

# The Sylvans

## Detailed summary powered by AI

16 March 2026

*Motion: This house welcomes attempts for regime change in Iran.*

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## Analysis of the outcome powered by AI

The debate over whether the house welcomes attempts for regime change in Iran resulted in the motion being carried. The discussion was marked by a stark contrast between brutal geopolitical realism and impassioned anti-imperialism, ultimately swinging on a crucial semantic clarification regarding the motion's phrasing.

The proposition opened the debate by abandoning moral high grounds in favour of stark realpolitik. The first speaker argued that international relations are defined by power politics and that maintaining the American sphere of influence is a necessary evil to counter future threats from China and Russia. By framing Western hegemony as the only bulwark against worse authoritarian alternatives, the proposition set a cynical but pragmatic tone. The speaker acknowledged the abhorrent nature of foreign interference but deemed it essential for Western survival and geopolitical readiness.

In stark contrast, the opposition grounded their argument in a vehement critique of Western imperialism and historical interference. The second speaker rejected the narrative of American moral superiority by citing ongoing global atrocities and historical Western interventions in the Middle East such as the overthrow of democratically elected Prime Minister Mossadegh. The opposition framed current military manoeuvres not as humanitarian interventions for the Iranian populace but as cynical resource grabs aimed at controlling the Strait of Hormuz, maintaining the petrodollar and serving a Greater Israel project.

As the debate transitioned to the audience, the ebb and flow of arguments revealed a deeply conflicted room. Almost universally, audience members expressed disgust toward the current theocratic regime in Iran, highlighting its oppression of women and brutal suppression of dissent. However, this anti-regime sentiment frequently clashed with a profound mistrust of

Western military intervention. Several speakers drew parallels to the disastrous aftermaths of Western involvement in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan. They warned that decapitating the Iranian government without a viable internal opposition would lead to a balkanised state or a dangerous regional escalation involving global superpowers. A younger speaker also voiced intense disillusionment with Western hypocrisy, questioning the legitimacy of nations with poor moral track records attempting to police the world. Further context was added by speakers who highlighted the deep cultural history of Persia and the complex religious rivalry between Shia Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia.

Despite the heavy criticism of Western motives, the tide of the debate began to turn as later speakers refocused the room on the precise wording of the motion. A crucial pivot occurred when an American audience member separated the concept of regime change from current US military actions. By pointing out that "attempts" could include non-military strategies such as the broadcasting of the BBC Persian service to bypass state censorship, the motion became palatable to those who abhorred military strikes but supported Iranian liberation.

This recontextualisation was bolstered by the chairman, who stepped in to share a personal anecdote about the Iranian people's desire to be freed from their authoritarian leaders. This framing successfully shifted the emotional weight of the debate from a referendum on American military doctrine to a statement of solidarity with the oppressed Iranian populace. In their summations, the opposition doubled down on the inevitability of military disaster, warning that the current trajectory would not bring liberal democracy but would leave Iran in rubble. The proposition, as the final speaker, astutely conceded that an internal grassroots revolution would be ideal before pivoting back to the grim reality that geopolitical readiness is paramount in a dangerous world.

Ultimately, what drove the result was a vital clarification immediately preceding the vote. The chairman confirmed that the motion was a general endorsement of regime change however it might come about rather than an explicit approval of current US military intervention. This distinction allowed the house to separate their distaste for Western imperialism from their disdain for the Iranian theocracy, providing the ethical runway needed for the motion to be carried.

## **Detailed transcript:**

The motion being that this house welcomes attempts for regime change in Iran. And the speaker, if you'd like, you have five minutes. Yeah, start now, five minutes. And I will give you some little warning cards as we go through. Okay, in your own time.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am the speaker. I work in the West End theatres. You might think I'm a bit of an actor today. I'm going to act the partisan arguing in favour of regime change in Iran and completely ignoring the arguments against it. If you're looking for the history books, history is all about power politics. What did Rome think of killing off any opposition to its growing empire, whether in Carthage or Macedon? Ah, 'tis the way of the world. If you have a growing empire, as

