

215 **Remarks of Welcome to His Imperial Majesty,
Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Shahanshah of Iran.**

July 24, 1973

Your Imperial Majesty:

It is a very great honor and a special honor for me to welcome you again to our Nation's Capital and, at the same time, to welcome Her Imperial Majesty, the Empress, and all the members of your official party from Iran.

I say a very special honor for several reasons, first because our friendship goes back over a period of 20 years when we

first met in Tehran, when I was Vice President of the United States and when you then were a very young Emperor.

Through those 20 years, both during the periods that I have served in office and during the periods that I have been a private citizen, I have been honored and I have been greatly assisted by receiving the benefit of your counsel on world matters.

The second reason that it is a very special honor to have you here today is because of the unbelievably spectacular progress that your country has made under your leadership. I remember it 20 years ago. I saw it again when you received Mrs. Nixon and me so graciously just a year ago in Tehran, and there is no area in the world in which one can see more spectacular development—development in which the people of the country have benefited—than in your country. The whole world applauds you for the leadership you have provided to your people in bringing economic progress and justice to them.

The third reason will, of course, be the major subject of our conversations today, and that is that we welcome you here as not only an old friend, as a progressive leader of your own people, but as a world statesman of the first rank. Our talks over the years have ranged over many, many subjects, and it is particularly important that we meet at this time.

This is the first meeting that I will have had with a head of government or head of state since the meeting I had with General Secretary Brezhnev. It is significant to note that of all the areas in the world which pose a potential threat to peace in the world, that Iran is in a very key, central area.

I refer, of course, to the Mideast, to the Persian Gulf, and to all of that area that surrounds it. What gives us a great deal of heart, those of us all over the world who are interested in peace, is that you have always stood for, and stand for now, a policy of contributing to the forces of peace and stability rather than to the forces of war and destruction.

I know, therefore, that our talks will cover the whole range of world problems,

but particularly that I will have the benefit of your advice on the problems in this critical area of the world where with responsible leadership we can avoid war and build a new era of peace for the people of that area who deserve it.

Certainly, I have looked forward to these talks for a long time, and I know that I will not be disappointed. And I hope you will not be, by the progress that we will make in developing those policies which will contribute not only to peace but to the progress and the prosperity which your country has enjoyed, for all of that area of the world.

So again, we welcome you today officially, but more than that, we particularly welcome you and the Empress as good friends and old friends. We treasure that friendship, and from that friendship we hope to work together toward a better world for both of our peoples.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:19 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House where the Shah of Iran was given a formal welcome with full military honors.

The Shah responded as follows:

I am deeply honored, Mr. President, to be once again your guest, this time alongside the Empress, to pay our respects to the people of America and the friendship that they have shown toward us since the inception of official diplomatic relations between our two countries, but also to express to you personally my happiness to have the opportunity of talking to you and having the wise advices that you can always give. Because in the world that we are living, especially in the days and years which lie ahead, we have got to be in constant contact in order to preserve what is really worth preserving, for which we are working, for which we are striving, and in our case, for which we are ready to die.

You have mentioned graciously that our country is making progress. That is true, as the United States has made progress. What you have achieved since your independence is unbelievable. We have had the privilege of flying

over your country since yesterday. What we see is something staggering, wonderful, and really something to be copied, where it can be copied. You have been blessed with so many wonders of nature.

The progress we are making is really to benefit the maximum majority of our people. We are following a policy of participation to the extreme limits. I could even say that, for instance, farmers would have an interest in seeing industries running well, and vice versa, industries will be interested in the welfare of farmers because they will have a greater purchasing power. People from down in the villages to the big cities will have, in various and different ways, the means to express themselves freely.

We are trying to develop our country with the maximum speed. We are giving our people the maximum possibilities of expression. But also, we want to make it very clear once more that we will keep not only our past glories and histories but our future with vigilance. We are not one of those countries who will surrender, because what we will surrender is too much. It is too great.

All this, I hope, will create in the region some atmosphere of stability, of people, instead of

quarreling, trying to understand each other to cooperate, to fight against the still existing evils of, maybe, poverty, illiteracy, not enough medical care. But we shall do this all only if our honor is preserved intact, because life for us without independence, honor, and dignity has no meaning.

I know that you understand these words better than anyone else, Mr. President, because this is what you have shown all during your life. And the dramatic success you had in your foreign policies is a source of inspiration, because, as you have said, the time of confrontation should be replaced by negotiation. Negotiation in good faith could have excellent results. And we hope you have success in this field, and we shall do the same. But for ourselves, at least, I add, we have got to be vigilant, we have got to be firm, we have got to be patient, but for all this, we have got to be strong morally in running our society, in our social justice, but also in our national strength to defend ourselves.

Thank you again for your warm welcome Mr. President, and I can only reiterate once more that I wish you and your government and your people and your country the best that you can wish for.