A KING'S EXILE: THE SHAH OF IRAN AND MORAL CONSIDERATIONS IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

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"Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the bloodsucker of the century, has died at last."

(short musical interlude followed)

—Transcript of Teheran radio report on death of the Shah in Egypt, July 27, 1980.

"Richard Nixon, that authority on Presidential nobility, has denounced the Carter Administration's treatment of the Shah of Iran as 'one of the black pages of American foreign policy. . . . If the policy of the United States is not drastically changed so that the world will know that we stand by our friends, we will lose all our friends.'"

New York Times, editorial, 29 July 1980.

"What are you guys going to advise me to do if they overrun our embassy and take our people hostage?"

President Jimmy Carter to aides after decision to admit Shah into the United States for humanitarian reasons, 19 October 1979.[1]

After months of holding out against opposition demands that he abdicate and leave Iran, on January 16, 1979, the Shah of Iran boarded his plane for Egypt to be welcomed by his friend Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. "I am going on vacation because I am feeling tired," the Shah said.[2] The journey would be the first leg of a vacation that would become a permanent and humiliating exile to include Egypt, Morocco, the Bahamas, Mexico, the United States, and Panama. As the Shah's regime crumbled away in Iran under a final onslaught of pressure from the Ayatollah Khomeini, the Carter administration would begin a difficult navigation of historical ties between the Shah and the United States in what would become a much-debated foreign policy decision: Should the United States admit the exiled Shah? How great was the American moral and political responsibility to a former ally when weighed against conflicting national interests? The string of decisions made by the Carter administration would ultimately weaken U.S. credibility (perhaps encouraging Soviet adventurism in Afghanistan), damage Carter's image as a world leader, and contribute centrally—through the hostage crisis—to Carter's political defeat.

Ending a thirty-seven year reign on the Peacock Throne, with a small box of Iranian soil in his pocket and his Empress in arm, the Shah passed under a Koran—a Muslim custom for a safe journey—as he walked toward his Boeing 707. An officer of the Imperial Guard threw himself at the Shah's feet, kissed his shoes, and begged him not to leave. The Shah and his family's hasty departure included all of the theatrics that had marked any other public

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appearances, Iran's former head of SAVAK[3] would later say. "They made sure that the cameraman managed to capture several shots of a humble soldier breaking from the ranks, prostrating himself before the shah, and trying to kiss his feet. The shah, with tears welling in his eyes, stopped him and helped him up."[4]

Thoroughly demoralized when the United States finally gave up on him and suggested he step aside, the Shah planned to go "reluctantly" to the United States as a final destination.[5] *The Economist* magazine touted:

> . . . once it became evident that the shah had lost irrevocable ground, the United States, which masterminded the salvage operation in Iran 25 year ago [that restored the shah to power], signaled that it was not prepared to do the same again. That was sensible, if not scout's honour: a nation's self-interest is not served by sticking to a ruler who has become detested by his people [6]

Within minutes of the Radio Iran announcement that the Shah had departed, the capital city of Teheran turned into a "vast political carnival."[7] Demonstrators toppled statues of the Shah's father throughout the city and, in Sepah Square, used the statue's decapitated head as a football. "We have won, we have won, we are free," a student called to Western journalists.[8]

A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP"

President Jimmy Carter entered office in 1977 with the commitment that under his administration the United States would no longer be arms merchant to the world and that human rights standards would be applied to allies as well as adversaries. With these aims in mind, Carter expected to maintain cordial relations with Iran, but he had no plans to exclude the Shah from either of these commitments. Past administrations had rewarded the Shah's pro-American policies by opening the military coffers for his shopping sprees. President Nixon in particular, had given carte blanche for the Shah to purchase the latest U.S. military equipment in any amount.[9]

Ten months after his inauguration, Carter prepared to meet the Shah for the first time. In preparation for this initial meeting, the President had requested documents that made it clear a special relationship would be needed with this king. First, the President had a request from Iran that would place the administration over its armaments limits by billions of dollars for each year of his term. Alongside this mammoth request, Carter's papers contained an extraordinarily impressive record of assistance provided by the Shah to the United States over the past decades. A special report by the *Washington Post* after the Shah's death in 1980 outlined the Shah's unwavering support: The Shah had militarily intervened on behalf of the United States in Oman. He had provided jets on short notice to the United States in Vietnam. Again at the request of the United States, he had secretly provided weapons to Somalia for use against Ethiopia. He had personally persuaded South Africa (a regime reliant on Iranian oil) to stop shipping oil to Rhodesia when the United States supported an embargo of Rhodesia. When asked, the Shah had established peace with Iraq, although this initiative was criticized from within Iran. He had provided U.S. bases along his border with Russia so that the CIA could monitor Soviet missile programs and troop movements. He had helped maintain an adequate flow of oil to the United States and he was the only Middle Eastern ruler who had supplied oil to the state of Israel.[10]

In return, the Shah had grown accustomed to submitting staggering military shopping lists for U.S. items ranging from warships to radios.[11] The Shah's unofficial alliance with the United States reached its zenith under Nixon's administration. American policy had always been based on the premise that close collaboration with Saudi Arabia and Iran was critical to combat Soviet influence in the Middle East. With this in mind, Nixon and Kissinger decided to gratify the Shah's desire for a rapid military buildup through massive U.S. arms transfers to Iran.[12] Between 1959 and 1971, aggregate U.S. arms sales to Iran totaled $1.8 billion. Under Nixon, orders rose from $86 million in 1968 to $184 million in 1969.[13] Nixon and Kissinger would later explain this decision as a natural outgrowth of the "Nixon Doctrine," in which the United States declared it would not assume the former British role of protector in the Gulf. The responsibility for peace would fall on the states in the region.[14]

The Carter administration would seek to scale back the sale of arms to Iran while urging the Shah to make greater concessions in his regime's human rights standards. The administration's two-pronged change in policy toward Iran is thought by many to have contributed to the Shah's downfall. The public undermining of U.S. support—which had previously been unequivocal–allowed room for domestic resistance to strengthen and solidify. The Shah would resist both initiatives whenever possible. For example, when the White House notified Congress that it

intended to sell seven Airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft to the Shah, the request ran into heavy opposition, and the White House eventually withdrew the proposal rather than risk having it defeated. The administration's plan was to negotiate reassurances from the Shah and resubmit the request at a later date. President Carter's diary had the following entry:

> The Shah of Iran sent an angry message to me . . . that because of the one-month delay in presenting AWACS proposal to Congress, he was thinking about withdrawing his letter of intent to purchase these planes from the United States. I don't care whether he buys them from us or not.[15] July 31, 1977.

As for human rights concerns, several year before the Shah's downfall, allegations of the torture of political detainees were made public by the UN Commission on Human Rights. At the same time, twenty-eight Iranians, including former ministers, former and current members of the parliament, journalists, and members of the army, sent an open letter to President Carter citing numerous examples of human rights abuses in Iran.[16] In December 1978, Amnesty International said it had received information that "clearly indicates that Iran had reneged on her own undertakings and has violated international law."[17]

"KING OF KINGS"

The Shah has been described as an arrogant, cold, distant man with no common touch.[18] During his last days in Iran, he was reportedly furious to see himself referred to as "the shah" in Teheran's newspapers rather than by his full title usually used by the Iranian media: His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah Aryamehr, or King of Kings, Light of the Aryans.[19] Mohammed Reza Pahlavi had become Shah at the age of twenty-one in September 1941 after British and Soviet forces had occupied Iran and forced his father, a Nazi sympathizer, to abdicate and go into exile. During the Shah's reign, his main aim was to rebuild Iran into a modern industrialized country based on Western institutions rather than on Iranian traditional values. He received enormous financial and military backing from the United States in this endeavor, but domestic opposition gradually developed against what was seen as an autocratic and oppressive rule. One concern was that the quadrupling oil prices in 1973–74 did not improve the economic situation for Iran's poor. In 1976, only 3 percent of Iranians shared 90 percent of the nation's wealth.[20] The Pahlavi family personally amassed an enormous fortune during the Shah's reign. Under pressure to account for his fortune, the Shah initiated a decree in 1978 that prohibited members of the royal family from having financial dealings with government agencies in the future. It would be too little, too late.

Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski would say in his memoirs that "the Pahlavis reminded me of Western-type nouveaux riches, obviously relishing the splendors of wealth and a Western lifestyle, but at the same time the shah seemed to enjoy being a traditional Oriental despot, accustomed to instant and total obedience from his courtiers. He almost seemed suspended between two worlds, and there was a strange sense of ambiguity about him. He simultaneously exuded intellectual strength and personal softness."[21]

Carter's personal relationship with the Shah was ambiguous at best. The differences between the two leaders' views of the world would be an important element in Carter's decisions regarding the Shah's exile. Carter, a down-to-earth peanut farmer whose wife had not spent money on a new dress for his inaugural ball, could only have been disconcerted by the Shah's legendary opulence and disdain for the common Iranian. When the Shah would later request entry to the United States from Morocco, Carter would tell Brzezinski angrily that he did not want the Shah playing tennis in the States while Americans in Iran were kidnapped or killed.[22] A shift in the American public perception of the Shah would also take place over the next year. U.S. Ambassador to Iran William H. Sullivan would later say:

> [The shah] had always been presented in this country as an enlightened and benevolent ruler, who, while autocratic, was leading his nation out of the squalor and misery of the past. Now he was being condemned as a despot who was ravishing the wealth of his people and crushing their political, religious, and cultural aspirations [23]

As for the Shah, he had always preferred Republicans and felt that the two pillars of the new President's foreign policy were in some sense directed toward him. Carter struck the Shah as the embodiment of a piety that could prove damaging to the Iran-U.S. bond he had cultivated for thirty-five years. No country in the world was the subject of more attention for its alleged or actual human rights viola-

tions than Iran. And no developing country was buying more weapons or building its armed forces at a faster rate.[24] The Shah privately held that had Presidents Nixon or Ford been in the White House instead of a geopolitical "novice," Iran would not have been lost; and that Carter had sought to discredit the Nixon-Kissinger realpolitik to the detriment of the stability of Iran.[25] He thought his unbelievable bad luck, and Khomeini's unexplainable good luck, corresponded too closely with the change in U.S. administrations to be a coincidence.

The Shah's fear that Jimmy Carter would be a president like Kennedy, pressuring him for reforms and liberalization, would prove true. And the Shah had hated Kennedy.[26]

"A FLYING DUTCHMAN"

In the weeks before he fled Iran, the Shah had several invitations on the table that he weighed carefully. At the last minute, he selected Egypt for a variety of reasons. For one, a Muslim country would be good for his image. The Shah, who had never been a religious man, was photographed repeatedly at Sadat's side praying in various mosques.[27] For another, Sadat was a personal friend who would treat the Shah with the attention and respect the Shah felt he deserved—the Shah's regime had showered financial aid on Egypt during Sadat's administration.[28] In contrast, the United States planned to hustle the Shah quickly through Customs on the East Coast and then immediately to his new home in California. There would be no royal welcome.

While the Shah had first planned to accept asylum in the States, according to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, he decided to punish the United States for previous slights and chose to embarrass President Carter by not going there.[29] He also did not want to give credence to the criticism that he had been an American puppet. Vance remembered that "in late December 1978, when the Shah had first talked of leaving Iran, we had instructed Ambassador Sullivan to tell him he would be welcome in the U.S. Instead, he dallied in Cairo and Morocco t show his displeasure with the United States."[30] U.S. Ambassador Sullivan remembered this series of events differently. He would say that when the Shah was first to leave Iran, "it appeared we might even gain some credit with the ayatollah for making the shah's orderly departure feasible."[31] Sullivan described the Shah as originally less than enthusiastic when, two days before he was to leave Iran, he received an invitation from Sadat to stop over in Aswan en route to the United States. The next day, however, the Shah accepted Sadat's invitation and said he would stay a mere twenty-four hours and then continue to the United States. Sullivan would later explain the Shah's decision to stay in Egypt: "We learned from our observers in Egypt that he felt there would soon be a military confrontation with the revolution and that the armed services would prevail. He seemed convinced that, in such an event, he would be recalled to Tehran."[32] Sullivan characterized this idea as delusional, and the Shah's decision would prove to be a mistake as U.S. and Iranian priorities shifted to form new designs.

At this early stage, the Shah would have liked to go to any European country (apparently despite his pronouncements to Sullivan that he preferred the United States) and could not understand why no invitations were forthcoming. Switzerland would have seemed a logical choice for the Shah, as he owned a home there where his family skiied for part of each year. But the Swiss, like other mercantilists, were frightened of damaging their relationship with such a vital Middle Eastern country as Iran over a sense of loyalty to a fallen friend. Commercial prospects in a huge market were at stake as well as the probability of jeopardizing their oil supplies.

The British Labour government was also in a less than helpful mood after a series of very public insults by the Shah over the past years. Margaret Thatcher, however, did send an informal promise to the Shah that if she were elected as Prime Minister, an invitation would be forthcoming.[33] She was elected but would change her mind. The Shah made no formal application to Britain, but several private citizens quietly did raise the issue. Ex-King Constantine of Greece, who had himself been given refuge in Britain as well as earlier in Iran, made requests on the Shah's behalf. The government, however, was concerned with the security of the Shah once he arrived. Britain at that time had twenty thousand Iranian students, who would be very angry. Also, admitting the Shah risked the Iranian response of blocking all trade with the country—including oil—and seizing the embassy.[34]

The Iranian ambassador to the United Kingdom (U.K.) during this period never mentioned the U.K. as a possibility for the Shah's asylum in his diaries. In the last weeks of the Shah's reign, Ambassador Parviz Radji noted almost every day that some foreign or local dignitary would call to ask, "Where will his imperial majesty go?" Radji did not know the Shah's plans, and never mentioned England as an option, although the Shah owned a home there.[35] Several months later, accepting the Shah would

become even less attractive to European countries after Iranian mullahs declared death sentences on the Shah (and members of his family) and demanded that he be killed wherever he was.

During the Shah's first days in Egypt, the Shah's ambassador to the United States, as well as associates of his close friend David Rockefeller, scouted properties in southern California and Georgia for a royal residence. Sunnydale, the luxurious California estate of diplomat-businessman Walter Annenberg, was made available.[36] But the Shah reportedly became incensed by Carter's press-conference appeal to Khomeini in which he said that he expected the Iranians to remain "good allies" of the United States in the post-Shah era. Carter called for Iran's religious leaders, political factions, and armed forces to unite in support of the legal government of former Prime Minister Bakhtiar.[37] An angry Shah decided instead to travel to "friendly" capitals.[38] By the time he would decide to come to the United States, Carter and Vance would no longer want him. As the Khomeini regime consolidated, the United States would have a stake in building new relations with Iran.

From Egypt, the Shah moved on to Morocco (arriving January 22), where he would remain until King Hassan II made it clear that his stay had become a political embarrassment. King Hassan welcomed the Shah at the airport, but with none of the honors accorded by Sadat. His acceptance of the Shah for a brief visit has been attributed to the membership of both kings in the ever-shrinking society of monarchs. The Shah himself had previously supported the fallen kings of Afghanistan and Albania, Constantine of Greece, and Umberto, the former king of Spain.[39] But Hassan expected the Shah to remain only a few days, not indefinitely. While the king wanted to demonstrate his royal loyalty, he did not intend to jeopardize relations with the new religious regime in Iran or with radical Arab states. He had carefully crafted his own relationship with the mullahs in Morocco by having representatives in almost every brotherhood and mosque. Harboring the Shah increased the danger of Muslim fundamentalism in his own kingdom. In addition, Hassan was reportedly ambivalent regarding the Shah personally.[40] Later, President Sadat would remember Hassan's actions as strange:

> When the shah was in exile in Morocco, Hassan had sent his ambassador to request that I extend an invitation to the shah to live in Egypt. In exchange, he offered to defend Egypt's position at a forthcoming conference in Baghdad. . . . So [Hassan] had urged the shah to live in Morocco in the first place, then asked me to invite him to live in Egypt; and when he thought my invitation was delayed, Hassan immediately issued orders that the shah should leave Rabat in twenty-four hours.[41]

"I had intended to go to the United States soon after leaving Iran," the Shah would recall, "but while in Morocco I began receiving strange and disturbing messages from friends in the U.S. who were in touch with the government and from sources within the Carter Administration. The messages although not unfriendly were very cautious: perhaps this is not a good time for you to come; perhaps you should come later; perhaps we should wait and see."[42]

By February 14, the new government of Dr. Mehdi Bazargan, supported by the Ayatollah Khomeini, had been formally recognized by Afghanistan, Bahrain, Britain, China, Cyprus, East Germany, India, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, South Korea, the Soviet Union, Lebanon, Morocco, Romania, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Governments that recognized the new regime de facto included Egypt, France, and the United States. On February 18, Iran severed diplomatic relations with Israel. It would sever relations with Egypt on April 30. As for the United States, the new regime said that it would not continue the close military cooperation that had existed under the Shah. The United States was told to close its monitoring posts on the Soviet-Iranian border, and $9 billion in armaments contracts were canceled.