the United States clearly is, you must defend it. If a country like Iran is a danger to it, you must attack. But how to do it? Iran is one of the few nations that has successfully resisted the American hegemon, and can that be tolerated? Well, if it affects American power, that must be considered. It may pose a danger to us later down the line, it may harbour terrorists who have committed terrible atrocities against the West and every other argument for having no nations outside the American hegemon. Personally, given the choice between a Chinese sphere of influence and a Russian sphere of influence, just for the governments wonderful people, but looking at the governments I'd rather take the American sphere of influence. I really do not want to be anywhere near the alternatives, for there is no freedom of speech like we clearly have here in the West, with no arrest for Twitter speeches or Twitter comments whatsoever. And was it right of the American government to do what it did? Well, I'd say nearly 50 years down the line, the Iranian regime has shown it's not willing to play nice on the stage. It is willing to pursue the nuclear programme. It is willing to back anti Western proxies like Hezbollah and ultimately, it's a dangerous world out there, not necessarily from Iran itself. The real bugbear, probably, that nobody's talking about is China. For what does Trump know? I don't know what he knows that I don't. Maybe he knows that China has something underway that is going to threaten the American sphere of influence, and that is why Trump is so fervently changing the regimes, not only in Iran but in Venezuela. So just to put it clearly here, this is not necessarily about Iran, the country in itself, but about the fact that this argument would apply to Venezuela, possibly to Cuba or anything else which America needs to deal with now in order to prepare for the later challenge from China. It sounds utterly abhorrent to our liberal Western ears, which have been raised on the concepts of human rights. But alas, in the real world, we often have to do things to achieve our ends that we don't want to do. I mean, look at the Cold War. It wasn't just the Soviet Union who was using subterfuge and assassinations and regime change in places like Iran to achieve its ends. But do we want to support the Western sphere of influence or its enemies? And I put it to you, I personally would not want to lift a finger to change the regime in Iran, because I am a born coward, like a good civilian. But this house says that in a dangerous world, sometimes difficult decisions must be made, and if Iran was left unchecked, it would pose a threat to the Western sphere of influence. Having neutralised Iran, this house argues that we are safer for it, because now China would lose a very important ally, a source of oil and the sooner that we can get Iran to be an American proxy. I'm not particularly happy about any human rights atrocities that might be committed under this new government backed by America. But this house argues that that is what we have to do in this new dangerous world. The good old days of the Cold War and the 30 years after the Cold War are long over, and America is having to get its hands dirty for our own good. So says this house. I thank you.

Thank you to the speaker, and I'm usually managing to come in just under the time instead of people going over it. So thank you for putting those arguments in favour of the motion. To the next speaker, it's now your turn to speak for five minutes against.

Thank you very much. Thank you for having me. Okay, to address the first point, a US led world order. Are we really the good guys, right? This is what is becoming apparent. So we know that the Trump Administration has kidnapped or extracted Maduro from Venezuela to extract resources. We know that they're throttling Cuba and Cuba, apparently, is going to be attacked next. We've got genocide in Gaza and we are complicit with that, or the West is. We've got the de facto annexation of the West Bank and now we're going in to attack Iran, which is a country

of 93 million people. Iran and pretty much all the Middle East know now that they are the next Gaza. So for Iran, this is an existential crisis. So the point of that is, are we really the good guys? And if we look back at history, the whole Middle East was divided up after the Ottoman Empire fell between the French and the British in order to occupy the territory. And then when oil was discovered, well, the empires wanted the oil. There was a democratic election. Mossadegh in Iran was elected, but he was deposed, replaced by the Shah of Iran, which was a fascist regime that had a secret police. And then there was a revolution, it's come to be called the Islamic revolution, but it was made up of lots of different parts and different groups and it's not a great regime. But the point is that the narrative that the US is going in for the benefit of the Iranian people is for the birds. For the birds, right? That's not what they're doing it for. And if any country in the West has a right to defend itself, especially with nuclear weapons Macron in France has said he's going to double or triple his nuclear warheads and there's been no protest there we've got this weird situation where Israel is threatening Iran with nuclear weapons, allegedly to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons. So the narrative that we're in there to help the Iranian people is false. A decapitation strike really means replacing a terrible dictator with a more malleable dictator. So the argument that we're there to help people falls on its face. The narrative of nuclear weapons is also false, because Iran hasn't developed a nuclear weapon, even though it has been capable of doing it. If that was the true intention, then there would be ways of doing it without attacking Iran. There are other things going on too, though, right? The real reason they want control of the Strait of Hormuz is to maintain US hegemony and the Greater Israel project. So we know that if we can control the Strait of Hormuz, we can contain other nations. If this goes on for several weeks, then China and Japan will run out of energy and their economies will collapse. So controlling that strait is a technique to contain other countries, such as the expansion of China. It also has to do with the petrodollar, to make sure that the Gulf countries keep selling their oil in US dollars. That's another form of hegemony. And then we've also got the Greater Israel project. I think Netanyahu said today that Israel is not a regional hegemon, it's a global hegemon. So the point is, this attack against a nation of 93 million people, four times the size of Iraq, is not being done for their interests and in their benefit. It's being done for nefarious purposes that are not aligned with our liberal democratic values and these idealistic values which we like to associate ourselves with.

