And, of course, once or twice people absconded with money. Then the whole thing went back to nothing. But there were situations where these cooperatives really worked.

So anyway, that's my analysis of land reform. And I think there has been a lot of pro and con reporting over time. I've read Lampton's books. I haven't finished Hooglund's books, but, you know, there are pro's and con's to it. Everyone has their own way of analyzing it, but I think some people are a little bit unrealistic in terms of how they see land reform going ahead and they want too much organization. So I think there's got to be a political impetus there to go ahead with it before all the i's are dotted and the t's crossed.

Q: That's interesting. Now when you were stationed in Tabriz in 1961-1962 -- and most of 1963-- ?

Bolster: Most of 1963.

Q: How much contact did you have with the Embassy in Tehran? Did you visit it from time to time?

Bolster: Oh, yes. We made frequent trips down to the capital. We went on pouch trips where we carried classified pouches down to the Embassy, and we had Embassy visitors come up to see us. Some Embassy officers would come on sort of familiarization trips. Obviously, being up in Tabriz, it was a big occasion to

go to Tehran and go to the commissary and buy food that you couldn't get in Tabriz and bring it back. Whoever went down would bring back stuff for other people, packed in dry ice. You know, frozen meats and things that you couldn't get up there. So there was a lot of back and forth.

The reporting situation was such that we reported directly to the Department on many issues, with an "info copy to Tehran". But we also took part in certain collective analyses. We would exchange information. We would know that the Embassy was preparing a report on some subject and they would be asking our views on various aspects. We would send those in and they would become part of it and they'd be sort of a country view from the Embassy. Then they would include sub-sections from each of the consulates, how things looked from their vantage point.

So I think it was a very good system, because if you go too far one way or the other, it's bad. I've seen both situations. I've seen where the Embassies won't let the Consulates say anything without going through them.

Q: Over-centralization, I guess.

Bolster: Over-centralization and a control of thought, which I think avoids spontaneity and frankness in reporting, because if you can't report directly, if everything just gets sent into the Embassy and then eventually put together in some package and sent on, you know, there's no urgency of it. But if you have your own

chance to report things, then you put a lot more care into it, because you know that's going to be in the Department of State as Tabriz dispatch, So-and-So, and you're on the line. If your name is there and you're the writer and something turned out to be wrong or misanalyzed, then you're the one who's name is on the line. I think that's a much more productive attitude to have, because if the Embassy says everything must come to us first, then whatever the Embassy thinks is going to be the view that goes to Washington. Because the Consulates may have quite different views, but it never gets through the combined reporting.

Q: Did you see the cable traffic between Tehran and Washington when you were at Tabriz?

Bolster: Yes.

Q: It was routed to you?

Bolster: Yes, but often after the fact. I mean, the cable would go into Washington and then we would get copies in the pouch. But there had to be these very often pouch trips, where there was a few at the Embassy coming up to see us or a copy going down there. We traded off.

Q: Were you pretty well apprised as to what was going on in

Tehran, with Ambassador Holmes [Julius] and so forth?

Bolster: Yes.

Q: You met Holmes?

Bolster: Yes. Whenever I would go down, I would be invited to the Embassy staff meeting and any issue that came up be invited to comment. I was very impressed with Holmes. A tremendous guy.

Q: What were your impressions on him? Can you elaborate a little bit?

Bolster: Well, he was extremely open. He took the view that the Embassy was supposed to bring ideas upward to him, to supplement what he was doing. He was seeing the Shah. He was seeing all the top officials. He was making his own assessment of things, but he expected the reporting of the Embassy to be generated from the bottom up and expected the Political Section to come forward with views on things, which they would ground on the material they were producing, based on interviews and press coverage and their own analysis. And then he would decide what flavor to put in the final conclusions, but he depended very much on his staff.

There was a good feeling, because everyone felt they really

were a part of the team and whatever they said could be listened to. I had the feeling as a very junior guy-- I mean, I was just a Vice- Consul coming in from Tabriz, but when I was in one of these Embassy meetings and Holmes would go around the table, he would say, "Arch, what's happening up in Azerbaijan?" Or "What about so-and-so?" He really took the time to listen. So, you know, you felt like you were part of the team. Pretty nice feeling.

