

181. Toasts of the President and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi,
Shah of Iran, at a State Dinner in Tehran. *May 30, 1972*

Your Imperial Majesty and all of your distinguished guests:

Let me first thank you on behalf of Mrs. Nixon and all the members of our party for the very generous remarks that you have made and for the magnificent hospitality which you have extended to us on this occasion, and in speaking of that hospitality, may we particularly thank you for the welcome that we received as we came into the capital city of your country today. It will leave a memory in our hearts that will last for all of our lives, and we are most grateful for the welcome we received from the people of Iran on this historic occasion.

Since ancient times, this country has been one that has been known for its splendid hospitality, and we, of course, tonight have had a good chance to see why that reputation has become worldwide.

It is always a very great privilege to visit here, but I feel especially privileged to be here in this period in which you are celebrating what you have referred to, the 2,500th year of your country's history. I think of the fact that the United States of

America in just 4 years will be celebrating its 200th anniversary, and then I compare that 200 years with 25 centuries of history, and I realize that as we compare our two countries, we owe so much to you. As you have spoken so generously of what you may owe to us, we owe so much to you, not only for 2,500 years, but for a history that goes back even 6,000 years.

In this room, and in this company, speaking from what was once known and perhaps still is known as the New World, it is only appropriate that we pay our respects to and express our thanks to the magnificent heritage of the Old World that is now, through your efforts, a bridge to the new.

On this particular occasion, as all of you know, this is the first stop that we have made since the trip that we have taken to the Soviet Union. Your Majesty has referred to that trip, and I think it is only appropriate on this occasion for me to speak of that trip, the visit we had there, what it means to the world, and what it means to all nations in the world.

Before doing so, I wish to say that I

have had the opportunity during the period that I have served in office—8 years as Vice President, when Mrs. Nixon and I first had the opportunity of visiting Tehran, and then over 3 years as President of the United States—and even some years out of office, the opportunity of visiting over 70 nations. I have met the heads of state and the heads of government of most of those nations, and I think that all of this company should know that in evaluating those that I have met, heads of state and heads of government, His Imperial Majesty is one who has an understanding not only of the bilateral problems that our two countries sometimes have—fortunately relatively small ones—but beyond that, an understanding of the area in which he lives and of the international problems.

His advice and counsel have been invaluable through the years, and it was for that reason that, after my visit to the Soviet Union, I was glad that the opportunity was provided, through Your Majesty's invitation, to come here, to consult with you, and to get the benefit of your wisdom in terms of the future policies of the United States of America.

Speaking now of what these visits mean, and what the future is, I think it is important for us to bear in mind that while we have been at what is called the summit, that there has been no intention on the part of the two governments represented at that summit conference—no intention to divide the world into two spheres of influence, no intention to set up a condominium. Certainly on our part—and I express here the policy of the United States in the past and the present, and I know what will be the policy in the future—we consider it important and vital that as a great nation and a powerful

nation, that we seek good relations with all nations in the world.

But we also recognize that as we begin a dialogue with some nations with which we have had no dialogue at all—I refer to the visit that we paid earlier this year to the People's Republic of China—and when we begin conversations that can, and we trust will, develop a better relationship with a nation that from time to time since the great World War II has been an adversary on occasion—that as we do both of these things, we have not overlooked a very fundamental fact of international life, and that is that it is vital that we build our policy on the alliances and the friendships that we have had in the past, that we have now, and that we hope to have in the future.

That is one of the things that this visit symbolizes. We are proud that Iran is a friend of the United States, that the United States is a friend of Iran.

We are proud of the fact that we have some bonds between us—bonds that have been formalized by treaty. But I would point out to this audience, those who are here, that bonds that are formalized by treaty can be one thing; what is more important are those bonds that are further underscored by a personal relationship, a personal respect, a personal esteem, between the leaders of the countries involved.

I value the friendship that it has been my privilege to have with His Majesty over these years. I believe that all American Presidents have valued the friendship that they have had on their part with the leaders of this country.

What I am saying, very simply, is this: We are proud to have the official relationships with the Government of Iran, which have been set down on pieces of paper

sometimes called treaties, sometimes called agreements. But what is more important is that we are proud of the fact that the relationship goes beyond simply the piece of paper, that it goes to the personal relationship which we see exemplified in this magnificent dinner tonight and which we trust will always be the hallmark of the relations between our two countries.

I should like to bring my remarks to a conclusion tonight by informally referring to an impression I had as we came into the city today. It was a glorious day, as all of you will remember. The sky was blue, we could see the mountains in the distance, the weather was just right, as if it had been ordered for the occasion. And then, as the motorcade moved from the airport out through the suburbs and then finally into the city, we saw the people on the streets. We could tell from the expressions on their faces they had not been ordered to come because, while you can order people to get out on the streets, you cannot order them to smile. You cannot order them to wave, and particularly, you cannot do that with the children. It must come from their hearts, and it had come from their hearts.

