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RESTRICTED

INTERVIEWER: PARVIZ RAJI

INTERVIEWEE: SHUSHA ASSAR

LONDON: APRIL 9 AND 10, 1986

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PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of a series of tape-recorded interviews conducted for the Oral History of Iran Program of Foundation for Iranian Studies by Shusha Assar with Parviz Raji in London in April 9 and 10, 1986.

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Foundation for Iranian Studies

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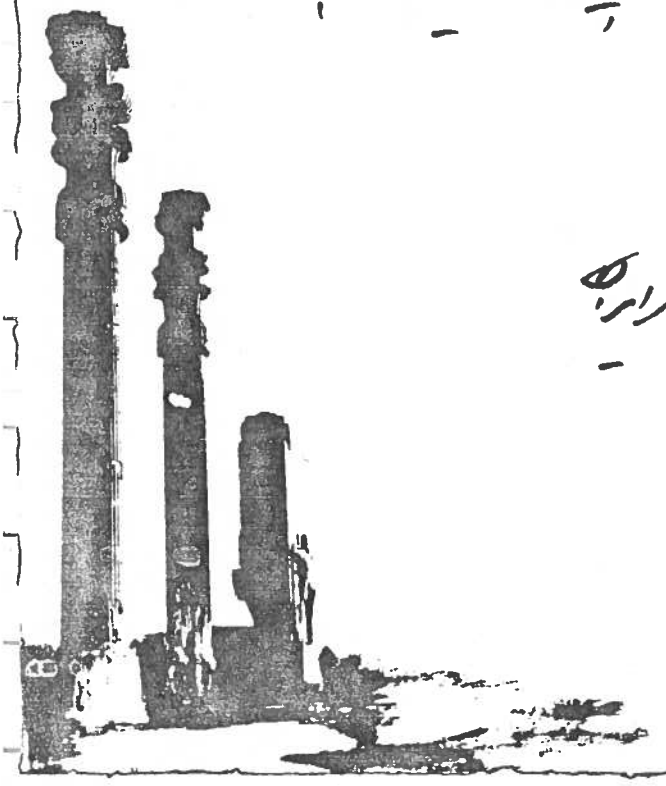

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mr. Parviz Raji was born in Tehran in 1936. After completing his early education in Iran, he was sent to England for further studies. Upon the completion of his university education at Cambridge, Mr. Raji returned to Iran, and began his career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the Ministry he worked as the advisor and secretary to Foreign Minister Aram. Later, Mr. Raji spent a brief period at National Iranian Oil Company before joining the entourage of Mr. Hoveyda as his Chief of Bureau. Mr. Raji served in that capacity for most of Hoveyda tenure of office as Prime Minister. Mr. Raji also served as foreign affairs advisor to Princess Ashraf, and accompanied her on several foreign trips, including the Princess' visit to China, openning the relations between Iran and PRC. Mr. Raji was subsequently appointed as Iran's ambassador to Graet Britain, a post which he held until the advent of the Iranian revolution. Mr. Raji's memoirs are highly instructive regarding the leadership style and character of a number of important Iranian statesmen, especially Hoveyda, and moreover, sheds much light on the workings of important Iranian government agencies.

Interviewee: Parviz Raji | Interview #1

Interviewer: Shusha Assar | Place: London

Date: April 9 and 10, 1986

Assar: This is tape number one, interview with Mr. Parviz Raji in his house in London on the 9th of April, 1986. We are going to start with a short biography of Mr. Raji's background, his family, education up to the point where he enters public life, and then we go from there with the actual interview. Okay, Mr. Raji, it's up to you now. Let's go from the beginning -- your childhood, your education, the whole thing.

Raji: Right. I was born in Tehran in 1936, the younger of two sons, to a father who was a French trained orthopedic surgeon. And yet, despite my father's French background and education, he had early on in his life decided that his sons should have an an "Anglo-Saxon" education. So in 1950 when I was twelve and my brother thirteen, or I was thirteen and my brother fourteen, we were sent to the States where we enrolled at a rather smart east coast private school in Pottstown, Pennsylvania by the name of The Hill School, and I understand the school is still there and functioning very properly. But we only stayed there for a year because as you will remember, in 1951 there was the Anglo-Iranian oil crisis. The petroleum industry in Iran was nationalized, and Dr. Mossadeq, and

as a consequence, there was an interruption to the flow of oil, and foreign exchange became scarce and very expensive. And under those circumstances, my father could no longer afford to keep us in America, and we were brought over to England in 1951. For a while his financial difficulties persisted. We would spend three or four months -- particularly for the summer months -- in Iran to ease the burden on him and then come to England and go to various schools. And this rather uncertain situation persisted until 1953 when the oil dispute was settled and the consortium began to operate the Iranian oil fields, and after a while the flow of foreign exchange into the treasury resumed, and this eased the situation all around. So we stayed on in England. My brother eventually went to Edinburgh in 1956 to study medicine, and I gained admission to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where I read for a degree in economics.

In 1959, on the completion of my tripos, I returned to Tehran full of enthusiasm to apply my newly acquired skills such as they were. And a viewing of the Iranian scene made it quite clear to me that the oil industry, which was really the prime mover of the economy in Iran was the source of all wealth, and therefore, all power, and I made up my mind that I wanted to join the oil industry, which I did -- I think in 1960. In a country which is suffering a shortage of trained minds, as Iran then was and I expect still is, it wasn't particularly difficult to work one's way up the bureaucratic ladder. It was when I joined the NIOC, in fact, that I first met Amir 'Abbas Hoveyda, who was to play a dominant role in my subsequent life. Amir 'Abbas Hoveyda was a career diplomat who was then in charge of administration of the oil company. He himself had been brought into the oil company by the then chairman of NIOC, who

was someone called Abdollah Entezam. Abdollah Entezam, it will be recalled, played the crucial but unsuccessful role many years later in 1979 during the revolution. But at that time he was in charge of the NIOC as a kind of elder statesman diplomat. He himself was a career diplomat, and he'd served abroad, I think, in Germany after the War, and he had also at some stage served as Foreign Minister, I believe, and also Deputy Prime Minister. And it was on account of his background in the public domaine that he was interested in what was then the country's leading industry. But Entezam was an elderly man even in the 1960's. I think he was in his seventies then, wasn't he?

Assar: No, he was in his sixties.

Raji: Sixties. But I think he was afflicted with ill health. I think he'd had a history of respiratory ailments. Anyway, he kept very elegant hours. I remember he would turn up at NIOC by Persian standards rather late in the morning -- round about nine thirty, ten o'clock -- make an act de presence and disappear around about one o'clock and not turn up in the afternoon. And because of his work style, he had found it necessary to delegate a great deal of his authority to his subordinates. And of course, his most trusted subordinate was Amir 'Abbas Hoveyda, who had served under him, I think, on one or two assignments abroad -- certainly in Germany, I think I seem to remember, in Stuttgart after the War. Anyway, again on account of the lack of trained minds, if you like, or shortage of trained minds, it was only a matter of time before I found myself into Hoveyda's office and was appointed by him to act as his private

secretary. Hoveyda, of whom I should speak later, was a very demanding boss, but it was also a very rewarding association working with him. He was open to ideas. He was incapable of pulling rank, which I found a rare and most welcome quality amongst Persian officialdom. And of course, he was totally trusted by Entezam, much to the annoyance and envy of the other directors. A word also about Entezam. He was a giant of a man in terms of his reputation. He was of unquestioned probity in his approach to public life. He had a tiring reputation for honesty, and he belonged to the Sufi tradition in the Persian culture, which he not only preached, but also practiced. And he had a complete disregard for the trappings of wealth and power.

I stayed on at the NIOC for about three years. And even though I can perhaps consider my stay there as a success, I was beginning to become slightly disenchanted with my work at NIOC primarily because it emerged that the road up the ladder in NIOC was limited for someone who had not had the training either on the technical or on the legal side of the oil industry. And while it was certainly true that Entezam himself was a political appointment, it also dawned on me that there were shortcuts to the higher up positions, if you like, of the oil company through channels other than the NIOC itself.

So after a while and after consultations with Hoveyda, I decided to join the Iranian Foreign Ministry. This required the taking of an entrance examination and an interview, all of which posed no serious problems. And in 1963, I entered the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Minister then was someone called 'Abbas Aram, who subsequently served later on as Iran's Ambassador in London.

And three or four months after my joining the foreign office, I found myself given the rather prestigious job of acting as Mr. Aram's private secretary or personal assistant. Aram was a difficult man to work for. He'd received his education in India, and perhaps this explains, without my sounding disrespectful, why he was a very reliable number two but not a very good number one. He could never initiate any policy. He, I think, lacked vision, imagination, initiative. But he could be relied upon to carry out whatever decisions had been taken with great diligence and care. He was pernickety as far as words were concerned. He was always changing his speeches, and I remember that it was sheer agony working on one of his longer speeches -- for instance, at the United Nations -- because he was really in a sense incapable of the decision, and it was only the time factor that ultimately saved one from this indecisiveness on his part. The moment arrived when he had to go and stand behind the podium and deliver his speech, and once he'd done that, of course, the whole thing was over. He was not an unkind man, and I had great respect for his knowledge of the English language. He was, in fact, a wordsmith. He actually enjoyed stringing words together and producing what he thought were [unclear] But he did stay on, I think, for seven years as Foreign Minister, and I would really be surprised if even once during these years he would have raised a matter which he thought might even mildly irritate the Shah or put him in bad temper. His routine of work was that the telegrams, the dispatches, the telexes came in from various embassies across the world during the evening and early morning. These would be decoded and typed out by a pool of confidential secretaries. Then the Foreign Secretary would exercise

his judgment as to which of these were worthy of consideration by the Shah. And he would then round about noon each day make his daily pilgrimage from the Foreign Ministry to the Shah's palace in Sa 'dabad in Shemran, submit the cables for His Majesty's perusal and obtain the Shah's comments or instructions and then drive back down to Tehran. And in the afternoon he would transmit these instructions to the various ambassadors and consuls or whatever.

By a curious coincidence both Entezam and Hoveyda also left the NIOC shortly after I did. In 1962, Kennedy had been elected to the presidency of America. And if you remember, during a visit to Vienna, I believe, he posed that famous kitchen debate -- kitchen because they were surrounded by American modern gadgetry when the debate took place. He held that debate with Khrushchev which Khrushchev boasts that the Communist world will triumph over Capitalism, and he castigates Kennedy for supporting such reactionary regimes as that of the Shah of Iran and says that Iran is a rotten apple which will soon fall into the lap of communism. This, of course, annoyed Kennedy intensely. And during one of the Shah's annual trips to Washington when he meets Kennedy, I have it on reliable sources that, Kennedy actually puts his feet on the table and says to the Shah, "What are you going to do about the feudal image of your country?" Of course, as is well known, that led to what subsequently became known as the Revolution of the Shah and the People. The Shah came back to Iran. There had been voices within Iran, particularly on the left -- the name of Arsanjani comes to my mind.

Assar: His first name?