Okay, thank you very much to our two leading speakers. I think you get three minutes at the end to sum up. Is that correct? So what we've heard here are two very opposing views, but they both agree on one thing, which is that the Iranian regime is a bad one, an evil one. But the second speaker asks, do we really want an American led hegemony in the Middle East? And questions the motives of the Americans. And the first speaker suggests that something needs to change. It can't go on as it is and America needs to get its hands dirty, I think you said. So if people are cogitating their own views on this hot topic, please put your hand up and we'll get you up here to speak for three minutes. Come on, to the next speaker, I'm really sorry I got your name wrong earlier. Where I got that from...

What a debate. You heard it here first. The first speaker advocates regime change, but who's going to change? The second speaker talks about American imperialism, that they are automatically going to change. Change comes about from the grassroots. If the people of Iran decided to change the regime, that's one thing. That's a valid progression, the people rise up and say goodbye to Mr Ayatollah. Now, whether he is humanitarian or put there by God or the

panel, at least there was some form of election. There's a country that has got a head of state that isn't elected. I wonder who that could be. So is there a case to actually have a regime change in that country? In other words, sweep in front of your own doorstep first without telling other people how to run their own country. And of course, there are horrible people all over the world. All leaders are horrible. Against human rights in the Middle East? We've been in this country repressing human rights. It's only 100 years or so that the working class and women got the vote. Recently, people have been prosecuted and repressed for just holding up a sign. So let's not get onto the United States. What did they do to repress the Native Americans and other such repressive actions? No, I don't think either case has been put well enough, so I want you to really seriously consider abstaining tonight. Thank you.

Thank you to the speaker. Why am I surprised by that? The next speaker, do come up and have your three minutes. Thank you very much.

I'm in the middle somewhere. Mr Chair, there's a religious aspect to this conflict. The attack by Israeli warplanes on Tehran, which was to attack a meeting that was taking place where they knew who was there, the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei and various other high up people, coincided with the Jewish holiday of Purim. Now, the legend of Purim is based on a story in the book of Esther about a Persian official called Haman who wanted to exterminate the Jewish population in Persia. This is back in the days of the Achaemenid Empire, but he was foiled in his purpose by Mordecai and the Jews celebrate this Purim, this sort of victory, if you like. And this attack coincides exactly. Now in Israel, they've been drawing cartoons of Haman as Ayatollah Khamenei, equating the two. So I just wonder to what extent this attack was coincidence, or was it on purpose that Israel was given this information that this meeting was taking place and they decided to go and decapitate the regime? Now, Iran hasn't been a very favourable regime to the region. They've had various proxies, the Houthis in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon and also, of course, in the Iraq War. Remember that there was a war between Iran and Iraq for about 10 years and eventually, of course, when Iraq completely capitulated after the Americans and the British gathered themselves into Iraq with shock and awe and all that sort of thing, Iran was able to extend its influence into the southern states of Iraq, which are Shia. Iraq, of course, has a Shia majority and southern Iraq is predominantly Shia. And so the whole balance of power changed with Iran managing to extend its influence into the southern Iraq. And since then, of course, we've had Shia governments in Iraq, which have not satisfied the Sunni half of the population and that led to the creation of ISIS and we all remember ISIS in northern Iraq, which spread into Syria and caused enormous problems. So Iran has always been a rival of Saudi Arabia. And this is because, of course, Iranians are Shia and Saudis are Sunni and the split between the two became very personal when the Sunnis back in, I can't remember the date, killed the grandson of the Prophet, Hussein, outside the city of Karbala. And the Shias have a festival, I don't call it a festival, it's called Ashura, where they castigate themselves and draw blood and so on to commemorate the death of Hussein. The rivalry between the two goes very deep. So there is indeed a religious aspect to this whole affair.

Thank you to the speaker, for that angle. Any other speakers, please? The next speaker, do stand up.

