

## ENCOUNTERS

### WITH THE SHAH

Born in ١٩١٨ in the depths of the countryside, I was raised in that gentle land to which I became attached. My dream at that time was to grow up, join the Military College, and graduate as an officer in the Egyptian army. That dream came true. In ١٩٣٨, I graduated as an officer with the rank of second lieutenant.

I recall this today as I take up my pen to write about the Shah of Iran. It was a strange coincidence that brought us together. He was also born in ١٩١٨ and graduated from the Military College in ١٩٣٨-and with the same rank. But there the comparisons between the shah and myself ended.

I came from a family of peasants in the little Egyptian village of Mit Abul-Kom; he was the son of an emperor and the successor to the throne of an old and mighty empire. My dreams went no further than gradual advancement in the military corps, serving in the Egyptian army until I retired, when I would return once again to the land I loved. As for the shah, a great future awaited him. His dreams were limitless. His father the emperor, who was known for his severity and determination, was training him to take over on his death. The emperor paid great attention to his son's education and, wishing him to learn the art of warfare, sent him to a military college like any other student.

At that time, and under those circumstances, I never imagined that I would one day make the acquaintance of the Shah of Iran. The very year we

graduated, however, Ali Maher, the Egyptian prime minister, persuaded King Fouad to arrange a political marriage. He proposed that the heir to the throne of Iran should marry the Egyptian king's daughter, Princess Fawzia. The shah was head of a Shiite Islamic state; King Fouad, the head of a Sunni Islamic state. The marriage, as Ali Maher saw it, would draw the two countries together, unite their interests and put an end to their differences.

The Persians had created an empire and civilization before the appearance of Islam or even the birth of the Arabic language. Persian civilization spread to all parts of the world, and today there are still those in the East, especially in Pakistan and India, who speak Persian as the language of civilization and culture (and after the ۱۹۵۲ revolution I decided to learn Persian, too).

The marriage between the man who was to become shah and the king of Egypt's daughter was duly agreed upon. Preparations for the wedding began. And here I leap ahead to the year ۱۹۷۱. On October ۱۱ of that year I was on my way to pay an official visit to the Soviet Union and was received by the shah during a stopover at the airport in Teheran. I had previously had a meeting with him at the Islamic summit in Rabat in ۱۹۶۹, following the burning of the al-Aqsa mosque.

Recalling that meeting, I put a question to the shah as soon as we began to speak. "How many times have our paths crossed?" I asked. Greatly surprised at the question, he replied: "This is the second time we have met. Our first meeting was in Rabat."

“No,” I said. “It is the third time! Perhaps you will not remember our first encounter.”

“And when was that?” he asked in astonishment.

“In ١٩٣٨,” I answered. “That year we both graduated as second lieutenants. You came to Cairo as heir to the throne of Iran to marry King Fouad’s daughter. A military parade was held in the desert at Alamaza. I was in the Fourth Battalion, Infantry Rifles. You sat with Prince Farouk to watch the military parade I participated in.”

I went on: “You were on a raised platform and I passed before you in the parade. The distance between us was very small, yet in reality it was great. For you were the heir to the throne and I was a mere officer from an Egyptian village you have never heard of.” We both laughed.

Then I said to the shah: “We have an Arabic saying: There can be no love except after enmity.’ The friendship that follows upon enmity is, in fact, stronger and more durable. You will recall the fight we had in Rabat before the heads of state of the Islamic world. There is indeed truth in the Arabic saying, for we quarreled and now are friends.” Our quarrel had been a bitter one, but our friendship grew steadily over the years and was to stand us both in good stead.

The quarrel in Rabat happened at the Islamic summit meeting of ١٩٦٩. I had gone to the meeting as head of the Egyptian delegation, and President Nasser had asked me to take advantage of my presence there to meet the shah and attempt to settle the differences that existed between our two countries. Nasser had suggested I ask King Hussein of Jordan, who was also

present at the summit, to intercede with the shah and arrange a meeting. Nasser himself had been unable to attend the meeting because he had suffered a severe heart attack. King Hussein gladly agreed to our request, and we decided I would meet the shah at King Hussein's residence.

I had had a long day of visits with the heads of Islamic states, who had come to Morocco to decide what to do after the burning of the al-Aqsa mosque by arsonists in Jerusalem ... how to protect the Muslim holy places that had fallen under Israeli control. It looked like it was going to be a difficult meeting, for the heads of state feared that I had been sent to bring about the failure of the meeting. I said to them: "It is not true that I have come to sabotage the conference. We are all here to examine the situation following the burning of al-Aqsa mosque. It is essential, in these circumstances, that we all work together to make a success of this conference. So have no fear."

