



The Coup: 1953, The CIA, and The Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations

Ervand Abrahamian

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In August 1953, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency orchestrated the swift overthrow of Iran's democratically elected leader and installed Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in his place. Over the next twenty-six years, the United States backed the unpopular, authoritarian shah and his secret police; in exchange, it reaped a share of Iran's oil wealth and became a key player in this volatile region.

The blowback was almost inevitable, as this new and revealing history of the coup and its consequences shows. When the 1979 Iranian Revolution deposed the shah and replaced his puppet government with a radical Islamic republic under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the shift reverberated throughout the Middle East and the world, casting a long, dark shadow over U.S.-Iran relations that extends to the present day.

In this authoritative new history of the coup and its aftermath, noted Iran scholar Ervand Abrahamian uncovers little-known documents that challenge conventional interpretations and also sheds new light on how the American role in the coup influenced U.S.-Iranian relations, both past and present. Drawing from the hitherto closed archives of British Petroleum, the Foreign Office, and the U.S. State Department, as well as from Iranian memoirs and published interviews, Abrahamian's riveting account of this key historical event will change America's understanding of a crucial turning point in modern U.S.-Iranian relations.



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