Q: How effective was he as ambassador? From your vantage point?

Bolster: I think he was extremely good, because, you know, the Shah was an imposing figure, even back at that time. Obviously, as his country became more wealthy, he became even more imperious, eventually crowning himself and all these things that you know about. But even back then, in this period, 1961-1963, you know, he'd come back with CIA help in 1953 and now this was-- what? Eight years later. Although he was a little bit, I think, always less at home in domestic politics than he was in international politics, still he was very forceful.

I always joked about it, because I felt that his routine with every new Ambassador was to attack. You know, from the moment the Ambassador walked in. He would always have a list of complaints, and as soon as the new Ambassador would come in to present credentials and have his first meeting, the Shah would

point to this list. "Why is this happening? Why are you doing this? Why? Why? What's happening here?" You know, just sort of putting the Ambassador on the defensive right from the start. And if you weren't careful, you could become just a conduit for every view that the Shah had. You know, just going back to Washington-- "we've got to do this and this and this and this, because these are things that are upsetting the Shah this month."

And Holmes didn't play that game. Holmes listened to what he was told. Then he would come back and say, "Well, Your Majesty, we'll see what we can do about that, but this other thing, we've got to talk about that." And he would give his views and his side of things, and I think that was important, for the Shah to have a bit of give and take.

Unfortunately his successors, several in a row, did not have that same filter. You know, whatever the Shah wanted was all reported back to Washington in sort of breathless fashion and, "He wants thus and thus and thus. We've got to do all these things." I think it was bad, because the Shah got then in this habit of spouting a list of complaints and always putting the American Ambassador on the defensive.

Q: And off balance. But with Holmes that wasn't such a problem?

Bolster: It wasn't such a problem. Partly it was Holmes's

experience in the past. He was a senior military officer and had worked in the World's Fair preparation. Had been a lot of things. But his personality was just-- you know, very firm with people. Willing to listen to your side of things, but not going to be just overwhelmed by whatever you said. He took it aboard, analyzed it, and it was a very good give and take. At whatever level you were. As I say, as a junior officer I was impressed, because he'd listen to me just as intently as he listened to the Political Conselor, if I was in a meeting, a staff meeting, and ask some questions.

Q: He was in Tabriz part of the time, Ambassador Holmes?

Bolster: Yes. But I wouldn't be able to tell you how many times. There was a lot of pressure to stay in Tehran. Always something going on. You know, visiting dignitaries from State and royal audiences all the time.

Q: Who were some of the other officials at the Embassy that you would deal with when you were working out of Tabriz? Who were some of the other people on Holmes's staff that you got to work with or got to know?

Bolster: Well, I would work with any one of the counselors. I knew them, but I didn't have a great deal of contact, because the Consul would be interacting more with the Political Section Chief

or the Economic Section Chief. I would on occasion obviously and they were seeing my reporting and so on, but it wasn't that direct a channel.

We did have a person functioning as a Consular Coordinator, who would--

Q: Sort of a liaison?

Bolster: Yes, a liaison with all the consulates, to find out what our plans were for reporting, and in turn tell us the kind of reporting that Washington and the Embassy might like to have.

Q: Who was that?

Bolster: [Laughs] Well, I was afraid you were going to ask, because I can't dredge up the name right now.

Q: It's okay. Did people from Washington come and visit Tabriz? Officials, Congressmen, whatever? Was that an occurrence? Not much, hah?

Bolster: Very rarely. The head of GTI, Greece-Turkey-Iran, which was a Division in those days, she came out just as I was about to leave Tabriz, because Howison was leaving and he was being considered as her Deputy. So she came out on an inspection

tour allegedly, to look around and see what's happening in Iran. We went together, and took her down to Maragheh, looked on the land reform program and so on.

Q: What sort of-- ?