At this point, Princess Ashraf, the Shah's twin sister, asked David Rockefeller of the Chase Manhattan Bank to become more involved in finding the Shah asylum. The Shah had been friends with David's brother Nelson Rockefeller, who had visited Teheran several times, once as Vice President. Nelson Rockefeller had been in close touch with the former king by phone during the last months of his reign. Conspiracy theories abound about the prominent place held by the Rockefellers, as well as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, in the remainder of the Shah's story. Rockefeller and Kissinger informally and passionately pushed for the Shah's admission to the United States through calls to the President, Brzezinski, and Vance at regular intervals to argue that it would be "dishonorable" t reject the Shah.[43]

Mark Hulbert argues in his book *Interlock* that Kissinger and Rockefeller were lobbying for the Shah's entrance to the United States for financial

reasons having to do with Chase Manhattan. (Kissinger joined Chase's International Advisory Committee upon leaving the government.)[44] Hulbert's explanation for these petitions was that in 1979 the new Iranian regime began withdrawing billions of dollars from accounts at Chase as retaliation for the bank's close ties to the Shah. Previously, Iran had been the crown jewel of Chase's international banking portfolio. Thus, the bank needed a crisis to force the U.S. government to freeze all Iranian deposits. Along these lines, Ali Akbar Moinfar, Iranian minister of petroleum, publicly stated that the American people had been "knowingly deceived" by Rockefeller and Kissinger for the same reasons cited by Hulbert. He said the information had been given t him by well-connected U.S. journalists.[45] Kissinger in his book *For the Record*, denied that Rockefeller's interest was spurred by economic considerations and commercial interests.[46]

There is no waterproof reason to doubt the sincerity of Kissinger's appeals, or the internal logic of his view that the United States was weakening its stature by its treatment of this ally. Certainly no one had emphasized the importance of the Shah and Iran more than Nixon and Kissinger, and it is perhaps understandable that these men simply felt a personal loyalty. Former President Nixon was extremely grateful for the Shah's generosity towards his 1964 election campaign and says on film in his presidential library that he "knew the Shah better than any world leader he had met in the previous thirty years." Whatever the reasons, the Carter administration feared another dimension of Kissinger's campaign. The White House was close t completing the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) with the Soviet Union and Senate ratification would be difficult. The treaty was Carter's foreign policy priority item in 1979 and, if it were ratified by the Senate, he perceived it as potentially one of the major accomplishments of his presidency. Kissinger's support of the treaty was seen as essential to convincing the Senate, and the White House feared that Kissinger would link his support of SALT II to the Shah's entry into the United States.[47]

Kissinger kept the pressure on the government by going public every few weeks with colorful comments such as "a man who for thirty-seven years was a friend of the United States should not be treated like a Flying Dutchman who cannot find a port of call."[48] Later it would be charged that Kissinger and Rockefeller successfully pressured the President into admitting the Shah. Carter's aides would say that this was not true. According to Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan, the President deeply resented the pressure, and if anything it was counterproductive.[49]

The Carter administration decided to maintain whatever ties were possible with the new regime in Iran because of its oil and its critical geopolitical position. On February 16, the United States announced that it would continue normal diplomatic relations with the new regime. In March, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance made what he called one of the most "distasteful recommendations" he ever had to present to the President. "It was that the shah, who had left Egypt for Morocco, be informed by our ambassador in Morocco that under the prevailing circumstances it would not be appropriate for him to come to the United States."[50] Staff studies showed that if the Shah was permitted into the United States it would be seen as an indication that the United States wanted to return him to the throne. The Shah's message to the American embassy in Morocco that he would like to proceed to the United States, was rejected. The request came only a week after a short-lived but frightening Iranian attack on the U.S. embassy,[51] and thousands of Americans remained in Teheran. Vance said that when the Shah was informed of the decision, he reacted calmly, merely requesting that the United States help in finding a country that would accept him.

The Shah traveled next to the Bahamas; arriving March 31 for a stay that he treated as a brief vacation. "Everything was arranged by my new advisors former associates of my good friend Nelson Rockefeller," he said, adding that he no longer wished to impose on his friends Sadat and Hassan.[52] The Shah's contacts with the United States while in the Bahamas were minimal. He was assured that his family was always welcome in the United States and that he could always go there for medical treatment. "But increasingly Washington signaled some uneasiness about my presence."[53] Soon England became uncomfortable with the Shah's living on a British island. Ten days before his tourist visa expired, the government refused his request for an extension. "With the U.S. distant and cool, and the British, as always, hostile, Bahamian Prime Minister Pindling wanted me out—despite the enormous sums I spent there for my ten weeks stay," the Shah said.[54]

MEXICO OFFERS INVITATION

A week later, arguably due to Kissinger's and Rockefeller's persuasion of Mexican President José Lopez

Portillo, the Shah received an invitation from Mexico, a country with a tradition of offering haven to the politically persecuted.[55] In April, the Iranian government had reportedly warned Mexico (without success) that bilateral relations would be affected if the Shah were accepted.[56] However, Mexico not only had its own oil wells, but also traditionally it had had little political interest or dealings with Iran or any other Middle Eastern nation. There was broad conjecture about Mexico's motives for inviting the Shah, with the consensus being that Portillo had little to lose and was irritated by threats from the Iranians. "We don't sell to Iran or buy their oil. We have no special economic tie," a senior diplomat said. "Frankly, if they want to break relations we couldn't care less."[57]

The Shah accepted the invitation and arrived in Mexico on June 10. Kissinger said he had acted because "unfortunately our government would not do anything. . . . I felt the United States had a moral obligation to stand by a man who for forty years was our friend."[58] Press reports in Mexico severely criticized what they called the Mexican government's bowing to pressure from the former secretary of state.[59] Mexican officials would later say that Portillo resented the intervention of Kissinger and his "public boasting" about the fact that he had arranged for the Shah to come to Mexico.[60]

President Portillo accepted the Shah for temporary residence in a luxurious estate south of Mexico City. "Mexico was first on my own list of preferred places of exile," the Shah wrote, because he had enjoyed the scenery and people while in power. At his newest haven in Cuernavaca, he had lush gardens, privacy, and numerous servants.[61] He was visited by Nixon and Kissinger as well as other friends.

But by midsummer, the pressure was once again mounting (led by Kissinger and Rockefeller) to reassess the entry of the Shah into the United States. There was concern that the Shah's visa for Mexico might not be extended beyond September, and the Shah's advocates believed, whether Mexico extended the visa or not, that the United States should publicly offer asylum as a matter of principle. Brzezinski, as usual, argued forcefully for allowing the Shah's entry. "It is unlikely that we can build a relationship with Iran," he said in internal deliberations, "until things have sorted themselves out. But it would be a sign of weakness not to allow the Shah to come to the States to live. If we turned our backs on the fallen Shah, it would be a signal to the world that the U.S. is a fairweather friend."[62] The President and Vance saw it differently. "As long as there is a country where the shah can live safely and comfortably," Carter reasoned, "it makes no sense to bring him here and destroy whatever slim chance we have of rebuilding a relationship with Iran. It boils down to a choice between the shah's preferences as to where he lives and the interests of our country."[63] Rockefeller and Kissinger were approached to take this message to the Shah, both refused in irritation.

Once again, Washington's decision was to put off admitting the Shah. On September 27, Vance said publicly that "we have had to take into account the possible dangers to American people [in Iran] at this time" and that therefore the Shah's admission would not be in the U.S. national interest.[64]

A bombshell—news of the Shah's critical medical condition—would change everything. With the news of the Shah's illness, Vance said, "we were faced squarely with a decision in which common decency and humanity had to be weighed against possible harm to our embassy personnel in Teheran."[65]

A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE

It is apropos at this point in the Carter administration's deliberations to acknowledge the two competing visions of foreign policy as articulated b Secretary Vance and National Security Advisor Brzezinski—a dichotomy within the White House that was a constant source of press criticism.[66] These two men were the salient advisors to Carter regarding the Shah's exile. U.S. Ambassador Sullivan was disregarded by Carter after he had acted less than professionally during the turmoil of the Iranian revolution, and Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan was only involved in the process tangentially before the Shah's move to Panama.[67] Members of both Vance's and Brzezinski's staff were active in the process but tended to toe the line of their respective bosses.

