the mail back and forth and make sure that things got to the right place. And if anybody wrote me a letter, I would write back and say, looks to me like he's doing pretty well, or I would have lunch with the guy and report back to them. In fact, we administered a set of comprehensive exams to one of Columbia's PhD candidate, in our offices. So I was a kind of a cross-check. The fact that I have a Columbia Ph.D. and I knew all the people there helped in that connection. We couldn't have done that for every university--or maybe we could, depending on the members; still, it was an interesting idea, a way to get Iranians to work in Iran rather than to do their work in the United States and be disqualified for a return to Iran.

Q: Now you answered a few moments ago that you took a group of Iranian educators to the United States on a tour. Did you have special funds that you could use for such purposes? Did you use public funds or was it privately funded?

Arndt: We have a program in U.S.I.A. called the International Visitor Program, and we were sending, as I think I told you last time, groups of local government people, about forty per year. Did I tell you about the Bakhshdar program?

Q: I'm not sure about that. I don't think so.

Arndt: Well, we send individuals and groups to the United States for short-term visits, ranging from-- well, now it ranges from two weeks up, but in those days it was required that it be a one-month minimum, and we could go up to two or three months even.

There were two groups that I want to tell you about. The university group you just mentioned, and the Bakshdars much more important.

The university administrators group was assembled this way. The Chancellor of the University, Jahanshah Saleh, was going to be in the United States anyway, and the University of Illinois had a relationship with the University of Tehran. So Salch designated the Vice-Chancellor for Research (Sheibari), the Vice-Chancellor for Administration (Paad), the Dean of the Medical School (Hafizi) the Dean of Arts and letters, and a Professor of Surgery from the Medical School (Hasemian).

Q: Can you recall any of the names of these people?

Arndt: Oh, yes. Sure. Do you want all those names?

Q: Yes, it would be useful, I think.

Arndt: The Vice-Chancellor for Administration was Ibrahim Pad. The Vice-Chancellor for Research was named Abdullah Shibani, a very traditional man. The Dean of the School of Arts-- Adabiat, as it's called-- was trained in Germany, a literary scholar, Zabiollah Safah. The Dean of Medicine was Ali Hafizi. And the surgeon was a British-trained man named Hassan Hashemian. The five of us traveled all over the country, catching up with Saleh in Chicago and Los Angeles, I could tell you what we did in some detail, if you're interested.

The reason I happened to be involved was a fluke. I had come home for the birth

of one of my children and I happened to be in the States. So they said, why don't you take this group around as long as you're there? It was a fluke. By the way, I have learned alot and since have argued it should happen more often, because I made friends on that group that I will never forget, and learned things that were the basis of much that I later did.

The other one is a more important group, however, and I think that's because it was and interesitng experiment in political development. When I got to Iran in '66, A.I.D. had been working for some time with local government. And I don't know exactly what they'd done, but the situation that A.I.D. had found in local government when I got there was clear. Iran is divided into five or six big provinces, called Ostands, and these are sub-divided into units called Bakhshs. The Bakhshs correspond roughly in size to an American county; there were something on the order of four hundred or more Bakhshs in Iran. Four hundred and twenty or something like that.

The Bakhsh and the Ostand, all local government had in the nineteenth century been in the hands of people who bought their jobs. They bought their jobs because they collected taxes, and they skimmed a good living off the taxes, of course they paid their own "taxes" all the way up and down the line. It's the notion of "corruption" that we Westerners hate so, but the system had its own peculiar (to us) integrity; they took in money, they paid out money. The money was moving around very nicely, thank you, through many hands--just what the economists want. It was a way of imposing authority through corruption, if you like. But they didn't consider it corruption, it was merely the way the system worked.

When I got there in '66, there were still in those four hundred and twenty-odd

Bakhshdar job a lot of people who had never been to school, who were illiterate, couldn't write, who were there for traditional reasons. And A.I.D. had persuaded the Ministry of the Interior (local government) in revising the situation in the Bakhshs. The Bakhshdars, as they're called, is after all the representative of the central government, the Ministry of Interior, at the local level. Now the Ministry also includes the police and the gendarmerie, so there were various styles of control available to the center. Because of this, the project was a little bit nervous on the edges, especially later. Some people in USIA were critical. On the other hand, I think we were doing something very useful trying to show them that people could be entrusted to govern themselves, up to point, with the implicit corollary that self-government would gradually lesson their dependence on police control methods.

