1. Record Nr. UNINA9910824352303321
Autore Shannon Matthew K. <1983->
Titolo Losing hearts and minds : Ame

Losing hearts and minds : American-Iranian relations and international

education during the Cold War / / Matthew K. Shannon

Pubbl/distr/stampa Ithaca, [New York]:,: Cornell University Press,, 2017

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ISBN 1-5017-0970-4

Descrizione fisica 1 online resource (pages cm)

Disciplina 371.8299155073

Soggetti Iranian students - United States - History - 20th century

Educational exchanges - Iran - History - 20th century

Educational exchanges - United States - History - 20th century

United States Relations Iran Iran Relations United States

Lingua di pubblicazione Inglese

Formato Materiale a stampa

Livello bibliografico Monografia

Note generali Previously issued in print: 2017.

Nota di bibliografia Includes bibliographical references and index.

Nota di contenuto Frontmatter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction:

EDUCATION BETWEEN IRAN AND THE WEST -- 1 THE FOUNDATION -- 2 THE WINDOW -- 3 THE YOUTH -- 4 THE BOOM -- 5 THE RECKONING -- Conclusion: THE INTERNATIONALISMS OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

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Sommario/riassunto

Matthew K. Shannon provides readers with a reminder of a brief and congenial phase of the relationship between the United States and Iran. In Losing Hearts and Minds, Shannon tells the story of an influx of Iranian students to American college campuses between 1950 and 1979 that globalized U.S. institutions of higher education and produced alliances between Iranian youths and progressive Americans. Losing Hearts and Minds is a narrative rife with historical ironies. Because of its superpower competition with the USSR, the U.S. government worked with nongovernmental organizations to create the means for Iranians to train and study in the United States. The stated goal of this initiative was to establish a cultural foundation for the official relationship and to provide Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi with educated elites to administer an ambitious program of socioeconomic development.

Despite these goals, Shannon locates the incubation of at least one possible version of the Iranian Revolution on American college campuses, which provided a space for a large and vocal community of dissident Iranian students to organize against the Pahlavi regime and earn the support of empathetic Americans. Together they rejected the Shah's authoritarian model of development and called for civil and political rights in Iran, giving unwitting support to the rise of the Islamic Republic of Iran.