SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: August 2, 1951

SUBJECT: Iran

PARTICIPANTS: Sir Oliver Franks, British Ambassador
The Secretary
Mr. Matthews

COPIES TO:
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Mr. Holbrooke (SEIA)
Mr. Perkins (SEIA)
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After taking up other matters, Ambassador Franks said he wanted to discuss Iran briefly in the light of recent developments. He said that he was informed that he had had instructions from London and his observations were purely personal. In the circumstances under which it was arranged and in the light of his accomplishments, Mr. Harriman’s mission to Iran, he felt, had been a “God send.” He was convinced arrangements for the resumption of negotiations could not have been successful without Mr. Harriman’s very able handling of the situation both in Tehran and in London.

However, Sir Oliver continued, he regarded successful arrangement for the Stokes mission as mostly “ halluc.” In Mr. Harriman’s undertaking, he thought there would be equally important and equally difficult and delicate. In other words, he said, he was sure we were a long way from any satisfactory solution of the Iranian oil problem and if Mr. Harriman left Tehran at the present time there was grave danger that the talks would break down. Mr. Stokes was a bluff, genial, open and hearty man, not accustomed to dealing with the Iranian mentality. Mossadegh, on the other hand, as far as he could judge, was a man with certain very definite and passionately held beliefs and probably the capacity for employing his intelligence to rationalize his actions similar to that possessed by Nehru. Under these circumstances he thought it would be difficult for Stokes and Mossadeg to find a common language.

Sir Oliver
Sir Oliver then said that we may have noted Mr. Attlee's recent statement in the House of Commons that the British would in no circumstances accept Siam. He said that Mr. Attlee was a cautious man and would not have made that statement had it not represented a decision which he had reached. He reminded us that this confirmed the feeling he had had for some weeks that British opinion, not only in the Conservative Party but in general, had greatly hardened on this question. He thought this was a very important added reason why Mr. Morrison should stay on in Tehran.

We said that we fully agreed that Mr. Morrison should remain and also that Mr. Attlee's statement and its implications had definitely not escaped our notice. The Secretary said, as he had described the situation at yesterday's BOS meeting, he felt the point now reached in Iran resembles the point in the Kashmir talks on July 25 when agreement was finally reached on an agenda for nearly seven substantive talks could begin. He said that Mr. Morrison had himself recently indicated a belief that he should remain in Tehran, and that we would get off a message urging him to do so.

In reply to our question, Sir Oliver said he had no objection to our telling Mr. Morrison of his views provided we made it clear they are purely personal.

N. Tremain Matthews