AID had persuaded the Iranians to hire only university graduates for these jobs. And they had begun to do that before I got their, and I suppose AID helped them in various ways. There was some local training, there were merit selection systems, who know what else? When I got there in '66, this had been going on for two or three years. AID, which was on the way out, proposed to us that we use the International Visitor Program to send groups of these new young bakhsdars to the States. The first group left in Spring '67, it seems to me. There were five of them. With luck I could even remember some of their names, because they were very unusual and even beautiful young people. One of them, Abbur Alizadeh, I remember, to get to his local, had first to take a train. Then ride in a jeep for a couple of hours, and finally he had to take a mule overnight to get to the seat of where he lived and worked. So you can imagine the kind of rugged terrain that they were dealing with, and the kind of provincial minds

would be dealing with. So youngsters, all between twenty-five and thirty went off for a fabulous trip to the United States.

It was so successful and the programming was so skillfully done at this end-- I could talk about that, if you like-- that we asked the Iranians whether they didn't want to expand the program. They said, we want to send as many as you can afford. We had said to them, how about if we put in half the money and you put in half the money. And they agreed to that. So we began joint financing, and we sent for a couple of years twenty a year of these people, four groups of five.

The whole time I was there we did this project, although it got a little smaller at the end, and one group in particular seemed to be very police-oriented to our surprise. In the time that I was there we sent maybe as many as fifty people to the United States. And the idea was that in time, ten years or so, we would completely cover the Iranian countryside with Bakhshdars who had been in the United States, who were university graduates, who'd come back, who understood how local government was done in at least our country, and who could understand how human beings could be trusted to do a certain amount for themselves through motivation and rewards rather than through external controls.

Q: So they would meet with state and county and municipal officials in this country and talk with them about the problems of local government?

Arndt: Exactly so. State, county-- and we showed them the federal level too, but reminding them that it had little

relevance. The whole idea was to find relevance, you see. I mean, how can what they do relate to what we do? To answer that, we really tried to make them understand that we were not trying to show them how to do it, but only how we solved our problems and how some of our problems were similar to theirs.

What we did was to build them a little program in self-government. The theme was what people can be entrusted to do things for themselves, if given motivation and encouragement. We started them on a family farm, the smallest self-governing unit we could think of. On the family farm they came in contact with the county agents, and they watched how the farmer related to the cooperatives or whatever it was. And then we built them out to the town and then the county level, and then out to the state level. And then finally we brought them to Washington for glimpse of the federal level. And at one point during the seminar we would have them in a university, where someone, usually in the Extension Service, would show them how the university related to all this, and how the university related to the state, and so forth. It was a beautifully-designed program, thanks to intensive and detailed communications between our past and the program agencies in Washington.

Q: Did AID in Washington help set this up, in terms of the way it was organized?

Arndt: USIA did it through our normal channels. The impetus came from AID, but by the time we did it, it was on our own, AID was gone. We used our own people. Here in Washington we have private agencies that do that programming. It was done by a group called GAI, the Governmental Affairs Institute.

A lot of people know about that project. Jim Bill knows a lot about it. Watched it for years, critically but with approval. I once sat in a discussion in U.S.I.A. where the Research Division had gotten the notion that (and Jim Bill was there, as a matter of fact, as a consultant, they brought him in for that.)-- that SAVAK, the Secret Police, had been using this program, or that the Ministry of the Interior was hopelessly confused in the Iranian mind with police and SAVAK and so forth. That would have been in 1973 or '74, probably the spring of '74, and by then I'd been out of Iran for three years. I had, I must say, very little confidence in my successors. That's not for the record, but that's the way it was. Yet if anybody reliable had told me that SAVAK had taken over that operation, I would have been stunned, but not entirely surprised-- but the fault would have been ours, for letting it happen. As I think about it, it doesn't surprise me that our people in the Embassy might have been insensitive enough to let that happen, and there is another possibility-- that USIA wanted to use the IV money for other purposes and had cooked up this canard. But it sure as hell didn't happen on my watch, I'll tell you. We had always insisted that the Ministry of the Interior send us twice as many Bakhshdars as they intended to send; then we had an interview. We went and sat down and we gave them all half an hour, every one of them. It took a lot of time. Somebody from the Political Section came over. And we just talked up and down the map. We asked them what their problems were and what kind of life they lived. And we found out a lot, by the way; I might say I think even the Political Section learned a lot from those interviews. But that's a different question.

