

Amir Abbas Hoveyda

18 February 1919 – 7 April 1979

The longest serving Prime Minister

- In office 27 January 1965 – 7 August 1977 - executed
- Also served as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
- Served in France, Turkey, and Germany as a part of Iranian diplomatic mission
- Mossaddegh's new government in 1950's dissolved the previous one where Hoveyda was the Minister of Foreign Affairs
- He left Iran to become a part of the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees, overseeing African, Asian, and American countries

Early life

- Born in Tehran to a diplomat father and Qajar royal mother
- Father was a bahai and Hoveyda himself not religious
- Moving frequently due to fathers occupation
- Living in Beirut, attending French school and reading French literature influenced his love for France
- Moved to France but attained high school credits in London to be able to enter a French university
- Spoke English, French, Italian, German, Arabic and Farsi

- Upon returning to France, governments of France and Iran in disagreement – went to Brussels to study instead
- Finished a BA in Political Science – under German occupation
- Returning to Iran, enlisted as a soldier
- Bypasses due to his education straight to the Officers' Academy
- Dispatched to France with the Iranian embassy
- Used as a scapegoat in the “Paris Affair” – transporting finances from Switzerland to Paris (as an embassy staff, their vehicle was not searched on the borders)

A new path

- Joining the National Iranian Oil Company in 1958, taking a higher position under his patron Entezam as his assistant
- Inspired by the work ethics of the West, he introduced grievance procedures for unsatisfied workers (environment etc.), eating with the labourers in the cafeteria to form closer links between the workers and the management
- Despite his love for the West, he was against foreign workers working in Iran to make sure the local sources are used efficiently
- Established The Progressive Circle, young Western-educated men to diminish the old ranks of the Shah's government, and to improve the country's economy

Controversies

- Became a Freemason in 1960 – seen as an important asset to become a high-ranking officer
- Since Freemasonry seen as British Imperialism, this had a negative effect
- Accused of being a Baha'i, although this was rejected by himself and the Shah

The Prime Minister

- With the progressive Circle becoming a political party (New Iran Party), Hoveyda became more powerful
- His wit and experience might have made him the object of jealousy, gossip and unfair blaming
- Hoveyda blamed for passing a bill that gave immunity to foreigners, although he wasn't involved in it
- After Prime Minister's Mansour assassination, he became the Prime Minister
- Towfiq magazine satirized him as a dandy, and that's how most ordinary Iranians knew him. Magazine shut down on Shah's order due to criticism aimed at himself, but through Hoveyda

Tried to reconcile the intellectual community and the opposition with the monarchy, with a vision of what could have been achieved, at the end was unsuccessful

Shah becoming more and more autocratic

Criticism of corruption which Hoveyda was trying to fix

Since Hoveyda's power was cut by the Shah, bureaucracy and the political system in Iran, he publicly let go of trying for reforms, his optimism disappeared. Competition with peers also made his position difficult

Privately complaining about the situation in Iran and the obstacles preventing him to achieving his reformist goals and political freedom

- 2nd march 1975 - the Shah dissolved the New Iran Party, and only one party was allowed, the one established by himself: Rastakhiz Party
- Threatened by Hoveyda's power, because due to lack of power in the government, and all his efforts went into the Party
- Hoveyda was briefly the Secretary general in Rastakhiz, and later Minister of Court until 1977, the Shah was trusting him but wanted to centralize his power
- An article published in Keyhan criticized Khomeini was attributed to Hoveyda without proof – backlash that lead to the Revolution
- Hoveida offered to go on a mission to Belgium, rejected due to many reasons, one was his mother

The End of a Prime Minister

- Hoveyda used as a scapegoat in the turmoil of the upcoming Revolution
- Forced to resign, arrested with other 60, Shah believed he would be acquitted
- After the Shah fled, the guards holding him deserted also, leaving him to the Revolutionary guards
- Requests from friends to escape rejected because Hoveyda believed as he had done nothing wrong, the court would acquit him, and turned himself in

- Tried by the Hanging Judge, Khalkhali, appointed by Khomeini, ordering thousands of execution of political prisoners throughout his career
- Most of the allowances in court process abandoned, no rights to due process, impartiality of judge, rules of evidence, and assumption of innocence, or right to a counsel
- Hoveyda accused of spreading corruption on Earth, smuggling heroin to France, terrorizing people by closing down newspapers, fighting God and his creatures, spreading imperialism and Zionism, espionage, etc.
- Hoveyda, not allowed to defend himself, said that the court was a sham, and the judge ordered a verdict: death by a firing squad

- While he was being taken out of court and into the firing squad premises, the impatient Hojatoleslam Ghaffari shot Hoveyda twice in the neck, leaving him to beg to be killed quickly.
- The autopsy revealed that he was beaten prior to execution
- His home was looted, but there were almost no pricey possessions except for his favourite items, a rocking chair and a small library
- Hoveyda had no children, married once to Laila Emami, divorcing after 5 years but remaining friends
- Hoveyda was awarded posthumously Commander of the Legion of Honour by the French government