Bolster: Kate Bracken. But I think logically the main reason for her coming out was just to see Howison in action, see what kind of post he ran and see if he would be a super Deputy, which he then became.

Q: How much information did you get about policy developments going on in Washington concerning Iran? Did you get a sense of what the Task Force was doing, the Iran Task Force in '61 was doing, and the direction of policy?

Bolster: Oh, yes. Sure, we would. Because we got copies not only of telegrams from the Embassy to Washington, but all the Washington traffic out to Tehran. There would be info copies for the consulates and all, and we would have them in the pouch. So we'd get a good idea of seeing back and forth on policy issues. We needed that obviously, if we were going to make any kind of contribution from our vantage point.

Q: What were your impressions of U.S. policy towards the Shah under the Kennedy Administration? You mentioned a few things

earlier about sort of pressure-- generalized pressure for reform. Were there any other factors that might be worth discussing?

Bolster: Well, there were wide swings in opinion toward our policy. I don't know if you've ever interviewed Bill Miller?

Q: It's been suggested, but I haven't met him.

Bolster: Well, Bill, to my way of thinking, was way off on one extreme, on a liberal extreme. He felt that it had been a total mistake to bring the Shah back, and that even having done so and knowing what the result of that was in terms of the Nationalist opposition and so on, that we could cut our losses if we would immediately adopt an attitude of support toward all these Nationalistic people who were coming along. He called them-- what was it? The New Men or something like that.

Q: He was Political Officer at the Embassy at this time, the early sixties?

Bolster: Yes. Well, actually he was in Isfahan first and then he came to Tehran. But I met him early on and we talked about our attitudes, and, as I say, I considered him to be more extreme, you know, because he felt that concerned National Front people like Hossain Mahdavi and Cyrus Qani, some of the people that he got to know, that these were the real wave of the future.

These were bright, Western educated, forward-thinking, liberal type Iranians who we should support. We owed it to the future of the country to get behind the Nationalist opposition and really support them as a challenge to the Shah. That if the Shah didn't do a better job of making progress in Iran that would help all the people that we should throw our support behind the National Front.

And he kept arguing this in reporting and so on, to the extent that he eventually left, left the Service, coming back to Washington and still trying to push these ideas. And he was relentless. He never gave up, you know. No matter how high it went, he kept pushing these lines. And even when reporting was concluded, like a briefing book for the Secretary's visit overseas, he would still go around and try to get someone to insert another view in the briefing book that would show his point of view. [laughing] He really was a very skillful bureaucratic player.

But anyway, I felt he was one extreme, that you just couldn't expect us to suddenly say, well, you know, that the Shah has had it and support the National Front.

Then there were other people in the other extreme, who felt that the Iranians could never do anything on their own, unless they had a strong leader, and all ideas came from the Shah. That was what I would call the linchpin theory. Or the keystone theory. These terms turned up in a lot of Embassy reporting over the years. And when I was down there later in the

Political Section, I considered Martin Herz to be pretty much in that more conservative or right wing approach. I mean, he listened to all of us more junior people, who had much more contact with Iranians, except the top, the top people, with whom he had contact. He considered all of us sort of idealistic young officers, who should be allowed to go out and use our energy in getting out and finding what's going on, but, you know, when it comes to reporting to Washington, he had to sort of temper these young guys' radical views and give a more objective view. Which turned out to be that despite all the things that were going on, the Shah was really the only one. We had to support him and there really wasn't anything else. You know, he was the linchpin.

Q: Where did Holmes fit in this spectrum of opinion, from what you could tell?

Bolster: Well, you see, when I mentioned Herz, he represented a change. He came in as Political Counselor just as I was finishing my tour.

Q: After Holmes had left? I see.

Bolster: Well, I think he overlapped with him, but finally Holmes did. But it was late in the game when he came. He was a bit reluctant to take positions at the beginning-- Herz--

because he wanted to find out about what was going on. He was a very smart guy, very analytical, so he didn't want to make any commitments early on. So that was the time when Holmes was there and it was pretty much as it had been, with information being assembled and passed up the line, and there was some good reporting going out of there.

