

---

**Text D: National Security Council Assessment of the Situation  
in Iran, Nov. 20, 1952**

---

**Date: November 20, 1952**

**TOP SECRET**

**SECURITY INFORMATION**

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

**Proposed by the**

**NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL**

**on**

**THE PRESENT SITUATION IN IRAN**

1. It is of critical importance to the United States that Iran remain an independent and sovereign nation, not dominated by the USSR. Because of its key strategic position, its petroleum resources, its vulnerability to intervention or armed attack by the USSR, and its vulnerability to political subversion, Iran must be regarded as a continuing objective of Soviet expansion. The loss of Iran by default or by Soviet intervention would:

- a. Be a major threat to the security of the entire Middle East, including Pakistan and India.
- b. Permit communist denial to the free world of access to Iranian oil and seriously threaten the loss of other Middle Eastern oil.
- c. Increase the Soviet Union's capability to threaten important United States-United Kingdom lines of communication.
- d. Damage United States prestige in nearby countries and with the exception of Turkey and possibly Pakistan, seriously weaken, if not destroy, their will to resist Communist pressures.
- e. Set off a series of military, political and economic developments, the consequences of which would seriously endanger the security interests of the United States.

2. Present trends in Iran are unfavorable to the maintenance of control by a non-communist regime for an extended period of time. In wresting the political initiative from the shah, the landlords, and other traditional holders of power, the National Front politicians now in power have at least temporarily eliminated every alternative to their own rule except the Communist Tudeh Party. However, the ability of the National Front to maintain control of the situation indefinitely is uncertain. The political upheaval which brought the nationalists to power has heightened popular desire for promised economic and social betterment and has increased social unrest. At the same time, nationalist failure to restore the oil industry to operation has led to near-exhaustion of the government's financial reserves and to deficit financing to meet current expenses, and is likely to produce a progressive deterioration of the economy at large.

3. ...It is clear that the United Kingdom no longer possesses the capability unilaterally to assure stability in the area. If present trends continue unchecked, Iran could be effectively lost to the free world in advance of an actual Communist takeover of the Iranian government. Failure to arrest present trends in Iran involves a serious risk to the national security of the United States.

4. For the reasons outlined above, the major United States policy objective with respect to Iran is to prevent the country from coming under communist control. The United States should, therefore, be prepared to pursue the policies which would be most effective in accomplishing this objective. In the light of the present situation the United States should adopt and pursue the following policies:

- a. Continue to assist in every practicable way to effect an early and equitable liquidation of the oil controversy.
- b. Be prepared to take the necessary measure to help Iran to start up her oil industry and to secure markets for her oil so that Iran may benefit from substantial oil revenues.
- c. Be prepared to provide prompt United States budgetary aid to Iran if, ending restoration of her oil industry and oil markets, such aid is necessary to halt a serious deterioration of the financial and political situation in Iran....
- d. Recognize the strength of Iranian nationalist feeling; try to direct it into constructive channels and be ready to exploit an opportunity to do so, bearing in mind the desirability of strengthening in Iran the ability to resist communist pressure.
- e. Continue present programs of military, economic and technical assistance to the extent they will help to restore stability and

increase internal security, and be prepared to increase such assistance to support Iranian resistance to communist pressure.

- f. Encourage the adoption by the Iranian government of necessary financial, judicial and administrative and other reforms.
- g. Continue special political measures designed to assist in achieving the above purposes.
- h. Plan now for the eventual inclusion of Iran in any regional defense arrangement which may be developed in the Middle East if such inclusion should later prove feasible...

**Notes:**