

Foundation for Iranian Studies

Program of Oral History

ALAN PRICE DAW

RESTRICTED

INTERVIEWEE: ALAN PRICE DAW

INTERVIEWER: WILLIAM BURR

SAN FRANCISCO: JULY 2, 1988

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IRANIAN - AMERICAN RELATIONS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Alan Price Daw

Oral History Research Office
Foundation for Iranian Studies

1992

PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of a series of tape-recorded interviews conducted for the Oral History Program of Foundation for Iranian Studies by William Burr with Alan Price Daw in San Fransisco in July 2, 1988.

Readers of this Oral History memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, narrator and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. Foundation for Iranian Studies is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein.

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PREFACE

The following oral history memoir is the result of one tape-recorded interview session with Alan Price Daw on July 2, 1988. The interview was conducted by William Burr in San Francisco, California.

This interview is one of a series on Iranian-American relations in the post-World War II era which were conducted as part of a joint project between the Oral History of Iran Archives of the Foundation for Iranian Studies and the Columbia University Oral History Research Office. Similar projects have been undertaken in England and France.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that he or she is reading a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Columbia University in the City of New York | New York, N. Y. 10027

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

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May 31, 1991

Mr. Alan Price Daw
693 Wisconsin
San Francisco, CA 94107

212
this
will
be
sent
now

Dear Mr. Daw:

In early January of this year we wrote to you concerning the transcript of your interview for the Foundation for Iranian Studies/Columbia University Oral History Research Office oral history project on American relations with Iran.

Essentially, that letter stated that if we did not receive the edited version of your transcript by March 8, 1991, we would proceed with processing and archiving the interview. As part of this process, we will do relatively minor editing: checking dates, names, etc... and clearing up stylistic problems. We will then index and abstract the interview and submit it in our Collection. Copies will also be held at the oral history archives of the Foundation in Washington, D.C. and at the Hoover Institute. The interview will be closed for five years, until April 1, 1996, unless an interested researcher receives your written permission to consult the transcript. If you prefer, we can open the interview immediately. If you do want us to open it now, please let us know.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me at (212) 854-2273 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Ronald J. Grele
Director

cc: Dr. Mahnaz Afkhani

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alan Price Daw served as a political Officer in the CIA Station in Tehran between 1968 and 1971, and from 1971 until 1974 worked at the Operation Directorate of the CIA, again on Iran. His recollections shed much light on Iranian politics between 1968 and 1974, on U.S. policy toward Iran, and on the way in which the U.S. gathered and analyzed information on Iran.

CORRECTIONS LIST

P.20	Irans Amini (?) should be Iranzamin
P.25	Golpaigani should be Golpayegani
P.25	Karenky should be Karansky
P.25	Marshi should be Mar'ashi
P.25	Shariatmadari should be Shari'atmadari
P.25	Talegani should be Taleqani
PP.26 and 62	Mujahidin-i-Khalq should be Mojahedin-e Khalq
P.26	Bereshti should be Beheshti
P.26	Kahmenei should be Khamene'i
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PP.34-36	Shia should be Shi'i
P.39	Ernest should be Earnest
PP.43 and 86	Mujahadin should be Mujahedin
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VA

Interviewee: Allan Price Daw

Session #1

Interviewer: William Burr

San Francisco, California

July 2, 1988

Q: The following interview with Allan Price Daw by William Burr took place in San Francisco, California on July 2, 1988. The interview is part of a joint effort by the Columbia University Oral History Research Office and the Foundation for Iranian Studies.

Mr. Daw, can you tell me where you were born and raised?

Daw: Born in Salt Lake City in 1930. Lived there four years. Seven years in Portland, Oregon. Then Cincinnati, Ohio. Graduated from high school in '47 and then really never went home again. College at the College of Wooster. Major in geology and political science. Three years in the Army, some of it in Europe. And then to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy for two and a half years and then down to Washington.

Q: When were you in the Army?

Daw: What was it? '51 to '54.