Well, Mr Chair, I think most of the contributions we've heard tonight are all right. The problem is we still have to make a choice. After the Shah was removed, who had quite an oppressive regime in Persia, you effectively ended up with a religious clique in control. They did elect a

president, but you've got these ayatollahs and I don't like any government formed of priests of any class at all, and we've got that problem in that they've been killing young girls. It's about 1,000 who have been killed now by the ayatollahs. So I would imagine the people of Iran would welcome a regime change, if they could bring it about. But the priestly ayatollahs have got a large army and I've forgotten what they're called now, Revolutionary Guards or something, and there isn't any civil power that can match them. Now, maybe the President of the United States is trying to create a regime change, but I don't really believe hurling the vast, most powerful missiles that man has ever produced and demolishing vast tracts of that country is really going to achieve very much. If you do, there's not much country left to run. So we come back to the situation that I talked about at the last meeting. If you're going to do anything, you need to be able to get a vote of the people and you need to have a clear view as to what they're going to vote about, what they would like to be in charge. So I suggested that the President of the United States should concentrate on getting some of his boots on the ground in order to be able to hold some sort of election or gauge opinion as to what the people actually want. I don't think the bulk of the people in Iran would vote for the ayatollahs to continue. But of course, that's just my opinion. We don't know what the facts are. What the opposition is saying is all correct. So basically, you've got a terrible hotchpotch of problems in that area. What would be the best solution out of a number of unsatisfactory problems? If America wishes to do something, I think it's got to get in there with some boots on the ground and test opinion. Do the people of Iran want the ayatollahs, or would they prefer something else? And they'd have to give them roughly what they might be able to. Thank you.

The speaker over there, yes, do come up.

Hi, I am opposed to the motion, but from a different perspective from the opposition. I was just thinking, America is trying, probably is trying, to have a regime change in Iran. But think about Iran in the past. Since 1979, so 40 something years, it has been controlled by the Ayatollah, especially the one who just died, who controlled it for almost 30 years with an iron fist. All the opposition has been crushed throughout all these years. So right now, when you try to have a regime change, who is going to take the power? Right now, the new Ayatollah still has the backing of the military. The military has been with Khomeini and his successors for decades, okay? And that is the reason why all the opposition has been crushed so easily. So when you don't really have a leader from the opposition, because they've been killed, they've been jailed, they've been tortured, to develop or try to groom new leaders takes time. Now, American boots in Iran? I think it's a terrible idea. We've got Afghanistan. We've got Iraq. Every case you look around, it has been a failure. So when you don't have a viable opposition, even if you prop somebody up, you don't have the military to back it. It's not going to work. It might take years in that case, but it's not going to be a short war. So that's the reason why I object to actually interfering with Iran. I don't think America is winning at this moment just by suppressing them for a little while. Yeah, in Iraq, it took George Bush a few months to declare victory and then right after that, we all know what Iraq turned out to be and we don't want to see another Iraq or Afghanistan. Thank you.

Any other speakers on this topic? Okay, thank you. Please come up. To the speaker, how are you?

Well, I nearly revealed more than I wanted to. I've got a zip problem. We forget that Trump is not the leader of the world and that he's not a dictator, because that is what appears to be

happening. Because he is doing everything to go into every single country and when he's ready with his attitude, this country will be somewhere along the line if he's around for long enough. Anyway, unfortunately, due to small print and old age, I need to put this torch on my phone. So, I read in this paper today, right? And somebody who's connected to Trump, these are some of his words, right? John Bolton, a respected Republican who advised the president on national security and even thought it was right to attack to avoid a future crisis. Future crisis. Now, one of the things with the West, I don't know, really, why we think that we have the right to say who should have nuclear power, right? We do not dictate what happens in the world. But unfortunately, NATO doesn't have any country that's in the southern hemisphere in it, so maybe that's why. Okay, he said, while Iran was not considered an immediate threat, its nuclear programme was getting too close for comfort. Hold a minute. Who else is expanding their nuclear programmes around? All right? Doesn't France have a nuclear programme? Remember, England and France never used to get on, even as a child. When I was a child, they didn't get on. Okay, they weren't in a fight, but they didn't get on with each other. I remember asking a Frenchman in France, can you speak English? And he spat on the ground and it wasn't because I was black, because it was actually a white person that asked him! But failing that case. I mean, think about the oil crisis, think about everything else that's happening and just think about the lies you're hearing and plus, what is happening in Iran is absolutely disgusting, right? I'm talking about the things that happen to women and I'm one person that fights and campaigns against cruelty to women. But just think about the cruelty that happens to women in this country and what we do about it, right? Think about what we do about it and just think about why this war and all the other things are happening is to distract us, because what will we be talking about next time? And our involvement in it happening. Because, let's put it this way, Starmer knows more than he might be saying. Okay. Now I thought this was actually quite funny. I don't know if I've got enough time to say it. He quotes Churchill. What Churchill said on appeasement. This just confirms the unteachability of mankind who needs to be taught. Just remember, both Trump and he have criminal charges against them, right and they are both fighting. And what is the West doing to help Palestine? Are they sending over anyone to help the Palestinians from being attacked? No, but we're ready to go and help Iran. We need to think about our priorities. Yes, Iran's regime needs to change, but we also need to change our attitude.