Raji: Hasan Arsanjani, I think he was. Who had for a very long time been clamoring for some kind of agrarian reform in Iran. The traditional classical situation where you had a number of landlords was attractive to the country -- most of them absentee landlords -- where the peasants slaved away on the farm, the landlord took half and distributed the rest to the pesantry.

Anyway, the Shah came back to Iran, and he instituted his really quite fundamental reform measures. He called it the White Revolution to begin with. When the white was smeared with a great deal of blood in later years, it became the Revolution of the Shah and the People -- but white in the sense that it was bloodless, and it was being instituted from the top, and it was enlightened. Amongst the measures which he introduced -- and he submitted all this to a national referendum -- was, in fact, the land reform. And there was a literacy corps. My memory serves me ill now, it's been so many years. But I think there was a literacy corps, there was a profit sharing scheme for factory workers, and also -- and I think this came as an afterthought -- also legal rights for women. I don't want to dwell at length on this. I mention this because the upshot of the institution of all these measures was a reaction amongst the clergy. Foremost amongst the people who opposed these measures, which they held to be in contradiction to the Shari'ah religious law was Khomeini. And we are now talking about 1963. I remember -- I don't really know the exact date in the Christian calendar, but in the Persian calendar it is the fifteenth of Khordad -- and I remember that I was driving to the Foreign Ministry from Shemran, and I could see smoke rising from the Public Library which

the mob had burned in downtown Tehran. There was the sound of sporadic machine gun fire, and the disturbances were effectively put an end to.

Entezam, who had a weekly audience with the Shah, and who had been in a sense rather appalled at the ferocity with which these disturbances had been dealt with, and who was, of course, you will remember, very much in the Sufistic tradition of things -- moderation in all things -- braces himself on one of his weekly audiences with the Shah and cautions that His Majesty should proceed with moderation and the pursuit of his worthy objectives. And I don't really know whether Entezam was privy to the kind of pressure that was being exercised on the Shah by the Americans, but the Shah didn't have very much room to maneuver. He'd been told to do something about the feudalistic image of his country, and he was going to undertake the measures that would have changed that image. So in a kind of -- The Shah didn't like what Entezam had said, but Entezam, of course, was a man of deep conviction and not one who would give in easily. Particularly he was -- and I think I said this earlier -- he really had no attachment to earthly power or riches. So during one official ceremony -- I forget which now -- on a grand occasion at the Shemran Golestan Palace, Entezam as the most senior civil servant had traditionally the role of reading the message or felicitations on the particular occasion to the Shah, to which the Shah would reply and a couple of sentences or so. On this particular occasion Entezam had the temerity to say publicly to the Shah that I wish Your Majesty well in the pursuit of the objectives, the high ideals that you've set yourself, and it's his bottom line that really annoys HIM immensely. Entezam says, "I hope you will

continue to implement your reform measures with moderation." It's the with moderation that hits His Honor. And Entezam was known to smoke a few cigarettes and, I think, occasionally have a few drinks. And the Shah turns around, and in front of all the assembled personages says that moderation is a good thing in drinking and smoking but not in pursuit of our worthy ideals and then turns on his heels and disappears.

Assar: He certainly had the art of ...

Raji: Anyway, this was the last time that Entezam saw the Shah for a very long time. He left the NIOC chairmanship very shortly after that. And of course, with Entezam's departure, Hoveyda went too. Again as a part of the new image which the Shah was trying to build for himself and for Iran, he had encouraged the educated young technocrats to come together and form some kind of political party. One of the people who'd read the signs right and had considerable talent in attracting people to himself and an organizing ability was someone called Hasan 'Ali Mansur whom you will remember. He had initially formed the Progressive Circle, and the Progressive Circle after a while became the Iran Novin or The New Iran Political Party. And they with tacit royal approval participated in the parliamentary elections, I think, of 1963, if I'm not mistaken. My date may be suspect, but I think it's 1963. And they won a sizable majority. Mansur had been a life long friend of Hoveyda, and I think both of them had served at some stage under Entezam. And the Shah appointed Mansur as Prime Minister. This was three or four months after Hoveyda had left the oil company. And in Mansur's newly formed

cabinet, Hoveyda was given the highly important post of Minister of Finance. So in a sense, if you like, technically he was now the boss of the oil company, because all the oil revenue would eventually go into the coffers of the Finance Ministry.

I had only just gone to the Foreign Ministry and not very long after Hoveyda -- I beg your pardon . . . . Mansur's primereship lasted ten or eleven months. I think I'm right in saying that when the Shah had been to Washington to talk with Kennedy, while Kennedy had expressed his dislike of the feudalistic image of the Shah's Iran, the Shah had also expressed his wish for modernizing the Iranian armed forces. After all, that was his power base. And I think reluctantly Kennedy had agreed to send then Colonel Haig to have a look at the --

[end of side one, tape one]

Haig coming to Iran to have a look at the state of the Iranian armed forces and to see what could be done. In the meantime, the oil is flowing, and Iran is experiencing, I think, a decade of prosperity the like of which it had not known before in its very long history. So there was a determination at the top to do something, and the funds were available and also, if you like, what there was of the trained manpower. One of the conditions of the Americans for providing military assistance to Iran was that armed forces in Iran should be judged not by Iranian law if they'd ever committed a crime, but by American law. Now this, of course, is a very sensitive area throughout Persian history when the British and the Russians were the -- late 19th and early 20th century -- were the dominant powers of the region, they had imposed this kind of juridical hegemony, if you like --

Assar: Called le capitulation.

Raji: And they were called capitulations, if you like. And, of course, to any Iranian with any degree of nationalistic aspiration, this was an immensely humiliating and debasing kind of agreement which had been imposed on Iran. And now you had the situation in 1963 where voluntarily the Shah was reimposing this kind of a condition on the country. I think to his credit, Mansur didn't particularly like this idea -- Mansur, the Prime Minister of the day, who had been told to bring in this bill, and the bill, I think, was called the Status of Forces Agreement. But the Shah wanted this done because he did want the American personnel to come to Iran and to train his army, and the presence of American persons in Iran would only have been possible if there had been an agreement that would have exempted them in criminal cases from Iranian legal jurisdiction.

Assar: But I heard the other day from a high-powered British diplomat that, it would have been very easy for the Shah to explain that this would incur public wrath and that a tacit agreement simply between them that if anybody did anything in forces, let us say Colonel Haig, he would be judged very leniently and sent home rather than actually pass a law like that and thereby enrage the public and provoke reminiscences about capitulations.

Raji: Well, I don't doubt the judgment of your interlocutor, but there wasn't anything tacit about this particular law. Very shortly

after Mansur submitted it to Parliament, he was assassinated, and the assassin, who was a religious fanatic -- Who are those people who study to become one of those? What are they called?

Assar: Talabeh.

Raji: Talabeh. The religious Talabeh had the word Allah engraved on the handle of his gun. And again, one didn't hear this at the time, but Khomeini had said that, if the Shah of Iran kills a dog in America, he will go to jail -- if an American dog kills the Shah of Iran in Iran, nothing will happen to him. I mean, it was that kind of extreme emotionalism that was unleashed by this particular --

Assar: Why do you suppose the Shah didn't accept to make it a tacit agreement rather than bringing it out into the open?

Raji: Well, I'm not sure that tacit agreements would have worked. He was at that stage envisaging quite a sizeable presence of the American military -- the Army, the Air Force, the Navy. All these were growing. And the number of American personnel subsequently didn't come in such a major figure. So I think the Americans wouldn't have settled for anything less than a legalistic, well-defined framework of relationship. With hindsight, one can see that this was prudish in the extreme and, as you say, a certainly unnecessary provocation. But at the time the assassination of Mansur was attributed to united reactionary fanatical elements who were against all progress and particularly land reform and the emancipation of women. Really I think at least

one of the central issues, which was of the Status of Forces Agreement, was hardly mentioned at all. And I can recall --

Assar: So in the meantime, you are at the Foreign Office?

Raji: In the meantime, at the Foreign Office. I took my entrance examination, did my interview and went to the Foreign Office and was assigned to the Department of International Relations. And my first boss, you would be interested to know at the Foreign Office, was someone called Majid Rahnema, to whom I'll come back a bit later.

Assar: What section of the Foreign Office was it?

Raji: It was the International Department dealing with the U. N. and other -- But Hoveyda had spoken to Aram about me. They were friends. And Aram soon called me up for an interview, and he expressed a wish that I should work with him rather than at the Department of International Affairs, and of course, this was too great an honor for me to refuse. And within, I think, a span of two months, I moved from Majid's Department of International Affairs to the Minister's Private Bureau.

Now, Aram was a workaholic. He was a man who had a very impressive command of the English language. He'd been, I think, educated in India. And if it's not disrespectful of my Indian friends, he displayed that particular capacity, which I think all Indians in that era did display -- namely, that he was marvelous at being number two. He was not an initiator of policy. He was not

highly imaginative, but he was extremely diligent. And he could be relied upon to carry out any given instruction to a "tee." Not, in fact, that there was great need for imagination or initiative at the Foreign Ministry. The procedure was that incoming cables from our embassies abroad would come throughout the evening, early morning, and they would be decoded, typed out. And round about noon each day, Aram would make his daily pilgrimage from the Foreign Ministry to Sa'dabad Palace or Niyavaran Palace, present to His Majesty what he had selected as the most important or news worthy dispatches from the Shah's ambassadors all over the world, and receive the royal instructions, which he would scribble on the edge of each cable that he presented to the Shah, and drive back to Tehran to the Foreign Office and transmit His Majesty's instructions to our various embassies. Aram was an individual, an extremely difficult man to please. He attached a great deal of importance to anything that he was called upon to say or write. I remember writing, for instance, his speeches for the General Assembly of the United Nations each year, was really sheer agony. He was indecisive to the last minute, and one was only saved by the bell. There did arrive a time when he actually had to get up and go and stand behind that podium and read his piece, and it was then that he could no longer change things, that you knew that --

Assar: What would he do? He would give his instructions and say, "This is what I want to say" in Persian, and you had to put it into some kind of a speech in English? Was that the procedure?

Raji: Well, not really. Other than the major powers in the

United Nations, I think all other countries really regard the United Nations as a kind of forum for airing their own domestic policies and priorities. I remember, for instance, Aram's speeches were devoted to the glories of the White Revolution, and the press in Iran would play this up and refer to it. But to everybody else at the United Nations I would have thought it would be paralytically boring to have to sit and listen to the statistics of improved literacy in Iran or what percentage of the pot is in which pack, you know. But anyway, we weren't alone in doing this. As I say, this was a platform for showing off, if you like, your advances on the domestic scene. And I think of the hundred and ten countries of the UN at that time, perhaps eighty or ninety of them did precisely the same thing. But he was both pernickety in terms of the words that he employed and also indecisive in making a judgment. So it was not a great pleasure working with him. I suppose he had his moments of generosity, but perhaps uncharitably, I remember him as a rather difficult boss, a rather difficult boss with few compensatory aspects to his character. But anyway, he's since died, and may his soul rest in peace as they say in Persia.

