



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

17 March 1980

Dear Lord Shawcross

Thank you for letting me know about the request you have received to represent the Shah if he were arraigned before an International Tribunal.

I appreciate your feelings of loyalty for the Shah. But I believe that, were you to accept this brief, there could be very unwelcome effects on our own relations with Iran, and possibly even on the safety of our Embassy staff in Tehran.

Relations with the Islamic Republic will be difficult and unrewarding while the hostage crisis lasts - and probably thereafter. Given the new Iranian Government's bitter hostility to the Shah and the considerable popular antipathy in Iran towards Britain (both because they believe that we have interfered in their internal affairs, and because of our close association with the Shah), I am afraid any role you played would be misinterpreted. The Iranians would identify you - as a Privy Counsellor and a former Minister - with Britain and the British Government. The consequences for our relations, and our people in Tehran, could be serious.

I am sorry to have to reply in this cautious vein, but given the suspicious and hysterical nature of Iranian opinion, I would not wish to run any unnecessary risks.

Thank you for asking our views. Our personal  
views towards the Shah are the same as your own.  
He was a good friend of this country. My concern is for the  
safety of our own  
people still in Iran

The Rt. Hon. Lord Shawcross, G.B.E., Q.C.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher