

The start of iranian coup d tat history essay



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It was the night of August 15th of 1953 and the Iranian Coup D'état was finally put into action after the approval of Shah Reza Pahlavi. It was the hope of the United States and British governments that Mohammed Mossadegh would be caught by surprise but unfortunately, for them, Mossadegh's chief of staff, named General Taghi Riahi, heard of the coup before it was about to take place. With defenses in place, Mossadegh evaded capture postponing the overthrow of government to the next day. With members of the C. I. A. under arrest, it seemed that this attempt at installing an anti-communist leader (Shah Reza Pahlavi) and securing safety for the British and American economies had failed.

The American government is known promoting democratic values throughout the world. Despite the ideals America was fighting for in the Cold War from the 1940s to 1990s, the government still participated in the overthrow of democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh. Mossadegh threatened to nationalize Iran's oil in 1951 and later gained the support of the Iranian Parliament. British companies had many investments in Iranian oil and with the approval of nationalization, the economies of both British and Iran were harmed. The British government requested the help of America to perform a coup on Mossadegh. With suspicions of Mossadegh supporting communism, the American government was willing to sacrifice their democratic encouragement and ideals for the insurance of an anti-communist leader.

The forces attempting to overthrow Mossadegh were not willing to give up the coup even after the first night of failure and so the initiative continued. The shah, at this point, fled to Baghdad, too frightened to stay in Iran. By

August 17th, the shah had signed the decrees needed for the coup. One dismissed Mossadegh and the other stated that General Zahedi would take Mossadegh's place as Prime Minister. Many supporters of Mossadegh and Mossadegh himself believed that the danger of an overthrow was gone because of the shah's departure to Baghdad. The counterattack occurred on August 19th which resulted in the arrest of Mohammed Mossadegh. He was sentenced to three years of jail and then was required to spend the rest of his life under house arrest. With Mossadegh out of power, the British and American governments implemented a new power, Shah Reza Pahlavi

The decrees were provided by the British and American governments to the shah to gain security in the fact that there would be an anti-communist in power in Iran. Although anti-communist, Shah Reza Pahlavi would come to take over Iran as a dictatorship and not a democracy. Although the American government was seeking security with the overthrow of Mossadegh, over the long run, it is evident that the plan has backfired causing the reduction of the United State's influence in the Middle East.

The threat of communism was the whole purpose of the Cold War. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan are examples of how the United States government was able to contain the spread of communism to countries that could be at risk. The Truman Doctrine (1947) supplied money to Greece and Turkey in order to steer away from extreme ideologies that might favor communism. The Marshall Plan (1947-1951) provided American money to almost all European countries. The only countries not assisted were communist nations. This method of securing anti-communism and encouraging democracy by supplying money to countries throughout the

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world show, to what lengths, the American government would go in order to defy the communist nation of the Soviets. The Iranian Coup D'état was just another attempt at containment performed by the United States.

Although the United States government was not at first interested in getting involved in the coup when the British government first approached them, Eisenhower eventually approved the involvement. After the U. S. government investigated the situation, the realization that Iran could potentially fall under the power of the communists roused the American government into approval of assistance. The reason of the United States government being involved in the coup was stated by Allen W. Dulles, the director of central intelligence at the time. He stated that, " the aim [of the coup] was to bring to power a government which would reach an equitable oil settlement, enabling Iran to become economically sound and financially solvent, and which would vigorously prosecute the dangerously strong Communist party". With the assistance of the U. S. government in the coup, it was believed that communism would be contained and the pro-democratic nations would benefit from the overthrow of Mohammed Mossadegh.

Even though countries siding with the United States in the Cold War may have benefited from the Iranian Coup D'état, the Iranians were under the control of a corrupt dictator that ruled their country for twenty-five years with the assistance of the U. S. government. The U. S. government believed that it was only necessary to have an anti-communist leader in place during the Cold War. At that point, it was only necessary to contain communism which is why the United States supported Pahlavi and why Pahlavi was able to mistreat the Iranians for so long.

Even before the supporters of Mossadegh could speak out on the secret overthrowing done by Britain and America in 1953, they were tortured and killed. The Iranians as well as the world was led to believe that revolutionists in Iran overthrew Mossadegh. But because Mossadegh was Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister, the belief that revolutionists overthrew him was highly doubted by the Iranian people. This caused the resentment that Iranians have toward the West and America.

Although the Iranians were oppressed for twenty-five years by Shah Reza Pahlavi, in 1979, he was able to be overthrown in the Iranian Revolution. In result of the Iranian Revolution, the nation was vulnerable which allowed Ayatollah Khomeini, a fundamentalist, to come to power. This was an abrupt change from the ruling of Pahlavi and his Western ideals. The Ayatollah was strict with religion causing many social changes. Many say that with the ruling of Ayatollah brought the radicalism that Iran is known for.

Along with the Iranians having a negative view on America, the coup caused damage to the views of other nations on American ideals of democracy. In Mohammad Mossaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran, it discusses the negative effects of the Iranian Coup D'état by stating...

" The '28 Mordad' coup, as it is known by its Persian date, was a watershed for Iran, for the Middle East and for the standing of the United States in the region. The joint U. S.-British operation ended Iran's drive to assert sovereign control over its own resources and helped put an end to a vibrant chapter in the history of the country's nationalist and democratic movements. These consequences resonated with dramatic effect in later years. When the Shah

finally fell in 1979, memories of the U. S. intervention in 1953, which made possible the monarch's subsequent, and increasingly unpopular, 25-year reign intensified the anti-American character of the revolution in the minds of many Iranians."

As Malcolm and Gasiorowski discussed, Iranians were not the only nation that was affected negatively by the Iranian Coup D'état.

In a time of war, or any time for that matter, it is necessary for a nation to have political realism. Without realism used in government decisions, it is not possible to determine if communists would have taken over the world. Because of this necessity of political realism, especially during the Cold War, it is evident that Eisenhower and the British government at the time believe the Iranian Coup D'état to be necessary for the security of the nation and of democracy.

Although, with hindsight, we can see the negative effects of the overthrow, we can also see the thought process of the governments staging the coup.