They had been reassured. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia told the other heads of state he was well acquainted with Anwar el-Sadat. He was not the sort of man, he told them, who would deliberately sabotage a conference of such significance to Muslims everywhere. My position as head of the Egyptian delegation was not without its difficulties, either. My enemies had been infuriated when Nasser chose me to take his place as head of the delegation during his illness. They had imagined Ali Sabri, the former prime minister and Nasser's second in command, to be their leader. Great had been the blow, therefore, when Nasser chose me instead. There was little they could do about this, although they had persuaded Nasser to include one of their men in the Rabat delegation, Labib Shukair, at that time speaker of the

People's Assembly. Shukair's job was to spy on me. I had raised no objections, although I was quite aware of their aims.

The Islamic summit meeting began the following morning at the Hilton Hotel. There had been an unforeseen problem when the Pakistani delegation objected to India's participation. I was on a committee that was formed to mediate the quarrel, but our efforts were of no use: India was not allowed to participate. Thus, the whole of the first day of the conference was wasted in an attempt to solve the dispute between Pakistan and India.

The next morning, while still at my residence, I received a phone call from King Hussein. He said: "I shall come by, brother Anwar, in exactly five minutes, to accompany you on your visit to the Shah of Iran." I was astonished. "That is not what we agreed upon, brother Hussein," I replied. "I asked you very clearly to arrange my meeting with the shah to take place at your residence, not his. The meeting should take place on neutral ground. If I go to him, I shall be at a disadvantage. I don't want him to come to me, either. And even if I did, he would not accept."

King Hussein was silent for a moment. Then he replied: "What shall I do now? I have already arranged with the shah that we go to him. He is looking forward to your visit." I said to Hussein: "I honestly don't know how to get out of this awkward situation. I made it very clear to you right from the start that I wanted the meeting to take place with you." Hussein answered unhappily: "All right, Anwar, I'll try and find a solution. "We hung up and eventually made our way to the Hilton for the next session of the conference. I found that King Hussein had broached the subject with the shah, asking him to change the place of our meeting. The shah had turned

down the suggestion, and it was never brought up again. We had still not had our meeting, therefore, when the session began. When my turn came to speak for Egypt, I attacked no one. I said we had come to examine a problem of the utmost concern to Muslims everywhere. It was up to us to sit as brothers, in absolute harmony, having shed our differences outside the conference hall.

The shah's speech followed immediately afterward. He delivered it in French, his first foreign language (English being his second). I understand French very well, although I cannot speak it fluently, and I was very perturbed when the shah ended his speech with an inconsequential proposal, unworthy of being heard by those who had traveled such long distances to examine an issue of major importance. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) had already held its conference on the subject and had issued a strong condemnation of Israel's action. The shah's proposals, in contrast, were wholly unacceptable.

I could not remain silent. As soon as the shah had finished, I raised my hand, asking to speak. I made an angry, improvised response. "I have just listened to the resolutions proposed by the shah," I said. "All I can say is they are not worthy of the issue we are considering and are inferior to those made by the OAU. It is shameful that the shah, a Muslim emperor, should put forward such resolutions. The Islamic people will be ashamed when they hear them." And I ended by saying: "I do not forget the determination with which the shah's father struggled to maintain his independence during the Second World War, nor the resolution with which he opposed the designs of the Allies, who punished him for his stand by having him deposed."

I looked over at the shah, whose face was suffused with anger at what he had heard me say. During my speech, which was in Arabic, he had put on earphones to listen to an interpretation of my words in French. In that language, my words had carried an undertone of violence which I had not intended. When the time came for him to speak again, the shah strongly defended himself, emphasizing that he had struggled to confront imperialism and recover his country's land. Furthermore, he pointed out, his country depended neither on Great Britain nor on America. But Egypt, he said, leaned heavily on the Soviet Union.

I realized that the shah had misunderstood my words because of the French interpretation. Anxious to remedy this, I asked once more for permission to speak. King Hassan of Morocco assented, and I took the floor. "I am still of the opinion that the resolutions proposed by the shah are not sufficiently strong to deal with the grave incident that has brought us here," I said. "On the other hand, I suspect that due to a fault in the French translation, the shah did not fully grasp my meaning. I shall therefore remedy this by summarizing my feelings in a verse of Persian poetry."

