

# 60 Years of U.S. Intervention in Iran: Nothing But Horrors for the People

Right now, the U.S. government is threatening war on Iran. 60 years of U.S. intervention in Iran show that the U.S. has brought nothing but horrors for the people of Iran.

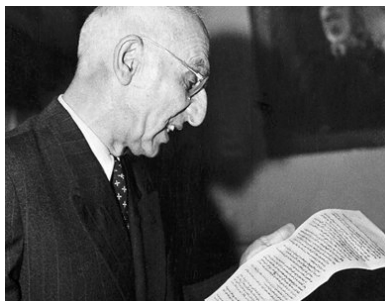
## 1953: The CIA Installs a Dictator

**1** In the early 1950s, Iran was ruled by British imperialism and its puppet, the tyrannical Shah [King] Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Britain's Anglo-Iranian Oil Company controlled the country's main source of wealth—oil—and reaped millions in profits. Most Iranians were impoverished peasants, enslaved on the land. Iran's oil workers toiled for 50 cents a day and lived in polluted slums without water or electricity.



A protest against British rule, 1951.

A movement of millions arose that drove the hated Shah from the country. Mohammed Mossadegh became Prime Minister and attempted to nationalize Iran's oil. Controlling Iran and exploiting its oil were crucial to their imperialist empires. In 1953, the CIA and the British organized a coup that overthrew Mossadegh and returned the Shah to power, crushed his opponents, and instituted a ruthless dictatorship. Mossadegh's oil nationalization was reversed, and full control was returned to Western oil corporations.



Above: Iranian Prime Minister Mossadegh reads statement nationalizing Iran's oil, 1953. Right: Iranian soldiers guard the Shah's palace after the 1953 CIA-engineered coup ousting Mossadegh from power, August 1953.



## 1977-1979: Fall of Shah and Rise of Islamic Regime

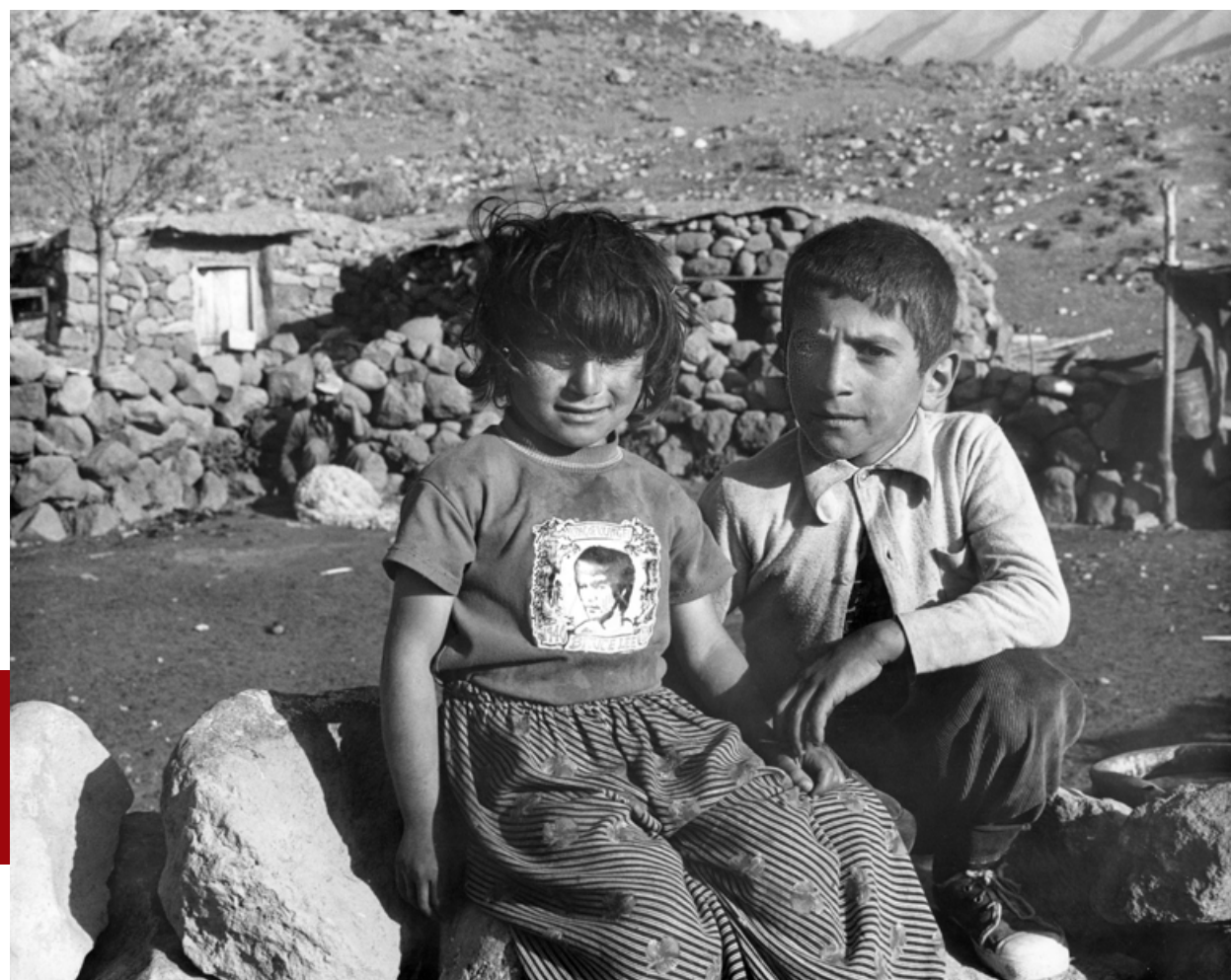
**3** In 1978, a wave of mass revolution built across Iran against the hated Shah. The U.S. backed the Shah's attempts to drown the revolution in blood—for instance, his September 1978 "Bloody Friday" massacre of thousands of protesters. When it became clear that the Shah was losing control, the U.S. switched tactics. The Shah was pushed into exile, and the U.S. helped the reactionary Islamic fundamentalist regime led by Ayatollah Khomeini consolidate power and usher in a new nightmare for Iran's people. The U.S. rulers thought they could work through the Islamic Republic because Iran's theocratic rulers had no intention or ability to fully break with imperialism. And the U.S. backed the Islamic regime's brutal repression of revolutionary and progressive Iranians.