Assar: But he had a good reputation as a man of integrity and --

Raji: Yes, he was a man of integrity certainly. He'd served, I think, with distinction in Washington. And he, I think, stayed Foreign Minister for something like six years or seven years. He'd been ambassador to Baghdad. And I think it was afterwards that he came -- It was after his leaving the Foreign Office that he was appointed as Ambassador to London. He was homeless after the

revolution, as you know. They took over his property.

Assar: After the 1979?

Raji: After the 1979 revolution. And this is, perhaps, irrelevant, but I'll say it. The sentence that he uttered when he'd been released from prison and the formulation of which no one had helped him, and was perhaps the best thing that he ever said, and it was said impromptu, was that when he went to his home and he saw that the revolutionary guards had occupied it, he said he asked to be returned to prison, because he said to a homeless man at least prison is a kind of home, which I thought was very touching. He'd been not badly treated, and I think he died a couple of years ago.

Assar: What did he say about his relationship to His Majesty? I mean, did he ever sort of dare to proffer advice on foreign policy or express opinions, or was he just a cipher?

Raji: Well, I don't honestly know. I mean, even in my later years of glory when I was received by His Majesty, I never could quite make up my mind whether one was in a position to offer advice or whether one was there just to receive instructions. I would have thought in the days of Aram in the sixties that His Majesty was not particularly prone to receiving advice. And I don't think that even if he had been, Aram, with his rather reserved and extra cautious approach on life, would have offered advice. I would have thought that Aram's relationship with the Shah was one of total

subservience -- total. Yes, I think that's right.

Anyway, after Mansur's assassination, Hoveyda, who had been with Mansur in first the Progressive Circle and then the Iran Novin Party -- the New Iran Party -- and who in Mansur's government was acting as the Minister of Finance, was called upon by the Shah to act as Prime Minister. There were many more senior people in the cabinet who had a claim to the job of Prime Minister, but the Shah did want to symbolize continuity, and this explains why Hoveyda and not some other more senior minister was appointed to the post of Prime Minister.

Assar: You mean that because Hoveyda and Mansur were known to be such close friends and colleagues --

Raji: And also because of their collaboration in the Iran Novin Party. Shortly after Hoveyda's appointment as Prime Minister, I was approached and asked whether I wanted to resume, if you like, my erst while association with my NIOC boss on a more elevated level. And of course, it was as they say too good an offer to refuse. I left the Foreign Office -- we're not circa 1965 -- and went to the office of the Prime Minister.

Assar: As a private secretary?

Raji: As a private secretary to Hoveyda. He brought his other private secretaries from the oil company with him, so if you like, we were a coterie of known associates, and not only to Hoveyda but to ourselves as well.

Assar: Who were the others?

Raji: Well, his telephonist, his personal secretary, Mrs. Ma'refat, you remember. And NIOC curiously enough for a very long time remained a kind of reservoir of manpower for Hoveyda to draw on whenever he wanted to make some kind of an appointment. And of course, that's natural, because he knew the people at the oil company better than he did elsewhere.

Anyway, I resumed my relationship with Mr. Hoveyda. I think I stayed with him uninterruptedly for about five years.

Assar: This is from 1965 to 1970?

Raji: 1970. The hours were very demanding. They were --

Assar: So let us not talk -- This is obviously a very, very important part of your career. Let's talk about everything in that period -- your relationship with Hoveyda, his character, work positions and everything else that comes into it, personalities, feuds, quarrels, intrigues, the whole thing.

Raji: Well, I think I am rather biased in favor of Hoveyda, but I think to anyone who did come across him, Hoveyda was a man of immense charm. The one thing that really struck you at first meeting was the affability of this man. He had what a great many of our compatriots singularly lack -- an ability to market himself -- which I found very endearing and a tremendous ice breaker, if

you know what I mean. Particularly in the more formal, constipated corridors of power, if you like, that was such a great gift to have. He was a man of vast knowledge. I think his formal education had been conducted in Brussels and in Paris. I'm not sure whether he'd read history or philosophy or both, but he was deeply knowledgeable about the intellectual trends in European history and very up to date on current ones. He was a very fast reader. He was always reading something, and he was always chiding his ministers for saying that they didn't have time to read. He was always finding fault with that aspect of their character, saying how can they improve their minds if they don't keep up with the literature around. He was a great linguist. He spoke Arabic because of his early upbringing, I think in Beirut, where his father was assigned as a minister. He spoke English quite well -- very well -- and with immense confidence actually. And I think his French was perfect, yes -- luminous I think is the term that applies.

Assar: And German he spoke too.

Raji: I think he spoke German too, yes. He'd been posted to Germany and -- But he was, I think the term that applies, a life enhancer. He was by nature, by constitution, by mental disposition an optimist. He was a doer. He was a positivist, if you like. Whereas I always had a tendency to see the difficulty in a situation, he would always first see the positive aspect of it. He would always see what marvelous gain doing one particular thing or another would produce. He was also really quite devoid of humbug.

He was not vain even though he was always telling the photographers not to photograph him from the back of his bald head. And he really wasn't at all arrogant. And all this, I suspect on account of the kind of international upbringing that he'd had. And of course, as a student in his Paris days, as a student in Brussels during the War, he'd been exposed to impecuniosity. There'd been times when he was down and out and he had to work as a waiter. So he had, if you like, he was very well aware of the public pulse. Subsequently, when he had to "walk with kings, he was aware of the common touch." That's the right Kipling phrase.

Assar: Quote.

Raji: Quote. I remember that when he first became Prime Minister, I had one memorable session with him. And we were close enough friends for me to allow myself to say things to him that I would never have dreamed of saying to Aram, nor would Aram, for instance, have had receptivity. But I remember Hoveyda said that he did consider it a great honor to be the Prime Minister, and he thought the Shah was immensely flexible and listened to people. And he said that he had three priorities. To be perfectly honest with you, I forget what the first two were. But the third one, which did stick to my mind and was, perhaps, the most important, was he said that there was a need for a degree of liberalizing. And I immediately thought to myself that this surely must be the test of Hoveyda's success as a Prime Minister. To what degree can he bring a degree of flexibility to the Shah's authoritarian and rather rigid rule.

Assar: This was in 1965?

Raji: This was in 1965. I remember the day extremely well. He had his downhill pipe in his mouth, his feet on the table. He'd just come down from an audience with the Shah, and he said that the priorities for the country were x, y and z, with z being the liberalization. And he said that the Shah, if you spoke sense to him, would listen. And I must say, that came to me as a mild surprise, but a very welcome one.

Anyway, our working association continued.

Assar: So whenever you had something on your mind, you could openly talk about it to Hoveyda?

Raji: I could talk about it to Hoveyda, and I am afraid I must just go back to that one meeting. I said -- and this must have been within the first three or four months of Hoveyda's primereship -- I said to him that would he allow me, without appearing impertinent, would he allow me throughout his tenure of office as Prime Minister, to act as one percent of his conscience. He said he would, and I remember when we came to England in 1973 as guests of Mr. Heath, and Mr. Heath referred to my official title as Special Advisor to the Prime Minister, Hoveyda said "No. He is one percent of my conscience," which flattered me very much.

Assar: This is very interesting. I'm sure that business of state was immediately at hand and that this is long before what the

international clamour about repressive measures by SAVAK were put down and so forth. You say already then you were talking about liberalization of existing measures, which were less severe than they became later. How come exactly the reverse happened, which is the repression became much more strong, and, I mean, what happened? I mean, if you said that the Shah was flexible then, what happened --

[end of side two, tape one]

Tape number two with Mr. Parviz Raji again on April 9, 1986, at his home in London.

We have got so far as my asking how the liberalization measures that Hoveyda had in mind did not take place -- rather reverse if we judge by rumors. So carry on about why the opposite happened.

Raji: Why the opposite happened. Well, I'm saying that Hoveyda at that time had formed an impression of work was the required priorities would be around liberalization. And he had formed a judgment that the Shah was someone he could speak to. And I don't want to put words in his mouth, but I think it's fair to say that he was possibly disappointed in later years in both. I remember three or four months subsequently to that he came down from one of his audiences with the Shah. If you remember, there was a weekly satirical publication in Tehran called -- well, the name will come to me in a minute.

Assar: Towfiq?

Raji: Towfiq, exactly. And they had rewritten an article or printed a cartoon which was mildly irreverent of one of the claims of the then mayor, and the mayor, of course, had been wounded by this.

Assar: What was his name?

Raji: Nikpey. And he had complained to the Shah for the attack on him by the press, and I think that particular publication had either been told to cool it or to close down or the government advertisements which in a sense subsidized all these publications, had been withdrawn. And Hoveyda, who cultivated a kind of -- at least initially -- a kind of contact with the press and would devote a great amount of hours to receiving people of the press and listening to their briefs on certain things, raised with the Shah this banning of the Towfiq over Nikpey. And he came down from one of his audiences, and I remember he'd gone up there with great hope, and I knew the subject that he was going to raise with His Majesty. I never knew the replies, but what was included in the dispatch box that he was taking up with him. For instance, there was the question of Towfiq and the press, so I knew it had gone into the box. When he came back, I allowed myself to ask what in fact had happened to the fate of Towfiq, because the Towfiq man was himself ringing up all the time and saying, "Well, do we publish, or do we not publish?" And Hoveyda was ashen faced, and he said, "No, His Majesty said that tolerating criticism is a

kind of pofuzi, and I think pofuzi is best translated in English as a kind of spineless, whimpish, feeblish attitude to a critical view of yourself. So, I mean, you are right. With the passage of time, and with the growth of his power, the Shah became less rather than more tolerant. But Hoveyda, of course, was too much of a politician never to openly either admit this to me or to himself. And also, I think, his idea of liberalization at that time was, perhaps, totally different to what subsequently during Carter's administration was again brought to bear on the Shah. I think at that time Hoveyda really meant a greater tolerance of newspaper attacks on ministers, perhaps a slightly more active Majles or parliament and an absence of this kind of over sensitivity, which really equates any kind of criticism with either traitor's disloyalty or even worse, and which did ultimately so much harm to, I think, the Shah himself. Because the minute he tried to liberalize, the condensation underneath had been so great that the lid blew off of course, and --

Assar: Hoveyda was also, perhaps, under the influence of Abdollah Entezam and perhaps by temperament, himself always claiming to be a Sufi and rather detached from material concerns appropriately. And this was borne out, if I may be allowed to put in a slight personal touch here, because I think it to be interesting for future references by the fact that he came to see my father often even when he was in power and listened to him in awe certainly. So obviously he had that side to him. Now, why didn't he at that point -- you say he was disappointed -- why didn't he say, well this has -- Mr. Entezam say, "Well, this has become too difficult for me. I just

retire" or go back to the foreign office or something?

Raji: A very good question. He didn't have, I believe, the kind of towering commitment to the Sufistic tradition which Entezam had. There'd been hundreds of people literally who had expressed views in opposition to those held by the Shah -- people of very valid backgrounds, people of very sound judgment, people of unquestioned patriotism -- and, of course, they had been fired from their positions, and I could name a hundred names. And it had also become a kind of a joke not to go and create waves when you saw His Majesty. And the name that was always cited, and I think in my work I make a deep reference to it, everytime I wanted to say something, people would say to one, "Remember Entezam" -- that he resigned because he cherished his own convictions more highly than the post that he held, but what did he accomplish? He went and lived in his apartment, and the country was, if you like, robbed of his considerable intelligence and talent, etc. So the dominant trait was, one, stayed on and did what one could from within rather than stay outside the ring and simply jeer that this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong.