Any other speakers? Thank you. What's your name? The speaker? Thank you.

Apologies for my voice. It's a little bit low. But I wanted to start by saying that I think no one really likes the regime in Iran today. I mean, they enrich nuclear uranium to 60%. I don't think that's for electricity generation. There is a repression of freedom that threatens our country. So I don't think anyone really likes the regime in Iran today. But I just want to take a step back. Remember, Iran is not Venezuela. Unfortunately, I'm saying really in a real way, it's not Venezuela. Iran is not Iraq either. Iran is Persia. Iran is special. It's a country with thousands and thousands of years. It's the country of the Thousand and One Nights stories. It's a country with a huge cultural background. It is a country that has made history to a large extent. So when we talk about changing the regime, it is not simply saying, let's have the people rise up against the regime. That's not how it can be done, because today there is a different playing field between whoever is protesting and a government that is trying to repress the protests. What I'm saying is that the guns of the government may be much, much bigger than the guns of the people. What the US is trying to do is bring about regime change. And no one really understands, aside from

all the threats and the nuclear issue, no one really understands why regime change should happen at this specific time. No one is really able to give you a real answer as to why it was on the 28th of February that they had to attack. But what it has brought us is several threats from a geopolitical standpoint. China is the main buyer of Iranian oil and we know that China, whether we like it or not, is going into a soft conflict with us. That was also an issue with Venezuela. Venezuela was the biggest seller of oil to China. There are all kinds of repercussions for Europe, aside from economic repercussions. Everyone complains in Europe, oh, we're going to have higher gas prices here. Fine, whatever. I'm going to pay more for my electricity. The big trouble is whether or not, to me at least, whether or not other countries will be directly involved. And that's how a regional conflict becomes much more widespread. Today, actually, there was news that Trump is looking for other countries to intervene in the Strait of Hormuz. That's how you actually spread the war from a regional conflict to a more global level. Think about something else, Ukraine and Russia. We were talking until a few months ago about how Ukraine and Russia would be going to peace talks. What's happening now is that Ukraine is supporting Israel to build anti drone defences and Russia is supporting Iran, or vice versa, anyway, for drone provisions. So again, there are all these interlinkages that have been made even more complicated by the push for regime change in Iran. So what I'm getting to the point is, Iran is a huge country. It's an empire. It's the Persian Empire. That's what we are talking about. There are not only Shia people. There are the Kurds, who are different from an ethnic perspective. It's a huge country. People cannot rise on their own and there are too many geopolitical interlinkages that make this regime change completely complicated. Thank you.

Anybody else? Do come on up. What's your name? The speaker. Hello.

I just wanted to reiterate the opposition's point about me personally being so disillusioned with the narrative of the Western powers as the morally superior players in this game, especially being a young person on social media. We're really getting direct access to how fabricated this sort of historical narrative has been and reading history shows it is just the same cycles repeated throughout and this just seems like a play in an old game. And also, if someone is going to pose as morally superior, why should it be done by people who have criminal records? Netanyahu is deemed a war criminal by the majority of the countries in the world. And I think a massive sign that we are on the wrong side, the US and the UK, is that we were some of the only countries in the whole world that voted against the consensus, saying there wasn't actually a genocide being committed in Gaza and that Netanyahu wasn't a war criminal. So, yeah, I just think that sums up who America is and the UK backing them to decide the right ways of the world when they don't have a moral reputation at all. Yeah. Thank you.

Thank you to the speaker. Yeah, come on up.