So that was all part of the same developmental picture. Upgrading. Now obviously this is political development with economic tie-ins of course. I remember one Bakhsdar

in particular. He used to come to Tehran every year and we'd go out to lunch. Lois [Roth] would usually come along. This was a very attractive young man, a real idealist; and he once told us about how he got the richest man in the town, in the area, to agree to put up half-- matching funds, the matching funds concept-- half of the cost of a road, if the people in the area would get together and either through their own work or their own money contribute the other half. That sort of thing. It sounds very American, doesn't it? Well, it wasn't happening in Iran when we got there. It was happening because of the skillful insistence of kids like this. Probably the most important thing I was part of in Iran, I would love to have some way of evaluating it, but there's no way in the world I ever will. Or that mankind ever will, thanks to the events of the last dozen years.

Q: I think you also mentioned in our last meeting that you had something to do with the military academy at some point.

Arndt: Yes. I thought I told you that long story. Didn't I tell you?

Q: I don't think so.

Arndt: Well, the General in charge of the U.S. military mission was Hamilton Twitchell, who lives over here in Virginia and whom you really should interview. And he called me over to his office one day, which was quite some distance from mine, and I went over and he had a Colonel with him. It seems the Shah had asked them if they

could help upgrade the military academy, and Twitchell had had the idea to ask me to come and be part of this dialogue, which I always thought was one of the better things I ever saw a military man do, in all modesty. But it showed a lot of seriousness and sensitivity on his part. Their first idea was to a team from West Point out to Iran. So I said, well, look, tell me more about the military academy. I know nothing at all about the place. What is it? And they told me, frankly, it was an obedience school, that it had almost no academic content at all, other than a little science and engineering.

Q: You mentioned that.

Arndt: And so I said, well, look, what are you going to get West Point out? You know, one could argue West Point is an obedience school too, but for sure isn't a major university. Basically the curriculum is engineering. Why wouldn't it be more appropriate to get a team of Iranian US-returnees together? And Twitchell bought the idea. It fit into the fact that we were trying to get Iranians to come back, you see, to get them to take their own responsibilities. Why not get a team of young faculty, an American-trained group to look at the military academy?

Well, they did. They got the team from the Aryamehr Technical Institute, the MIT of Iran, run at the time by remarkable Berkeley physicist named Reza Amin, who is now at the World Bank. So these guys went over and did a thorough survey and wrote a report. The problem is that they probably picked the wrong man to be in charge. He was a very impressive mathematician, as I recall, but very neurotic, very ambivalent, very hung up on all kinds of problems. And his disdain for the whole military thing led him

to over-sell his points. He recommended things that were not realistic. What needed to be done was to recommend something feasible, safe, marginal-- something that could be done to move the academy in the right direction over time, so that growth would necessarily follow. Instead, they laid out an unrealistic program that never could have been carried out, at that time. So it was shelved.

It failed, in fact, and nothing was done about it. But at least we did not get blamed for it. In a deep sense we did the right thing, but even if it failed. Twitchell and I have remained friends all these years. I still admire the man enormously. He gave me an insight into a side of the U.S. military, and Iran's of course, that I'd never seen before. It failed, but then I'm not so sure that anything else would have succeeded. That's a different question. In many ways we did the right thing, even if it didn't work.

Remember, by the way, the early perception was that the Shah wanted it. The Shah didn't like the way the military academy was running. He understood there was something wrong. And that in itself was significant, even if he did not accept the solution. Over time, given continuity, things might have begun to change there, even so.

Q: Now last time you discussed to some extent the scholarly exchange programs that you helped to manage, the educational exchange programs that were under your jurisdiction. And you talked a little bit about the Fulbright program and its problems of budget cuts and so forth. Besides the Fulbright program, what were some of the other scholarly exchange programs that you worked with or on?

Arndt: Well, in my shop the money for academic exchanges was concentrated in the

Fulbright program. But we also had the International Visitor Program, which is usually used for political leaders of one kind our Political Counsellor, Martin Herz agreed that there was really no political leadership that we could send to the United States that hadn't been there, so he didn't have any problem with my using that program for educational purposes. So we were able to divert a certain amount of that program into university administration, for example.

We also had a lot of private programs. We had a program called the Eisenhower Fellowship, a very prestigious, high-level so-month program. And I remember sending the remarkable man named Hamid Enayat, who since has died, probably the most important political scientist in Iran, but who had been trained in Britain and had never been to the States. So we sent Hamid here on the Eisenhower Fellowship, and he spent six months and became a very well-known figure in the U.S. and traveled back and forth after that rather frequently. These were privately-funded US researchers, there were direct-hire Americans, various universities had programs in Iran. But as I said, the Ford Foundation helped us with legal education and research.