The Arab heads of delegation were horror-struck. Behind me, Labib Shukair made a loud commotion with his feet, trying in alarm to warn me. They all thought I would make a fool of myself. Nobody knew that I not only spoke Persian but was also so familiar with Persian poetry that I could now, in one verse, summarize my response to the shah's speech. Paying no attention to the alarm around me, and ignoring Labib Shukair's hysterical behavior, I recited the verse. Translated into English, it says: "He who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow needs favors from no one."

The shah understood. Rising immediately to his feet, he began to applaud. Seeing this, the heads of state followed suit and applauded too. The Afghan prime minister, my friend Nour Ahmed el-E'timadi, who also spoke Persian, joined in. The shah's reaction was strange: he was at odds with Egypt, and my response to his speech and my objections to the resolutions he had proposed had angered him. Nevertheless, when I recited the verse in Persian, he had stood up and applauded. Labib Shukair could not believe his eyes. Later, he told me he had been on the verge of fainting when he heard me start to recite the Persian verse. He had not known I had once studied Persian and had imagined my pronunciation would be poor and my meaning distorted. But when he heard the shah applaud, he took a sheet of paper and wrote: "What you have done is most splendid."

Once the hall had quieted down, I asked permission to leave as I was obliged to return to Cairo. As I made my way toward the exit, I passed in front of the shah's seat. The shah was known never to have laughed and smiled only with difficulty. But now, thinking I was going over to him, he gave me a welcoming and encouraging smile. I contented myself with a quick wave of my hand and continued toward the exit.

I was accompanied to the airport by King el-Hassan's personal representative, Ahmed Balafrig, one of the best and most cultured of men, who said to me: "You cannot imagine how pleased I am, brother Anwar, at what you have done today. I never imagined you could exhibit such a command of Persian poetry as to move the shah to stand up and applaud. Many delegates praised your pronunciation." During a stopover in Tripoli on my way back, a reporter from the newspaper al-Ahram asked me, his face

revealing doubt:' Is it true that you recited a poem in Persian and that the shah was so impressed that he stood up and applauded you at length?"

“Yes, that is indeed what happened,” I replied. He did not appear to believe me, for he handed me a piece of paper and said: “If so, would you please write the verse in Persian on this sheet?” I did so with great ease.

But the Egyptian newspapers did not report a single word of the matter. The establishment which at that time controlled the press had ordered that it be ignored. Nevertheless, when I returned home I found that Nasser had heard about the incident from one of the Arab newspapers printed in Beirut, which he was in the habit of reading before he went to bed. I went to see Nasser primarily about his health and upon entering his bedroom found him surrounded by three physicians. As soon as he saw me, he asked me teasingly: “What’s the story, Anwar?” I responded in surprise: “What story, Gamal?” He said jokingly, "The story of the Persian language and Persian poetry. I swear to you Anwar, I was in fits of laughter when I read it. I said to myself: “Anwar recited any old nonsense, pretending it was Persian, and must have fooled them.”

I laughed in turn, then said: “How could I get away with that, Gamal? I spoke in front of the Shah of Iran as well as other delegates whose official language is Persian.” Gamal persisted: “I might have believed that if it had been just a few spoken sentences-but for you to recite Persian verse, well that is something I could never imagine from you, Anwar.” We laughed for a long time and Nasser ordered that the story be published in the Egyptian papers.

After I took over following Nasser's death, Iran was among the first countries with which I wished to restore normal relations. I wrote a letter to the shah, the first part of which was in Arabic, the last in Persian. The shah promptly returned that gesture with another: in place of a typewritten reply, he sent one in his own handwriting. He welcomed my invitation to come to Egypt, and his visit with the shahbanu proved the start of a solid friendship that grew stronger by the day and firmer with each passing situation, and which lasted until the very last day of the shah's life.

During my stopover in Teheran in October ۱۹۷۱ I drew a quick picture for the shah of the situation facing Egypt at that time. We talked about the attitude of the United States and of the Soviet Union, whom we considered at that time as a friend. "Tell me about your position," I said to the shah. "The Americans sell arms to you. The Soviet Union stands on your frontier and also sells you arms. This can please neither friend nor foe."

The shah spoke at length about the situation and ended with the words: "My advice to you, Anwar, is just to relax. Great powers will be great powers. They will never change." I replied: "That's true. I agree with you-but that doesn't mean I have to give in to whatever the great powers propose for me. My one and only aim at this stage is to prepare for the battle we are planning against Israel and which we intend to start very soon. No power in the world, great or small, will prevent us." And so I gave the shah advance warning of our intentions, which culminated in the October War of ۱۹۷۳. I bade him farewell and headed for Moscow.