Okay, so sorry. If I can just remind people what the motion is, if I can find it myself.

This house welcomes attempts for regime change.

Yes, this house welcomes attempts for regime change in Iran. We can look at it from both sides. Okay, so we can look at it from, why is the West going in there? Why is our friend Donald going in there? And you think, from a philosophical or ethical point of view, what gives us the right to decide how people or how nations rule themselves? On the other hand, you think, what gives the Iranians the right to kill 30,000 of their own people and to ensure that they are subservient to what's basically a religious sect with a history of saying, if you don't do what we say, we are going to kill you. So on one side, we've got this lovely ethical argument, which the West has got

because we live in a democracy and on the other side they live in an autocracy, which is killing them. Now, I am no fan of Donald Trump, as some people will know and I think that he's doing this for a particular reason and he's doing it for his own reasons, unsurprisingly, because that's what Donald does. And so his idea is to think, okay, I will go in, I'll bomb the hell out of it. The people are supposed to rise up, take power in Iran and we'll all be home in time for tea and biscuits. And it's not working out that way. And the reason that it isn't working out that way is because, really, in this type of situation, regime change, which is what he is fundamentally trying to do, any stuff about the nuclear stuff is a side issue, because six months ago, ten months ago, he said that they destroyed all of the nuclear capability in Iran. So this is all about deflecting attention from stuff which is happening back in the US. But really you need three things. You need the situation to be right, you need people to be rising up, which was there. But unfortunately, you didn't have the security forces, the IRGC, splitting in order to provide some support for those people. And you don't have any political organisation or subsection within the Iranian political environment to be able to push this through. So just doing what Donald wants to do isn't going to work. But I'm in support of the motion that we need to support some form of regime change. Thank you.

Hello. Come on up. Great to see you. Thank you very much.

So I actually think that regime change in Iran would actually be a good idea. It's a theocratic regime. It's had quite a malign influence in the region, especially with its proxies in Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen. I don't believe that this conflict, or previous conflicts like the 12 day war last year, had anything to do with nuclear weapons. The American intelligence services themselves said that there is no evidence that Iran actually has nukes. And I don't actually believe that this conflict, or the US generally, is actually supporting regime change, or that they want regime change in Iran. Because actually, if you got rid of the theocratic regime in Iran and replaced it with a secular democracy, that might actually create some stability in the region and that will reduce profits for the arms manufacturers that lobby the politicians in the US Congress and the US state. They actually thrive on and support instability. So I don't think that the US actually wants any form of stability in the Middle East. The other thing is this idea about regime change requiring boots on the ground. It's not just about airstrikes and it's estimated it would need between 300,000 to 500,000 boots on the ground if it's US troops, which is very unpopular, especially with the MAGA base. Alternatively, the US could use proxies in Iran that are anti government to overthrow the theocracy. That could be the Kurds, but they don't want to get involved. And then you've got the Balochs, you've got the Azeris, they don't want to get involved either and there's no evidence that they want to get involved. But this idea that the US is doing it because we want democracy and human rights is simply not the case. If they supported democracy and human rights, they would support regime change in all these Gulf Arab monarchies like Saudi Arabia and Qatar that are genuinely supporting global terrorism. But also the thing is, Iran actually had a democracy in the early 1950s, just like what an earlier speaker was saying. They actually had a democratically elected prime minister, Mossadegh, who nationalised the oil so the profits of the oil would go to the people of Iran, as opposed to going to the Anglo Persian Oil Company. But then what happened is Britain and the CIA orchestrated a coup d'état, overthrew him and installed the Shah, who was a brutal dictator who actually used his secret police, the SAVAK, to torture any dissidents. He was hated, not just by the Islamists, but by communists and leftists. He was overthrown in a revolution in '79 and that's how the

Ayatollah came into power in the first place. So American intervention actually created one of the most anti American regimes in the world. This is blowback from Western foreign policy. So my concluding point is, I think, yeah, it would be a good idea, but I don't actually think that it will happen. Thank you.

Thank you very much indeed for that. Any other speakers on this topic? The speaker, do come up.