Thus, the different foreign policy objectives of Vance and Brzezinski became critically important to Carter's decisions as he vacillated between his advisors' positions. In his memoirs, Carter would say that "the different strengths of Zbig [Brzezinski] and Cy [Vance] matched the roles they played, and also permitted the natural competition between the tw organizations to stay alive. I appreciated those differences. In making the final decisions on foreign policy, I needed to weigh as many points of view as possible."[68]

Before sanctuary for the Shah became an issue, the two men had argued opposing positions over

the question of the use of force to maintain the Shah's regime. Vance was opposed to a military coup because he believed the United States should not make such a fundamental decision for the people of Iran.[69] Brzezinski, during the last stages of the Iranian revolution, would say, "I could tell the President was quite concerned about possible bloodshed, and I mentioned to him after the conversation was over that, unfortunately, world politics was not kindergarten and that we had to consider also what will be the long-range costs if the military failed t act."[70]

Generally, Vance adhered to an optimistic image of an international system where a new world order was possible under U.S. leadership. He envisioned a cooperative world where "each nation can surmount its own difficulties only if it understands and helps resolve the difficulties of others as well." Support for constructive changes meant that the United States must practice preventive diplomacy and promote the welfare of developing nations by helping them to "develop their own institutions, strengthen their own economies, and foster ties between government and people."[71]

In contrast, Brzezinski's priority for U.S. foreign policy was the need to maintain global stability "Our collective security," he would say, "requires that the United States successfully maintain a global power equilibrium while helping to shape a framework for global change. These two imperatives—a power equilibrium and a framework for change—are not slogans. Each represents a difficult and vital process, critical to our national security."[72] He perceived an increasingly fragmented and unstable international system. As for the Shah, Brzezinski's position never wavered. He felt all along that as a matter of both principle and tactics, the United States should simply not permit the issue to arise. Thus, he was often arguing the position of Kissinger and Rockefeller against Carter's and Vance's opposition. Similar to Kissinger's views, Vance believed that "at stake were our traditional commitment to asylum and loyalty to a friend. To compromise those principles would be an extraordinarily high price to pay in terms of self-esteem and standing among allies, for uncertain benefits." He emphasized that Sadat, Hassan, the Saudi rulers, and others were watching U.S. actions carefully.

On top of these basic philosophical differences, both men's decision-making circuits were heavily overloaded in the aftermath of the Camp David peace treaty negotiation process between Egypt and Israel, the SALT II negotiations, and a period of defense budget battles[73]

HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS

In October, the Shah's secret six-year battle with lymphoma became public when Dr. Benjamin Kean, a New York pathologist recommended to the Shah by Rockefeller's staff, said the Shah was in critical condition and needed medical treatment only available in the United States.[74] The Americans had always made one thing clear: The Shah would have access to the United States for medical treatment should his safety be threatened. With this news, Vance changed his position and said "as a matter of principle" the Shah should be admitted to the United States for "humanitarian reasons."[75] The President alone argued against letting the Shah in. He questioned the medical judgment (there was some question of Dr. Kean's being a specialist in tropical diseases, not lymphoma) and once again made the argument about the interests of the United States. Jordan mentioned the political consequences: "Mr. President, if the Shah dies in Mexico, can you imagine the field day Kissinger will have with it? He'll say that first you caused the Shah's downfall and now you've killed him." The President glared at Jordan. "To hell with Henry Kissinger," he said. "I am President of this country!"[76]

Eventually Carter became frustrated as the only holdout on the prudence of the Shah's admittance. He asked Vance to double-check the seriousness of the medical condition and to question the U.S. embassy in Teheran about what the reaction of the Iranian government would be if the Shah entered the United States for medical treatment. Would it guarantee the safety of the American embassy?[77]

It was not an academic question. In previous months, the U.S. embassy in Teheran had been overrun three times by Islamic militants. On December 24, 1978, crowds of Iranian students had stormed the embassy, throwing rocks and attempting to climb the walls. Marine guards had dispersed the crowds with tear gas. On February 14, 1979, one month after the Shah had left Iran, the embassy was seized by armed men who killed one Iranian and held 101 persons hostage, including the U.S. ambassador and nineteen Marine guards. The Iranian government forces freed them three hours later. On May 25 and 26, approximately one hundred thousand demonstrators attacked the compound and tore down the American flag. "The storming of the embassy was becoming a ritual,"[78] according to Hulbert.

The senior American diplomat in Iran, Bruce Laingen, and a visiting State Department official, Henry Precht, met with Iran's Prime Minister and

Foreign Minister and reported that the Iranian government officials were strongly opposed to the Shah's entry into the United States but promised to protect the U.S. embassy in Iran just as they had in February 1979.[79] No government had ever before sanctioned an attack on an embassy, and the Carter administration did not foresee this as a possibility Several months later, Carter would explain on *Meet the Press*:

> The embassy had been attacked in the past. Embassies around the world are often subjected to attacks. In every instance the Iranian officials had joined with our own people to protect the Embassy of the United States. Following the seizure of the Embassy earlier in the year, we had carried out a substantial program for the strengthening of the Embassy's defenses. . . . We wer again assured by the Iranian Prime Minister and the Iranian Foreign Minister, that the Embassy would be protected. It was indeed protected for about ten days [after the Shah's entrance into the United States] . . . [But] when it was attacked by militant terrorists, the Iranian Government withdrew their protection of the Embassy. It was an unpredictable kind of thing. This has never been done, as far as I know, in modern history, to have a government support a terrorist act of this kind, the kidnaping of hostages, and the holding of them for attempted blackmail.[80]

Aware of the potential danger to the U.S. Embassy, but with these Iranian assurances as counterweight, the President instructed Vance to proceed with plans to bring the Shah into the United States. Press Secretary Jody Powell, concerned about Carter's chances at reelection, said, "They [the American public] think we're doing more than we are. They don't know how lousy our options are."[81]

MAKING OF A CRISIS

The Shah's arrival in New York on medical grounds was "like a fuel rod entering an atomic core"[82]—it initiated a powerful chain reaction with domestic and international reverberations. His Majesty was admitted to Cornell Medical Hospital for "humanitarian reasons" on October 22, 1979. On November 4, the American embassy in Teheran was seized, and sixty-one American diplomats, clerks, and Marines were taken as hostages. The "students" formally demanded the return of the Shah for trial and an apology from the United States for its past meddling in Iranian affairs. Washington saw this demand—as well as its informal alternative of sending the Shah to any country besides the United States—as a barbaric breach of both ethics and international law. The *Washington Post* said, "To even consider handing over or sending away a sick man who was a major U.S. ally for thirty-seven years is seen in high circles as a craven act of submission to blackmail, outside the pale of U.S. tradition as well as U.S. fundamental interests."[83]

In his memoirs, the Shah would write, "There is little I can say about this act of villainy, allegedly committed to 'punish' the United States for offering me a medical haven. Nevertheless, the incident had a profound impact on my own life. Although Washington did not communicate with me directly, the signals were unmistakable. The Administration wanted me out of the country just as quickly as was medically possible."[84] He went on to complain that "during my stay in New York Hospital there was little contact with the U.S. administration. President Carter never phoned or sent a message, neither did any other high U.S. official."[85] Kissinger and his wife, however, paid a surprise visit to the Shah's bedside a week following his surgery. After his hour-long visit, Kissinger told reporters that the United Sates "owes the Shah a lot."[86] Demonstrations demanding an independent account of the seriousness of the Shah's illness took place outside the hospital around the clock.

On November 14, Carter issued an executive order under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977 blocking all property and interest in the property of the government of Iran and the Central Bank of Iran. The order did not cover privately owned assets of the Shah and his family. The action was criticized by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States which said they would "think twice" before investing in the United States.[87] In the first week of December, Britain would freeze Iranian assets, followed by a West German decision to cease to guarantee new credits to the Iranian government.