On my return, we agreed to put an end to the disagreements between Egypt and Iran. Offices and embassies were reopened in Cairo and Teheran,

and relations between two friendly countries were restored. The shah and shahbanu came to Egypt at my invitation, visiting Cairo and Upper Egypt. A strong and solid friendship sprang up between us. What the shah did for Egypt I can never forget or ignore-on the contrary, I let no occasion go by without mentioning his efforts on our behalf.

I recall particularly the crisis we faced when our oil supplies ran out at the end of the battle in October ۱۹۷۳. Qadaffi had betrayed us and sent our tankers back empty from Tobruk. We appealed to Saudi Arabia, but they had asked the minister of petroleum to fly out to discuss the request-all of which would take time we could ill afford. I therefore cabled the shah and said: "We are facing a crisis. Our oil will not last fifteen days. Please come to our rescue." The shah was up to the responsibility. Accurately assessing the drastic situation we were in, he immediately ordered tankers on the high seas to change course and head directly for Alexandria where they would discharge their loads of oil. Meanwhile, I received a cable from the shah in which he said: "On the way to you now are ۶۰۰ tons of oil which were being shipped to Europe. I hope you will send the minister of petroleum to Iran so he can inform us what further oil you require."

Such was the treatment I received from the Arabs and such from the Shah of Iran. In an article attacking the Arabs, the late Lebanese reporter, Selim eI-Lozy, wrote: "Egypt is fighting for you. Oil is the only thing your land possesses, yet you refuse to supply Egypt with any of it, obliging her to turn instead to the Iranians." As it turned out, Saudi Arabia did eventually send us some oil-for which we were grateful. But had the shah not stood by

us we would have been faced with a problem which God only knows how we would have borne.

At my invitation, the shah later came to Egypt. It was only natural that our talks should center around the war that had just been fought and the programs I was considering next. The shah was very enthusiastic about the construction and development program I had in mind. To my surprise, he said: "I would like, on behalf of my country, to participate in the rebuilding and revival of the city of Port Said. I hope you will accept a loan of two hundred and fifty million dollars, to be repaid over a long term, to be used for the construction of Port Said as a free zone to promote world trade." It was another surprise from the shah and one that truly embarrassed me. Not only had he rescued us from our predicament by sending us oil, but here he was again voluntarily offering aid for the revival of Port Said, which had sustained the horrors of all the previous wars. I thanked the shah and our friendship grew stronger and firmer.

Ours was not just a personal friendship but extended beyond that to the official level. Egypt and Iran were the two oldest countries and the most ancient civilizations in the region. The Iranian Empire was created twenty-five hundred years ago, at a time when Europe was still divided into provinces that had not yet attained the status of independent countries. Egypt was a country with a government of its own as far back as seven thousand years ago. Because of this bond between our two countries, the shah and I agreed to coordinate our affairs to establish a balance of power in the region, whereby no foreign power would be allowed to interfere with or alter its

borders. For we were the "owners" and therefore best aware of the interests of its peoples.

The shah based his stand on the great military power Iran possessed at that time. Egypt also had the basic ingredients of such power and was working hard to realize its potential. The shah and I agreed that decisions would be taken, not by the great powers, but by the countries of the region themselves. At that time, I was trying to find a solution to the problem of the three islands in the Persian Gulf over which the Arabs and Iranians were in dispute. I told the shah: "An alliance between Egypt and Iran is not enough. It is only right that the Arabs and the Persians also unite, for they are natural allies, brought together by geography, religion, and destiny. We should strive to create such an alliance so that we can maintain our independence and confront any challenge, be it from the East or from the West. Our region boasts over sixty percent of the oil reserves in the world—enormous wealth, which must be safeguarded. This cannot be realized unless we unite." The shah agreed, and I went on to say: "For this reason, we must work to settle our own differences. We should begin with the problem of the islands, to which a solution must be found."

An opportunity to do this came toward the end of my visit to Teheran when Sheikh Zayed of the United Arab Emirates requested that we meet. Iran had seized control of three Arab islands in the Persian Gulf: Great Tomb, Smaller Tomb, and Abou Moussa. These three islands are the property of one of the states that forms the UAE. On the spot, after being informed of Sheikh Zayec's request to meet me, I decided to bring up this topic in my discussions with the shah. I managed to convince him the

problem had to be solved, although the shah was quite sensitive about it. My line of reasoning centered on the argument that the bond of Islam which united us impelled us to settle all our outstanding problems. When

I felt the shah had grown convinced of this, I went to see Sheikh Zayed at his residence in Teheran. He had at first insisted on calling at my guest house, but I told his people I would come to him instead.