Q: And were you in Europe?

Daw: The last year and a half in Europe.

Q: What were your duties in the Army?

Daw: Well, I was a second lieutenant, which means that you are all things to all men. I worked in an intelligence corps office in West Germany at a time when the Soviets were quite active in that part of the world.

Q: And then from the Army you went back to Fletcher?

Daw: Went back to Fletcher directly out of the Army, spent two and a half years there.

Q: And you studied-- ?

Daw: International law. Economics, political theory, diplomatic history.

Q: And then you went to Washington from there?

Daw: Directly.

Q: And you were with which agency?

Daw: I was with the Agency until '71, when I came back to the United States from Iran.

Q: Now how did you come to join the Agency?

Daw: My brother-in-law happened to be-- had a number of friends in the Agency. I met them. I had planned to go in the Department of State. Had a love of my life who was in State at the time and through her met a lot of people in the Department of State, while I was finishing up at Fletcher. And frankly, I found people in State more concerned with their appearance and their impression on people than they were of the substance of foreign affairs. That rather turned me off. And when a recruiter called me from the Agency, I said, yes, I'll talk with you. I found it interesting. I talked to a number of other people and decided that was where things were being done and I liked the attitude and intensity of the people involved and decided that the Agency was a much more interesting place to work than the State Department.

Q: What kind of training did you receive when you joined?

Daw: Well, the normal, the whole gamut of what one is supposed to know about how one goes about getting other government's secrets.

Q: And what were your first assignments in the years before you ended up in Tehran?

Daw: Well, I was in Khartoum for a couple of years, the garden spot of the world. And I was in Afghanistan, three years in Kabul. A couple of years-- well, one year in Karachi, two years in Islamabad, and then Tehran.

Q: What was your general range of duties?

Daw: Well, the whole gamut. I did economic work and political work and a little consular work. On the side. I was not a consular officer. I did some work, simply subbing for others.

Q: You did economic and political reporting?

Daw: Yes.

Q: Now how was it that you were assigned to the station in Tehran?

Daw: Well, I really couldn't tell you that. I was given an option and that was one of the options and I took it. I spoke some Persian, having been in Kabul, since that's a Persian speaking country as well. So I presume it was the logical extension of the tour in Kabul.

Q: What was your range of duties? What kind of duties did you have when you were in Tehran?

Daw: Well, the range of duties of any political officer, the object being to represent the United States there, reflect American policy and American interests and the nature of the American society on the one hand, and to interpret the same kind of things to the U. S. government, in respect both to the Iranians and to the other third country governments represented there.

Q: So you did internal reporting?

Daw: Certainly. Internal and external. Tehran was the center for a great many foreign governments at the time, who had representation in various forms. The Israelis, for example, had a mission. It was a very-- was and remains a very critically important country for a lot of reasons. Geopolitically and oil and the Gulf and the whole set of issues that surround that part of the world, and a lot of governments saw it in those terms and had substantial missions there. So our interests were certainly more than just Iranian politics, economics, sociology, and so forth. They involved also interest in the attitudes and policies of other governments, toward us, toward Iran, toward the region.

Q: Now the station chief of that-- was that Alan Conway? Or had he already left?

Daw: No. He was not here when I was there. I don't know that he was stationed there.

Q: I'm not quite sure myself, but that's the impression I got. Was it Arthur Callahan then? Or Brommell? I'm not quite sure about the order.

Daw: Let's stay off that kind of thing, if you don't mind.

Q: Fine. Well, just in terms of generalities, how much interaction did the station chiefs of that period have with the Shah? Did they meet with him pretty routinely on a fairly close basis?

Daw: Well, I don't really know, because that was not part of my brief. That was not part of my various--

Q: So you didn't pick up that kind of information when you were there? Okay. I've read that generally the Agency had about ten or so officers in Iran at any given period during the sixties and seventies. Is that pretty much true in numbers?

Daw: Well, again, I don't really want to go into that. That is not something that I feel free to discuss.