Thank you, Mr Chair. I just wanted to come in. I was thinking about jumping in a few speakers ago, but actually a couple of the last speakers made some of the points that I wanted to make. But I do want to reiterate a couple. I want to bring it back to the motion. I'll preface that by saying I'm American. I completely don't support what Trump is doing. I'm not a Trump supporter whatsoever; I'm against Trump. However, what the last couple of speakers have pointed out is this motion is not about this particular military action by Trump. The motion says this house welcomes attempts for regime change in Iran. We did have both the opposer and the proposer saying the regime in Iran is a terrible regime. We've heard that from other speakers. I just want to reiterate that that is very, very important. We've got to look at this in the round. Also, the other thing, which may have been implicit in what the other people were saying, but I want to say it explicitly, is that attempts at regime change don't need to be military attempts. Take the BBC Persian service. Now, if the stated aim of that service were regime change, no Iranian would ever be able to listen to it. I don't know what its status is in Iran, if anyone there can actually access it, but it tries to provide impartial news. The Iranian regime would say it's completely biased against us. So what is impartial? I'm not trying to get into that debate. The point is the BBC Persian service is trying to provide unbiased access to information that hasn't been filtered by the Iranian regime. It might have a Western bias, but it is coming from our values and we think they're good and the people here support those values and some people in Iran do support them. I have a friend here in London and his wife is an Iranian filmmaker and one of the last times she went to Iran, which was a good 10 years ago now, she was thrown in jail and he had to go around and try to get her out. I don't think she's gone back to Iran since. The point is information. We heard that there are no political organisations in Iran who can support a change of the regime, because they're so stifled. So even things like providing information over time could be considered attempts at regime change. So I think we need to be really careful about what the motion actually says. It doesn't say we're talking about Trump's war in Iran. It doesn't say we're only talking about the military. We have to ask ourselves, is it a bad regime? Would the Iranian people benefit from it being changed? Now, that's up to them. We have to make a call here sitting outside and decide if that's a good idea or not.

Thank you very much to the speaker. Any other speakers? I'm told that it is allowed for the Chair to say a few words themselves. I better time myself, to be honest. Go. Yeah, just a few things to say about Iran and regime change. I do support the idea that there ought to be regime change in Iran, but I don't think that it's going to be brought about by bombing Iran from the skies. And I agree with an earlier speaker that the only way the Americans would be able to actually affect it is by having boots on the ground. And I don't think that's going to happen either, because I don't think the American public would wear it and Trump would suffer in the midterms. But let me tell you who does want regime change and who deserves to have regime change: the people of Iran, who have suffered enormously from whatever leadership they've had for many generations. As has been pointed out, the Shah was already there, but they had a prime

minister who was running a democracy and wanted the oil wealth to go to the Iranians. The CIA overthrew him. The Shah briefly left, came back and was a tyrant ever since. Thousands were locked up, thousands were tortured, thousands were killed. There have been attempts. The way the Ayatollah came back from Paris and was welcomed by millions of people at the airport was because he made false promises. He said that the Iranians would get free electricity and a share of the oil profits. Of course, that never happened. What the Iranians got instead was an authoritarian theocratic regime which has been very bad for its people. I've been to Iran. Admittedly, it was back in 2008 and the people are incredibly friendly. They're very welcoming and accommodating. They want to talk to you. The ones that could speak English, many came up to me and my wife and said, you know, we're not bad people. It's our leaders. And that is true. There have been attempts before that have always been quelled. When that girl, Neda, was shot in the chest in 2009, there was a Green Revolution. It never got anywhere, because the military killed thousands of people in the streets. The same has happened again recently. So I would make a plea to vote for the motion, even though I agree with lots of things that have been said on this side, because the people who deserve a change of regime are the Iranian people themselves. Thank you.

Any other speakers? Okay, is it the opposer first to sum up? Right. Okay, so in which case, the speaker, may I ask you to take three minutes to sum up your perspective after those contributions?