I went there on my way to the airport before my departure for Saudi Arabia and told Sheikh Zayed of all that had taken place during my meeting with the shah. I informed him: "I have managed to find a solution to the problem with Mohamed [the shah] before you asked it of me." I have never before commented on my success at that time in mediating between Iran and the Emirates over the problem of the islands because I didn't want it to become a forum for political auctioneering.

A few months afterward, I traveled as usual to Aswan to survey the construction projects in the south. I made sure I carried out this visit annually to see on the spot how the projects were progressing in that part of the country away from Cairo. It was not for leisure or a holiday at a resort. Nor did I stay in a palatial mansion, but in a guest house for engineers of Aswan. While I was still there, at the beginning of January ١٩٧٨, a sudden dispatch came from the Shah of Iran. It said: "I am coming to spend one night in Aswan, then I will return home." Though I welcomed the shah, I was surprised at this impromptu visit because I had been with him in Iran only a few months before, and he had visited me in Cairo, so what was the urgency of such a visit? At the Aswan airport, I greeted the shah warmly, and the shah reciprocated by saying: "I came for one simple reason: to

announce to the world my support for your peace initiative. For this reason, I will not spend more than twenty-four hours here, after which I shall return home.” I felt a deep gratitude to the man for making that effort to affirm his stand, and I told him: “Why should you take this burden upon yourself? You have already announced your position, and you have always stood by Egypt in its previous crises, both during and after the October War. We will never forget your supplying us with oil when we needed it then.”

I recall this now to refute what a well-known journalist, a friend of world leaders, claimed in a recent television interview that was telecast in London. He said that the Shah of Iran had never done anything to help Egypt. But he forgot the shah’s stand that I have just mentioned. He also forgot that the shah had supplied us with buses when we were in desperate need of them to solve our country’s transportation problems. The story of that deal started when I asked the shah: "Is it true, Mohamed, that you can produce Mercedes buses in Iran?" He replied: “Yes.” Then I asked: “Can you send us three hundred buses?” And he replied: “Yes, send me your team of experts and the buses you ask for will be in Egypt as soon as possible.”

On yet another occasion, the then prime minister of Egypt, Abdel Aziz Hegazy, informed me that the cotton crop would not be sold that year and that we would therefore run short of hard currency. Immediately, I told him to be in touch with the Shah of Iran and ask for a loan with the cotton as guarantee. Hegazy carried out my instructions and sent a Telex to Iran asking for the loan. The shah replied personally: “How much do you need exactly?” We informed him we needed ٥٠ million dollars. The shah said:

"The money is on its way. As for the cotton crop, keep it in your stores so that you can sell it later."

All of these past actions were present in my mind while I was with the shah that year in Aswan. He told me there: "The reason behind my visit is not only to announce before the world my support for your initiative but to convey this support specifically to the Arab world. My intention is to go to Jeddah and to meet with King Khalid and the Saudi princes and to tell them openly: 'What are you waiting for? Why don't you announce your support for Sadat's initiative? Sadat is not only working for Egypt but for the entire Arab world and for you. "And the Shah of Iran actually did fly to Jeddah and told them: "Why don't you announce openly your support of the peace process? Sadat is working for the whole area, for a comprehensive and just peace, and for the return of Arab rights."

A whole year passed. And again I received the shah in Aswan, in January ۱۹۷۹, in the same city, at the same airport, with the same hotel as his residence.

But the shah was not the shah I knew, and Iran had become another Iran.

In January ۱۹۷۸, the shah had made his flying visit to Aswan to announce his wholehearted support for my peace initiative and to tell all Arabs to support it. But in January ۱۹۷۹ the shah had come to Egypt to seek refuge. In the span of a single year, his situation had been transformed.

When he had returned to Teheran in January ۱۹۷۸ after his short visit to Aswan, a plot was awaiting him, hatched by the Iranian Left. I say that

because anyone who has a little knowledge of politics would arrive at the conclusion that the Left was behind all the moves against the shah. The Iranian Left had decided to wage its battle against the shah on the streets of Teheran—one of its well-known tactics. It starts by organizing a demonstration, when clashes take place between police and demonstrators. The clash develops into an exchange of shots with a number of victims among the demonstrators.