So we were coordinating private and public programs for educational purposes. Now many of these new universities got into relationships with American universities. The French had nourished illusions about what you could do through that kind of "twinning" and it was very hard for us to cope with that, so we tried to find ways of developing cooperative relationships with them as best we could. Armin Meyer, in fact, later went back to Iran as the man in charge of the twinning relationship between an American university and the University of Meshed.

The leftover AID program sent 50 or more Iranians annually to the American

University of Beirut, some of them for 4-year programs. There were lots of little things like that going on all over, on Iranian funds in many cases. So we were using private means. We were trying to help the Iranians decide how they would spend their money, or to link up with the right peole in the US. We were doing anything we could to nourish that. Sometimes we did it without money. Let me give an example of that.

The distinction between a poor university and a good university, to make it simple, is that one has faculty that does research and the other doesn't. Jay Hurewitz at Columbia helped me identify this point-- that the difference between the University of Tehran as it should be and what it was, was scholars who were doing research in their fields and who were producing published research. Research is useless unless it's refereed and published in a known journal and receives the usual criticism that is the proof of its value.

So that the word "research" became a key word. Now, how did we do anything about that? Well, in the first place, when the '67 war broke out, a lot of American scholars who had been planning to go into Iraq and Jordan and Syria had no place to go. They came to Iran instead. And these are all important people now, like Mike Fischer and Michael Hillman and Bill Beeman and I don't know who else. We had a bonanza of American researchers at that particular time. As it happened, it coincided with the invention of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

Well, all these bright kids came in. But to do research in Iran, particularly research in social science, you had to have a research permit, particularly if you're going to go around the country. It was intended to control the kind of things that people dug into, but it was also intended to provide protection for them, because there were places in

the country which were not safe. So that they would be under the eye of the police. In any case they had to have a permit and that was that. And the Fulbright Commission was in charge of getting those permits.

Well, we were having a lot of trouble. It was taking a long time. And there was a young American scholar-- and I really have blocked out his name, I can't remember it. I remember he came to us overland. He came down through Tabriz when he arrived, and he came into my office and he said he was having trouble getting a research permit. I said, look, do us a favor. I asked him to keep a day-by-day log of his search for a research permit, because he did not really need one in a hurry. He was working hard on his Persian, starting to read the literature, there was lots he could do without having a permit. "Since you don't need the research permit for a while, keep a log day by day and tell me exactly what happens."

About eight months later, or some awful period of time, he got his research permit, and he brought me the log. I took the log-- I can still see it in my mind, because we were using-- remember that purple thing called hectograph? It was hectographed. I took the thing and made it readable: we used "Day One"-- I didn't want to put the dates on, because they could figure out who it was-- "Arrived at such-and-such a place." Then he got this paper. Got that paper. Day Two, did this, did that. Day Three, x told me to go see y. Day Four, went to see y. He told me to see z. So we put together this thing. It was about a six or seven-page document. Every day, for eight months. I leaked it all over town. Above all, I sent a copy to Armin Meyer. That's the most important. I said, Mr. Ambassador, this will really amuse you, but it will show you what we're up against. At first, he wasn't especially interested. Three

days later he called me and he said, "That's the most incredible thing I ever read in my life." It's unbelievable. That's absolutely true?" I said, it's absolutely true. I'm sure he gave a copy to the Shah. So they put a man on the research permit desk in the Ministry of Higher Education, and things turned around overnight. His name, by the way, was Keyvan Tabari, Columbia Ph.D. He's a lawyer now, practicing in San Francisco. If you're going out there, he'd talk to you about that effort. He was right there on the spot when all that was happening.

But, you see, the whole idea was that if we couldn't have American researchers working with Iranians, then the notion of research wouldn't be there, and if the research wasn't there, then universities wouldn't grow. And what did that cost us? It cost us the grantees that we happened to have. We had only to staying touch with them, talk about them, circulate them, doing that memo and leaking it to everybody. The point was they were renewing knowledge, finding out new things, living the life of research-- and they were, at the very least, an example of what universities are about, the ongoing search for new knowledge.

Q: Now last meeting you mentioned that when the Fulbright program suffered budget cuts, you had to find other ways to finance exchanges and you went to the oil companies, you said, to raise some money? How did that work out?

Arndt: The Fulbright was cut very heavily in 1967-68. Almost fifty per cent over two years. It was a question of survival. Did I tell you about the staffing?

Q: Yes. The strike.

Arndt: What happened was that the lone American-- the staff all left and they were suing us and there was a big, complicated thing. And the lone American sat in there and tried to keep things going by himself as best he could, Charles Boewe.