We saw them there, not hundreds, not thousands, but tens of thousands of girls and boys, smiling, waving, with their American flags and the Iranian flags side by side.

I am sure that through His Majesty's mind ran the same thoughts that ran through mine: Our obligation is to them; our obligation is to their future.

What we have done in the meetings that we have had in this past week is only a beginning. It possibly builds a foundation for a better future between two great nations and a foundation, possibly, for a

better chance for peace for all nations in the world.

Our meetings here helped to build that foundation, a foundation of good relations that already exists between our two great countries, but a foundation for more progress in the future—progress which will benefit not just our generation, but that generation, one that will make us, as the leaders of our countries, proud of that leadership, proud of our people, proud of our heritage—yours 2,500 years old, ours so much younger.

But proud as we are of that heritage and proud as we are of that country, recognizing that our responsibility is to keep what is best from the past but also to build for the future.

As I look at Your Majesty's record, what you have done for this country in terms of the progressive actions in everything from land reform to education, so many other areas, I realize that your thoughts are, of course, about the proud past of this great nation and this great people.

But overriding that are your hopes for the future—the future of those children we saw on the streets of Tehran today.

So tonight I would simply conclude my remarks by saying that there will be many in the days ahead who will try to evaluate the so-called summits—the one in Peking in which the most populous nation of the world and the most prosperous nation of the world met for the first time in 20 years, the one in Moscow where the two most powerful nations in the world met and made some very important agreements which could contribute not only to better relations between those two but to peace for all the world.

As the experts evaluate those summits,

let them keep the one thought in mind that I think is so close to the heart of His Majesty and so close to my heart: We as leaders of our countries do our best. We sometimes make mistakes, but our thoughts, our hopes, our dreams are for our children—not just our family's children but for the children of our countries, the children of all the world, that they may have the opportunity to grow up in a more peaceful world, a more prosperous world, a more friendly world. And if, in the brief span of time that each of us spends in the office he holds, we could have contributed to that goal, all of the efforts, all of the time, everything that we have done would have been worth it.

It is in that spirit that I would like to propose tonight that our glasses be raised, of course, to the continued friendship of the two great peoples—the Iranian people and the American people—whose friendship goes back so far, as His Majesty has pointed out, and also to the leadership which His Majesty has provided for his country and, of course, to his partner in that leadership, his Empress.

I would close, if I could, on one informal note. In 1953, right after General Eisenhower, who was a great friend of Iran and who was the last American President to be honored at a state dinner like this in Iran, right after he had become President he was talking to me in his office—and he often used to say that he didn't know much about politics. That, of course, is the understatement of the century for one who won such great political victories. That day we had had a meeting with the leaders of the Congress, Democrats and Republicans, and General Eisenhower, who was a great judge of men and of women in a leadership capacity, made this rather interesting comment:

He said, "I am puzzled about political leaders. You can't generalize about them." He said, "Some of those fellows in there are very intelligent, and others seem to be a little slow. Some spoke very, very well, and others were a bit inarticulate." He said, "About the only thing that I can think of that political leaders seem to have in common, successful political leaders, is the ability to marry above themselves."

What I am simply saying tonight is that on this particular occasion we propose a toast, of course, to His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah, to his lovely Empress, who has been by his side, as my wife has been by my side, through adversity and also through periods of very great satisfaction.

So, ladies and gentlemen, if you would rise and raise your glasses.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:06 p.m. in the Niavaran Palace in response to a toast proposed by the Shah. He spoke from a prepared text.

The Shah's remarks were as follows:

Mr. President:

It is a great pleasure for the Shahbanou and myself to welcome you Mr. President and Mrs. Nixon in our country. Your visit is symbolic of the friendship and deep understanding which have always marked the relationship between our two countries and which with the passage of time have gone from strength to strength.

We Iranians were acquainted with the great American nation even before the opening of diplomatic relations between our two countries through fruitful cultural and educational cooperation. It is for this reason that our relationship was from the beginning based on a truly sincere and spiritual understanding. It was almost a century and half ago when the first American school was established in Orumieh of Aserbaijan, which is called Razaiyeh today. In subsequent years similar schools were founded in Hamadan, Rasht, Meshed, and in several other cities of Iran. But the most important of all these schools was

The American College of Tehran, founded almost 100 years ago. Many distinguished Iranian personalities had graduated from this school in the past. The management of this college was for many years entrusted to that noble American, Mr. Samuel Jordan, who is remembered very much by our people. It is for this very reason that one of our largest streets in Tehran has been named after him in order to keep his memory alive.

