

LC, HAK, Gopoli, Ivan,  
MSS DIV LIB CONG.  
MEMORANDUM

DECLASSIFIED  
PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
June 21, 2006

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUMS, NOTEBOOKS  
30 MAY 72 - 15 SEPT. 73

TS-28 ~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

**PARTICIPANTS:** Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, Shahanshah of Iran  
  
The President  
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the  
President for National Security Affairs

**DATE & TIME:** Wednesday, May 31, 1972  
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

**PLACE:** Saadabad Palace  
Tehran, Iran

The Shah began the conversation with a discussion of terrorism and the pressures on him from the left wing. There was pressure on the Shah from Brandt. The Shah claimed that the trouble came mostly from Baghdad, or at least Baghdad would take credit for it. There were dangers emerging in Oman, the Shah continued, where the rebels were completely supported by the Communists. There was also a great danger facing the Saudis. The regime was very backward; there was no inclination to reform. The King had a Bedouin army to deal with the regular army.

After a brief digression on the pure Iranian architectural style of the mausoleum, the Shah returned to the subject of Saudi Arabia. The Shah was convinced the Saudis would not be spared by the Egyptians once the Israeli problem was settled. They had a superiority complex but they were lousy fighters. The head of the Saudi CIA proposed to the U.S. through the Shah to work out a Saudi-Iranian-Egyptian grouping to stop Communism. The Shah had told Oman that we would fulfill any request they had for assistance in defeating the guerrillas. He would discuss with the British the questions of the Indian Ocean and possible joint maneuvers in the Persian Gulf.

The Shah emphasized the importance of making some progress toward an Arab-Israeli settlement. He recognized the Israelis' concerns for their security after their having fought three wars for it. Still he thought they

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/~~  
CLASSIFIED BY: HENRY A. KISSINGER

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

2

were too stubborn. On the other hand the Arabs were not mature; they were flamboyant and always trespassing on the rights of others.

As for Iran, the Shah continued, the Persian Gulf was key. Iran had established relations with Ethiopia and South Africa to make sure there was a common policy in the Indian Ocean. Iran would deal even with Australia for this purpose. Turkey was an essential element of this strategy. If its domestic structure disintegrated this would be a total disaster. But they may pull through. They had just cracked down on subversives and arrested another 2,000.

What had been the problem with Erim? the President asked. The military wanted to dominate, the Shah replied. But they also wanted to keep the existing institutions. It was a hard balance to strike. The problem was the absence of reforms. "So you ascribe your success to staying ahead of the discontent?" the President asked. The Shah said "yes. Our farmers own their own land. As for the universities, we just put subversives into jail." The Shah even thought Mao wanted a strong Iran; he had the impression that the PRC preferred to have good ties with Iran. The Chinese were reliable friends, as they proved in Pakistan. The Empress was going to visit Peking.

If you looked at Russia under the Tsars, it had a rough government -- the same system, with secret police and priests (now commissars). Communism became legitimate with victory in the Second World War. How come China couldn't be ruled for centuries? It needed an iron fist, and the only iron fist the world accepted was this sort of regime. Only a Communist regime there could stand up to the Russians. Communism was a pretext to rule China with a firm hand. The USSR was an imperialist country.

The President returned to the question of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Didn't Mrs. Meir refuse a settlement? He asked the Shah if other Israelis were more reasonable. Less and less as time goes on, the Shah replied. Eban used to say he was willing to leave alone all the territories except for minor rectifications with Jordan. But now even he was less flexible. The President had to urge Israel to be more flexible. The Shah personally thought a Sinai settlement giving one-third to Israel was possible. Israel, he affirmed, was Iran's natural ally. The President wondered if one could sell this to the Arabs. Only to the King of Jordan, the Shah replied.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
~~EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

3

Nasser was a disaster, the Shah continued. An evil man. The question was how could we check Soviet penetration. The Egyptians suffered from megalomania. The President commented that they reminded him of the Indians, tricky and withdrawn. The Shah remarked that the Indians could fight and kill but the Egyptians could not. There was practically an aerial bridge of military supply from Moscow to Cairo but the Soviets gave all the electronic counter-measure equipment to the Indians.

The President said he has been impressed by the number of Iranians who had gone to school in the U.S. He wondered if they would be turned into subversives. "Are your students infected? Can you do anything?" The Shah mentioned that our military personnel are no problem. He wanted blue suiters [U.S. military technical personnel], military men who would not leave in a pinch.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the President agreed to furnish Iran with laser bombs and F-14s and F-15s. He asked the Shah to understand the purpose of American policy. "Protect me," he said. "Don't look at detente as something that weakens you but as a way for the United States to gain influence." The Nixon Doctrine was a way for the U.S. to build a new long-term policy on support of allies. This was the President's view: the American intellectual community didn't reflect U.S. policy. Who is bad, who is good, among intellectuals? The President asked rhetorically. It was hard to tell. The majority were failures.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
~~EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~