdowsi have given to the world.

It is entitled "To an Exiled Patriot, Too Long From Home", and these words apply equally to Ardesir Zahedi:

*It is April, yet there remains
Snow, dappled on the
foothills of the Alborz range,
Leeched from the perpetually
Crisp and clouded summits
of a silent, ageless place.
And there, for now, the winds
are hushed; few souls venture,
Yet clear before, I see translucent,
shimmering, your face.
Winter goes, yet there remains
Ice, hard beneath the
drumhead of the Persian plains.
And here, for now, the winds
resound; Ferdowsi sleeps,
While in the absence of
your soul, I weep.*

I commend to you His Excellency Ardeshir Zahedi. We honor him with the Silver Star for Outstanding Contributions to Strategic Progress. ■