At that point we started looking for money elsewhere. Now I have to tell you that around 1962 or 63 the Fulbright program, which had been solely financed by the American government at the outlet, had begun to say ask foreign governments to contribute, because we could do so much more together. So there was a tradition then of joint financing that went back, in many counties, about five years. So we had a background for it in Iran.

Well, we started the easy way. We started by asking people with money. And one of them was the Western Oil consortium and they gave us a grant, to bring a particular American scholar to Iran. We had an application from him. His name was Mark Dresden, from the University of Pennsylvania. And they were interested in his work. He wanted to produce a hand-book of Iran that they thought would be useful for their own employees.

Q: Which firm was this? Which company?

Arndt: It was the Western consortium.

Q: One particular member or just the consortium as a group?

Arndt: Yes, it was a man named Van den Berg, who was the secretary of the Consortium at that time. He's now retired.

Q: So it was the joint funds of the company. So it wasn't one particular company that funded it, but the consortium.

Arndt: The consortium was all the western oil companies.

Q: Gulf and Shell and-- ?

Arndt: Everybody. They had a central office in Tehran and they had funds to give. And the grant sat in a savings account earning interest while we tried to get Dresden to come. Well, Dresden, it turns out, never did come, and ultimately, believe it or not, we gave the money back (but we kept the interest).

Well, that was the beginning of the game. Boewe had left, by then, and we brought in a remarkable woman named Parirokh Rad. She's retired and living in the San Francisco area too. Pari had worked for Amideast for many years, and she came over to be our Fulbright director. And Pari and I talked about joint financing, recognizing the difficulties. We conceived what we jokingly called the slave block notion. I wasn't particularly happy about it, but it was the only way we could get funding at the time. We would say to a university, we have a mathematician coming next year and we've we've requested him for your university. On the other hand, the

university down the road says that if we send him to them, they will provide housing and a stipend for him. So why don't you provide housing and more stipend? Cost-sharing with the universities. She did that very successfully. We had a million bucks or more in the bank, which was nationalized when the Revolution took it over; and this is one of the claims that we're suing for in The Hague.

Q: From what source is that?

Arndt: From this money that was built up, from university contributions. It became a kind of an endowment. We put it in the bank, it was earning interest, the funds were floated back into the program. If she ever needed any money for a thing to do, she could do it. The idea is we were using Fulbrights as auction pieces to get university contributions to the program.

Q: Competitive bidding?

Arndt: Yes, that is what it boiled down to. Now, my hope was that we would persuade the Iranians to do joint financing as a system, at the center, the way the Germans and the French and everybody else did, so we could eliminate this slightly unseemly practice. But that involved the Majlis, the Parliament. In my last year I made a lot of calls on a lot of parliamentary people, and finally I met a friend, a very wise man, whose name was Mahmoud Zia'i, Senator Zia'i. He told me, there's no way the Parliament will ever do this, because if they did it for you, we would have to do it for

the Soviet Union and every other country. And I said, but it's different. The Fulbright is bi-national. It's governed bi-nationally. If these other governments let you run their programs bi-nationally, then you should invest in their programs. No, he said, we simply-- you don't know, he said, there's just not the imagination.

So-- I remember, however, going around on calls when my successor came (I had a two-week overlap with him). I remember going around and calling on people, one after the other, and every time it was anybody potentially useful, I would say, I still think you're making a big mistake; we really should do that; I hope that in my successor's time you will be able to find a way to recognize that your needs and our needs coincide; we can do more than twice as much if you help us; it's important.

But it didn't happen. It wasn't going to happen, at least in that decade. It was an idea well ahead of its time. But on the other hand, Pari Rad was getting all this money privately and putting it in the bank and keeping it and using it as needed.

Q: Now when you thought about the exchange programs and worked on them, did you emphasize any particular educational disciplines that you wanted to emphasize?

Arndt: The Fulbright program planning was done by projects, and we had several disciplines built into the thing when I got there and others that developed as time went on. We had, for example, a project with the Education School, and one in Library Science. And so we were very heavily committed to having a librarian teaching libarianship in that country. And that developed, by the way, into what was called the Iran Documentation Center, an attempt to move Iran into the twentieth century and

link them in with computerised data bases in Europe and the U.S. for their needs, in the knowledge that it would be impossible for them to ever build up libraries like ours, but that they had all kinds of documentation needs which they could meet in other ways. That was a direct outgrowth of the Fulbright project in library science.

We had a project in Iranian Studies. What that meant was that we brought American researchers to Iran and very occasionally an Iranian to the States. Prominent Iranians would lecture in American universities.