The next bombshell dropped on the administration was a surprise announcement by Mexico that it was suddenly unwilling to accept the return of the Shah—a condition it had agreed to before the Shah was allowed to enter the United States[88] "The situation has radically changed," said Foreign Minister Castaneda. "The world confronts a real crisis. One of the major aspects of that crisis is the Shah himself."[89] Another government official commented that "it seems Mexico is burdening itself too much with other people's problems."[90] Carter would say, "Portillo is not a man of his word." The President's diary entry for November 29, 1979, reads:

> I was outraged. The Mexicans had no diplomatic personnel in Iran . . . and did not need Iranian oil . . . they had given us no warning of their reversal; apparently the President of Mexico had simply changed his mind.[91]

It remains uncertain why Mexico believed it could so easily renege on a previous agreement with its mammoth neighbor. Several Mexican officials denied promising the United States or the Shah that he could return in the first place. The U.S. State Department had issued this information internally, but the original memo written by Assistant Secretary of State Warren Christopher was based on information provided to the State Department by the "Rockefeller office."[92] Mexico said Portillo may have in person relayed some niceties to the Shah along such lines, but there were no written assurances from Portillo or any other Mexican official to the Shah or to the United States guaranteeing later asylum.

Journalists suggested that Mexico was making a point of being independent by crossing swords with the United States on the matter of the Shah. While Mexico was dependent on the United States as source of food, tourism, and credit, and as a market for its manufactured and agricultural products, Mexico was working to transform itself into a regional power distinct from the United States. The country's oil income had quadrupled over the past few years, inspiring a dramatic change in its position toward the United States.[93] It was not only on the issue of the Shah that Mexico would show this machismo. President Portillo castigated the United States for its freezing of Iranian assets, stating that it would seriously debilitate the international monetary system; later, Mexico would send its athletic team to the Moscow Olympics, disregarding the U.S.-led boycott. The risks in the case of the Shah, Portillo said, were "ferocious and the responses ar disorderly."[94] Mexico wanted to wash its hands of the whole messy issue.

In considering Mexico's behavior, it is worth noting that press assessments of the Carter administration almost unanimously cited the "failing" presidency of Jimmy Carter.[95] The perception of the Carter presidency as deeply troubled and lacking stature was widespread. "Jimmy Carter is not a majestic figure like Roosevelt and he doesn't inspire fear like Johnson," was a common assessment.[96] Carter was also taking hits from hopeful presidential candidates that increased the perception overseas of a weakened presidency. Senator Ted Kennedy, a candidate for the Democratic nomination, made headlines worldwide when he claimed that the former Shah:

> had headed one of the most violent regimes in the history of mankind, in the form of terrorism and the basic fundamental violations of human rights in the most crucial circumstances to his own people. How do we justify the United States on the one hand accepting that individual because he would like to come here and stay with his umpteen billions of dollars that he has stolen from Iran, and at the same time say to Hispanics who are here... [that they] have to wait nine years to bring their children to this country?[97]

While Kennedy's extremism was criticized domestically, views such as his made accepting the Shah even more unattractive to U.S. allies.

The White House began to look in earnest for an country willing to take this dying political pariah. The Shah had few options. His friend Sadat sent Egyptian Ambassador Ghorbal to the Shah's hospital with an invitation to come to Cairo for medical treatment, but the Shah was hesitant to return to Egypt. The Middle East peace process had been faltering since March 1979 as the signatories refused to cooperate. The Shah's return would have been detrimental to Sadat's relations with other Arab states. For the short term, Washington offered recuperation at Lackland Air Force Base near San Antonio, Texas The base had few security measures, so the couple was taken to the most secure part of the hospital—the psychiatric ward—rooms with barred windows and locked doors. "The Empress grew claustrophobic. We simply could not remain in those quarters...once we were moved to the visiting officers' quarter, things improved. The weather was good. I went for walks, the Empress played tennis. True, we still had no place to go, but it was now Washington's problem to assist us." [98]

On December 27, 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The Soviet invasion was largely credited to the instability of events in Iran, and the Carter administration's perceived weakness as it concentrated on securing the release of the American hostages. Internationally, the Soviet move was deplored as an invasion of a sovereign country, but the Soviet Union argued that the Afghan government had invited it to send troops in order to safeguard the government from "external enemies."[99] In response, the United States deferred Senate ratification of SALT II and imposed a series of sanctions against the Soviet Union including a grain embargo and the boycotting of the Olympic games due to take place in Moscow in 1980.

HAMILTON JORDAN AND THE GENERAL

Where to next for the Shah? His Majesty still wanted to go to Europe, but the European countries remained dependent on Iranian oil and had embassies in Teheran. They refused to entertain the thought of admitting the Shah. The Carter administration, aware of the risks inherent in another country's accepting the Shah now that the U.S. embassy had been taken over with no interference by the Iranian government, seemed hesitant to bully anyone to take the Shah off its hands. Carter would later describe the response of U.S. allies at this time:

> Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was strong and wholly supportive . . . President Giscard d' Estaing was polite . . . Chancellor Schmidt, coolest of the three, told me he would merely reissue a supportive statement. Sadat offered every possible help, including military assistance if we should decide to punish Iran with our armed forces. The Saudis promised to keep as many Arab nations as possible arrayed against Iran. . . . It soon became apparent, however, that even our closest allies in Europe were not going to expose themselves to a potential oil boycott or endanger their diplomatic arrangements for the sake of the American hostages.[100]

Quiet diplomacy continued. The Carter administration came up with one option which, ironically, the Shah said he had already learned of during his stay in the Bahamas: Panama. Gabriel Lewis, formerly Panama's ambassador to the United States, had visited the Shah in the Bahamas and invited him to Panama (before the hostage crisis), but at that time the Shah was not interested.[101] The White House, however, had decided that Panama was the best option, or perhaps the only hope. "We've gone to every possible country and we've completely struck out," Carter told Jordan. "Only Sadat is willing to take him, and after talking to Ghorbal (Egypt's Ambassador) and Mubarak (Egypt's Vice President) I'm convinced this would be trouble for Sadat."[102] Mexico's refusal to readmit the Shah had made it even more difficult to approach other countries

On December 11, Carter asked Chief of Staff Jordan to approach General Torrijos, with whom Jordan had developed a close and warm relationship during the ratification of the Panama Canal treaties. The reasons seemed self-evident. The United States still maintained a strong military presence in Panama. Panama was not dependent on Iranian oil. The Gorgas Hospital in the former Canal Zone was an up-to-date American military hospital. Panama had no diplomatic ties with Iran and so was presumably immune to threats from Khomeini. Not least, Jordan knew that the General was also a gutsy guy.[103] "The bottom line is that if Torrijos wants to do it," Carter told Jordan, "he will—particularly if it helps us resolve the hostage crisis."[104] Because of the delicacy of the request, and in keeping with the administration's hesitancy to bully its friends, Carter told Jordan to go in person to see the general.

On the flight to Panama, Jordan listed the pros and cons of accepting the Shah from Panama's perspective. The reasons General Torrijos might accept: (1) he might be willing to help Carter—the two had developed a mutual respect during the treaty negotiations; (2) he knew that Panama's relationship with the United States was critical to Panama's economy and political posture in Latin America; (3) he understood that he would be center stage—Jordan believed the general would love being at the center of a great international drama; and (4) he believed that Panama had a tradition of welcoming exiles and political dissidents. The general had even invited Patty Hearst to Panama for her honeymoon. The drawbacks to Panama included (1) the potential harm to Panama's shipping business; (2) the possible harm to the canal itself which was extremely vulnerable to sabotage—Iranians could close it with a single stick of dynamite; (3) the domestic political problems for Torrijos from the left which would claim the general was a puppet of the United States; and (4) the possible harm to Panama's image among developing nations and in Latin America. It was important for Panama not to be perceived as communist or a U.S. puppet. Torrijos was the only world leader who could count both Fidel Castro and the President of the United States as his "good friends."[105]

Jordan asked to speak to General Torrijos alone He explained that the only country in the world still offering to accept the Shah was Egypt. However, President Carter opposed a decision for Cairo for fear it would contribute to Sadat's other problems—mainly his isolation from other Arab leaders over the peace process with Israel, and domestic quarrels that would be exacerbated. Torrijos shook his head: "The President is right." He closed his eyes and took a big puff on his cigar. "Hamilton, the crisis is first and foremost the problem of the United States, because these people are Americans and they represent your country and your government. But it is also the problem of the world community. As long as diplomats can be held like those in Teheran, no diplomat is safe anywhere. You can tell the

President we will accept the shah in Panama. We are a small but proud country. If we can make even a small contribution to peacefully resolving this crisis, we will be happy to do so."[106] In his memoirs, Jordan would attribute the general's gracious response to the respect he had been accorded by Carter in the Panama Canal negotiations. Inviting the Shah might also be in Torrijo's interest. He did not want Reagan or any other Republican to win the 1980 election; the hostage crisis was endangering Carter's reelection.