Q: Okay, fine. Now you arrived-- what year did you arrive in Iran?

Daw: '68.

Q: Do you recall the months or the season?

Daw: September.

Q: So this is towards the close of the Johnson administration? How would you describe the general approach that the administration took towards the Shah in Iran around this stage of things? Around this time?

Daw: Well, I think if you're talking about the White House or American policy as such, the successive Ambassadors-- Armin Meyer and Douglas MacArthur II-- I think really believed their speeches, that this was the island of tranquillity in a sea of troubles. This was our great Middle Eastern ally. This was a bastion of Western interests, something to support, something to nurture and care for. There were other views in terms both of the ideal government that could have existed in Iran and in terms of the durability, stability of the Shah's government as such.

But the basic position of the United States government-- that is, as a policy-- was that the Shah, while it wasn't that he could do no wrong, that he was certainly the best thing that anyone could see there. From the way they looked at it, he was stable, his government was durable, it represented a good, close working ally in a very dangerous part of the world.

So I don't think anyone seriously contemplated an alternative to the Shah in terms of support by the United States.

Q: Now, of course, Nixon comes in several months later. Was there strong continuity from Johnson to Nixon?

Daw: There was strong continuity from, I think, the time that the Brits and the Americans worked together to put the Shah back in power. I don't think there was any deviation from that of any significance through all those years until '79.

I might say the Carter policy tended to be more critical of the negative aspects of the Shah's government than any of his predecessors, but even there there was no serious question about American support to the Shah and his government. There was question about some of the activities of the government, some of the weak aspects of the government, and this was very much part of Jimmy Carter's human rights-- the reflection of his views on human rights spread on an international canvas.

But was he going to withdraw American support if this or if that? Absolutely not.

Q: Now without going into the names or the question of numbers, which I asked earlier, I've read that in general the CIA, the station in Iran, mostly focused on the question of the Soviet role in the country, on Soviet agents and so forth, and that was the preeminent interest, from which Richard Helms has told me, and from what I've read in various books. Is that pretty much a fair characterization?

Daw: Yes, I think so.

Q: So given the net parameters, how many people actually worked or spent a fair amount of time on Iran as such, the internal affairs of Iran?

Daw: Oh, I think it was a minority, a subsidiary, definitely secondary interest of the U. S. government. It's a classic responsibility, not just to the Agency, but of every government institution, to keep abreast, to the degree they could, of issues like political stability, threats to government, economic problems arising, this kind of-- and economic conditions, for example.

But certainly our major concern was the Soviets and for a lot of very valid historical reasons, which have not yet played out.

Q: Were there any people at the station around the time you were there-- you said you had some Farsi-- besides yourself, were there others who spoke Farsi?

Daw: Many. To varying degrees of fluency. I certainly was not a fluent Persian speaker. I had not had any formal training in Persian, but I do like languages and picked it up fairly well.

Q: Were any of the officers Iranian specialists as such? I mean, had a deep knowledge and background in studying Iran as a society?

Daw: There were a number of people. I wouldn't say a number of people, I would say two or three people in the Embassy who could be considered Iranian specialists, both by temperament, personal interest and training, who were keenly interested in Iran as Iran, Cyrus the Great, et cetera, a genuine deep interest in Iranian culture, history, sociology, politics.

Were there enough? Isn't that the question? Hell, no, there weren't enough. There never are. It's very expensive to train an officer in a foreign language. And this foreign language, of course, was effective basically in only two countries, Iran and Afghanistan, to a certain degree in the Gulf and other spots. But fundamentally we had inadequate Persian language capability, inadequate area knowledge. But that's true everywhere. Probably the only place I'm aware of where we ever had an intense, deep

understanding of a country was Germany, and that was because we had so many people in Germany-- we, the U. S. government-- after the war, and they liked it and they stayed and they were there for years and years and years.