We always have had a project in what we called American Studies, which in Iran boiled down really to American literature. We worked in math and computer science at Arya Mehr. We had an election microcopist for the Medical school. We worked in Social Work Education.

We had a business school man, who knew about computers. The Harvard University Business School had founded a branch in Tehran when we were there, and he was there in connection with that.

If I think about it, others will pop into my mind, but I can't remember now. But the key idea was that the research people, predoctoral and post-doctoral, all did some kind of teaching, even if it was only rubbing shoulders with colleagues in the field. E.G. Sidney Mintz in Anthropology.

Q: Now the Iranian scholars who were sent to the United States, was that also under the Fulbright program?

Arndt: As you know, we had an awful lot of Iranians in the United States at that time

and there was a lot of political pressure in this city to avoid any more students, and so I had a lot of trouble sending the student grantees off. We got a few off at the end of my time.

Q: What about people-- professors and so forth? Higher level people?

Arndt: Higher level people could go. We had some post-doctoral researchers. For the life of me, I can't remember who they were. I simply can't. We sent them off and they disappeared from my life.

Q: Were the numbers of those-- say the numbers of Americans in the higher educational fields and scholars who were coming to Iran, compared with the numbers of Iranian scholars coming to the United States, was it pretty much the same numbers or were there more Americans coming to Iran than vice versa?

Arndt: There were more Iranians going, because it was cheaper. When you put down the money, it was about fifty-fifty, but there were more Iranians going to the U. S. than there were Americans going to Iran.

Q: Not just students, but-- I'm not talking about students as such, like undergraduates, but people in the higher educational fields. Is that still the case? Okay, I see.

Arndt: No undergraduates of course, US or Iranian. Funny how my memory has

sagged. I can remember those receptions for new Fullbrights, and the orientations, in the spring and the fall and I can see them and I can walk around that room, but I can't remember who was there. It's fading. There was a director before Charlie Boewe, Richard Brown, who went on to be president of a small university in Wisconsin, in Rhinelander, and who's now retired and lives in Rhinelander half the year and in some place in the Southwest the rest of the time. He's a very good source,

Q: Were there any Iranian scholars who had trouble getting to the United States? Had trouble with their government in terms of coming here to study? That might have had political difficulties that prevented them from getting--

Arndt: By definition I would not have knwn them. There must have been some. There were lots and lots who had come over and were still coming over then. After all, Ghotbzadeh was a long-time student here. Certainly we didn't send any political dissidents-- the program was historical, after all.

By the way, dentistry. We had a dentist. We had a dental educator at one time, who had spent mnay years in China. One scholar we went stayed here and is now fairly prominent. He's been at Princeton, Ahmad Ashraf.

The opposition? Everybody was in the opposition in one way or another. First, they all did an awful lot of bitching, the Iranians, but when they went so far as to decide to live here, that was a different thing. This country, liberated them and opened them up. Then, when they stayed, usually for economic reasons, the whole game changed.

Q: Now you talked a bit about educational exchange efforts that you worked on. What

kind of work did you do in the cultural exchange field? In terms of exchanges of intellectuals, artists, artistic people, and musicians and so forth?

Arndt: "Cultural?" It's all cultural. It's all intellectual. We've talked about intellect. You're now talking about the arts.
I really don't know where to start with that narrower definition of "culture."

Q: What kind of programs were there? Let's maybe start out-- what kinds of programs did you have that would permit such exchanges?

Arndt: Well, there were a certain number of artists coming through privately-- for example to the Shiraz Festival, or whatever. We could bring artists in the Fulbright program if we wanted. We had musicians, by the way. We had music educators, music researchers. Teaching and researching music, from the University of Illinois on the Fulbright program. Bruno Nettl, recently president of the American Association of Ethnomusicologists, was a Fulbright with us, Alex Ringer, Wilton Mason of North Carolina.

Artists and so forth-- well, we had-- U.S.I.A. had a variety of programs that we could use sometimes to bring people out. For example, we brought a printmaker, Paul Lingren, and an entire print studio with printing press. And we brought a filmmaker out. He came out with a package of experimental films and the capacity to make a film. His name was Tom Palozzolo. But it was the year of the short experimental university film and so forth and he brought a whole package of these out, which we

showed. And then he brought equipment and he sort of made movies there.

[END OF SESSION #2]

VA

Interviewee: Richard Arndt

Interviewer: Bill Burr

July 25, 1988

Session #3

Washington, D. C.

