

Letter to the Editor

How the Shah of Iran was undone

In a message to EIR's Robert Dreyfuss, Khosro Eghbal scores the 'courtier' principle that undercut policy deliberation.

The following letter and accompanying article are being presented in the *EIR* as part of a continuing public debate about the future of Iran, now that the Ayatollah Khomeini's regime is crumbling. The writer, Khosro Eghbal, a former Iranian attorney and ex-President of the Iranian Press Association, suggests that Iran's stability and integrity depend on that country's achieving a steady balance between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In order for a moderate government drawn from middle-class and conservative military circles to emerge, broad support must be created for a clergy-free regime that can disarm the mobs. During this period of transition from over two years of chaos, it is important that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. agree on conditions for helping establish a climate in which that rehabilitation is possible.

In the present crises, the collapse of the Khomeini government may lead to a confrontation between Washington and Moscow as both great powers move to fill the vacuum in the country. Increasingly, many Iranians believe that only a tacit accord between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. to respect Iran's neutrality can permit the establishment of a stable Iran under a moderate leadership. In this context, Mr. Eghbal has sent *EIR* an article, first published in 1962 but still relevant today, calling for an Anglo-American-Soviet treaty recognizing Iran as a neutral and nonaligned power.

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Dear Mr. Dreyfuss:

I have read, with much interest and considerable regularity, your articles on Iran since early 1979. This has prompted me to draw your attention and, I hope, that of your many readers, to an issue which has largely escaped public scrutiny and which, I believe, is one of the principal reasons for the fall of the Shah of Iran.

During the last 15 years of his reign, Iran's monarch had become exceedingly egotistical. The Shah visualized himself as supreme and superior, attaching little value to private or public opinion. His increasing concentration on buttressing Iran's armed forces and attention to for-

eign relations at the expense of coping with the attendant geometric rise in public expectation quietly, but steadily, insulated the Shah from the economic and social upheavals which were fast overtaking his country. In short, the Shah had become oblivious to the external events which beset the country and were soon to undermine the system of monarchy in Iran. The coterie of high public officials and governmental agencies that surrounded the Shah basically fed him misinformation and half-truths to bolster his ego and perpetuate their own entrenched and self-serving interests. By means of their deceitful and servile public service, they effectively managed to conceal from the Shah the real and growing complexity of problems that Iran was faced with.

In effect, Iran was being ruled not only from the Peacock Throne but also by a small number of toadying, self-styled "shahs," comprising the courtiers, the ever-present advisers, and ministers who fawned on the Shah and enjoyed the whole gamut of privileges with their influential positions without being accountable for them or having to shoulder the Shah's burden.

The Shah rarely solicited anyone's advice and if the advice was offered, it was usually shared with those who, with their special aptitude and intelligence so characteristic of Iranians, knew what the Shah wanted to hear. The Shah repeatedly claimed that he could appoint anyone, regardless of his social background, to a high government office. If the public outcry for the dismissal of one of his government ministers or appointees reached a high point, the Shah would preserve his appointee by letting it be known that he alone would decide the fate of his officials.

You will recall, a few months before the Shah was forced into exile he stated in an interview with *Newsweek* magazine that no power on earth could weaken the pillars of Iran's monarchy or cause his downfall.

It should be noted that arrogance and greed in the life of any individual lead to errors of judgment, social and financial bankruptcy. We must confess that it was the willful manipulation by intimate confidants that brought about the Shah's authoritarian and imperial

attitude towards mundane problems. We are all influenced by our environment. If one is told countless number of times, day after day, that one has no peers in statecraft, intelligence, and wisdom one is bound to be given to self-delusion and feelings of grandeur. After all, we should not forget that the Shah, too, was human, and therefore fraught with the same common human frailties.

History has shown that whenever Iran lost her equilibrium in her dealings with foreign powers, she fell prey to upheavals. For this reason, Iran's integrity and the preservation of her natural identity hinge on her ability to maintain the balance among external powers that have traditionally had a stake in Iran's strategic location and natural resources. To expand on this very crucial issue, I am enclosing, for your information, the translated excerpts from an article which I wrote in June 1962 in one of Iran's weekly journals. It is my adamant belief that if greater care, credence, and study had been given to the principles which are outlined in this article, today's dismal fate would not have befallen Iran. I remain confident, however, that this article can still serve as a basis for salvaging Iran's future.

Yours sincerely,
Khosro Eghbal

Iran between the great powers

The following are excerpts from an article written by Mr. Khosro Eghbal, attorney-at-law, editor of the newspaper Nabard and former president of the Iranian Press Association, published in the weekly paper Diplomat in Teheran, June 7, 1962.

The question of Iran's neutrality has become the topic of the day and the thoughts and opinions, whether pro or con, had better be expressed openly, so that one may implement, in time, what is good and advantageous for the country.

You will well remember when Iran wanted to join the treaty of Baghdad [proposed by the British as the predecessor to NATO—ed.], the government of Iran acted against public opinion by joining the Pact. In making political decisions, which have a great influence on the fate of the country, the question at hand has to be studied from different angles, so that one may be spared unfavorable consequences.

This method is consistently observed in democratic

nations and even in totalitarian nations with a single-party system. For example, in the United States even the confirmation of ambassadors requires the approval of the Senate and in the U.S.S.R. all relevant matters are to be discussed, reviewed, and debated in the party committees in advance. Rest assured that Mr. Krushchev can never independently decide; on the contrary, he is the spokesman and executor of the decisions reached by the political and executive committees of the Communist Party.

In my opinion, our own country, Iran, by observing the following principles, will make substantial improvements in a very short time.

1) Benevolent neutrality has to be the pillar of Iranian foreign policy.

2) The best interest of Iran and being a U.S.S.R. neighbor require that Iran maintain most amicable relations with the U.S.S.R., based on the principles of non-interference with each other's affairs and mutual respect. They should expand their commercial and cultural relations.

3) The U.S., U.K., and the U.S.S.R. must guarantee, by treaty, Iran's neutrality and the noninterference in domestic Iranian affairs and raise the standard of living of Iranians by giving economic assistance. After the signing of this treaty, Iran must leave the CENTO treaty and the bilateral treaty with the U.S. must be annulled.

4) In utilizing foreign economic assistance, her own resources, and the development of exports, Iran must improve her economic condition. She has to embark on short-term programs with the aim of improving public health, cultural affairs, and agriculture; she has to activate small, light industry in agriculture and in mining where the raw materials can be found in Iran; she has to organize and implement increased output and production so that the result can be a reduction in the cost of living and an increase in the standard of living.

5) Therefore, she must considerably reduce military spending and earmark those funds for education and public health.

6) An alternate service program should be created, and it shall be its mandate to give incentives and motivate people to work, to provide job opportunities and counseling to show the people the rewards of work, to fight unemployment and idleness, because it is only through work that one can overcome the economic and financial difficulty and battle poverty.

7) Every year, from among the draftees a necessary number of individuals are conscribed into military service on the basis of a lottery and the rest of the draftees must spend, through this alternative service program, the average time of military service contributing, instead, to projects of public interest, and without compensation, according to their qualifications and talents.