Assar: So you mean that he weighed the possibilities of what would be most beneficial to the country -- whether he stayed or whether he went -- or was he just so addicted to the power that he thought he must --

Raji: It's a very nebulous area -- all this -- isn't it? I mean, at what particular point do we say that this is the straw which is

going to break the back of the camel. As far as I know -- and I think this is perhaps the only instant -- there was one occasion in 1972, I think, when Hoveyda said to His Majesty through an intermediary that if I'm not wanted, I'll go. I don't think he ever had the temerity actually to submit his resignation and go, but he took sounding, if you like. And you may remember the occasion. The occasion was, I think in 1972, the Shah had been skiing in Switzerland. One member of his entourage who was known to be an opium addict -- an immensely rich man -- he is since dead. The matter appeared in all the papers at the time, so I'm not --

Assar: What was his name? Spilling any beans. So what was his name?

Raji: Libeling or slandering him. His name was Amir Hushang Davallu.

Assar: What was his job?

Raji: He didn't really have a job, but he was a trusted aide and confidant of the Shah. And the Shah had given him the concession for the sale of caviar in Europe, so he was really immensely rich. He was no smuggler, if you like, of opium, but he was a user of it. And whether there was some chicanery in Geneva or what happened, I don't exactly know, but when the Swiss customs go through his hand luggage or something, they discover an opium whatever the term is -- a stick of opium, yes. And because he was part of the Shah's entourage and he had a diplomatic passport, rank was pulled, and he

boards the Shah's private plane and returns to Tehran. Now the press and particularly Le Monde -- the press that was hostile to the Shah -- massacred us over this. And they all pointed out that Iran had an act of legislation that said that any person in possession of so much opium would be tried by a military court and executed, and they said that up to that particular time in Iran one hunred and thirty people had faced the firing squad for precisely what Amir Hushang Davallu had done at Geneva airport. But of course, because he was the Shah's trusted friend, instead of facing the firing squad, he was escorted to the royal airplane by the chief of protocol of the Swiss Guard. And it just went on and on, and for about ten days it wouldn't die. The Shah was in a very angry mood on arrival at Tehran Airport. Hoveyda, who was also addicted to reading Le Monde and was aware of this massive amount of flack which he had received, raises this matter with the Shah. I don't really know how he phrased it, but I heard from his subsequently that the Shah had said, "If I had left Amir-Hushang behind in Geneva to clear up the matter --" And it could have been cleared up. He could have for medical reasons say that if I don't have my opium, I'll die or something. The Shah had said precisely this to Hoveyda, he'd said that "if I had let the Swiss authorities detain Amir Hushang, he would have died in detention," to which Hoveyda said, "Your Majesty, that would have been infinitely preferable to what has happened now." And Hoveyda told me this himself, he said, "I hadn't quite finished my sentence when I could see a kind of angry iridescence in the Shah's eyes," and he turns from Hoveyda, boards his helicopter and I think goes up to the Caspien. Hoveyda was not summoned to see His Majesty for two or three days. There were no

telephone calls, and curiously enough, the intermediary, who will remain nameless, who was a kind of harmless buffoon who was a courtier and also a friend of Hoveyda's, is called into the act. And he goes up with a message from Hoveyda to the Shah saying that "if Your Majesty thinks that my services as Prime Minister are no longer required, needless to say, I would resign forthwith," to which the answer has come back, "No, you may stay on as Prime Minister." Now this was the only instance in Hoveyda's twelve years as Prime Minister where I remember matters came to a head -- a head in a very mild way. But they did reach a point where he felt that he had to remind the Shah that he could go. He could go if the Shah wanted him to. But really, it was an exercise to ease the path for the Shah to get rid of him rather than any major considerations of politics or administration. Anyway, on that particular occasion, the Shah said no, that he could go on being the Prime Minister, and of course, he did.

But it's very interesting what you say about comparison and the contrast between the characters of Hoveyda and Entezam. And in a sense, Entezam emerges as the man who not only is contemptuous of the trappings of power, but is perfectly capable of demonstrating that contempt.

Assar: But we mustn't forget to be fair on Hoveyda, that they were at different stage of their lives and careers. When Mr. Entezam left, he was nearly seventy, whereas Hoveyda in 1972 was about fifty, fifty-two, something like that.

Raji: That's a very good point, yes.

Assar: So, I mean, it's much easier to give up something when it's towards the end than towards the beginning. I'm not saying that this was the reason for it. Mr. Entezam may have done that when he was thirty-five. But I'm just saying that there is also that to be taken into consideration.

Raji: Absolutely.

Assar: But you always say that you thought that Hoveyda was totally uncorrupt financially and blameless in this. You have always maintained that.

Raji: Yes.

Assar: And indeed, after the revolution there were two camps of people -- people who blamed the Shah and should have blamed Hoveyda for the debacle of the last few years. But it's very important for future generations to know both sides of the argument, and therefore, one should put forward people who blamed him by saying that although he didn't embezzle a lot of money, or indeed none, he allowed other people to do so in a big way and that if his particular addiction was much more to power than to riches, that doesn't absolve him from the charge of corruption, because if you witness or allow corruption or acquiesce to it -- especially if you're in a position of power -- you are just as corrupt. And that his particular form of corruption was precisely the addiction to power rather than relinquish it.

Raji: I think we're setting ourselves rather high standards quite honestly. In that sense, I think the entire human race is corrupt. To get back to Hoveyda, I think it's absolutely true that he was personally untainted by any even rumor of financial malfeasance.

Assar: Well how did he allow his ministers to embezzle so much, which is now well known?

Raji: Yes, well just remember this, that particularly from 1973 on where the oil price went up and the country became unexpectedly enormously rich, the incidence of corruption increased tenfold, fifteenfold, one hundredfold -- I don't really know. But this situation is inevitable whenever you have great wealth and a concentration of political power. It is inevitable. Now you say, why didn't he resign when his ministers were --

Assar: I didn't say why he didn't resign. Number one, how do you choose the ministers? Why choose those people? There were plenty of very integral, admirable people. To call the for instance, that number two at Ministry of Health under three or four ministers was a totally, in fact was an extremely able man. He was never given a chance to become and it's precisely that he was, he wasn't embezzling or corrupt or allowing other people to be.

Raji: Well, I don't really know that there was a kind of --

Assar: He chose the ministers, didn't he?

Raji: He chose some of the ministers. He had absolutely no say over the Armed Forces Minister, for instance. He had absolutely no say over the Foreign Minister. And again it is inconceivable that he would have chosen someone for any ministry which didn't have HIM's approval, which didn't have the Shah's approval. And of course, ministers had to be cleared by the security organization as well. There was corruption beyond the shadow of a doubt. There was corruption on a large scale.

Assar: I'm only being the devil's advocate, putting other people's opinion.

Raji: Yes. I'm not absolutely certain of what he could have done about it. Now when criticism of the Shah's regime in later years in the late seventies became audible -- particularly in the Western press -- there were two accusations which were always leveled against it. One was the charge of violating human rights; i.e. torture and mistreatment of prisoners. And the other one was of corruption. Of these two accusations against the Shah's regime, the charge of corruption was the one that rankled Hoveyda far far greater than the charge of human rights violations.

Assar: Why was that?

Raji: I don't honestly know because I suppose it depends on the chemistry of the man. I would have given far greater priority to the other quite honestly. I remember once when one of the

chancellors of one of our universities was in my waiting room and was going to see Hoveyda, he said that he'd just spoken to an American reporter, and the American reporter said, "SAVAK is mistreating people, and there is documented evidence that such and such, people are being tortured, etc., etc.," and he as chancellor of the university said to me, "what am I expected to answer in a situation like that?" And I, of course, taking my cue from Hoveyda, having sat on many of his interviews with the press, said that "I don't know what you should say, but what Hoveyda says in circumstances like this is that if we arrest people who are in the process of planting bombs to kill innocent people, then we don't give them champaigne and caviar in our prisons," and he laughed it off in that way. And of course, this served as a cue for not only this particular chancellor at the university but many of his professors. Everytime they gave an interview, this was a phrase that I saw with boring recurrence. But --

Assar: So you were talking about your experiences at the Foreign Ministry and Hoveyda's personality and style and relationship with the press. But what about his relationship with his own ministers and other political figures and also people whom he respected and listened to like Mr. Entezam, whom I believe he saw frequently.

Raji: He did see frequently. And he would actually, I think, at least at the beginning of his premiership, go and visit Entezam on weekend. But I remember again one occasion when for some reason Entezam decided to come and see Hoveyda at his office, and talking about this kind of Sufistic fraternity between them, I was

astonished to see that Hoveyda actually kissed Entezam's hand. The only hand one kissed other than ladies was the Shah's, and --

Assar: Well you do. As a Sufi you do kiss the master's hand.

Raji: Well there are tremendous gaps in my elementary education in Sufism. I did find that rather a surprising thing. And in the Tehran of those days this could actually have been interpreted as a gesture of disloyalty, such was the climate of pervading fear if you like, yes. His relationship with his ministers -- I hope it's not disloyal when I say this about Hoveyda, but while he was an immensely charming, able and affable man, and the Prime Minister of Iran for twelve years, I think when it really came to the crunch, when it came to major decisions of policy, he was not a powerful figure. I think no prime minister of the Shah's after Dr. Amini was more than a figurehead for implementing his own wishes. Let's take a theoretical case. If say the minister of the armed forces, the Minister of War as he was called, had been discovered or had had an accusation of corruption leveled against him, Hoveyda would not have been in a position on his own to dismiss him. The procedure would have been for him to report to the Shah, and if the Shah chose to ignore those allegations or to justify it or not, I don't know, the minister would have stayed on. There was one instance -- a rather celebrated instance -- when there was a public falling out between the Prime Minister and his then Foreign Minister, Ardeshir Zahedi, you might remember. It was a very minor matter. I think there was a request for decorations, for medals, that had to be in by a certain time, and the Foreign

Ministry had submitted its list for decorations at a later date than that which had been fixed previously. And when the assistant in charge of the Prime Minister's office had written back to the Foreign Office saying that decorations had to wait until next year because the limit had been passed for that particular year, there was a very rude and public letter, do you remember, from Ardeshir to Hoveyda saying the people who had devoted themselves to the cause of serving the suffering ought not to be denied just reward for the services by sheer bureaucratic mismanagement or arbitrary standards or whatever. And anyway, Hoveyda sent this letter back, refused to accept it, whereupon Ardeshir wrote his second letter, even ruder than the first. And Hoveyda took this to the Shah and said, "Here is your Foreign Minister writing publicly to me on official stationery of the Foreign Ministry using such words. Either he goes or I go." Perhaps Hoveyda didn't actually use that final phrase, but the Shah saw that the Prime Minister was in very embarrassing spot, and the Shah also knew Ardeshir's rather childlike tantrums in situations like this, and so Ardeshir was booted out of his office. And from then dates in fact the start of this feud between Hoveyda and Zahedi.