It is difficult to get someone to live in the Middle East over an extended period of time, with a family. And so the whole upshot of this is that Persian studies certainly don't produce the number of participants, let's say people who are keenly interested in Iran or Afghanistan, as France or Germany or Britain or Scandinavia. It's very nice living there. It's not terribly nice living in the Middle East, although Iran certainly was a lovely place to live.

So we didn't have enough Persian speakers, we didn't have enough area knowledge. And now you're talking about the professional level of foreign representation. When you talk about Washington, then, of course, it's a whole other ball game. How many people in Washington had twenty minutes for an intense discussion of what was happening in Iran? Vietnam was going on, et cetera. The U. S. government's congenital problem of throwing more than one ball in the air was certainly true there in Iran in that period.

Q: That's interesting. Now various histories of U.S.-Iran relations, and various articles and books talk about the CIA's fairly close relationship with SAVAK, the Iranian intelligence agency of this period. How did you evaluate SAVAK as an

organization?

Daw: Well, SAVAK was brutal. Again, in historical context and relative to the rest of the Middle East, not particularly brutal. I used to tell some of my friends who were bitterly critical of the Shah's government and of SAVAK, and for good reason, that they ought to spend six months in Baghdad, or six months in Pakistan under Bhutto, or six months in Kabul under Daoud. Or try the Egyptian Director-General of Intelligence.

SAVAK was brutal. People died in its prisons, no question about that. They had kind of the-- what shall I say, the French phrase, the petite fonctionnaire, but armed with political power. They were very, very aggressive and very pompous and very egoistic in the sense that they really had no challenge, legal or otherwise, from anyone. So they had a lot of power.

But it is, I think, useful to compare SAVAK's activities, whether or not it was ubiquitous, as it attempted to portray itself-- whether or not it was unusually brutal, horizontally in space and vertically in time. The Persians have never been very gentle with people who are opposed to a sitting government. And the rest of the Middle East was a very, very tough place, considerably tougher in my view than Iran.

So SAVAK has to have a context. Historical relative to other countries and historical relative, for example, to what the mullahs have done, since they've come in. So bad? Yes. As bad

as portrayed, not in my view, not from what I had known, living in the Middle East.

Q: How able do you think SAVAK was as a political intelligence organization?

Daw: SAVAK partook of what I think a lot of us felt was an Iranian cultural trait, and that is, unlike the Afghans, you'd ask an Afghan what time it was-- a classical joke-- you'd ask an Afghan what time it was, and he'd say, "Why do you ask?" In Iran the answer would be, "What time do you want it to be?" That is unfair, because the Persians, once comfortable, are much more honest and direct than that. But culturally, in general terms, the Iranians tended to answer in the way they thought you wanted to hear, with whatever it was they thought you wanted them to say. And the implication of that with SAVAK was, in my view, that they told the Shah and his government what they thought he wanted to hear. When you have a title of Shahanshah Arya Mehr, the Light of the Aryans, the King of Kings, that tends to color what SAVAK had to say.

So I don't believe that SAVAK was as direct or as honest, and without in any way making an invidious comparison, although I guess they all are, so did the U. S. government in Iran report to Washington generally in terms more favorable to the Shah's government than, in fact, they should have. One could say, for example-- as I think Jim Bill and Jim Cottam and a number of

others said-- it's not as good as you say, it's not as stable as you say, it is not as open as you say, there are problems here. And really basically no one in Washington wanted to hear that. Invidious comparison, yes. I don't mean to carry that too far, but people tend to report whatever they're doing. Well, put it another way, there are very few directly honest people.

Q: They sort of adopt the party line, whatever it happens to be?

Daw: I think so. It's certainly easier, isn't it? Anyway, it's in that sense that I think SAVAK's reporting was skewed.

Q: I'm not sure how much you can go into this, but how closely did the Agency work with SAVAK?

Daw: I don't really know. I don't really know. That was not part of my brief. My understanding is that SAVAK had a great deal of suspicion of the Americans. After all, we seemed unable to keep ourselves from saying, look how wonderful we are, we can put a government in and take a government out at will. And I think that concerned them. They are also a very, very proud people, borders on arrogance. And for good reason. They have a terribly impressive cultural history. I would certainly be proud to be an Iranian.