Q: The third part of the interview with Richard Arndt took place in Washington, D.C. on July 25, 1988.

Dr. Arndt, at our last meeting you were talking about a film show put on by an American director, an American film director named Tom Palozzolo.

How successful was this show?

Arndt: The United States Information Agency was at the time struggling with the concept of a central programming concept, so that they would design packages of things, allowing them to do rather expensive things, which would suit the needs of many, many, many, many posts.

Now our program was designed specifically for Iran and was patched together with baling wire, with whatever we could pull together and induce to become our own, but it was focused on our specific needs. So Palozzolo was chosen by <u>them</u> as an experimental film man, not according to <u>our</u> needs. That's the key word, experimental filmmaker. The agency viewed a few thousand experimental films and selected a package of thirty or forty of them, and they broke these into four or five different sessions. And Palozzolo came with them. Whether the films were relevant or not is a moot question.

But the important thing was that Palozzolo brought with him a Bolex camera. He had not only made one or two of the films on the series, and he introduced them, but he also offered to make experimental films with Iranians. It was an innovative idea, for which we happened to be more or less appropriate. Iran had been fooling around with its own film industry and had been doing some rather remarkable things. There were good films beginning to be made in Iran at that very time.

And I would only say that the proof of the success of it was that it was very attractive to people, especially to those in the television stations. You remember there were two television stations at the time, one essentially a commercial station in the camp of the Minister of Culture, brother-in-law of the Shah, and the other NITV fosterer-- pushed by the energy really coming out of the Empress, which became the national Iranian television station, and that's where all the new energy and muscle was. NITV also developed the whole Shiraz Festival idea. One interesting spin-off. The year after I left, the Shiraz Festival had an experimental film division. And the key American participant, on their funding, was a man named Stan Vanderbeek. It was an enormous success. In the Shiraz Festival, which was keyed to experimental art, he was just exactly what was required; and it seems to me the seeds for all of that were planted three years earlier by Tom Palozzolo. He himself was a rather gruff, semi-articulate man, who wasn't really the best thing in the world for us, but the package of films, the fact that we could show them again and again, and the fact that he was there with machinery, showing people how to do things, probably struck a lot of sparks.

Later we had a most ingenious show-- prize-winning commercials-- you know that a lot of American genius goes into T.V. commercials-- and those showings were popular

too.

Q: Who were some of the other American artists or writers that you helped bring over?

Arndt: Well-- let's see. Let's start with the visual arts first. I have to be careful with this, because it's not so much that we brought Americans. First of all, we'd been training Iranians in the United States for quite some time. There was an important sculptor named Parviz Tanavoli-- that piece that you're looking at right there-- who had been trained at the University of Minnesota and who had come back and who was the center of a lot of activity. He worked in ceramics and in bronze, as you see. We had already, years before in the fifties, launched the idea of "art galleries." The first art gallery was at the Iran-America Society. And then independent art galleries began to crop up all over Tehran. There were two or three important ones by the time I got there. And once you have a gallery, you needed an artists, and the artists therefore had a place to show their work, and then you need buyers-- local and foreign.

So much of the work we'd done was with their own artists, trying to get them to bring their work out, trying to get them the means to sell their paintings and to live. Now this really focused on the strategies of the Iran-American Society, which had, after all, three art galleries, one enormous. It was able, particularly under Lois Roth and her visual adviser, a painter in America named Douglas Johnson, to develop a concept of the gallery as a reminder to Iran of the way the art world functioned. Later David Galloway would be hired to run Tehran's first Museum of Modern Art, on

Iranian-funds.

For example, we had a show in perhaps 1968 of "coffee-house paintings." Now the coffee-house paintings were like the bar-room paintings in the United States in the nineteenth century. They were in every humble coffee-house. They were done by itinerant painters, but no one ever looked at them as works of art. The Iran-America Society show was the first time anyone ever said, my God, these things have their own kind of beauty. And that was a major show with a big catalog, one that put those paintings into the world marketplace.

Later we did the same thing for the fellows who were hand-painting the giant movie posters in Tehran. I'm talking about the big ones now that were over at Sepah Square and so forth. These guys would get up on ladders and paint these things and then stretch those giant canvases, to advertise current films. So we had a big show of Tehran movie poster art.