Thank you, everybody, for your comments. I think we can all agree that it would be wonderful for the current regime to become a fabulous liberal democracy and we all agree that we want the best for the Iranian people, right? So in that sense, if you want to take the motion the way that an earlier speaker says, is that what we want? We all agree with that. But we're talking about this now because the US and Israel have gone in and attacked. So I am talking about this and the intention of this attack on Iran. The clash seems to be a narrative designed to manufacture your consent, a common term you all know of, to win the battle of public opinion that the US, Iran and Israel are going in there for our benefit to do what we just said, to change the horrific regime and bring about a liberal democracy. But this is a standard playbook. They said this in Iraq. They said this in Afghanistan. They said this in Libya. Remember Gaddafi, right? They said this in Syria. But what's happening actually is that these countries are just being bombed into rubble, as you see in Gaza. And what actually will happen is that Iran will become, best case scenario, a balkanised state. In other words, it will be torn apart into areas in conflict with each other because it's easier to control and the US and Israel are doing that for strategic and resource advantages. So what the opposition is saying is that this attack on Iran is not designed for the benefit of the Iranian people. However horrific the present regime is, it's going to be ten times worse. And if you don't believe it, just look at Iraq. Look at what's going on in Syria. Look at what's going on in Lebanon. They're bombing southern Lebanon. They go in and they say, right, get out of town because we're going to bomb you. Can you imagine somebody saying that to London: leave, because we're going to bomb you. This is not being done for the benefit of the Iranian people. That narrative is there simply to win over public opinion. In the end, it's going to be a complete disaster. And because of the strategic and resource advantages, it's actually going to end up creating a much worse global situation, a precarious situation in terms of who's actually in charge of this critical chokehold. There's going to be this whole cold war. Anyway, it's going to be a disaster. This is not being done for the benefit of the Iranian people.

Thank you. So having proposed the motion in the first place, the first speaker is now going to sum up himself. Okay.

So just to clarify some things, I am actually agreeing with some of our speakers before that the best thing for regime change in Iran would be a revolution from within to end this horrible theocracy they've had for far too long. Let the people rise up themselves on their own terms and bring about a golden age of Iran where basically it's like a Persian speaking version of Britain, where people walk the streets free, there is freedom of speech, women dress however they want, yada yada. And I agree that's not what is happening now. I agree that this is not being done for the Iranian people's own good. I agree that some of the bad leadership they've had in the past is directly a result of American intervention. And in fact, having seen the chaos that has erupted in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East, this may actually make the Iranian people cling to their tyrants more, because they'll think, well, if our leadership falls apart, we're going to end up like those countries, so we'll just take our chances with the tyrants. Alas, that we live in such a world where this should be the choice, but we live in the real world, and unfortunately, those ayatollahs are not going to be overthrown anytime soon. I'll put it to you this way: if a Harris or Biden presidency were happening now, would things be any different? Probably, but only by a few years. It is possible that by the end of President Kamala Harris's first term in office, the same thing would be happening in Iran. I don't know. I don't have access to all the secret intel that they've got. However, I do know that if there's one good thing that Mr Trump has done, it is to arouse people's perceptions of the dangers posed by China, militarily or through espionage. And what it looks like to me, based on whatever intelligence Mr Trump is acting on, is that they want to be ready for whatever is coming. Yes, a different administration would do the same sooner or later, because it's a dangerous world out there. And China is not the Soviet Union. It's a wonderful country with a wonderful history and wonderful people. But America's there, China's there, and there's going to be some kind of conflict, whichever president is in power. Now, they want Venezuelan oil. They want Iranian oil. I agree this is being done mostly for the Americans' good. But that's at least one reason why this house would support regime change, because when the ship hits the wall with China, the Americans want to be ready. We are a British proxy. I'll say it, we have been an American proxy since the Second World War. We have cowered in the shadow of America, whether to protect us from the Soviet Union or, in the future, from China. I don't like it myself, but this house supports regime change in Iran, firstly, in opposition to the ayatollahs, and secondly, because of geopolitical reasons. We want to be ready.

Thank you. So I guess now having spoken it out and thought about it, it's time for the vote. Do we do abstentions first? For, against, abstentions. Okay.

Just one question. Are we going to be voting on regime change in general, or on regime change as it currently is?

Well, yeah, okay, so let's vote on the motion. And the motion is, this house welcomes attempts for regime change in Iran. Now, obviously you could argue whether there is or isn't an attempt at regime change at the moment, because Donald Trump changes his mind from time to time about that. But I think the pure meaning of this motion is that we, as a house, would welcome attempts for regime change, however it may come about. So I think that's what the vote should be on. So all those in favour of that motion: this house welcomes attempts for regime change in Iran. I make that 12. Thank you. Against? I'm just double checking. I make that eight. I see nine.

Okay, my apologies. Abstentions? Who's for abstaining? The speaker? Two, three abstentions, four abstentions. The other speaker, sorry, I didn't get you in the corner of my eye. Okay, so on that motion, this house welcomes attempts for regime change in Iran, the result is that the house does welcome it. The motion is carried by 12 votes in favour, 9 against and 4 abstentions. Thank you very much.