

1953 Coup Iran Exit Ticket

On March 8, 1951, Mohammed Mossadegh became the Prime Minister of Iran and vowed to nationalize Iran's oil industry and improve Iran's economy (Doc A). This situation did not sit well with Britain or the United States. Britain had oil companies in Iran, and British Prime Minister Clement Atlee said that he would "do anything possible to prevent the Persians [Iranians] from getting away with a breach of their contracted obligations" (Doc C). These "obligations" refer to the concessions that the Iranian shah had made with foreign merchants previously (Doc 6). The United States was also unimpressed, as it was in the midst of the Cold War, and was afraid that Mossadegh's taking of power from the shah "was unfavorable to the maintenance of control by a non-communist regime for an extended period of time" (Doc D). To explain, the United States feared that the ousting of the shah left the National Front politicians led by Mossadegh with only one enemy, the Communist Tudeh Party. Because the Nationalists had so far failed to help the economy, the US feared a communist takeover, and the intervention by Russia, which would be a loss for the US in the Cold War (Doc D). This information all comes from a Top Secret National Security Council Statement by the United States, and while it does not show the Iranian perspective at all, it is the perfect document to show what the US government felt about the situation, as the statement is directly from the United States and shows exactly what *they* think, with all their biases and interests. In addition to the National Security Council's widespread goal of holding off Russia from Iran, the CIA created a specific plan to overthrow Mossadegh called the TPAJAX. To summarize the plan, the CIA and SIS would supply Iranian General Zahedi with money, while simultaneously convincing the shah that Mossadegh must go if Iran was to maintain independence from the Soviet Union, and that Zahedi should be named Prime Minister instead of Mossadegh (Doc E). Through the quasi-legal overthrow, Mossadegh's overthrow would be justified by his "anti-religious" government and the "economic collapse" in Iran (Doc E). This information comes from the CIA plan, and is trustworthy in determining what the CIA *wanted* to do. The actual events are as follows: Through the CIA's plan, Mossadegh was overthrown (Doc F). But while some were quick to denounce Mossadegh as a traitor (Doc F), we know that not everybody in Iran agreed, as the Communist Tudeh party was still intact. Document F does not explicitly say this, but it has bias as it is from the CIA, who support the shah. Still, it can be seen that on the same day, when the Shah heard the news of Mossadegh's defeat, he decided immediately to fly back from Rome to Iran, but was later doubtful of the truth of the defeat (Doc G). Why was the shah in Rome in the first place? He wanted to avoid bloodshed- the bloodshed of himself, because many people did not support him, and even wanted to kill him (Doc G). This interpretation explains the conflicting information of what the people actually thought: while some did support the shah, many did not. The 1953 coup *did* happen though, as seen in a New York Times article on the coup's fallout. Because the article has US bias, it cannot be used to say whether or not General Zahedi was actually "in a strong position" (Doc H). However, this document can be used to show that "Dr. Mossadegh [was] in custody", and this information is corroborated by the court's finding of Dr. Mossadegh as guilty in his 1953 trial (Doc I). This concludes the account of the 1953 Iran coup.