There was one tiny show we had which was called "Small Sculpture." Obviously we couldn't bring enormous sculpture, it's too heavy. But we got some small pieces and Douglas Johnson gave us the concept: the whole idea was first of all to show the small sculpture in a context that showed how, if you enlarged it, it would look as if it were decorating Tehran. So he took these small pieces and with a trick camera he would pose them in front of a large building that everybody knew, and the sculpture would look like it was forty feet high. And then we had these slides flashing on the wall as these small sculptures were sitting there in front of their noses. Another thing we did at that particular thing was to have a special invitaional showing for the art world, an "unpacking vernissage," to show them that you had to handle art very preciously; we

opened the crates right in front of them. Then, later, we exhibited the packing crates in which the show came. We used the packing crates as the stands on which these sculptures sat, to show them the elaborate care and attention that even went into packing this show.

When we finally placed the sculptures on the packing cases, we invited all the art critics and art buffs in town to come around, and showed them that the crew, wearing white gloves, was assembling this show under their eyes.

And then there was another photographic show, simultaneously, of all of the sculptural elements in Tehran, from lines of laundry hanging out a window to trees to all kinds of things in everyday life.

So constantly the effort was to show the Iranians what visual elements there were in their own world that could be turned into art. Then we did a graphic art thing. A man named Paul Lingren, who's now at San Diego State University in California, came out complete with a printing press and for three months ran a print workshop, to show them how to do graphic arts. That too was enormously successful. Paul went back after two or three years to catch up with some of his earlier students and so forth, as he did in India.

So we were seeding. We did not have any major artist that came through. Periodically Lois would go off to New York or London and come back with a show promised-- Kitaj was one, Larry Rivers another. American artists would come through to go to Shiraz and Isfahan as tourists, and sometimes we met them, but that was the end of it. Now the only exception to all that was Douglas Johnson, who was an American artist who was living there. We had two large shows of his in the Iran-

America Society and he was Lois Roth's visual director at the Iran-America Society for three years. And there was a young Persian named Fereidun Ave, who was a pretty ingenious guy, trained in the U.S., and the two of them made the Iran-America Society into a real visual keystone of Tehran, and for two or three years it was simply the hottest thing in town. There was no question about it.

The final show they had-- the staff insisted on doing a show for Lois as her departure present. They never told her that, but they wanted to do the show, and she said, no, we can't do it, it's too big for us. They said, no, we have to do it. They took the whole enormous gallery, totally repainted the whole thing, and brought in the show they called the "Shiraz architectural detail." These were wood panels, windows, doors, ceilings, fragments from houses, all from the Shiraz area. It was probably the most spectacular show we ever had at the Iran-America Society. And it was the setting in which all the farewell parties for Lois Roth took place, the end of that very exciting period that she created.

So much for the visual artists. Now the writers. We were always looking for writers. While I was there we had, for example, James Michener. His particular kind of thing was not of any interest, I suppose. It was interesting that he was there. By then he'd published his Afghanistan book, called Caravans, which was a terrible book. I guess he had not yet published The Source, which was a great book. But he didn't come across as a writer in any particular way.

But in my last year we had a visit from-- an absolutely off-the-wall visit by Truman Capote, who happened to fly in on a plane with a man named Robert Anderson, the chairman of Mobil Oil, and Capote was a friend. So we had Capote at the Iran-

America Society for a session, which didn't amount to much. A.B. Guthrie came through. Irving Stone. The writer Wallace Stegner came out during a summertime when I wasn't there. Lois programmed him. He had had a student named Simin Daneshvar, who was the wife of the famous writer, Jalal Al-Ahmad. And Simin then, after Stegner went back to Stanford, Stegner carried on a correspondence with Simin Daneshvar by writing to Lois at the Embassy. The letters were addressed "Lois Simin Roth", and she would then take the letters over to Simin, because there was no guarantee that the letters were either being delivered or not being read on the way. And then there was the Iowa Writers Conference, which was an important semi-academic experience for overseas writers, run by Paul Engle at the University of Iowa. We got a grant for it and we sent a writer--after an elaborate effort to choose the right one, we sent a woman writer named Tahereh Safarzadeh.

Amd we had a quondam poet named John Pauker, who did not amount to much. A writer doesn't have much to say, oddly enough, except maybe to another writer, in my experience-- what they have to say, they write. And they're not very useful, in terms of our program. But what we did was encourage writing. I was helping out with a couple of translations, for example. An Iranian named Mansour Ekhtiar, who's here in Washington now, did a few translations, and he would send me his English versions when they were in semi-final shape and I would try to make them a little prettier. And I worked with Ebrahim Golestan on one of his novels, but we never finished it. So the whole idea was to make this accessible to a wider audience. Later Bill Hanaway and Mike Hillman, two of our Fullbrights, began a systematic effort to get Persian writing translated into English and published. It all began then.