I obviously, from what I've said, felt there was some middle ground between these two extremes. I felt we went too far in supporting the Shah in everything that he wanted. You know, every complaint he had, even down to PL 480, and whatever he wanted, for years they were just jumping, providing everything. I felt that we should have been more demanding on the Shah. When we were supporting him economically, militarily, politically, we should have said that certain things had to be done, we're not going to pull strings to have specific things done, but in general we wanted a certain type of progress in the country, and if we didn't see something along that line, we

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Bolster: Given the general lines that we outlined for our expectations, we should have moderated our support then and given him the impression that, you know, this was not just a blank check, but that we expected to have certain general progress made in the country.

We ended up never doing that. We ended up pretty much responding to all of his complaints and putting ourselves in a defensive posture. I think he got the impression that Americans were generally fairly malleable in the political process, and I think that was not helpful to his later policies. He became, I think, over-impressed with his own ability to control events and really sort of lost sight of the objective facts when he got into the later stages, particularly when he formed the so-called Rastakhiz Party, the Resurgence Party, where he really just almost became leader in a Communist style situation, where "everyone was with me and I'm going to get 99.7% support, or people who are not with me are going to leave the country." I mean, that was really the way it came down in the very final stages, along in '75 and '76.

Q: According to one of the reports that I've seen from the Kennedy period-- it was a document by Philips Talbot. This was partly a quote. He said it was U.S. policy to combine vigorous, but discreet, political and economic advice to the Shah, with enough assistance to enable him and the Iranian government to survive and go forward. So apparently there was some assumption in Washington that it would be policy to sort of encourage the Shah to move in a certain reformist direction.

Bolster: Yes.

Q: Give him advice, but-- how much of an effort along that line did you see under Holmes?

Bolster: Well, of course, I really can't say about what Holmes told the Shah, because I just was not anywhere near the scene. But my impression from reporting on that scene is that on occasion the Shah sought Holmes's advice on things, and Holmes gave it, either directly when he had a feeling he could give it directly or when he needed to check with Washington and get back. I think he was fairly good about giving some advice to the Shah.

But when we came along to Armin Meyer and eventually to MacArthur [Douglas], I think you found sort of an extreme in MacArthur's case. A man who just really never told the Shah anything that would be the least bit derogatory or in the nature of giving him advice on how he should conduct himself or his affairs. It was just going to hear the Shah's complaints and then writing back, or telegraphing back to Washington on how we had to bend every effort to resolve the things that were troubling the Shah. It really became pretty much of a one-way street later on, and I think that was unfortunate.

Q: Also, according to one of the Task Force reports that I've seen, I guess there was some interest in Washington in encouraging the Shah in moving towards a more constitutional role, in the sense that the Prime Minister would have a fair

amount of policy-making authority in the system. I guess maybe people saw Amini as sort of a move in that direction. Did you get any kind of a sense of how far the Kennedy Administration wanted the Shah to move in this sense, to what extent they encouraged that kind of an evolution, towards a more constitutional regime?

Bolster: No, I don't think that there was any very well developed idea of just what we thought should evolve in Iran. It was more or less the question of general trends. We wanted maybe a trend towards-- yes, a trend toward the Prime Minister running the country in a day-to-day sense and the Shah becoming perhaps a little less involved in political machinations. But it was not a detailed plan of action. I don't think we ever felt we could tell the Iranians exactly how to organize themselves, but it was just a question of these general trends.

But then, of course, later on, as the Shah got more secure in his power base, he began to search for people who would not be independent. I mean, Hassan Ali Mansur, who we mentioned was assassinated, was the prototype of the yes man, of a person who salutes and goes off and does exactly what the Shah wants. So I think that that perhaps is again a function of the Shah's political development. During the Amini period, he was still not really terribly forceful. He showed many times that he wasn't quite sure what should be done. That gave Amini a chance to propose certain things and the Shah could sort of say, well,

okay, try that, or don't do that, or something. But later, as the Shah began to feel more secure in his power base, he began to look for people who would do his bidding. Mansur comes to mind, as I say, as pretty much of a yes man.