Assar: Resentment.

Raji: Well, it was more than resentment, because Fereydun Hoveyda -- I mean, of course, his brother -- printed that Zahedi is the primary instigator for putting Hoveyda in jail when the Shah in fact did order him to be detained in 1978 in, I think, November 1978.

Assar: What was the power of Ardeshir over the Shah?

Raji: Ardeshir had the personal closeness to the Shah which Hoveyda at least initially certainly lacked. As you will recall, it was Ardeshir's father who had restored the Shah to his throne in 1953. Ardeshir himself had -- his life had been in jeopardy during those months or weeks when the Shah had tried to depose Mossadeq, and Ardeshir could have been --
[end of side one, tape two]

Raji: I mention this particular episode of Ardeshir Zahedi simply to exemplify the fact that the Prime Minister even under such publicly embarrassing circumstances, was by himself incapable of dismissing outright a minister without the intervention of the Shah.

Assar: What about other ministers? Some of them were his friends. You mentioned, for instance, Majid Rahnema.

Raji: Majid Rahnema was, I think, a kind of special case. Jamshid Amuzegar --

Assar: They had been at university together in Beirut.

Raji: They were old friends from Beirut. Then, I think, in Paris, and I think that they were also in the Foreign Ministry together. They were colleagues in that sense. And Majid's

intellectual left of center credentials were really quite impeccable. All right, he'd been associated with Princess Ashraf, and he'd been Ambassador to Switzerland, but he'd always retained, if you like, contact with the more liberal constituencies, if you like. And I think whatever one may think of Majid, and I am admiring of him, that there is this thread that runs through his character -- a kind of perhaps even a somewhat unwise espousal of everything which was to the left of center of his day. Anyway, eminently qualified he would have been for any ministerial job in Iran, he was offered during Hoveyda's premiership the post of Minister of Science and Higher Education, and I think this was done really over and above the opposition of SAVAK, who considered his political leanings in his student days as somewhat suspect, to put it mildly. But it was predictable and regrettable that very early on there was a falling out between Majid and SAVAK authorities over the handling of some student disburbances at Tehran University. And of course, if was inconceivable that in a situation like that the head of SAVAK should go, so Majid went. But I do remember, for instance, once when he was in charge of the ministry, that he insisted that the Prime Minister seize personally some of the leaders of the disturbances -- the disturbances so called. They might have been legitimate grievances. I wasn't privy to the nature of the student demands at the time. It's predictable that they were saying, let's have more laboratories and less tanks, and it would have been that kind of a situation. And Majid brought these people to the three of them, I remember, and it was late at night -- ninish, nine thirtyish -- to see Hoveyda. The students waited in the waiting room while Majid went in and as they

say in Persian "cooked the Prime Minister" -- prepared the Prime Minister -- to receive these student leaders and also to tell him what the students would say and what he was expected to say. Anyway, eventually the students went in. I don't know what transpired. But they stayed there for about an hour. There must have been a healthy airing of their views. It couldn't only have been salutory. And when the students came out and I went in to see -- I was summoned to go in an see Hoveyda -- there were smiles all around, so something, however minimal, had been accomplished. But I who knew Majid well and could allow myself to pull his leg, said, I remember, to Hoveyda's uncontrollable laughter that whatever the legitimate grievances of Majid's student friends were, they did smell somewhat, whereupon he -- Majid said that their smell was infinitely healthier than any artificial scent that I had put upon myself.

Assar: Oh really?

Raji: But all this said in a very kind of jokey way.

Assar: Yes. And what about other personalities? This is very important, because I mean, obviously being in that office you saw everybody who came and went. So, I mean, talk about all the other personalities who or annecdotes that would illustrate their relationship with the powers and their methods of work and the methods of work of Hoveyda particularly. I mean, any salient feature in any important personality who was in charge of something or other. Because after all, even if the Shah dictated everything,

there was a machinery that was handled by these people, and whenever personality is involved, it has some kind of an influence on the machine. And nowadays they say that even if scientists observing through a microscope, his personality has some affect on what he observes so that -- Were there any people that struck you as being more or less powerful or important, I mean anything that you can remember at that time?

Raji: Yes, there were a number of quite dominant figures in Hoveyda's cabinet, and they'd been around for a very long time. Amuzegar, I think, was certainly one -- Amuzegar who succeeded him when -- Amuzegar was immensely intelligent. He was more experienced in terms of ministerial responsibility than Hoveyda when Hoveyda assumed office.

Assar: Amuzegar was . . . he was more experienced.

Raji: He was more experienced. And there was a kind of mutual respect that Amir 'Abbas and Jamshid demonstrated towards one another, and I never as long as Hoveyda was Prime Minister ever detect even a slight hint of friction -- certainly no display of public anger, no backbiting, not even mild arguments. And when you think that Amuzegar was someone who served under Hoveyda for twelve years, this was really quite remarkable. He presided -- Amir 'Abbas -- over the cabinet as a kind of primas interpares as the first amongst equals. But everyone was aware that if matters couldn't be hammered out to a solution at the cabinet level, then there was the necessary journey up the hill to see the Shah. And

unless you commanded enough attention with the Shah to be able to air your own case privately, if somebody else did it for you, you didn't necessarily always come out the best. So there was a slight reluctance to have disagreements of the cabinet reported out to the Shah. There was every effort to try to hammer things out during the cabinet. And of course, I think this was Hoveyda's main function. He was, if you like -- He acted, if you like, as the Shah's principal private secretary in that regard. I don't say this in any kind of derisive way. I don't want to diminish his role or his contribution. But I think any Prime Minister of the Shah's was really a conciliator, if you like, of the differing points of views that were finding themselves in this one channel which led to the Shah. And I think in that regard, he functioned totally well.

Assar: And were you present at cabinet meetings?

Raji: I wasn't present at cabinet meetings, no. The cabinet had a secretary who was a minister.

Assar: Where did it take place?

Raji: At the office of the Prime Minister.

Assar: And then there were also weekly cabinet sessions with the Shah or he didn't attend?

Raji: There were weekly what they called High Economic Council

meetings in the presence of the Shah, and these in a sense were even more important, if you like. They were held every Monday afternoon, I remember, because that allowed me to get an occasional game of tennis in. These meetings really decided on the economic guidelines of the country for the future. And people present there at those meetings really had far greater clout than the ministers who for some reason or other were not included. For instance, the Minister of Education would not have participated. The Minister of Health would not have participated. But the Minister of Economy, the Minister of Finance and the armed forces people again were always present.

Assar: What about the Plan Organization? What was the role of the Plan Organization in the whole thing?

Raji: The Plan Organization was also very much represented at the High Economic Council meetings. They after all were the people who handled the oil money. And Majidi, for instance, for a very long time in charge at the Plan Organization was a central figure. And I think it's a tribute really to Majidi, to his charm and to his good temper that he stayed at that post for a very long time and incurred neither the wrath of the Prime Minister nor of the other ministers nor indeed of the Shah, even though he was, I think, at the end unjustly dismissed when in 1977 things started going economically wrong. There was a desperate search for a scapegoat, and Majidi as the head of the Plan Organization was dismissed even though the decisions that he had carried out were those that had been jointly agreed at the High Economic Council or had been

transmitted directly to him by His Majesty.

Assar: Yes. Any other personalities? What about Ansari, who Everybody -- at least everybody I have interviewed has said he was a rather, well, what shall I say -- not a very -- not a character that everybody says good things about. They didn't know how he had accumulated his money. They didn't know how --

Raji: Well, I've got no idea how he accumulated his money, but he did come -- When he did become the Minister of Economy, he came to that post already a rich man. I think he had been very successful in private enterprise before coming to the Minister of Economy, and he was very much in the mold of an American executive. He was a kind of whiz kid if you like. He was a facts and figures man. He had a very quick and sharp mind. He was imaginative and he was bold. But I think he was also rather liked by the Shah. But what he would consider his accomplishments, his achievements as Minister of Economy, I don't know. Although to his credit I must say I think all those plans for buying up the chunks of going western concerns, such as Mercedes Benz or Babcock and Wilcox or participation in German industry. I think there were a number of other ventures that Iran participated in, I think he ought to take the credit for such bold initiatives and decisions.

Assar: Anybody else you would like to talk about? Any salient annecdote, anything that could have been somewhat influential on the course of events?

Raji: Not really that I can think of. Not at that level of things, no.

Assar: Were you aware, for instance, or was Hoveyda aware of dissidents in the country?

Raji: Oh, absolutely. SAVAK, which had a huge organization, was constantly circulating documents mentioning the kind of dissident activity that there was in Iran, what the sources of finance for these organizations were, the areas in which they were most active, and there was, of course, also the organization which in a sense oversaw the functions of SAVAK, the Private Bureau, which if you remember during the Revolution became a very murky organization, and its head, a man by the name of Fardust was accused of having collaborated for the clerics and bringing about the Revolution. There were always people from these organizations who were seeing Hoveyda, and of course, they had direct access to the Shah, so it is for me virtually inconceivable that one did not know what was going on.

Assar: So what was your reaction or everybody's reaction, you know, that if one were not more careful, maybe something wouldn't blow over.

Raji: I think what is totally important to bear in mind, particularly in the context of the 1979 Revolution, is that the Shah did bring in land reform. He did bring in equal rights for women -- at least voting rights for women. He did bring in the

Status of Forces Agreement which virtually, actually gave the Americans immunity from Iranian jurisdiction. And he did, when the riots broke out in 1963, expell Khomeini from Iran, and there was no revolution. He survived in 1963 this tremendous upheaval which he himself initiated at the behest of Kennedy and had withstood the organized opposition of the more fanatical clergy, i.e. Khomeini. In fact, not only was there not a revolution in Iran, but the decade following 1963 to 1973 witnessed some of the most remarkable changes, which the Shah must be given credit for, in transforming the Iranian economy from an aggrarian backward society to what it was hoping to become -- a semi-industrialized society in which the power of the income from oil was building an infrastructure on which viable industry could operate. So it's not the activities of the dissidents from 1963 even up to 1976, 1978 that led to the revolution. One must look for that to other causes. From -- if we are now talking about the roots of the Iranian revolution -- I think -- and I'm not sure that we are talking about that. Are we talking about that?

Assar: No. We are talking about you. But no, we were talking about personality and so on, but, you see, everything will throw a light over what happened afterwards. At the time obviously there were people who were far seeing.