With the greatest precision, the Left goes on with its tactics. During the funeral procession of the victims, other clashes take place, and more victims fall. And on the fortieth day of mourning for the victims, more demonstrations take place and more victims die. And this vicious circle never ends ... demonstrations followed by clashes and victims, and so on. But for the Left—which had instigated all this—the important thing was that the explosive situation should continue between the shah and the Iranian public. The aim of their tactics was to exert pressure on the shah and to blackmail him. And when the shah started to submit, his political opponents simply intensified their pressure in order to secure further gains.

I hope I am not misunderstood. I don't mean to support the shah against a popular revolution, since this is an internal issue of concern only to the people of Iran and I don't want to interfere with it. And I am certainly not against the revolution of any people since I myself made my revolution—and indeed was ready to repeat it on September 9 of this year if the situation called for it. \* All I want to say, without interfering in the internal affairs of

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\* Editor's note: This is a reference to the unrest in Egypt that preceded Sadat's assassination and which was followed by the arrest and detention of several leading dissidents.

Iran, is that the Left was behind the popular revolt in the streets of Teheran, pushing matters to an extreme from February ۱۹۷۸ to January ۱۹۷۹. And the result was the shah taking refuge in Egypt.

When he arrived in Aswan with his wife, Empress Farah, he was very ill, and I left the emperor and empress to rest at their hotel. Next day, Jihan (Mrs. Sadat) and I went to pay them a visit. We found the empress still asleep, and she stayed asleep until the early afternoon. The shah apologized to us and said: “We have not slept soundly for a whole year.”

The shah, as I said, had lived under tremendous pressures and faced all kinds of demonstrations instigated by the Left: sometimes student demonstrations, sometimes women’s demonstrations, and sometimes children’s demonstrations. And of course he could not attack children. The shah’s mistake was to retreat and start submitting to the demands of the Left. For example, they forced him to abolish the Iranian calendar year, Niroz, and to adopt the Muslim calendar year. But the shah's basic mistake was made when he abolished the multiparty system and formed one party in its place. This decision meant he was resisting the course of history, and the course of history can never be stopped, because if you try, history defies you.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it may have been possible to resort to the one-party system, as during Ataturk’s and Hitler's and Mussolini's time, but to resort to it these days is a fatal mistake. The course of history allows only for a transition from a one-party to a multiparty system, and it does not allow for the opposite, because one is a step forward and the other a step backward. When the shah committed this mistake, all

forces at once joined ranks against him, leading to an alliance of all his opponents. They were thus all grouped in one camp: Bazergan and Bani Sadr, the Left and “Mogahedi Khalq.” All joined ranks to topple the shah.

When the shah arrived in Aswan, I felt he would never return to Iran, as events subsequently confirmed. I met him at the foot of the steps of his aircraft and told him: “Rest assured, Mohamed, you are in your country and with your people and brothers. “But he was in a state of shock and his eyes were brimful of tears. En route to the hotel, while still shedding tears, he told me about the farewell of his soldiers at the Teheran airport and how one soldier took hold of him and said, "Don't leave us. Iran will be lost without you and the future is dark.”

I immediately asked the shah: “Why don't you withdraw the aircraft of your air force and your naval units from Iran?” My reason for making this suggestion was that the army, the fleet, and the air force had remained loyal to the shah and stayed loyal until the arrival of Khomeini. I was prepared to offer them sanctuary in Egypt. I told the shah: “Egypt is prepared to be their host until conditions stabilize in Iran.” His reply was the reply of a man who had lost all hope and any ability to take a decision. He told me: “America will not agree. They will not allow me to do it. I am not able to take such a decision.”

I then knew that the rule of the shah had ended and that his return to Iran had become impossible. The shah told me, while he was still weeping, that he felt like a leader who had deserted the battlefield. But he was forced to leave Iran because the Americans had exerted a great deal of pressure on him. He told me how the American ambassador came to meet him and kept

looking at his watch and telling him that "every minute that passes and delays your departure is not in your interest and not in the interest of Iran ... you have to hasten your departure, immediately."

The reason behind this American stand was that Carter's policy was based on a belief in human rights, and he considered that the shah's presence in Iran was against the will of the Iranian people and against Iranian human rights. During their summit conference that year, the four Western leaders—Carter, Schmidt, D'Estaing, and Callaghan—all took a stand against the shah. This stand led to the departure of the shah from Iran and the return of Khomeini. The Western leaders did not realize that they were installing a time bomb inside Iran. They did not grasp what they had done until after it had exploded, with its shrapnel raining all over Iran.