Then you get to [Amir Abbas] Hoveida, who was a very difficult person to analyze in that context, because he was sort of both. He did what the Shah wanted, but he also had enough experience in oil negotiations and economic affairs to have his own ideas, and he gave the impression of someone who tried to run everyday affairs of the government in a fairly reasonable way. He impressed a lot of visitors in my experience, in his grasp of development issues and really his involvement in every phase of government activities. Yes, he did what the Shah told him, but he managed to give the impression that he to some extent was his own man too. So there was a much more ambivalent assessment, I would say, of his situation than there was in other cases.

Q: This is changing the subject, but did the AID have operations around Tabriz? Were there any AID programs or projects?

Bolster: Yes, there was an AID mission. I'm sorry, that's a good point, because I didn't even include him before. The reason I didn't include him is that he had no direct tie to the Consulate whatsoever. He had a separate office and a separate line of command from the AID mission in Tehran. He even had his own vehicles, his own motor pool, so that we were in the strange

position on occasion of the AID director offering to the Governor-General several vehicles that could be used during the Shah's visit or whatever. We occasionally had to help him out with his transportation need, when the Consulate had one beat-up Chevrolet car for the Consul and one station wagon for everything else. And then the Branch PAO had a station wagon and, of course, movie equipment and so on. But our facilities were quite limited for what we were doing, and AID by comparison had a lot of vehicles and office space and personnel and budget, much more generous than we had.

So it was sort of an odd impression vis-a-vis the local government, because they had the impression of this very senior AID director, Huston Crippen, a very imposing and very nice man, a very really courtly gentleman, who had all these resources at his control, and then this very active Consulate, that was really strapped for resources. So it gave a sort of an odd impression, I think, to the Governor-General and his staff as to the relationship of the Consulate and the AID mission.

Q: Did you get a sense of what they were doing in that part of the country?

Bolster: Oh, yes.

Q: What they had projects for?

Bolster: Sure. Sure, we knew all the kind of projects they were involved in. They had agricultural projects, education projects. There was a very active program, but I was a little bit skeptical about results, because I think the earlier period in Iran, when they had done a fantastic amount of grass roots development--drilling wells and spraying for malaria. You know, just a tremendous number of physical attributes all over the country that were provided by Asleh Char [Point IV], as the Iranians called it. Point IV. They translated that literally as Asleh Char, Point IV. And AID was always known as Asleh Char, I remember that period.

Q: It was a lineal descendant, I guess, in terms of--

Bolster: Yes, it was. But, you know, through FOA, the Foreign Operations Administration--

Q: And International Cooperation Administration.

Bolster: International Cooperation Administration. All these alphabet things we did over the years, the Iranians never-- it was always Asleh Char. It was very simple.

But, you know, in the earlier period there was a tremendous amount. Everyone you talked to said, oh yes, they drilled a well in my village or they sprayed for malaria. You'd see spray-painted signs in small villages. Sprayed through here on such-

and-such a date. DDT, with the date or whatever. But by the time I was there, I felt they were getting a little bit bogged down in paper work and planning from Tehran and reports to Washington. They were a little more, I think, inefficient in their actual delivery of help to the grass roots.

Q: I think there was a lot of-- at this time, late fifties, early sixties, there was a fair amount of Congressional criticism of foreign aid operations in the developing countries, especially Iran, I guess. Did you think the projects were fairly sound that were being paid for at this time? You said there was a problem of inefficiency, but beyond that were the projects actually--

Bolster: I think the projects were good. There were things like entomological programs to control insect pests, and there were seed projects, and so on. Perhaps it was that progress in the earlier days was so much more visible. By this time we were seeing developments from the earlier days, where people had been sent for training in the States, as people came back and were working their way up in the Ministry. All kinds of earlier infra-structure had been laid for progress and I think it was always a bit disappointing, because you sent people to the States for a very extensive training and they came back and then for one reason or another they were maneuvered into other jobs and they never quite did what they were trained for. There was a lot of just institutional grinding of gears that I think was a bit