

# US Foreign Policy and the Modernization of Iran: Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and the Shah (Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary

## World)

Ben Offiler



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The relationship between the United States and Iran has long been burdened by missed opportunities and misunderstandings. Even during the Cold War at the height of the alliance between America and the last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard Nixon increasingly found themselves having to overcome tensions with Tehran. In *US Foreign Policy and the Modernization of Iran*, Ben Offiler argues that these presidents engaged with the Shah in a contest over Iranian modernity and, despite Washington's superpower status, struggled to exert influence over the Shah's regime. As a result of the continuity in the policies of Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, and the Shah's ability to demonstrate that he was not merely an American pawn, the United States came to accept its declining influence over Iran and endorse the Shah's vision of modernity, thereby tying the White House intimately to the survival – and downfall – of the Pahlavi dynasty.

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