The Shah of Iran visiting U.S. President Jimmy Carter, November 1977.



"Bloody Friday": The Shah's troops kill thousands of anti-government protesters, September 1978.



Children in a Kurdish village in Iranian Kurdistan, 1979. 26 years after the U.S.-backed Shah promised land reform, many villages were still without water, electricity, schools and hospitals.

## 1953-1979: The Nightmare Under U.S. Domination

**2** Between 1953 and 1979, the U.S. was the dominant power in Iran. Did it use this power to make life better for Iranians? No; life under U.S. domination was a nightmare. The Shah ruled Iran with an iron fist through his hated secret police, SAVAK, which the U.S. trained and organized. SAVAK imprisoned, tortured, and murdered huge numbers of Iranians who dared to oppose the regime. The Shah made the economy totally subservient to the West and spent billions turning Iran into a U.S. military outpost. Meanwhile, 60 percent of Iranians were illiterate, life expectancy was only 50 years, 139 of every 1,000 children died in their first year, and millions lived in rural poverty or sprawling urban slums.



Torture device used by U.S.-backed Iranian secret police to pull out fingernails of detainees.



AP photo

Above: Protesters taking over an army tank during the mass upsurge against the Shah, 1979.

Left: Iraqi prisoners of war executed by Iranian troops during the Iran-Iraq war, Bostan, Iran, December 1981



## 1980-87: U.S. Fuels Slaughter in the Persian Gulf

**4** The Khomeini regime was bent on promoting Islamic fundamentalism and expanding its role in the region. In November 1979, Khomeini encouraged Islamic students to seize the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. All this clashed sharply with U.S. efforts to maintain its domination of the Middle East. So in 1980, the U.S. gave Iraq's Saddam Hussein a green light to invade Iran, and then helped turn the Iran-Iraq War into an eight-year bloodbath. U.S. allies supplied Iraq with billions in arms and materials that Hussein turned into chemical weapons, which he used on Iranians (and Iraqi Kurds). The U.S. also armed Iran, and played both sides against each other to prevent either from winning. When the war finally ended, a total of 367,000 Iraqis and Iranians had been killed, and an estimated 700,000 injured or wounded.



Above: Protesters taking over an army tank during the mass upsurge against the Shah, 1979.

Left: Iraqi prisoners of war executed by Iranian troops during the Iran-Iraq war, Bostan, Iran, December 1981

## Today: Bush Regime Threatens More Aggression Against Iran

**5** The goal of Bush's "war on terror" is to defeat the Islamic fundamentalist forces who pose obstacles to U.S. imperialist interests so that the U.S. rulers can more directly control and exploit the whole Middle East, as a key part of creating an unchallenged and unchallengeable global empire.

The Bush regime is making all kinds of accusations against Iran to justify stepped-up threats. These are the same proven liars who sold the war on Iraq with the "Weapons of Mass Destruction" hoax, and nobody should accept what they say as true. But even if all the things that the U.S. says about the Iranian regime were true—that they are an oppressive theocracy, are aiding forces in Iraq that attack the U.S., have ambitions of being a nuclear power—none of that would make a U.S. attack on Iran anything but IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION.



U.S. warships on an "Expeditionary Strike Force Exercise" in the Persian Gulf, June 2007.

For a fuller background and history, read the 9-part series by Larry Everest—"The U.S. & Iran: A History of Imperialist Domination, Intrigue and Intervention"—available online at [revcom.us/iran-history](http://revcom.us/iran-history)