Jordan then went to see the Shah. Hearing that General Torrijos had been receptive, the Shah sent an aide and his Iranian security chief to Panama with Jordan. "They visited a distant mountain resort four hours from Panama City, a location in the capital, and Contadora Island. They found the mountains were lovely, but too isolated, and Panama City too crowded and noisy."[107] So the Shah chose Contadora. After agreeing to the terms of the "Lackland Understanding," the Shah prepared to leave the United States.[108] Carter telephoned the Shah. "He warmly wished me good luck and reiterated the assurances of his aides. It was the first and only time I had spoken with the President since wishing him farewell on New Year's Day 1978 when he visited Teheran," the Shah would say.[109]

A QUESTION OF EXTRADITION

Settled in a four-bedroom house owned by Panamanian Ambassador Lewis with a splendid view of the ocean, the Shah became disturbed to find that UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim was undertaking a mission to Iran to offer a trade of the American hostages for a UN investigation of the Shah's alleged crimes. The UN Commission of Inquiry, approved by both the United States and Iran, arrived in Teheran on February 23, 1980, to begin investigations int the grievances of the Iranian people against the former Shah. On February 25–26, the commission heard evidence from Iranian jurists and around 150 disabled persons who claimed that they had been victims of torture and cruelty during the Shah's reign. The commission also met with the governor of the Central Bank of Iran who had been investigating the wealth of the former royal family. He told reporters that he had given documentary evidence to the UN team "showing that the total amount of money plundered by the former imperial family was 500 billion rials [over $7 billion]."[110]

The United Nations cut short its visit on March 11 and refused to publish a report of its findings. The trip was unsuccessful—Waldheim never saw the hostages and later returned to New York empty-handed. The failure was attributed to the different interpretations of the UN's mandate as understood by Iran and the United States. The United States linked the mission to the release of the hostages; Iran insisted that the commission was only to reveal criminal acts by the Shah and the U.S. manipulation of Iran's internal affairs.[111]

Despite the failure of the UN mission, on March 12 the Iranian government demanded that the Panamanian government arrest the Shah. "It was the beginning of a strange and ominous double game," the Shah would say.[112] The Panamanians assured the Shah in secret that extradition was not a possibility—it would violate Panamanian law—while publicly hinting that the Shah was under house arrest. Two Paris-based lawyers, employed by Khomeini, drew up a 450-page brief and journeyed around the world seeking support. They planned to deliver to the Panamanian Foreign Ministry charges against the Shah of "torture, murder, and embezzlement".[113] Simultaneously, Khomeini's Panamanian lawyer began arguing that the Shah could be extradited legally if Teheran promised not to execute. [114]

The months of Panamanian exile were marked with confusion about the Shah's status. Officials continued to waffle on whether the extradition request would be considered and whether or not the Shah was free to leave Panama. Meanwhile, the Shah's cancer had spread to his spleen, and the Panamanian doctors were now demanding that the operation be performed by Panamanian doctors at their Paitilla Hospital instead of the U.S. Gorgas Hospital. "The next act in this bizarre dream resembled a medical soap opera," the Shah said.[115] Panamanian doctors, fiercely proud, gave the Shah's American doctors a choice: use our hospital and doctors, or head to the airport. The press account of this misunderstanding differed substantially from the Shah's. The *Washington Post* explained that U.S. officials had privately indicated that they would not look favorably on a request by the Shah to have his spleenectomy performed at Gorgas Hospital. The Carter administration apparently thought the Shah's admittance to a U.S. military hospital would be viewed as a sort of readmission to the United States which would endanger the hostages [116]

The international coverage of the Panamanian medical fiasco resulted in a phone call from Mrs. Sadat to the Empress reiterating an invitation to return to Egypt.[117] White House counsel Lloyd Cutler was sent to Panama to outline the U.S. position, which he did "with skill and detachment." [118] If the

Shah returned to Egypt, the United States feared that Iran might suspect a U.S. plot, that any chances for an early end to the hostage crisis would be killed, and that President Carter's political prestige at home would suffer.[119] Most importantly, the Shah's entry to Egypt would endanger Sadat's position in the Arab world, particularly the Mideast peace process. Carter had been adamant on this point. "I will not do that to Anwar," Carter had said in an earlier meeting, "he's got enough problems without having us dump the Shah in his lap. If he insists on leaving Panama, our position should be that we want him to come back to the States."[120] Cutler told the Shah that he could come to Houston eventually, but that it was too delicate at present. He urged the Shah to stay in Panama and guaranteed that the operation would be arranged to take place at the U.S. Gorgas Hospital.

"I did not seriously consider the American offers," the Shah said. "For the last year and a half, American promises had not been worth very much. They had already cost me my throne and any further trust in them could well mean my life."[121] When Jordan told Torrijos that the Shah was thinking of leaving, he responded, "I'll make him stay here even if he doesn't want to. I have observed this King—he cares about no one but himself. He does not have the right to jeopardize the lives of fifty-three others."[122]

The Shah stayed in Panama sixty-six days after Iran first requested his extradition, leaving for Cairo on March 23, 1980, several days before the deadline for the Iranian government to turn over documents supporting its charges.[123] Neither the United States. nor the Panamanians stopped him.

In reaction to the Shah's move, a member of Iran's revolutionary council said that the United States had engineered his transfer [before extradition papers could be filed] and warned that some of the hostages would be tried and imprisoned and also that Sadat would "have to pay for his dirty act."[124]

SADAT'S STAND

Keenly aware of his isolation in the Arab and Muslim world, Egypt's President Sadat welcomed the Shah of Iran at the Cairo airport with open arms. It was thought that Sadat hoped to contrast Egypt's compassionate generosity with the "narrowly vengeful view of Islam propagated by the Iranian clerics."[125] "I am a Moslem, a true Moslem," Sadat said. *The Economist* commended Sadat for his bravery—the Shah was undoubtedly an addition to President Sadat's already considerable political load.[126] Sadat's gesture was expected by many to further irritate his relations with other Arab countries and to provide a potential rallying point for Egypt's internal opposition.[127] The Iranian government had adopted a position hostile to Israel and hence the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Egypt's separate peace with Israel had meant the "Arab world had become well and truly balkanized."[128]

Former President Nixon would later describe President Sadat as not particularly sophisticated, but intelligent. "He was moved by impulse and believed in taking risks."[129] But this decision was not only Sadat's. Sadat asked the new Egyptian parliament in June for the approval of a bill granting the Shah and his family the right of asylum "in accordance with the principles of Islam, Christianity and the Egyptian people's ethics." The request was approved, with only one member expressing an objection.[130]

The Carter administration accepted this state of affairs—hoping that Sadat was the best judge of what he could tolerate politically. "He couldn't be more isolated than he is now," was Assistant Secretary of State Harold Saunder's pronouncement.[131] As for the Egyptian President, he showed no hesitation in taking the Shah, nor did he conceal his frustration with those who would not. In an interview given before the Shah's return to Cairo, he castigated the Americans and the British for refusing to offer asylum. "Nothing disgusted him more than lack of courage and the abandonment of friends in their direst need. . . . He saw it as a particularly horrible piece of cowardice and treachery because the Americans feared offending Iran's new ruler, Ayatollah Khomeini. It was the only time in [the] interview that the President was not fully in control of his emotions."[132] Mohamed Heikal, a close associate of President Sadat's who was imprisoned for political opposition toward the end of Sadat's life, would describe Sadat's commitment to the Shah in a book he began in prison:

> From the outset the Iranian Revolution had found no more vehement or consistent opponent than Sadat, in spite of the fact that, whatever might become of Khomeini, it was clear the Iranian people had rejected the Shah and that Iran was going to remain an extremely important Middle Eastern country whoever ruled it. . . . [Sadat's offer of asylum] was applauded in the West as an act of great generosity, particularly by those countries like America and Britain which had all along been the Shah's staunchest supporters but which

> had no intention of letting humanity get in the way of the interest of the state. . . . It was, of course, no more in Egypt's interest than it was in America's or Britain's to provide asylum, but Sadat saw himself as the embodiment of the state, so his friends must be Egypt's.[133]

The Shah's spleen surgery was performed March 28, 1980. After leaving the hospital, he stayed in the Koubbeh Palace, the Egyptian residence for all visiting heads of state. Any domestic opposition to the Shah's stay in Egypt diminished as the government-controlled press continually spewed stories reminding the Egyptians of the aid the Shah had given Egypt over the years.

Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi died July 28, 1980, in a military hospital outside of Cairo. The official medical report said he died of complications resulting from his chronic lymphoma. Egypt was the only country to officially mourn his passing. President Sadat said that no other heads of state would be invited to the funeral, and "even if they ask, we will apologize politely."[134] Former U.S. President Nixon and former King Constantine of Greece were the only two dignitaries who attended the state funeral. The United States was represented by its ambassador in Cairo. Other countries represented by ambassadors were France, West Germany, the United Kingdom, Israel, and Austria. Morocco was the only Islamic state other than Egypt to be represented.

Iranian officials stressed that the former monarch's death would make no difference either to the fate of the hostages or to demands for the return of the Shah's wealth. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was assassinated by Egyptian Muslim fundamentalists on October 16, 1981. President Jimmy Carter lost the 1980 presidential election to Ronald Reagan by a landslide. The hostages were released within minutes of the inauguration of the new U.S. president.

NOTES

1. Hamilton Jordan, *Crisis: The Last Years of the Carter Presidency* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1982). p. 27.

2. David Butler, "Iran After the Shah," *Newsweek*, 29 January 1979.

3. SAVAK: Sazman-e Ehela'at Va Amniyat-e Keshvar (Iranian State Intelligence and Security Organization)—the Shah's controversial secret police trained by Israel. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and SAVAK drove int exile or otherwise silenced political and religious opposition.

4. The former SAVAK chief claimed the soldier was later shot by the revolutionary government for his loyalty. Mansur Rafizadeh, *Witness: From the Shah to the Secret Arms Deal, An Insider's Account of U.S. Involvement in Iran* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1987). p. 395.

5. Jonathan C. Randall, *Washington Post*, 14 January 1979.

6. "Exile comes home; Can a bloody clash between Khomeini and the army be averted?" *The Economist*, 3 February 1979.

7. Butler, "Iran After the Shah."

8. Ibid.

9. Nixon's Secretary of State Henry Kissinger would later deny the "blank check" characterization as an exaggeration.

10. Scott Armstrong, *Washington Post*, 25 October 1980. A series of articles for the *Post* was based on more than 1,000 pages of documents, called the "Iran papers," that were collected by a State Department study group. The documents described U.S. relations with Iran from 1941 to November 1979.

11. Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 323.

12. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor 1977–1981* (New York: Farrar-Strauss-Giroux, 1983), p. 357.

13. William Shawcross, *The Shah's Last Ride: Fate of an Ally* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), p. 155.

14. Mark Hulbert, *Interlock: The Untold Story of American Banks, Oil Interests, the Shah's Money, Debts and the Astounding Connections Between Them* (New York: Richardson and Snyder, 1982).

15. Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 434.

16. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (London, Engand: Longman, 5 January 1979), p. 29388.

17. Ibid., p. 29738.

18. Rafizadeh, *Witness.*

19. William Branigan, *Washington Post*, 23 January 1979.

20. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, p. 30538.

21. Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, p. 360.

22. Shawcross, *The Shah's Last Rid* , p. 126.

23. William H. Sullivan, *Mission to Iran* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), p. 25.

24. Marvin Zonis, *Majestic Failure* (London, England: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

25. Jahangir Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution: The Pahlavis' Triumph and Tragedy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 263.

26. Rafizadeh, *Witness*, p. 124.

27. Rafizadeh, *Witness*, p. 302.

28. It was reported that the Shah had extended billions of dollars in grants and loans to Egypt after the 1973 war against Israel and had helped it survive a 1974 oil shortage with shipments of more than 4 billion barrels *Washington Post*, 1 December 1979.

29. Vance, *Hard Choices*, p.302.

30. Ibid., p. 370.

31. Sullivan, *Mission to Iran*, pp. 231–32.

32. Ibid., p. 241.

33. Shawcross, *The Shah's Last Ride*, p. 132. Also mentioned in Pahlavi's account, *Mohamed Reza Pahlavi, Answer to History* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980). Thatcher's invitation was delivered to the Shah in Morocco.

34. Iranians had attacked the U.S. embassy in Teheran several times.

35. Parviz C. Radji, *In the Service of the Peacock Throne: The Diaries of the Shah's Last Ambassador to London* (London England Hamish Hamilton, 1983). Ex-King Constantine of Greece was a frequent caller in the last few weeks. The British Embassy in Teheran was temporarily occupied on November 5, 1979, by demonstrators demanding the extradition of former Prime Minister Teimur Bakhtiar, giving credence to U.K. hesitations over the safety of its diplomats. Dr. Bakhtiar, incidentally, had asylum in France

36. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 29. Other accounts say Sunnydale was made available to the Shah before he left Iran.

37. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 27 July, 1979, p. 29,742. Dr. Bakhtiar had been recruited as a moderate Prime Minister by the United States and the Shah before the Shah's departure. Bakhtiar's government lasted only a matter of weeks after the Shah had left Iran.

38. Butler, "Iran After the Shah."

39. Shawcross, *The Shah's Last Ride*, pp. 99ff.

40. Ibid., pp. 99–100.

41. Anwar Sadat, *Those I Have Known*, (New York: Continuum, 1984), p. 110.

42. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p.13.

43. Don Oberdorfer, "The Making of a Crisis," *Washington Post*, 11 November 1979.

44. Hulbert, *Interlock*.

45. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, p. 30213.

46. Henry Kissinger, *For the Record: Selected Statements 1977–1980* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1981).

47. Shawcross, *The Shah's Last Rid* , p. 153. Vance would say in his memoirs, "Kissinger in his subtle fashion linked his willingness to support us on SALT to a more forthcoming attitude on our part regarding the Shah." The SALT II agreements, signed by Carter and Soviet Premier Brezhnev on June 8, 1979, in Vienna, provided limitations on strategic weapons at levels slightly lower than the previous ceilings. Carter withdrew the request for treaty ratification by the Senate following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

48. Reported by the press as part of a Kissinger speech at a Harvard Business School dinner, 9 April 1979.

49. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 31.

50. Vance, *Hard Choices*, p. 344.

51. For descriptions of previous attacks on the U.S. embassy, see page 8.

52. Pahlavi, *Answer to Hisory*, p.13.

53. Ibid., p. 15.

54. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p.15.

55. Including Leon Trotsky, former Argentine President Hector Campora, and General Carlos Humberto Romero, who ran El Salvador's military government for two years *Washington Post*, 21 December 1979.

56. Oberdorfer, "The Making of a Crisis."

57. Marlise Simons, *Washington Post*, 29 November 1979.

58. "For Shah in Exile, Life on the Run," *US News and World Report*, 25 June 1979.

59. Marlise Simons, "Mexico Will Not Allow Shah's Return," *Washington Post*, 30 November 1979.

60. Marlise Simons, "Mexico Said to Have Feared Reprisal," *Washington Post*, 1 December 1979.

61. Rafizadeh, *Witness*, p. 303.

62. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 29.

63. Ibid., p. 29.

64. Rafizadeh, *Witness*, p. 303.

65. Vance, *Hard Choices*, p. 371.

66. This portion of the case study draws from A. Rosati, *The Carter Administration's Quest for Global Community: Beliefs and Their Impact on Behavior* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1987).

67. In his memoirs, Carter says he became disappointed in Sullivan's lack of objectivity and did not rely on his assessments. Jordan, in his memoirs, says his meeting with Panamanian General Omar Torrijos was his first and only foray into foreign policy during his White House tenure.

68. Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 54.

69. Vance, *Hard Choices*, p. 331.

70. Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, p. 380.

71. U.S. Secretary Vance, 1979c, p. 35, and U.S. Secretary Vance, 1979d, p. 18, respectively. Quoted in Rosati, *The Carter Administration's Quest*, p. 69. Vance would later resign over the administration's decision to attempt a military rescue of the U.S. hostages in Iran.

72. U.S. National Security Council Assistant Brzezinski, 1979c, p. 1. Quoted in Rosati, *The Carter Administration's Quest*, p. 73.

73. Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, p. 358.

74. The Shah said he had previously withheld this information in the best interests of his country. One year later, Dr. Kean would sue *Science* for $4 million charging that the magazine said he made "superficial diagnosis rendering flawed and incomplete medical advice and either deliberately or negligently misjudging the capacity of Mexican doctors." The article also implied that Dr. Kean's "diagnoses were dictated by David Rockefeller."

Science stood by its story. Richard D. Lyons, *New York Times*, 27 January 1981.

75. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 31.

76. Ibid.

77. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 32.

78. Hulbert, *Interlock*, p. 137ff. Also Jack Germond and Jules Witcover, *Blue Smoke and Mirrors: How Reagan Won and Why Carter Lost the Election of 1980* (New York: Viking Press, 1981).

79. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 32.

80. *Meet the Pres* , 20 January 1980. Conversations with Carter, ed. Don Richardson (USA: Lynne Reiners Publishers, 1998).

81. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 36.

82. Oberdorfer, "The Making of a Crisis."

83. Ibid.

84. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p. 20.

85. Ibid., p. 20

86. Ed Bruske, *Washington Post*, 2 November 1979.

87. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, p. 30207.

88. The Shah believed Mexico's explanation was suspect. Mexico, he said, had plenty of oil, and should not fear reprisals. "Perhaps the government hoped to play a larger political role in the council of the Third World and feared my presence would dash that hope. I have hear accounts of a deal Cuba offered: bar the Shah and Castro would give up deadlocked efforts to win a Security Council seat and throw his support to Mexico. This theory has some plausibility. Cuba dropped out of the race and Mexico was elected." Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p. 24.

89. Simons, *Washington Post*, 20 November 1979.

90. Ibid.

91. Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 434.

92. Walter Pincus and Dan Morgan, "Mexico Denies Promising the Shah Could Return," *New York Times*, 25 December 1979.

93. Alan Riding, "The Mixed Blessings of Mexico's Oil," *New York Times*, 11 January 1981. In the previous five years, the country's oil income had rocketed from $3 billion to $14 billion.

94. "Mexican Leader Assails U.S. on Freezing Iran's Assets," *Washington Post*, 4 December 1979.

95. Mark J. Rozell, *The Press and the Carter Presidency* (USA: Westview press, 1989), p. 82. There was a brief rally of support for Carter immediately following the taking of hostages, it was short-lived.

96. James Reston, "Who Will Tell Jimmy," *New York Times*, 16 April 1978. *U.S. News and World Report* would say, "Freedom for the Americans was Jimmy Carter's goal [in Iran]. But the President had other crucial stakes riding on negotiations with Iran. Among them: to avoid further deterioration of his image, already that of an indecisive leader, at home and abroad." "Nightmare in Iran," *US News and World Report*, 19 November 1979.

97. Quoted in *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, p. 30207.

98. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p. 25.

99. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 9 May 1980, p. 30229.

100. Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 465–66.

101. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p. 15.

102. Jordan, *Crisis*, pp. 74ff.

103. In Graham Greene's *Getting to Know the General* (1984), Greene tells that in 1968 Colonels Torrijos and Martinez of the National Guard put Panamanian President Arias onto a plane bound for Miami. The following year, Colonel Martinez found himself on a plane to Miami as well.

104. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 75.

105. Jordan, *Crisis*, pp. 76–78.

106. Ibid., pp. 83–84.

107. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p. 26.

108. Vance described the "Lackland [Air Force Base] Understanding" as stating that the Shah's departure from the United States did not preclude his returning, but there was no guarantee. If he asked to return because of a medical emergency, the United States would favorably consider his request. If he asked to return for nonmedical reasons, the United States would consider his request but made no commitment whatsoever at that time

109. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p. 27.

110. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 24 October 1980, p. 30525.

111. Ibid.

112. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p. 29.

113. Karen DeYoung, "Shah Quits Panama Despite U.S. Effort," *Washington Post*, 24 March 1980.

114. Panamanian law prohibits the extradition of anyone to a country where the crime with which he is charged holds the possibility of capital punishment. Karen DeYoung, "Shah Quits Panama Despite U.S. Effort."

115. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p. 30.

116. DeYoung, "Shah Quits Panama."

117. The two women had become friends after an official visit of the Sadats to Iran in 1976. During the last months of the Shah's reign, Mrs. Sadat had frequently called the Empress.

118. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, p. 32.

119. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 24 October 1980, p. 30527

120. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 216.

121. Ibid. The Shah's concern for his life was corroborated by an Iranian contact who met with Jordan. The unnamed contact suggested that the CIA could figure out a way to have the Shah die on the operating table.

122. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 214

123. Under Panamanian law, a country petitioning for extradition has sixty days to submit evidence. After submission, the President has sole discretionary power to make the decision, and there is no time limit. Karen DeYoung, "Shah Quits Panama."

124. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 24 October 1980, p. 30528.

125. "Egypt and Iran; Arab Hospitality at its Best," *The Economist*, 29 March 1980.

126. Ibid.

127. Edward Cody, *Washington Post*, 24 March 1980.
128. Mohamed Heikal, *Autumn of Fury: the Assassination of Sadat* (New York: Random House 1983), p. 275.
129. Nixon presidential library film.
130. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, p. 30149.
131. Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 219.
132. Joseph Finklestone *Anwar Sadat: Visionary Who Dared* (United Kingdom: 1996). p. xxvii.
133. Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, p. 173.
134. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, p. 30537.

TIMELINE

December 24, 1978

Iranian students storm U.S. embassy in Teheran. Marines disperse the crowd with tear gas.

January 16, 1979

Shah leaves Iran for Egypt.

January 22, 1979

Shah leaves Egypt for Morocco.

February 14, 1979

Armed men seize U.S. Embassy in Teheran, killing one and taking 101 persons hostage. Iranian government forces free them three hours later.

March 31, 1979

Shah arrives in the Bahamas from Morocco.

May 25, 1979

One hundred thousand demonstrators attack U.S. embassy compound in Teheran and tear down U.S. flag.

June 10, 1979

Shah arrives in Mexico after being denied a visa extension in the Bahamas.

October 22, 1979

Shah arrives in United States for gall bladder operation.

November 4, 1979

U.S. embassy in Teheran is seized by Islamic militant "students," and sixty-one hostages are taken.

November 14, 1979

President Carter issues an executive order blocking all property and interests in the property of the government of Iran and the Central Bank of Iran.

November 20, 1979

Mexico announces it is unwilling to accept the return of the Shah.

December 16, 1979

Shah arrives in Panama.

December 27, 1979

Soviet Union invades Afghanistan.

February 24, 1980

UN Commission of Inquiry begins investigation of grievances of Iranian people against the former Shah.

March 12, 1980

Iranian government demands that the Panamanian government arrest the Shah.

March 23, 1980

Shah leaves Panama to return to Cairo, Egypt.

July 28,1980

Shah dies in military hospital outside Cairo.

November1980

President Carter loses presidential election to Ronald Reagan by a landslide.

January 20, 1981

Iranian military signals for plane carrying hostages to leave for U.S. News footage shows guards listening to Reagan's inauguration on radio.

October 16, 1981

Anwar Sadat is assasinated by Egyptian militants.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In alphabetical order)

Princess Ashraf	Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi's twin sister
Teimur Bakhtiar	Former Prime Minister of Iran
Mehdi Bazargan	Prime Minister of Iran under Khomeini
Zbigniew Brzezinski	U.S. National Security Advisor
Jimmy Carter	U.S. President
King Constantine	Former King of Greece in exile in United Kingdom
Warren Christopher	U.S. Assistant Secretary of State
Lloyd Cutler	White House counsel
Ambassador Ghorbal	Egyptian ambassador to the United States
King Hassan II	King of Morocco
Hamilton Jordan	U.S. Chief of Staff
Henry Kissinger	Former U.S. Secretary of State
Ayatollah Khomeini	Leader of Iranian Islamic revolution
Bruce Laingen	Senior U.S. diplomat in Iran
Gabriel Lewis	Former Panamanian ambassador to the United States
Husni Mubarek	Vice President of Egypt
Richard Nixon	Former U.S. president
Mohammed Reza Pahlavi	Former Shah of Iran
José Lopez Portillo	President of Mexico
Jody Powell	U.S. press secretary
Henry Precht	State Department official visiting Iran
Parviz C. RadjiIranian	Ambassador to United Kingdom
David Rockefeller	Chief Executive Officer of Chase Manhatten Bank; brother of Nelson Rockefeller
Nelson Rockefeller	Former Vice President of the United States
Anwar Sadat	President of Egypt
Harold Saunders	Assistant Secretary of State
William Sullivan	U.S. Ambassador to Iran
Margaret Thatcher	Prime Minister, United Kingdom
General Omar Torrijos	Commander of Panama's National Guard; f ormer chief of government
Cyrus Vance	U.S. Secretary of State
Kurt Waldheim	UN Secretary General