

MEMORANDUM
MEMCONS, Notebook

30 May 72 - 15 Sept. 73

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, May 30, 1972 - 5:35 to 6:35 p.m.

PLACE: Saadabad Palace, Tehran, Iran

The Shah welcomed the President warmly to Tehran. He congratulated the President on the success of our foreign policy and the Moscow Summit in particular. It was a masterpiece of strength on one side and dexterity on the other. Our friends, the Shah emphasized, were indeed reassured. But the Shah was worried about "this region" [the Middle East].

The President thanked the Shah for his welcome and his kind words. When we arranged this trip, he explained, it all had to come together. Going to China made the Russian trip possible. Taking strong action in Vietnam [the May 8 measures] did not thwart the Moscow Summit. There was no reason for euphoria or for the assumption that the Soviet leaders had changed their long-term goals. What convinced us of that was Soviet behavior in the 1971 India-Pakistan crisis. The Soviet leaders placed security considerations above Communism. What was on their mind was Europe and almost certainly China; they were trying to outflank the Middle East.

The United States, the President continued, was proceeding on a step-by-step basis. We made agreements where it was in the common interest. The President had told Brezhnev we would see Indochina through, but he had told him a confrontation with the US was more likely in the Middle East. The Politburo wanted better relations with us. We, for our part, wanted better relations with them. But we wanted to make sure no small crises would blow into big ones.

We appreciated the Shah's role in South Asia, the President said. His personal view was that if India with the support of Soviet arms had gobbled

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up West Pakistan, other states would have been in danger -- not from the Indians, because of their incompetence, but from the Soviets. We came to visit Iran because we considered it symbolic of our strong support for our friends. We would not let down our friends.

The President then asked Dr. Kissinger if he had anything to add.

Dr. Kissinger summed up the Soviet strategy of selective detente. They would make settlements on some matters with some adversaries in order to isolate others, particularly the Chinese. We had to be careful. It was important to establish the principle of great-power restraint. We had sought to bring this home to the Soviets.

The Shah expressed his agreement that a policy of confrontation was impossible. There were key areas, he stressed, which could not be neglected -- such as Europe and the Middle East. The Shah gave the figures on Europe's and Japan's dependence on oil from the Middle East. Libya's oil would go dry in another decade and a half, he said. The US would have to get more and more of its oil from the Middle East. We could not allow ourselves to get in a position where we could be cut off. That crazy fellow Mossadegh did it, the President remarked. He was nuts, the Shah agreed.

Last year, two months after signing the treaty with the Soviets the Indians attacked, the Shah said. He didn't want to be told that the Soviets were restraining their clients. "We will not hand over our country. We will pursue a scorched earth policy. They will have to shoot their way in."

The President asked the Shah if our allies were afraid of the Summit. Not if you have the right allies, the Shah replied. If they are self-reliant they will welcome it. If they have the principle of fighting until the last American they will not welcome it. Iran, like Israel, must be able to stand alone. The Shah therefore hoped that we had more blue suiters available; Iran also had to have the most modern weapons. We could not have a situation where the US cut off arms to any client of the Soviet Union. He was afraid the Soviets would establish a coalition of the Kurds, the Baathists, and the Communists; the Kurdish problem instead of being a thorn in the side could become an asset to the Communists.

Dr. Kissinger asked what could be done. Turkey needs strengthening, the Shah replied. Iran can help with the Kurds.

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How about Greece, the President asked. The Shah replied that the King was a nice man but a fool. He was objectively worried about Papandreou. The colonels must be supported. The King could stay if he kept quiet.

The President asked about Afghanistan. The Shah replied that the King of Afghanistan was lazy. There were pressures in West Pakistan and Pushtunistan and Baluchistan. This would then encircle Iran and give the USSR a corridor to the sea. The Shah had warned Yahya about his stupidity, but he could not accept this naked deliberate aggression.

The President then discussed the circumstances under which we would restore economic aid to India. The Shah remarked that if we could give some aid to India to save Pakistan, that was okay. But the main problem was to save West Pakistan. The President agreed that the Shah was right, and suggested they talk the next day about this. Iran could be a proxy for Pakistan, the Shah suggested. Dr. Kissinger noted that we then had to reestablish Pakistan's arms program to make Pakistan eligible for third-country transfers from Iran. That we must do, the President agreed. Otherwise Pakistan will be jumped. The Shah pointed out that he was offering Afghanistan everything.

The President then said that the US was willing to reconsider the question of the US naval deployment in the Persian Gulf. The Shah stated that he had wanted to exclude the other major powers from the Gulf after the British left and had therefore expressed concern about the small US naval force. But after the Soviet-Indian treaty there was something to be said for showing the flag there. Iran nevertheless was the only country capable of dealing with any situation without any outside help. He would study it.

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