Raji: I think if -- To get back to the question which you haven't asked really, if we examine the events from 1973 on, we come across the fundamental flaws in the policy that the Shah was pursuing, one faults him with hindsight. But certainly in 1973

when the oil price rose dramatically, you can't question the Shah's intentions for the welfare of his people. He went about it the wrong way I can now say with hindsight. There was this idea that you could throw money at every problem -- that it could solve it. And this led to a tremendous dislocation in the Iranian economy with backlogs of all sorts and a shortage of trained manpower. I mean, I think towards the end in 1977, there were something like six thousand Philippino drivers alone in Iran who were driving up trucks from the Persian Gulf up to the northern more populated urban centers because there weren't even enough Iranians who knew the craft of driving, for instance. I mean, it became really that bad. That in addition to the fact that the armed forces had been given such priority over domestic needs. This was known all along, but it was experienced in the summer of 1977 when power failure started, for instance. The Shah, and indeed government, had been at pains to point out -- whether they actually believed it or not is immaterial -- that the expenditure on the armed forces, necessary as it was for the defense of the country and the integrity of Iran, were not at the expense of the domestic sector. But when you had in the summer of 1977 the spectacle of one of the greatest oil producing exporting countries of the world suffering power failures because of the electricity grid that had broken down or that there wasn't sufficient hydro-electric power to go around, then there was a tremendous loss of credibility, if you like. And this is what Majidi basically got fired for -- the look that this hunting for scapegoats then began.

Assar: But let's go back to Hoveyda's relationship with the court

-- not only with the Shah personally, but also with other members of the court, for instance, Princess Ashraf. Her father was very influential by all accounts, the Queen. Who were the other people around or the list of courts were, for instance, Asadollah Alam and so forth. What was his relation with all that? Did he go to --

Raji: His relationship with the Queen, I think, was immensely cordial. I think that because they had shared a background of a French education, because they had both experienced semi-poverty in their younger days, they showed an outlook on life which the Shah with his more militaristic vision of life couldn't really envisage. I remember that there was a kind of unspoken understanding between Empress Farah and Hoveyda who held great respect for one another's knowledge of the French culture and books and literature. I mean, it was a field on which the Shah never could trample, if you like. He might be much more knowledgable about F-4's or F-16's. But there was this kind of unannounced respect and admiration, which I think was mutual between Hoveyda and the Empress.

Assar: And did he go to the court as an -- outside work? In other words, did he participate in the --

Raji: Yes he did. He was always present at court functions even though, I think, on many occasions he would turn up -- simply put in an act of presence and not even stay for dinner -- disappear, because, of course, the demands on his time were such that he would have to be up and functioning early in the morning, and he didn't

want to sit down and watch movies after dinner. There was this cordiality with the Empress. His relationship with Princess Ashraf were more strained. Princess Ashraf was, as you say, an immensely powerful figure and really quite impeccable in her opposition to people who stood in her way. She could be immensely loyal and supportive to her friends, I think was the most generous of patrons. That's certainly true in my case. And she was rather unsharing of her brother with other people. If there is such a term, affection for her brother was exclusivistic. But this is a trait in her character which she demonstrated towards all who came close to the Shah. Maybe it is a trait in twins, I don't know. After all, she was the twin, and she -- I know, for instance, that her relationship with Soraya, the Shah's previous bride were known to be on very bad terms with one another. But with Farah if there was any underlying differences, they were always patched up in public. There was outward cordiality. And I'm not really sure that Princess Ashraf saw on a sort of frequent basis or cared to see others of her family. I know she very rarely saw her elder sister, for instance, very rarely and very rarely saw her mother, who was much closer to the elder sister than she was to her.

Assar: Shall we go now to your own relationship with the Princess, because after you left the Prime Minister's office, you went to work for Princess Ashraf. Could you tell us how it happened, and what was your own relationship?

Raji: Yes. I didn't quite leave the Prime Minister's office in that sense. The Princess had a number of international

obligations.

Assar: How did you meet?

Raji: Well, we'd met socially previously. But there were parties at courts, and if you knew mutual friends, they would clear your name first, and then you'd be asked. But I'd met Princess Ashraf two or three times. Curiously enough, the first time that the name of Princess Ashraf came up in a more serious context was when Hoveyda mentioned that he'd been to see her, and she was then going off to India to attend, I think it was the centenary of Gandhi's birth, and the Princess had told Hoveyda that her international responsibilities were expanding and that she was very much in need of someone who could come and take over her secretariat and expanding volume of work, and could Hoveyda find someone for her? And I think Hoveyda had said that he would bear this in mind. Well, the Princess had insisted, and it was decided that I should be lent to the Princess on loan for an impending visit to India. So, if you like, the first time that I saw the Princess in a working capacity was this trip to India which didn't actually go down terribly well.

Assar: Why not? In what way?

[end of side two, tape two]

Assar: So this is tape number three still with Mr. Parviz Raji on the 9th of April, 1986. Tape three.

Okay, Mr. Raji, we were saying that your trip to India

wasn't a great success. Carry on from there if you would.

Raji: We were received with great pomp and ceremony. The Princess wouldn't have had it any other way. And we called on the Indian President and the Indian Prime Minister, and there were various receptions. But I think where the Princess took offense was when we were invited to attend a public ceremony for Gandhi's birth centenary, and we were all seated in a vast outdoor arena. And it was during this ceremony that the Princess felt a bit slighted over her placement, so we cut the trip short from five to three days and returned to Tehran. I was, therefore, rather surprised when two or three months later when the Princess was going to make her annual excursion to the United Nations -- I was surprised to be told that she had asked that I accompany her to write her speeches, etc. It was from then on that I became on loan to the Princess, if you wish, for a period of about two to three years. Whenever abroad, I was acting as her personal secretary, and when we returned to Tehran, I would go back to the Prime Minister's office and resume my responsibilities there. The travels with the Princess really formed a kind of charmed existence. The rewards and the praise were exaggerated, and the work involved was really negligible and not particularly serious. It was an artificial world in which in Africa she would deliver rousing speeches on women's emancipation, and in Geneva or New York or at the United Nations, she would speak on human rights, over which, in fact, she had on a number of occasions presided as chairman -- very much a world of international bureaucracy combined with the power and the glamour of the Shah's Iran, which she

represented rather well. But again, I became rather disenchanted with my role there principally because I expect I didn't think it was serious enough.

I returned to the Prime Minister's office in 1973. His promises to the public, his political utterances were beginning to show a lack of conviction. He'd been around too long. And while his achievements were considerable, there was a kind of public relations backlash beginning to set in. And if you combine this with the rumbles of economic dislocation to which I referred earlier -- the shortage of skilled manpower and the power failures, the bottlenecks in the economy, etc. -- again somebody had to be found to act as a scapegoat. So in the summer of 1976, the Shah decided that Hoveyda had been in office long enough and, if you like, kicked him sideways by making him Court Minister to replace his old friend, Asadollah Alam, who was by then very ill.

Assar: I remember that they showed a film of Hoveyda on British television at the time of the Revolution and Khomeini's takeover in 1979 in which Hoveyda kept saying that he had enough documents stashed away to pull out at his trial and exonerate himself of any charges they may bring against him. And I remember his brother, Fereydun Hoveyda, saying the same thing -- that he had spoken to him on the telephone and he had said, "Don't worry. I will explain everything at my trial, and everything will be fine." Have you any idea, since you were his friend and confidant, what those documents might have been?

Raji: No I don't, and I don't think Hoveyda would have wanted or

even tried to have exonerated himself from the charge of running the affairs of the country. After all, he was the Prime Minister of Iran for over twelve years. But what he said at his trial was that his hands were tainted with neither blood nor money, i.e. that he had never killed anyone nor had he ever stolen any money, and that's perfectly true. What he did say at his trial was that the political structure in Iran was such that there was one man at the top -- the commander, the leader, if you wish -- and that the leader commandeered an entire population. And Hoveyda, as the Prime Minister, of course, was amongst the more prominent of the supporting team. And he said that if he was guilty, then everyone who had in any capacity collaborated with the Shah's regime was equally guilty. But he never disclaimed as far as I know any responsibility for the actions that his government had taken. The denial really only concerned his personal integrity.

Assar: Another person whom, again with hindsight, people blamed is Asadollah Alam. He was very close to the Shah and held some kind of a court himself with lots of wheelings and dealings. And they say that he could have brought to the attention of the Shah certain things that were not going right, but apparently he never did. What was your impression of Asadollah Alam?

Raji: He was a glamorous figure. He was a true tribal chief, if you like. He was a Khan of Birjand in eastern Iran, and he was a very close personal friend of the Shah's from their school days together. And while his judgment may not have been perfect, his loyalty to the Shah was unquestioned. He belonged to the old guard

who considered it in bad taste to bring in bad news or tidings, and I would have thought that he would have had a tendency to sweep under the carpet anything which might have incurred the Shah's displeasure. He was a very attractive figure and was held in very high regard and affection by the other members of the Royal Family. I know that Princess Ashraf for one thought very highly of him and had a kind of personal rapport with him that she never did with Alam's successor, Hoveyda, at the Court Ministry. But if you follow the rumors of the day, it was also said that some of Iran's most prominent and successful businessmen were friends of or regarded with favor by Mr. Alam.

Assar: You mean that he received what became known as "permissions" and from then in return for pushing their access to concessions on deals and that kind of thing? At least that was one charge that rumor brought against him. What was your impression?

Raji: I remember that when Hoveyda became the Court Minister, I saw him shortly afterwards, and his complaint then was that he had jumped out of the frying pan into the fire.

Assar: And what do you think he meant by that -- intrigues or any other things?

Raji: The Court Ministry was a very delicate situation to handle. The requests of the individual members of the Royal Family would be directed to the Court Minister. And the Court Ministry was also in charge of handling matters of protocol and acting as liaison

with the government. There were rumors flying about, but I cannot really express an opinion on those.

Assar:
And what about the well known feud between Ardeshir Zahedi and Hoveyda and also the one between Ardeshir Zahedi and Princess Ashraf. Did you get involved with them, being close to both Hoveyda and the Princess?

Raji: No I didn't. Ardeshir operated on a higher level than I did. He wasn't the sort of person for whom I would have great regard or respect. He was what Hoveyda called the great exponent of the diplomacy of caviar, of gold watches and of painted ladies. He was never directly or indirectly my boss. And on the one or two occasions that I did see him perform as Foreign Minister -- I remember one instance at a center ministerial meeting, I found his performance rather underwhelming. But I understand that he was and is a man of tremendous generosity and considerable charm, and I think he will, of course, go down in history as one of the great entertainers of our age. And during his ambassadorship in London and in Washington, the glamour and the scale of his entertainment had achieved universal dimensions. I personally found it rather embarrassing when several years after Ardeshir's departure from London, I saw people in London who would tell me that they still received Christmas gifts from Ardeshir from Asprey's, for instance. There was another occasion when Anthony Eden long after he'd left Downing Street wrote a letter to us at the Embassy requesting that we did not send him the five kilos of caviar at Christmas because

he was going to be away at that time.

Assar: Five kilos?

Raji: Yes. Tales of that sort abounded, and his generosity was proverbial.

Assar: Well, since he was such a close friend of the Shah's, what's the feud between him and the Shah's twin and beloved sister, Princess Ashraf? How could it work out?

Raji: I don't really know the answer to that. It was a rather complicated relationship and a hazard to guess on. But if I were to hazard a guess, I would have thought that Ardeshir's marriage to the Shah's daughter could have had something to do with it. It didn't turn out to be a very successful marriage, but my latest information is that all fences have been mended between the Princess and Ardeshir now.

Assar: Should we go back for a moment to your advisory role with Princess Ashraf especially at the United Nations. And what was your role exactly? I mean, did you just simply write her speeches according to her instructions or did you occasionally manage to put a word in? For instance, when she was presiding over the human rights sessions in Geneva and so forth, at that time rumors were flying all over, especially in the western press, that dissidents were being tortured and put to prison in Persia. There obviously was some kind of a joke in that capacity. Did you say anything

about it? Did you talk about these things with the Princess? What were your sessions with her, you know, consist of? What --

Raji: The UN work, you must remember, is really quite technical, and one must have a certain knowledge of the procedures and the language involved. As far as the actual work of the United Nations where even the Human Rights Commission was concerned, the main burden of responsibility fell not on me but on Fereydun Hoveyda, who was our permanent representative at the United Nations. The Princess preferred speaking French and to read her speeches in French, and I couldn't have helped in that particular regard. Fereydun could and did, and his assistance was invaluable. And whenever the Human Rights Commission convened in Geneva, others -- people like Majid Rahnema -- would appear on the team and assist the Princess in that way. But of course, New York is an English language town. There were many occasions where the Princess attended official dinners, came across personalities. There was a great deal of correspondence to be handled. There were occasional after dinner speeches, after lunch speeches. And this really fell on my lap of responsibilities. You talk about Iran's performance on the human rights level and the Princess's position as chairman of it. I think if you look at the list of membership of the United Nations -- countries that are a member of the United Nations -- apart from a few western democracies, I think you'd find that ninety-eight percent of them -- ninety-eight, ninety-nine percent of them -- have rather appalling records in the field of human rights. But this doesn't in any way detract from their ability to pay lip service to the cause of human rights. Princess

had been preceded as chairman of the Human Rights Commission, I think, by an Iraqi, so perhaps it doesn't say very much for the UN Human Rights Commission, but there was a kind of geographical rotation that had to be observed. And I won't claim that we were faultless in that regard, but perhaps not a lot worse than other countries. We did once or twice -- the Princess and myself -- discuss the question of mistreatment of prisoners in Iran. And after one trip to New York when we did go back to Iran, we had a session with one of the generals of the security organization -- General Moqaddam, in fact, who subsequently became head of SAVAK after Nasiri and was executed after Khomeini's return. He was a kind, intelligent and forthright officer, I felt, who was trusted totally by the Shah, and he made no bones about the necessity for a degree of coercion, I think, as he termed it in Persian during interrogations. He dismissed as rumor and as fabrication the more lurid tales of what went on in Iranian jails, but he did say, for instance, that if he had to extract information from someone who had plotted or planted a bomb somewhere, then he would use a little bit of force to see whether he could extract information that would save other lives. But he was adamant in his denial that really ghastly methods were used in extracting information. And the Princess herself I wouldn't have thought was deeply concerned with these allegations.

Assar:
It didn't bother her you mean? You mean that she didn't find it outrageous. She thought that well if that is what has to be done, it has to be done?

Raji: I think she probably accepted this philosophically. I say this because shortly before I came to London, she gave an interview to the Times, I think to Caroline Moorhead was the person who did the interview, in the course of which she had actually said that all these charges that prisoners in Iran are being tortured to extract information from them was not true. And when the interviewer persisted with this particular line of questioning, the Princess had said to my astonishment that there was no use for torture because other methods could be employed to extract information. And when it was inquired what these other methods were, the Princess had said that injections were used.

Assar: Truth injections. [Laughs]

Raji: Truth injections or falsehood injections but injections.

Assar: Yes. Well, what about her own -- allegations against herself about, you know, wrongdoings with finance and with too much influence over her brother, and too much interfering with affairs of state? Did she react to that? Was she worried about it? Did she ever -- I mean, had she ever sort of confided in you about these matters? She must have had -- I believe everyone does -- somebody to talk to.

Raji: She quite enjoyed the exercise of power. She was very close to her brother, and she had historically played a very important role, I think, in the events of 1953 in restoring her

brother to power. You must remember that she was and is a woman of extraordinary courage -- physical courage -- and she's really quite fearless or was fearless. That and the fact that she was the twin sister of her almighty brother endowed a kind of aura of authority about her which was both attractive and awesome. As for the other rumors of influence peddling and extracurricular activities, I couldn't honestly tell you. I was never involved with any of -- If there was a business side to her, I was never involved with that. I think she had a group of friends that did not -- senators and bankers and things -- They were rather influential people in their own fields, but I simply couldn't tell you what the nature of her dealings in that regard were.

Assar: Also, during all that time that you acted as advisor to her, you must have come across international personalities who influenced either the Princess or the course of events in Iran or simply impressed you as very extraordinary. Could you talk a bit about them, you know, during the course of your career with the Prime Minister and with Princess Ashraf. What do you think about the various personalities who came into the picture so to speak?

Raji: Well, the most impressive person that I ever met is that of Zhu Enlai. At the start of Nixon's ping pong diplomacy -- I think it's either 1970 or 1971, I'm not quite sure -- the Princess expressed a wish to visit China. We had no relations with China at the time, and we did have relations with Taiwan. And it occurred to me that we might bring about the initial contacts with the Chinese through a person who was both close to the Chinese and to

the Princess personally and to Iran, and that individual was Zolfaqar 'Ali Bhutto, who was then, I think, temporarily out of office in Pakistan, very much waiting in the wings. And so it was arranged for me to go and see Mr. Bhutto in Karachi where he was and to raise this matter with him. I remember the trip extremely well, because the previous day I'd gone to the ski resort of Ab-e 'Ali in Tehran and had torn the tendons of my left ankle so that I was in plaster when I had to walk up and down the stairway of the airplane. It was a rather delicate exercise, and I suffered a number of bumps, which I shall well remember. Anyway, I did get to Karachi, and I did go and speak to Mr. Bhutto, whom I knew on a personal level and had really the highest admiration for his personality and intellect and mind. Bhutto thought this was not a problem, and it could be very easily arranged. We agreed to bypass the Ministry of Foreign Affairs -- that the Ambassador should not know about it. Of course, the Shah did know. We couldn't have done it without his permission. And subsequently a positive reply came from the Chinese, and program dates were suggested, a program was drawn up, and we went to China.

Assar: You and the Princess and who else?

Raji: The Princess had an assistant in Mr. 'Abdol-Reza Ansari , who was --

Assar: Who later became a minister?

Raji: Who had been a minister on many occasions. He was a former

Minister of Agriculture, he was a former Minister of Labor, he was a former Minister of the Interior. He was an American educated technician, an immensely likable, straightforward, honest man who was the number two at the Imperial Organization for Welfare which the Princess presided over. I'll get the name of it right in a minute -- the Imperial Organization for Social Services, I think it was called. He and his wife -- and he was after the Princess the most senior. There was me and, I think, one or two others -- perhaps a clerk, I don't remember, and a kind of dame d'honor for the Princess -- a smallish party of five or six perhaps. And we flew from -- There were no commercial flights into Peking in those days. One had to take a special route which avoided countries that had close contact with the west. We flew in from Burma, I remember, and we were put up in some kind of a government guest house in Peking. Everything was immaculately clean --
[end of side one, tape three]

Raji: There was no Marlin Dietrisch descending a grand staircase and -- But there were two meetings and one or two dinners with Zhu Enlai who acted as the Princess's host. He himself had spent he said I believe, a number of years in Paris working in various capacities, but he was reluctant to speak in any language other than Chinese. But we had many interpreters in French and English and curiosly enough, Persian. And I remember that there was the official dinner at the Great Hall of the People, of course. There'd been an exchange of after dinner speeches beforehand, so they knew precisely what we were going to say, and we knew precisely what they were going to say. And of course, the theme of

the Princess's remarks was that from contact there could emerge dialogue, dialogue could lead to understanding and understanding could subsequently turn to friendship, and this is why we had taken the first step. The Zhu Enlai speech, I think, was publicly extremely polite but notable for lack of content. But during the personal discussions that the Princess had with Zhu Enlai --

Assar: Wait a minute. So one evening you go to this big party. The next day you go for a private meeting. Now, who is present at that meeting?

Raji: Well, Mr. Ansarii was present, I was present from the Iranian side and that was all. On the Chinese side there was Mr. Zhu Enlai, I think the foreign minister who was General Lee, but I may be wrong, a septuagenarian certainly if not an octogenarian. And again a kind of side observation was the presence of the spitoons by each chair. And it took us awhile to decipher what the particular function of these pots were. The discussions really ranged from what Iran could do to ease the way of China's entry into the United Nations given the problem of Taiwan and the Sino-Iranian distrust of the Soviet Union which was very topical at that time. And I remember at one particular stage when the Princess became rather spirited, she said that the Prime Minister Zhu Enlai ought to consider bringing in China into the United Nations despite the Taiwan problem. And Zhu Enlai was very quick to observe and remark that it was like asking the Princess in theoretical circumstances to ask for Iran to become a member of the United Nations but not include the Province of Azarbajan in it. And

then he did refer to the problem that we had had with the Province of Azarbajan with the Russians in 1946. And I don't think the Princess was quite prepared for that reply from Zhu Enlai. But there weren't any difficulties with the discussions. It was a very friendly, informative exercise basically in getting to know one another. There were sightseeing tours to Hang Chow, which I did think was very useful, and to Shanghai and Canton, which again struck me as a very attractive city in China. It was the time -- I haven't been to China since. But it was a time when sayings of Chairman Mao covered virtually every empty space that you could think of.

Assar: You mean it was during the Cultural Revolution?

Raji: It was during the Cultural Revolution during the last years of the Cultural Revolution.

Assar: Does the Cultural Revolution end in 1977, or when did you go there?

Raji: No. We went there -- I don't think it ended in 1977 quite honestly. I think it ended earlier. We were there, I think, in either 1970 or 1971. The exact date would be the year of ping pong diplomacy just before Kissinger went or shortly after he had actually gone. The American ping pond team was there. I don't know whether that -- But the sayings of Chairman Mao that even as we arrived at Peking Airport, there was a huge placard saying "death to the capitalists and all their running dogs," and I

wondered quite which we qualify as. [Chuckles] Do we care about this stuff or --

Assar: What was Zhu Enlai like? I mean, what kind of remarks did he make about the danger of Russia to both China and Iran?

Raji: Well, you must remember that it was a light weight visit. I mean, the Princess was basically there to break ice, not to do anything more than that. There was a Maoist faction in the Iranian Communist Movement which took great exception to the Princess's visit, and they issued a communique which I have kept really expressing astonishment at Chairman Mao's behavior in accepting the sister of an autocratic, capitalistic, imperialistic monarch who oppresses his own people etc., etc. But there weren't any tremendous revelations in terms of conversations which were conducted between the Princess and Zhu Enlai. He was an immensely well dressed man I thought, even though he was wearing his tunic. And he had a commanding presence, exquisite manners. And I heard from Bhutto subsequently that he was very much impressed by the Princess's punctuality of all things.

We also visited Peking University during our stay in China. And after a tour of the faculty, we sat down with the President of the University and his more senior aides, and the inevitable tea was served and discussion flowed. And it emerged that there were a number of -- I allowed myself to ask a few questions by that time to both as a matter of interest and also to inject a bit of spark into the occasion. And it emerged that the procedure for gaining admission into the University was to be able to present oneself as

a faithful and loyal member of the Communist Party and follower of the thoughts of Chairman Mao. When we asked supplementary questions about how this actually worked in practice, we were made to listen to a speech lasting no less than seventeen minutes, I remember, on the Gang of Four. But the general impression that one had during the visit -- or at least I certainly had during the visit -- was the degree of regimentation which existed in Chinese society. You could drive through, as we did, any hour of day or night, and you would see columns of people dressed up in their uniforms carrying red placards and the little red book, which was very fashionable in those days, heading into various directions. And I think it's probably right to say that this degree of regimentation on this scale has perhaps not existed in any society before or since. Subsequently, after we came back from China, and on one of his visits to Tehran, the Princess entertained Mr. Bhutto. Mr. Bhutto told us that -- He, of course, was much closer to Chairman Mao and the Chinese generally, and he had told us that one of the complaints of Chairman Mao was -- at least he'd said to Bhutto on a private occasion -- he said, "Mr. Bhutto, you must save me from all the Maoists." [Chuckles] I thought it was very nice.

Assar: What about the relationship with Bhutto. You've just said that he was a friend of the Princess's, and was he also a friend of the Shah, and what was the relationship, I mean, between them, between Pakistan. Of course, they were both part of the CENTO.

Raji: They were both part of CENTO, and I think because of the bonds of religion and culture, the Pakistanis, whoever they are if

they are in power, must see that they have good relations with Iran. It's very much the same situation in Afghanistan, for instance, particularly since in those days Iran was a rich oil producing nation, and of course, the Pakistanis were in need of assistance with their various programs. Bhutto was a personal friend of the Princess. They were very close.

Assar: How did that come about?

Raji: It had come about. I don't know. Mr. Bhutto had immense charm, and I think he had been responsible -- I think, I'm not quite sure about that, this was before my working days with the Princess. I think he'd arranged for the Princess to visit Sukarno in Indonesia. Anyway, there was -- They'd met in Europe; they'd met at the United Nations in New York several times. And of course, Bhutto was always in and out of Tehran. Bhutto was a man of enormous intellect and a very skilled debater. I think, in fact, perhaps he and Aba Eban of Israel are the two people that remain in my memory as the great debaters of -- I don't know how good Eban would be in a discussion, but he's certainly a marvelous deliverer of speeches. Bhutto was very good at debate and discussion. So while Bhutto was in Tehran and had a very close relationship with the Princess, I think he didn't hold the Shah in very great respect. He considered the Shah an important ally. He considered him as the leader of a country with which Pakistan had to be on friendly terms. But I would have thought that the mental composition of the two men couldn't have been more different. The Shah would have been on a closer wavelength to, say, Ayub Khan or

Zin al-Haq because of their military outlook on things than he would have been for the kind of European trained intellectual, which basically Bhutto was. Yes.

Assar: I believe that you also met Lyndon Johnson. Was it on a trip with the Princess or on some official capacity or --

Raji: No, this was on a visit to Washington with Hoveyda, and it was in the summer or early autumn of 1968. In fact, when Lyn Johnson was in his last months of the presidency, and I think there was already in fact the president-elect in Mr. Nixon. But the Ambassador to Iran at the time, someone called Armin Mayer, who was a close friend of both Iran and of Hoveyda's, had arranged this visit for Hoveyda. Hoveyda was then married, of course, to Leyla, his wife. And we went to Washington and stayed at their house. And the incident that remains in my memory is during the after dinner speech at the White House, where Hoveyda whom you must remember was basically French educated, paid a great tribute to LBG, which produced a number of raised eyebrows, and Lyndon Johnson said in the course of his remarks that when the founding fathers came to America, they decided on a republic rather than a monarchy, and what a good thing that was because it would have been possible for him otherwise to be referred to as -- instead of saying Shahanshah, he said cha cha cha. But these remarks appeared in the papers the next day, but they were all taken as --

Assar: Did you have a private talk with Lyndon Johnson?

Raji: I didn't. I was far too junior at that time. But Mrs. Hoveyda said after dinner that Lyndon Johnson played footsy footsy.

Assar: Footsy, footsy with her?

Raji: Kneesy kneesy I think actually.

Assar: Now if we can come back to when you became Ambassador in London. Of course, you have written your book -- a sort of day to day diary of events -- and it is at the time when the storm is gathering and ends in the final debacle -- Khomeini takeover. So you don't want to go over the material that is in your book, but perhaps you could say briefly why you were chosen. I particularly was astonished that you, not being really a career diplomat, not having spent much time at the Ministry, you should be given this post over the head of a lot of people who had been waiting for it -- or walking towards it for thirty years. And then I'll carry on from there, because I have one or two questions I've been trying to ask which are not covered in the book.

Raji: Yes. Well, the credit for that, if credit is the right word, goes entirely to Princess Ashraf, and I state that very clearly in the book. I would have been highly honored to have been given London, but I didn't honestly think that I would be. What I do say in the introduction to my book, is that after on and off twelve years with Hoveyda at the Prime Minister's office, I really was in for a change. And while I was a career diplomat who had

been politicized if you like by going across to the Prime Minister's office, I did want to go back to the Foreign Ministry. And I would have been very happy with an assignment in one of the Mediterranean countries. Greece would have been perfectly lovely. Rome would have been perfectly lovely. These themselves were really quite senior posts. I'm not saying that I deserved to have been given any of them, but there was the Hoveyda, Princess Ashraf connection, and that pulled weight. And after all, these things happen in other countries as well. I remember when I -- I was just forty when I came to London, but the British Ambassador to Washington a year later was even younger than I was. So connections, friendship --

Assar: Peter Jay, you mean. You're referring to Peter Jay who was the son-in-law of Mr. Callahan who then was the Prime Minister.

Raji: But the credit, as I say, it was the Princess's doing. But the Shah was not ill-disposed towards the idea, otherwise I wouldn't have been given the job.

Assar: Another thing which is interesting and since this really concerns the future generation who want to read about this period, is that you talk in the book about eventually one sees how the situation degenerates into chaos, and that chaos paves the way for Khomeini's takeover. What emerges as an independent reader? There are several things. One is the tremendous preoccupation that image building instead of the essential. In other words, the BBC, what the BBC says, their comments on the world status, the newspapers.

As long as you can silence them or Amnesty International it's all right. The problem is elsewhere, because the reflection and the image seems to be the most important. But now you being here, couldn't you have sort of pointed out saying these are just pickaties, they're totally unimportant. They could be changed overnight if certain measures were taken.

Raji: What you say is perfectly true, but you must remember that one worked for a master who is morbidly sensitive to criticism. I mean, the fact that the Private Eye every fortnight came up with a reference to the "Shit of Persia" would cause seizures at the palace in Tehran. One Iranian Ambassador to London actually proposed changing in retaliation the name of all public lavoratories in Iran to Winston Churchill. Luckily His Majesty vetoed the idea. And it was a sign, a measure of one's loyalty, if you like, to do something to silence a press which was being highly critical, which was being irreverent. I'm not sure that the image was not as important as you say it was. Why I think it was particularly important was because no one in Iran ever found the opportunity or the courage to go up to the Shah and say, "Look, this is what ails this land, and in my humble opinion, this is what you should do about it." There were no such people around. If there had been such people around initially, they hadn't survived. They hadn't survived politically. They'd been gotten rid of. The bearer of bad news had to be punished rather than the cause of the bad news. So if you like, what the western press said, over which the Shah had no control, was the only corrected echo which he would hear in terms of the policies that he was implementing in Iran. And what were they basically saying? They

were saying that we were buying too much arms, and we were mistreating our political opponents. That was really it. I certainly wouldn't have had the courage to go up to the Shah and say, "Look, there are other priorities than arms buying, and why don't we do something, for instance, about agriculture or something?"

Assar: But why do you bring the question of courage up as this? Again, you talk about the atmosphere of fear. Everything operated on the basis of fear. And you blame yourself. You make this kind of mia culpa about why didn't I have the courage to say and how humiliated you felt about being so abject in front of the boss. Why one doesn't expect people to be heroes or to act like Mr. Entezam or all the dissidents who were put away for twenty years. Nonetheless, you had reached by then the stage where you could easily have been a little bit bolder. All that could have happened to you is what has happened anyway -- that you would just retire to your very beautiful house in London and live happily ever after and play tennis. Nothing further could have happened to you, because after all, let us be fair to the Shah. There was opposition, and although they didn't get anywhere in the hierarchy, they lived. They were there. It wasn't like Khomeini who simply kills them all. I mean, after all there were Bazargan and Shapur Baktiyar and all these people, like Entezam who were put aside from the affairs of the country, but they weren't harmed. And while it wouldn't have -- I want you to understand if it would have forced you to go and queue for the dole, this wasn't the case. This simply would have meant that you would cease to be an ambassador, which happened anyway. So

couldn't you -- I mean, being the way you are, extremely intelligent and having a sort of vision of things, couldn't you have said, well, what do I lose? I wouldn't lose that much, but I would probably gain by saving the country, because from your book, one gets the impression you knew what the hell it was going to happen if things didn't change.

Raji: Well, you might have known. I certainly didn't know what was going to happen. I certainly couldn't have foreseen this kind of an outcome. The senario that one did envisage was that the Shah might have an accident one day. It was what the press described as a one bullet, single bullet regime -- that he would go. He might be assassinated. But I certainly did not foresee, despite your gracious compliments about my vision and things, I certainly could not foresee a situation in which the mullahs would become dominant in Iran. They never have been for our two thousand years of political written history. And I don't think anybody in the world was more surprised when an Islamic republic did come about than Khomeini himself -- for a number of coincidences that did take place. I say, "Why wasn't I bolder?" I would have been made to leave London and retired in safety at home, and this happened anyway. Again, this wasn't a viable alternative. If I could see that in a couple of years time I was going to lose my job anyway along with everybody else, along with Hoveyda and the Shah, etc., etc., I might have acted very differently. But I certainly didn't think that. I actually didn't even think that Khomeini would succeed until, say, the autumn of 1978. One could hear the deafening rumble of the religious elements, but the army was still

very much in charge. The middle classes were still very much in their place. The economy was quite sophisticated and functioning. And to think that all this would be abandoned and really the country to go back to eighth century Arabia, which is basically Khomeini's vision of what Iran should be and is, was to my mind quite inconceivable. The one or two occasions that I did meet the Shah, I tried to raise subjects which I knew were sensitive to him which would incur his wrath, if you like. But if you raised the subject and you could see the furrowing of the brow, if you could see a spark of anger in his visage, then you didn't pursue the matter. At least, I didn't pursue the matter. And I don't know. It's very difficult to get it right in circumstances like this when you're dealing with individuals who have not only the power over your job, but also the power of life over you. I wouldn't really have considered myself a better person if I'd fallen out with the Shah because of the boldness of one particular expression on one occasion.

End of Interview.

RAJI, PARVIZ

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