Our people have also unforgettable memories of another American friend, Mr. Morgan Shuster, who came to Iran at the invitation of the Iranian Government in the year 1911 in order to reorganize our customs and financial affairs which were at that time disorderly and confused. Although his tour of duty, due to the prevailing diplomatic conditions at that time which were really no concern of the Iranian Government, did not last more than 9 months, yet his memory as a noble, humanitarian, and an honest individual has been recorded in the contemporary history of Iran and will never be forgotten.

I deem it necessary to stress the fact here that the relationship between our two countries from the very beginning has never been impaired due to ill intentions, greed, grudge, revenge, and so forth, but from the time we can remember the policy of your country towards ours was respectful, liberal, and based on the principles of justice and human welfare and fellowship. I can cite as the best example of this fact the proclamation issued in the year 1919 by the Government of the United States, defending the sovereign rights of Iran.

After the Second World War, the financial assistance granted by the United States of America to my country was effective in the resurrection of the national life of Iran, and we shall not forget this assistance. During all these years the ties between Iran and the United States of America in the various political, economic, cultural, and artistic fields have always continued to expand, and actually serve as an outstanding example of relations between two countries.

On numerous occasions, during these past years, I have had the pleasure of hosting leaders and other high ranking American personalities, including yourself, Mr. President, and also on numerous occasions I have personally traveled to your country, either as an

official guest or for participation in various university ceremonies. Presently in these universities and other cultural centers of the United States thousands of Iranian students are studying in order to gain the latest and most progressive scientific experiences and technical knowledge of the present day to bring back to their homeland.

Mr. President, you, who have come from your great land to visit our country, have charge of the leadership of the United States of America in one of the most grave periods of its history. It has very rarely happened in the history of the world that the decisions of a head of a state has such far-reaching effects on the destiny of the whole of mankind. Naturally, under these conditions the enormity of the responsibilities you shoulder as the head of such a country, vis-a-vis your nation, the other nations of the world, and history, is commensurate with the immense abilities and powers at your disposal.

A real leader under these circumstances and under such conditions before anything else needs to have a realistic spirit and foresight, and we have always admired these qualities which you possess to the greatest extent.

We have always been and are witnessing, during your term of office, that in facing all problems and the grave difficulties, you have placed the interests of your country over and above your personal interests, and this is what history demands from real leaders. We sincerely wish you every success in performing your important duties, because your efforts are related with the destiny of all mankind.

In this regard, within the recent few months we have witnessed your two historic visits to China and the U.S.S.R. Certainly these two visits have had immeasurable bearing on the international evolution of the world today. Your visit to China, before anything else, assisted the universal aspect of our present day world. Your unprecedented visit to the U.S.S.R., apart from the bilateral aspects of it, from the point of view of agreements reached in regard to health, environment, outer space, science and technology the agreement to set up a trade commission, and especially the agreement reached on strategic arms limitation controls, is of the utmost importance. I hope the latter is the first stage in the materialization of world disarmament under close international

control, and will prepare the ground for the creation of an atmosphere and system which will eliminate the dangers of war altogether. In this respect we all have high hopes and interests, and obviously, until such time that these wishes come true, we cannot neglect the maintenance of our defenses even for a moment.

Our country is governed by an independent national policy and the maintenance of the true interests of the people. We are following this path with due attention to our national and world responsibilities. Thus repaying friendship with friendship and for this very reason we highly value the friendly policy of your country towards ours.

We are proud that we have more than 2,500 years of recorded history which started with one of the most honored and humanitarian documents of the world history, namely the Freedom Proclamation of Cyrus the Great. Your country last year, like many other countries alongside us, celebrated this as one of the greatest events of the history of mankind. At this opportunity I would like to commend the American Committee for Cyrus the Great Celebrations, which arranged detailed artistic, scientific, and university programs throughout the United States. I would like to thank especially Mrs. Nixon for accepting the honorary chairmanship of this committee in your country.

Depending upon at least 25 centuries of national heritage and sovereignty, we today have started a new period of renewing our past glories, based on the eternal values of our culture and civilization, and hope that the pages of our future history will also be thumbed through with the same national pride based on honor, righteousness, peace, and justice.

We have based our independent national policy on international understanding in the path of national reconstruction and the strengthening of world peace, coexistence, and, above all, cooperation. It is to be noted that we shall not tolerate any inequality from any quarter in our relations with other countries. Certainly under no circumstances will we allow any violation of our land or our rights.

Your visit to Iran, Mr. President and Mrs. Nixon, certainly represents a further step in the expansion and strengthening of our long-standing friendship and cooperation. And we are sure that this visit will also be fruitful from the point of view of international peace and understanding.

Mr. President, allow me to raise my glass to your personal health and happiness and that of Mrs. Nixon, and to wish increasing progress and welfare for the noble American people and the further strengthening of the friendship between our two countries.