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Hossein Mousavi Biography

also known as Mir Hosein Musavi-Khamenei and Hussein Moussavi
(1941 –)

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Politician, artist, architect. Born Hussein Mousavi on September 29, 1941, in East Azarbaijan, Iran. The son of tea merchant, Mir-Esma'il Mousavi, the young Mousavi grew up in Khameneh, the hometown of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini. Mousavi is the grandson of Khomeini's paternal aunt.

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Mousavi earned his undergraduate degree from the National University of Iran. While in school for his bachelor's in architecture he joined the Islamic Society, and was an active member of several Islamic societies on campus. After graduation in 1969, he attended Shahid Beheshti University, where he attained a master's degree in architecture, focusing primarily on traditional Iranian structures.

Mousavi took an active role in politics and later told reporters that he was imprisoned for organizing protests against the monarchy under the Shah of Iran. While little is known of his time under the Shah, it is known that he helped found the Islamic Republican Party in 1979, in order to assist the overthrow of Iran's monarchy during the Iranian Revolution. The party supported the establishment of a theocracy in Iran, and helped organize strikes and demonstrations all over the country. During this time, Mousavi served as the chief editor of Jomhuri-e Eslami newspaper for the party.

The shah left Iran in exile in January 1979. Several weeks later, the Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Tehran to establish a theocratic government. In 1981, during the restructuring of the government of the Republic of Iran, Mousavi was appointed foreign minister. He held the post for five months before receiving a higher appointment of prime minister.

Mousavi served as prime minister for eight years, during which time he guided the country through its war with Iraq, and earned popular acclaim for his stewardship of the national economy. He was the pioneer of the voucher-based economy, which many believe was responsible for the fair distribution of goods among the people at a crucial time during the Iraqi war.

In addition, he was appointed to the leadership council of Lebanon's Shi'ite militant group, Hizballah, in 1982. Due to his involvement with Hizballah, Mousavi held a prominent role in the Iran-Contra affair. The highly publicized scandal revealed that President Ronald Regan had illegally traded arms with Iran in exchange for the release of seven American hostages held by the Iranian-sponsored militants in Lebanon.

Mousavi worked closely with Khomeini in the bargaining process, promising the U.S. that they would release hostages in September 1985. Profits from the arms sales to Iran were to be used to buy weapons for Nicaragua's right-wing group, the Contras.

Congress had forbidden the Reagan administration from supporting the Contras, and negotiating with hostage-takers, terrorists or Iran. As a result of the dealings, Regan was nearly impeached.

Mousavi is also known for severing ties with Great Britain after their refusal to disavow Salman Rushdie, the British author whose book, *The Satanic Verses* told the fictional story of a group of Qur'an verses allowing for prayers of intercession to be made to three Pagan Meccan goddesses. The story angered the Ayatollah Khomeini, who declared a fatwa calling for Rushdie's death in 1989.

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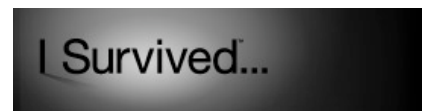
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