So I think they probably viewed the Americans with

considerable suspicion, considerably greater suspicion than the Americans thought they were viewed. I can remember an ambassador getting up and giving an address to some newly-arrived embassy employees, in effect saying, the Shah and I, or I and the Shah. We had our own problems with arrogance. We still do. Does that make sense?

Q: Yes, that's very interesting. From what you're saying, it sounds like the Agency was pretty much-- compartmentalization of functions within the station, that there wasn't a lot of-- you stayed within your compounds, within your assignment? You didn't really learn about what was going on?

Daw: No, I don't think that's true. I think it is understandable to you, I'm sure, that if I were intimately aware of relationships between the U. S. government and SAVAK, I probably wouldn't discuss them in any depth.

I think anyway, your question is relations with SAVAK-- I think our relations with SAVAK were probably paralleled by or government to government relations, in that we thought they loved us, so to speak, or however one would put that, when, in fact, it was far from the case. And I think the people who worked directly with SAVAK knew that. I think the rest, who had managerial or policy responsibilities, perhaps did not know that at any useable depth. There's a difference between knowing and knowing. That is, knowing as a fact a stream of information and

knowing as a reality, that is, the meaning and implications of it. And I think we chose as a government to know things, but to back away from their meanings when they were unpleasant. Or maybe unpleasant isn't the right word. The U. S. government has one hell of a time-- I presume it's common to all governments-- the U.S. government has one hell of a time accepting, shall we say, harsh realities. Because if you know of them and you accept them as ground proof-- that is, reality-- then you have to do something about it. And doing something about it is always the rub. So that if the U.S. government accepted as a reality that the Shah's government had elements of corruption, that members of his family were involved in genuinely nefarious activities, that the intellectual group-- the universities, say-- in general terms were opposed to an autocratic government, that the Shah's sister was involved in prostitution or dope or kickbacks from the various merchants in town-- if they really accepted that as a reality, then presumably they would have had to do something about it. If they felt the Shah's government was unstable, they would have had to do something about it.

What would you have done? And this is always the rub. It is not that there is a problem. Everybody knows there's a problem at one level or another. The question is how serious is that problem, and if it's serious, what are you going to do about it in the context of all your other interests in Iran. Okay? It comes out along that line. And that's true everywhere, isn't it?

What are we going to do about Haiti? What are we going to do

about Panama? What are we going to do about Brazil shipping arms to Iraq? What are we going to do about the Chinese sending missiles to Iran? Everybody knows about it, but what are you going to do about it?

Q: Now some have argued that during the course of the 1960's the Israeli intelligence organization, Mosad, became relatively influential, or became more influential with SAVAK than the CIA had been, say, during the 1950's. To what extent was that true?

Daw: Oh, I have no idea what Mosad's influence was. There was a very impressive group of Israelis in Iran. They had a number of different functions. They were not officially recognized as a mission obviously. Basically, throughout the Middle East, at least in my experience, my view, my opinion, the difference between the Israelis and the Americans was that for the Israelis, they viewed it as life and death. For us, we viewed it as this invulnerable bastion of democracy, with economic leadership of the free world and all those phrases that go with it. And if we win, we win. If we lose, we lose. There was a great difference in the levels of intensity and concern. In the intelligence field, that makes a great difference. In the governmental field, that makes a great difference. All right?

So, yes, I think the Israelis had significant influence. They had a very impressive group of people there. Very

impressive. Individual by individual. And in the same sense that the Israelis will go after a terrorist, as they did in North Africa a few months ago, you know what would happen if we did that. The U.S. Congress would absolutely explode, because here we were going out and assassinating people. Even though those people had either had or were about to assassinate American officials, for example. We just play the game by different rules. You're not Mike Tyson. If you've grown up in his neighborhood and lived his life, perhaps you would be. It's that kind of difference.

Q: When you were stationed in Tehran, did you develop professional contacts with various Iranian citizens, Iranian nationals?

Daw: Absolutely. Why not?

Q: Can you talk about some of the people that you got to know in the government? What their views were?

Daw: I knew quite a wide spectrum of people of various walks of life. I found-- well, you know, these are generalizations, but those who worked in the government, towed the government line for the most part. There were a very few who were outspoken in terms of criticizing elements of the Shah's administration, which were vulnerable, about which reasonable criticism could be made.

There were very few of those. That doesn't mean that there were not Persians in the administration who were critical of it, but they were not actively and vocally critical of it. In terms of those who opposed the government, everything considered, overall this government should be changed, they were very careful what they said. SAVAK was a reality. It was something of a bugaboo, but also certainly a reality. And they were very careful what they said, but were critical, and the more you knew them and the more they came to the point where they believed that they were safe in expressing their honest views, the more critical they became. That also is true of some of the people in the government, but less so, for obvious reasons.

Q: Can you mention any names here of some of those who you had--

Daw: No, I don't think I want to do that.

Q: Now of your Iranian contacts that you developed when you were in Tehran, were many of them from the old nationalist opposition?

Daw: Yes, a number of them. A good number of them.

Q: Had they pretty much abandoned any political activity as such?

Daw: No. No, they maintained their liaison with their

colleagues, their fellows. Those who were-- how to put this-- those who were actively engaged in the process of overthrowing the Shah's government-- or replacing it, overthrowing is perhaps too strong a verb, but wished a different government and were working toward that end, really wanted very little to do with the Americans for pretty obvious reasons. They constituted the major support to the Shah's government and it would take quite an act of faith to sustain a relationship with an American.

The Shah did not relish the idea of Americans maintaining contact with opposition figures. My personal view is that it is ludicrous for the U. S. government to go into a country and accept a denial of contact with anybody in the country we wish to talk to, under any circumstances, other than clandestine or that kind of thing, covert. I think the U. S. government is demented in going into a country and accepting a ruler's order that you not be in touch with this person or that group, and any Ambassador who accepts that ought to be pulled out, at least that day, if not earlier.

However, we did accept that. We do accept that all over the world. We still do, to too great a degree, in my view. Because the world doesn't consist of sitting governments. The world consists of sitting governments who will not be sitting long. At least that's history the last thirty, forty years and probably the last three or four thousand. Okay?

In other words, we don't seem willing to run significant risks. There was a group of Americans at Irans Amini (?), the

joint Iran-American cultural center, who I think were the only people in the U. S. establishment in Iran who consistently-- kind of under the guise of culture and reading and so forth-- developed truly wonderful contacts and friendships within Iran. They did not have an intelligence role or a political role and perhaps that made it easier. Or made it possible even.

But by and large, all over the world, if a government says, you will not have consistent, sustained contact with opposition figures, the Americans rolled over and said Yes, sir. And I think that is insane.

Q: Now were there orders from the Shah or a tacit understanding that this would be the case?

Daw: I don't know that. It was very obvious that the embassy was very nervous about anyone who established and maintained contacts with the opposition, because obviously it had been expressed, "well, maybe we shouldn't do that."

Q: Were you encouraged to pursue those kinds of contacts or was it something you were just free to do on your own?

Daw: It was part of my responsibility. It was also certainly part of my interest. I learned several languages when I was overseas and to the degree humanly possible spent as much time with various people in the country as possible. And a number of

people in the embassy did in whatever capacity. That was always kind of a thin ice business that was not particularly welcomed, although the understanding that flowed from that was welcome.

Q: So you would prepare reports pretty routinely on your discussions?

Daw: That's what we're there for. That's what a report is. But again, if you spend an evening with an Iranian or a group of Iranians or anyone, in an intense, serious discussion of a number of things, how long would your report be? Fifty pages? A hundred pages? Two hundred pages? No. A couple of pages. So there's a great distillation process that takes place, isn't there? Has to be. If you were writing a paper based on an interview with me that ran four days, how long would it be? Back to the issue of transcripts.

Q: Exactly. What was your impression of the extent of the opposition to the Shah at this stage, the late sixties, early seventies? Based on your contacts with various personalities in the government and outside of government.

Daw: Well, there was enough raw material lying around, enough people and groups who were opposed to the Shah's policies or his monopoly of power, which is also very much part of the Persian game, so that when the mullahs, the ulama, pulled themselves

together, and when Khomeini gave them leadership-- said "the king has no clothes"-- a lot of people jumped on that bandwagon. They had been-- their attitudes towards the Shah's government were negative and critical, either on a personal or generic basis. There were a lot of flaws, a lot of things to criticize. The tremendous dislocation of population that occurred in Iran, with the countryside moving into Tehran-- you know, compare Kabul, compare Cairo, compare Damascus, it's happening all over the Third World. The cities are drowning in unskilled people. That was a source of great perturbation. unhappiness, poverty. And those people more than any other group in the country were susceptible to the influence and outspoken criticism by the ulama, specifically Khomeini, but many, many others. There was a running feud between the government and the mullahs as such. There were a few tame mullahs, but by and large the leadership of the religious groups were opposed to the Shah on religious and secular grounds.

I don't think it is unimportant that Khomeini, for example, was-- Khomeini and others became outspoken critics of the government, after the government seized their lands in the land reform period. That represented a real clash. I don't know much about Central or South America, but I would imagine that if the government of X seized the Catholic Church's lands that this would produce a more strident opposition to that government from the clergy. So I really wonder sometimes what that-- the degree to which that played a role in the vociferous public criticism of

the Shah. You'd know the theological argument, that the Shah is not the legitimate ruler without the blessings of the ulama, and that is very much a Shia tradition and an Iranian tradition. That is, within the mullah group. It had nothing to do with secular government, and God knows the Shah's government was relatively secular.

But the outspoken criticism of the Shah gave those who were unhappy with that government for a variety of reasons grounds for saying yes, that's right, this government is a mess, it should be replaced. Again, all comparisons are invidious, but you do remember Jimmy Carter's campaign in the United States, leading up to his election. "Throw the rascals out. Washington's no damn good. What you want is an honest, decent man like me." And the American people said, yes, that's exactly what we want. It turned out that that isn't what they wanted, but that's another question.

What was it Emerson said? "Beware of what you wish, you'll get it."

Okay. So your question was, was there opposition? There was a great deal of opposition, but it was inchoate, unorganized, kind of indiscriminate, not necessarily based on reality. That is, again I used to say to some of my friends, "Why don't you go to Baghdad for six months? Why don't you go to Karachi for six months? Go to Kandahar for six months. Go to Aleppo for six months. Go to Alexandria for six months. And then come back and

tell me what you think. Economically, politically, the issues of repression." And so on.

Q: How much did you know about Khomeini and his influence around the time that you were in Iran?

Daw: Well, Khomeini was known as the man who pointed the finger. There were many other prominent clergymen. Golpaigani, Talegani, Marshi, Qomi to a certain extent. Even Shariatmadari, who-- yes and no. He was critical, but not outspoken. Many of the leading religious figures, some of whom were imprisoned and killed by SAVAK, were outspoken in their criticism, but they were in Iran and that made a lot of difference. Khomeini was free to say anything without going to Evan Prison. Many of the ayatollah who stayed in the country were critical, and the Friday sermons by the-- not the , because he was a government selected leader, but many of the others were consistently critical of the government, and the government knew it and tried various means to defuse this and divert it and dilute it, while all the time the mullahs were organizing at a different level of criticism, and that might characterize the whole country.

You asked earlier about the National Front people. Most of those were middle-class intellectuals. It isn't fair to compare them to the supporters of Karenky, because things were different. But they tended to be armchair critics, those who would not risk

their lives. And as often happens, they were passed on the left. That is, they were passed politically by those who were willing to give up their lives and use violence to achieve their political ends, because they were not basically willing to use violence. They were a more intellectualized middle class, nonetheless a very talented group of people in many dimensions, who ironically were infected by an idea of political liberty by the West, and in many, many cases by the United States. There was an era when the children of the middle class went to France or in some cases to England and to a certain extent to Germany for education. And they came back, graduates of Columbia and New York University and the University of Utah and so forth. And they came back and said, gee, political freedom is a great idea, let's have it here. But very few of them were willing to risk their lives. People who were willing to risk their lives were the Mujahidin-i-khalq and several of the other groups. The pure religious groups, the Marxist religious groups, perhaps characterized by Khamenei, or-- who was the fellow who was in Hamburg? Bereshti. That may not be a fair conclusion. He was a very crafty politician and a man of great talent and wit and brains and guile.

Q: Did you know him?

Daw: No. I never met him. A very impressive man. The

majahidin certainly knew who were they were going after when they killed him.

But those who were willing to risk their lives and go up to Saikal and up in the mountains and train and learn how to use weapons and have aliases and safe houses and went abroad for training and carried Khomeini's tapes back into the country and spoke in the catacombs. It's almost like the early Christian era in a sense. They were illegal and their activities were illegal, and they knew it. But they assassinated government officials, they assassinated Americans. They organized, they trained themselves. They used arms, weapons, explosives, aliases, safe houses, the whole panoply of underground activity, which then, of course, carried on into the mullah era, when the mujahidin split with the mullahs.

But these were the people who passed the national frontiers, because they were willing to do, not just to say.

Q: I've read-- this has been suggested by various writers-- that to a great extent the CIA depended upon SAVAK for information on the guerrilla organizations. How true was that comment?

Daw: Moderately so. Depended upon-- I guess that's the thing I have trouble with. If you depended on SAVAK, to know anything about the country, you were in trouble, because-- think a minute.

Why would SAVAK tell any foreign government, let alone the U. S.

government, which was so much involved in supporting the Shah's government, that they had a critical problem with terrorists.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE; BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE:

Q: You were saying?

Daw: Why would SAVAK tell a foreign government, let alone one whose support was deemed, I assume, to be critical in various fields-- that, my God, gentlemen, we have a terrible problem here, our government may not survive. Or we have a significant and active, violent dissident movement in this country. So if you depended on SAVAK for a realistic picture of Iran, where would you be? If you depended on the inspector-general at the Pentagon to conduct an investigation of illegal bribery in contracts, I don't think you'd get very far. All right? So you have a biased witness, is what it amounts to. It may be that Washington thought it was dependent on SAVAK, but that would be simply because they refused to accept other information to the contrary. After all, if the ambassador is getting up repeatedly and giving his island of tranquillity in a sea of trouble speech, which all ambassadors did ad nauseum while I was there, how then could you accept information that said, this is not an island of tranquillity, this is part of the sea of troubles. It's a bit like the expert anthropologist or archaeologist, who writes his

life work on the fact that folsom points are nine thousand years old, only to find one at 30,000 B.C., and have his book destroyed. He'd fight to the last moment before he said, geez, I was wrong, tear up my life work and throw it away. It's not quite a fair analogy, but all analogies are flawed, and that is too.

The problem is that we seemed politically committed to the Shah's government as impeccable. At least we told the Time-Life group when they traveled. We said it in speeches in Washington at dinners and so on. And granted, hyperbole for public consumption. The fact remains that the U. S. government did not want to look at any wrong that had significant dissidence. Let alone at the reasons why there was dissidence, because I believe, going back to what we were saying earlier, if they believed that, they would have had to take some action.

Q: So Time-Life traveled to Iran and you gave briefings to them? To their writers?

Daw: I think that was in the 1970s, the whole time. You know the business leaders. But it wasn't just that. It was an endless series of speeches to whomever.

Q: Was that that investor conference that Life and Time magazine-- ?