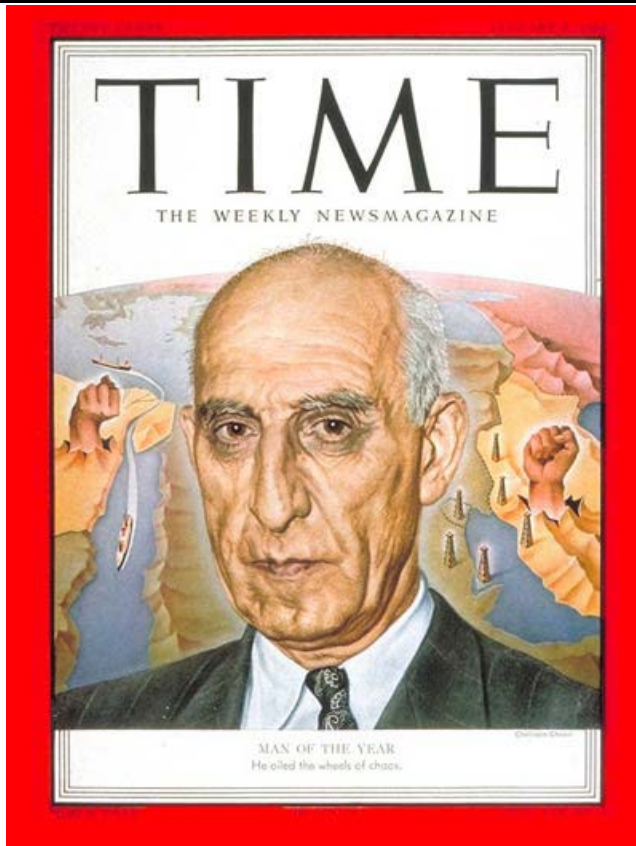

Text A: “Man of the Year: Challenge of the East”
TIME magazine, Jan. 7, 1952 (excerpt)



In 1951, Mohammed Mossadegh became the premier of Iran.

The Iranian George Washington was probably born in 1879 (he fibs about his age). His mother was a princess of the Kajar dynasty then ruling Persia; his father was for 30 years Finance Minister of the country. Mohammed Mossadegh entered politics in 1906. An obstinate oppositionist, he was usually out of favor and several times exiled. In 1919, horrified by a colonial-style treaty between Britain and Persia, he hardened his policy into a simple Persia-for-the-Persians slogan. While the rest of the world went through Versailles, Manchuria, the Reichstag fire, Spain, Ethiopia, and a World War, Mossadegh kept hammering away at his single note. Nobody in the West heard him.

They heard him in 1951, however. On March 8, the day after Ali Razmara, Iran's able, pro-Western Premier, was assassinated, Mossadegh submitted to the Iranian Majlis his proposal to nationalize Iran's oil. In a few weeks a wave of anti-foreign feeling, assisted by organized terrorism, swept him into the premiership.

The Anglo-Iranian Oil Co., most of whose stock is owned by the British government, had been paying Iran much less than the British government took from the company in taxes. The U.S. State Department warned Britain that Iran might explode unless it got a better deal, but the U.S. did not press the issue firmly enough to make London listen. Mossadegh's nationalization bill scared the company into concessions that were made too late. The Premier, whose mind runs in a single deep track, was committed to nationalization – and much to the surprise of the British, he went through with it, right down to the expulsion of the British technicians without whom the Iranians cannot run the Abadan refinery.

Results: 1) the West lost the Iranian oil supply; 2) the Iranian government lost the oil payments; 3) this loss stopped all hope of economic progress in Iran and disrupted the political life of the country; 4) in the ensuing confusion, Iran's Tudeh (Communist) Party made great gains which it hoped to see reflected in the national elections, due to begin this week.

Mossadegh does not promise his country a way out of this nearly hopeless situation. He would rather see the ruin of Iran than give in to the British, who, in his opinion, corrupted and exploited his country. He is not in any sense pro-Russian, but he intends to stick to his policies even though he knows they might lead to control of Iran by the Kremlin.

Notes: