

spoke for the country; he personified the country. I often use the expression "the Shah" when I mean the country. But anyway, he said, "There are several things that will prevail at all times. We will pay our way. We will not accept anything free. And as we pay our way, we will have every contract very, very carefully examined."

This became one of my biggest jobs. Every contract was examined to be sure that there would be no improper commission, influence peddling, things of that sort. A lot of the Americans, particularly the American businessmen, didn't believe he was serious on that, and they learned the hard way that he was.

As an example, someone showed him a copy of the Congressional Record one time--our Congressional Record--that showed a line item in there of just \$25,000. We were dealing then in terms of hundreds of millions of dollars. During my tenure alone, I signed contracts that I believe finally came out at about \$5.4 billion. So we were dealing in big money. Someone showed the Shah a little line of, \$25,000 of military assistance for Iran, and the Shah said, "Let's find out what this is all about. If I owe it, I'll give you a check tomorrow." Well, as it turned out, somebody was figuring back here in a job that I'd had years before, getting ready for a presentation to Congress, and he had a general administrative expense for that part of the world, and he just arbitrarily divided up the expenses among the

several countries and listed them, and inadvertently listed Iran. The Shah would not accept anything free at all during the time that I was there.

Q: Back in the fifties, though, military aid was in the form of grants.

Williamson: That's right. In the fifties, I would say it was predominantly, almost exclusively, grants.

Q: Did you, yourself, work on military aid for Iran? Did you do any planning in that regard for ISA?

Williamson: I thought several times. And except for the country of Iran being one of the two or three countries that could--see, we looked at countries, and we said, "Yes." In England, for instance, there were several things that we had done a lot of research and development on, and England was very interested in it. We would give them maybe a prototype model or a few manuals, insignificant things. We gave things to England and Germany. Now, Germany was building the 12-division Army at that time, so Germany was one of our biggest customers. France and just lots of countries. But countries of that sort that had been industrialized, there was no question about it, they'd get

grant aid, and we'd give them something, write it off, and that's it.

Iran and a good many other countries, such as Greece, for instance, we realized that if we gave them something, they couldn't afford to maintain it yet, and some of them we didn't see in the immediate future that they would be able to maintain it.

Q: Including Iran.

Williamson: That's what I'm saying. Iran eventually, during the time that I was there--and I was not the top man, I was just a worker--but during the time that I was there, Iran was identified as one of the countries that we foresaw their being able to pay the way completely, 100 percent. A lot of the other countries got into real trouble by trying to make them just pay for their spare parts.

Q: If it is possible to generalize, what were some of the goals of the military assistance program for Iran in the mid-fifties, when you were working there? What were seen as the major purposes for providing military assistance?

Williamson: I wrote my master's degree thesis on military assistance in underdeveloped countries, and in that, my principal finding was, it's impossible, it can't be done. You can't leave the country in an underdeveloped situation and give it very much military assistance. You will destroy the country. You will inundate it with something that they can't take care of. So to have a country that you think is friendly to our country, is geographically located, that it's essential to our country to have that country with a military capability requires that you develop the country too. So our military assistance program was geared to assist Iran to become a modern country.

Now, what was the armed forces at that time? They had their Navy physically shot out of the water. The British did a yeoman's job of steaming into the Persian Gulf and raising holy hell. There was no Iranian Navy to speak of. Their Army was a rag-tag underdeveloped mob. They never had been fantastic, they never had been much. Then as World War II tore them asunder, they became less. So at that time, the Army had a massive bunch of folks, but 50-year-old rifles and things of that sort. The Air Force was non-existent. They had a few little liaison-type flitty airplanes, but there was no Air Force.

So the approach for the three services was entirely different from each other, three different approaches. There was no one approach to the armed forces of Iran. The Air Force was

going to be "made." We were going to develop an Air Force. It was to be a carbon copy of the U.S. Air Force, scaled down, and not the most sophisticated airplanes, but airplanes that would fly in a combat environment. Every pilot of the Iranian Air Force was physically trained in the United States. Every form that they had was a facsimile copy, even to the extent of including "printed in the United States." (Laughs) And all of the Air Force was required to speak English. Everything in the Air Force was new. So they took high school and college graduates, taught them English, made them learn the U.S. Air Force, so it was a carbon copy.

The Navy was, starting from scratch, almost non-existent. They started with a few--I think they had U.S., British, Italian, and French coastal-type vessels, and they acquired ships on a one-at-a-time basis. So their Navy grew very slowly, but it was extremely small.

Their Army was the problem. In fact, their Army was so much bigger than all the others. In Iran, the word "army" means "all of them." If you speak of just what we call the Army, you have to say "ground forces." So the Army was the three combined, i.e. the Air Force, Navy and ground forces.

Their ground forces were, as I said, just a mob of people. So the first thing to do was to just get rifles, mortars, and machine guns that were acceptable. But we just didn't have

nearly enough of them to give them. And as long as you've got a developing nation, the idea was, "Let them make their own." So about that time, we started developing factories in Iran to make small arms.

Q: This is back in the fifties.

Williamson: This was in the late fifties and sixties, mid-sixties, along in there. This was over a period of time. I'd say in the Fifties, probably there were no factories. I was not there, but probably there were no factories in the Fifties. But when the what they call the White Revolution got underway, they were building little plants to fabricate a lot of things. As you can well imagine, initially, a lot of it was just assembly, assembling all the parts that were made somewhere else. But the Germans did a lot in there, the Rumanians did some, the Italians did a whale of a lot, the British did some, we did some, and we gave them a good bit of World War II surplus tanks. We had a good many, and of course, it was too much to expect them to make their own tanks and artillery, so we gave them tanks and artillery.

As the sixties developed and early seventies, they started purchasing. By then the Vietnam War had started, and although they wanted to buy 100 percent U.S., we couldn't let them have

our production, so we were in the position where we were producing for ourselves and couldn't supply them. So we licensed Italy to build helicopters. The Iranians bought tanks from England, they bought a few missiles, some antiaircraft guns from Germany, they bought artillery, armored personnel carriers and engineer equipment from Russia, and they were paying for all this. It was not a grant at all. They preferred U.S. equipment, they wanted U.S. equipment across the board, but we couldn't do it. Constantly, by the time I got over there, they were begging us to sell them stuff, and we were quite hesitant for two reasons. One, we just didn't have the production capability, but mainly, we thought maybe they were pushing their military too fast.

By the time I got over there, my very, very definite instructions were, "You are not a salesman. You are not to encourage the Iranians to buy any additional systems." So the entire time I was over there, I never, even once, suggested that they buy one single thing, except sometimes their going to our computers, their supply of spare parts on a certain item was getting low, and I told them to look at that very carefully, they might need some more spare parts. And they took my advice on that.

There was one other time that I told them that they didn't have the capability of recovering the tanks of the weight that

they were buying from England, that those Centurian tanks were too heavy for their lightweight tank recovery vehicles, I said, "You need to look around and find a tank recovery vehicle that will pull. You can recover a tank that loses a track on the road, but if a tank the weight of that Centurian runs off the road and gets in a ditch, you don't have the capability to pull it out of the ditch and recover it."

Q: That's a practical question.

Williamson: And they took my advice on that. But of the whole time I was over there, those are the only two items I ever told them or suggested that they buy. I was on the negative side quite frequently in telling them that I thought they either had enough or that they should not buy this particular item because it was too complicated.

In fact, the only time the Shah really got upset with me or showed any signs of being upset with me, one time I told him he was pushing so fast that I didn't think his available personnel would support his program on the tank schedule.

Q: How did he respond to that?

Williamson: He said, "Now, what do you mean by that?" I said, "What you need is more trainable people."

It went in two different sections. One time when I told him he didn't have enough, I left, and to my very horror, discovered that he had ordered the entire graduating class of a university to be inducted into the Navy, just like that. He didn't ask anything about who was graduating, what about them, what are their plans. He ordered the entire class to go to the Navy, and he told people he did that because General Williamson told him he didn't have enough people to support his program. (Laughs)

So I went in to see him, and I said, "We've overreacted. Let's talk about this a little bit." I said, "You do need a lot of technicians." At that time we were talking principally about his Army aviation program, almost exclusively helicopters. I said, "You do need to train a lot of pilots, but you need to train many, many more mechanics, communication specialists, maintenance specialists." I said, "You need to train a lot of people. In my judgment, you can't train them fast enough to support this program. This decree about the university graduates, taking a graduating class, in my judgment, you are hurting your community. You are hurting the civilian economic sector at the expense of your military, and it's not necessary. It's not appropriate." I said, "You need a lot of intelligent people, trainable people, but they don't have to be college

graduates." I said, "You can train a lot of your radio technicians with high school educations, and they will not only be just as good; in time they may very well be happier. A college graduate that has a good job, a good maintenance job, may not think it's a very good job. But a high school graduate may think that's a real good job."

So the next day I was invited to a meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr. Hoyveyda. He called the Chief of the Bureau Staff, the Chief of the Air Force, Chief of the Navy, Chief of the Gendarmarie, Chief of Education, Chief of Finance--had the very top level. He stood up there and said, "General Williamson has thrown out a challenge, and his Imperial Majesty has ordered us to prove him wrong." (Laughs) I don't know what got me off on this tangent. But he took it personally, in that I thought he didn't have enough people.

Their draft system took people in for two years, but the same person that may elect not to be drafted, but to join the regular Army, could come in, and if he had the educational background, he could join as a regular instead of being used as a conscript. He would be sent to what they called the NCO Academy. He would be made a non-commissioned officer, and he had signed up for life. There was no 30 years of length; sign up for life. Sign up for just as long as the armed forces wanted his services. And they believed in it, too.

But during this meeting that the prime minister had, they started talking about, "Maybe we need to think in terms of a shorter enlistment if we're going to have all these people in there." They used that expression several times.

I finally spoke up and said, "What are you visualizing? I have your two-year bracket here, and I have your lifetime bracket. What are you talking about now with a short enlistment?"

They said, "Eleven years." (Laughs) So it shows you the difference in their thinking and ours. But they instituted a deal where a man could sign up for eleven years and be given a pretty good education. But their program was different than ours.

Q: Interesting. I have a question about the ISA period. Did they have an Iran desk there, people to specialize in Iranian matters?

Williamson: No. ISA was not nearly so big then as it is now. We had a very small group. I guess we had ten, maybe 12 officers worldwide. We were running around, pillar to post, jumping through the hoop, trying to keep ourselves reasonably educated.

Q: Did you do much traveling?

Williamson: No, almost none. We didn't have time to travel. Didn't have money either. At that time, money was very restricted. During the entire time I was there, I didn't make one single trip. Of the ten or twelve people we had in our office, I'd say not over three or four of them got out of the building. We didn't travel at all.

Q: Who was your superior officer?

Williamson: The ISA secretary was Mr. Gordon Gray, and Mr. H. Struve Hensel for a period of time. General Alonzo Fox was in charge of the military assistance program, as such, and then General Audrey Joseph Maroun, who lives out in California, Audrey Joseph Maroun, was there. General Fox and General Maroun were the senior people, and they were one-star generals. We weren't a big section at all. We were supposed to be International Security Affairs, but the Department of Defense wasn't very active in the overall policy of that time. By very active, I mean we were not in the nit-picking bookkeeping part of it at all. We were supposedly policy. I was a lieutenant colonel, promoted to colonel while I was in there. We were hassling in an effort to just understand what we were doing.

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1; BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2

Q: I've read that after the Pentagon, you were assigned to the 13th Infantry command in Colorado.

Williamson: Yes.

Q: You took the regiment to West Germany under Operation Gyroscope.

Williamson: Yes. That was an experimental system that we had at the time, in 1956. We wanted to keep families together, to get stability in the Army at that time, and so they adopted a system called Gyroscope, where the unit of soldiers, with their wives, children, furniture, automobile, everything, was transported simultaneously. A wonderful system. The system worked very, very well, but it was just too expensive. We had to go back to the individual system, of people going back and forth.

Q: The system that we have presently.

Williamson: Yes. I wish we could afford the other.

Q: You were in Germany for several years?

Williamson: Three years.

Q: And your responsibilities there were?

Williamson: I had two responsibilities. I took the regiment and trained it for six months in Colorado, and then went over to Germany, went first to Ulm down in the southern part of Germany, and then moved the regiment back to Mannheim. After I had command of that regiment for three years, I moved from Mannheim to Stuttgart, where I was the G-3 training officer for the entire Army in Europe. I had that assignment for a year. I came back from there and went to the National War College.

Q: What did you study at the War College? What were your major areas of study?

Williamson: The War College, as such, is designed to be our training for strategic war. They have 33 students from the Army, 33 from the Air Force, 33 from the Navy and Marines combined, and 33 from the security component of the State Department, and other government curtain agencies almost exclusively State Department, however. It is supposed to train senior officers of the armed

forces for negotiations, for mobilization, for supply, strategic movements, and conduct of war.

Q: Then after the War College, you were back at the Pentagon again.

Williamson: Back to the Pentagon on the Army staff.

Q: What was your assignment?

Williamson: Personnel. Personnel business.

Q: What division?

Williamson: Chief of a division that handled all of what they called the spaces and initial training for the worldwide Army for a while, then I was chief of another division called the requirements division, which looked over to see what the Army needed for the future. Then I was executive of the directorate, which handled both the authorization division, the requirement division, and the budget division. So I had three different jobs there.

Q: You started out before the Kennedy Administration. You were back in the Pentagon before Kennedy was President? I'm not sure about the chronology. I was just wondering what the impact of Robert McNamara might have been.

Williamson: I was there in the McNamara days. I'll have to get my years straight, because I had four different tours in the Pentagon, and of those tours, I had several jobs.

Kennedy was killed after I left the Pentagon and went to Okinawa, so yes, Kennedy was there. I did have quite a bit of association with Robert Kennedy, not with President Kennedy, but Attorney General Kennedy.

Q: According to my chronology here, you were with the personnel division in July 1960, before Kennedy was elected.

Williamson: That's correct.

Q: Did McNamara's regime make much difference for the way your work was conducted?

Williamson: Very much different. McNamara is an oddball study if there ever was one. From our experience--and I learned to know him reasonably well and he visited me a good many times

later in Vietnam--I can say of Mr. McNamara that every single time I saw him face to face and presented a subject to him, he understood. I don't believe he counteracted me or turned me down one single time. Mr. McNamara is a very intelligent man. Mr. McNamara had a fault, though, a very fatal flaw: he was too smart, too smart for his own good. He could gather facts, he could understand quickly. He was so sharp, he was so quick, that he wanted to personally make all the decisions.

There's no way in the world that one individual can talk with all of the people who are in charge of literally hundreds and hundreds of different projects, understand what people are trying to do, then approve or disapprove. So Mr. McNamara gathered around him a bunch of what we called whiz kids, also smart people, that were sharp and could understand. But that group of whiz kids was most detrimental to the overall system. And the reason they were is the working level would come in and take, say, 20 minutes apiece, to explain a subject to a man that had never even heard of the subject before, absolutely new fertile ground. The guy would present it to the fellow, the fellow understood exactly what he was saying, but then he was charged with taking that 20-minute presentation and presenting that, along with 15 or 20 others, to Mr. McNamara in segments of about 20 seconds each. So Mr. McNamara was getting a very

drastically watered-down presentation of what could have been a complicated subject.

It might have been all right, except for the flaw of the situation that if Mr. McNamara asked one of his whiz kids a question, the whole house of cards fell down, because the whiz kid had failed to ask the question during the 20-minute presentation, and he had no knowledge at all beyond what he had just been told. There was Mr. McNamara making dozens and dozens and dozens of hip-shots based on an almost totally, certainly totally uninformed individual just the day before.

So this kid--and I call them kids because most of them were quite young--this kid had sat all day long listening to people come in and explain these things that needed to be done, decisions that needed to be made, and at the time, he understood exactly what he was told. Then he went in and, in machine gun fashion, tried to fire 20-second missiles at Mr. McNamara, and Mr. McNamara wasn't hesitant a bit in the world. He'd say, "Yes," "No," just like that that. [snaps fingers] But if he said, "I have a question," the whole thing fell apart.

Q: Interesting.

Williamson: And the system really fell of its own weight, because Mr. McNamara wanted to centralize it too much. Mr.

McNamara, in the last few months, has come up with some screwball ideas that I don't agree with at all, but every time that I talked with him, he was a very reasonable individual, and I can't fault for anything that I told him.

He came over one time to Vietnam with a very preconceived idea that the M-16 rifle was worthless and shouldn't be procured, shouldn't be bought. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "What do you think of the M-16?" In about four or five minutes I told him, and he turned to a man that I didn't know, who was with him, and said, "Buy 400,000 of them." Just a flat statement. He gave a directive for that man to start the system into producing 400,000 M-16s because I convinced him they were good. I had had the experience with it. He had been talking with a bunch of people that didn't know what they were talking about. I explained it to him, and he understood. I said, "The only thing wrong with the weapon is that you or somebody in the chain of command permitted it to be issued to the troops too fast. I got them in Okinawa, I learned the weapon, learned to use it, learned to take care of it. It is serving me beautifully. You hand it to some people just before they start into the jungle, they don't know the weapon, and it won't work for them." I said, "It's a lot better than anything else the enemy has, a lot better than anything I know of that anybody else has at this time."

I told you I had some ideas that I believed in. (Laughs)
And some of them that I do, I believe in them rather strongly.

Q: You talked a little bit earlier about your Okinawa experience, and then you went on to Vietnam from there. It would be interesting to talk about Vietnam. Have you been interviewed by other people about the war?

Williamson: Oh, my gosh, yes.

Q: Other oral history projects?

Williamson: Oh, yes.

Q: Can you mention a couple of projects for which you've been interviewed so people will know where they can look at the transcripts if they're interested?

Williamson: I had a long interview with the chief Marine historian. I worked with a guy named Hackworth, who wrote a book; a guy whose first name is Cliff, and I can't think of his last name, he's written a complete book; a guy named Laning, who is writing a book on the small long-range patrols in Vietnam.

I've made speeches at several universities, made speeches at several military installations.

Q: The transcript at the Marine Historical Office, will that be available for researchers to use or look at?

Williamson: I would imagine.

Q: You said you had two tours of duty in Vietnam.

Williamson: My first tour was, as I mentioned, the 173rd Airborne Brigade. I went over there. We went in May of '65, and I came out a year later. I came back to Fort Benning Infantry School for a while as the Assistant Commandant. Got promoted out of that job right away and went down to command Fort Polk in Louisiana, a training center, stayed down there for two years. Went back to Vietnam in '68 and '69 to command the 25th Division.

Q: Then after Vietnam, you were with the reserve components?

Williamson: After Vietnam, I came back here to the Office of the Chief Reserve Component, took care of the Army Reserve and the National Guard. I went from there to Iran.

Q: How was it that you were assigned to the Armish MAAG in Tehran? You said you weren't too happy about the decision. How was the decision made?

Williamson: (Laughs) That's a long story. We have a standing deal in the Army that we don't publicize why general officers are assigned here or there very much. I will tell you. It's no secret there, but it's just not the type of thing that the Army publishes.

As I mentioned, the armed forces in Iran went through evolution. I didn't cover the fact that it started just for the Army, and it was called the Army Mission. We had MAAGs in other countries, Military Assistance and Advisory Groups, but in Iran, for some reason that I do not understand, it was just the Army. It may have been the fact that that's all there was at the time. But anyway, sometime later, the decision was made, in addition to helping the Army, to help form an air force and a navy, and they started thinking in terms of making it a MAAG. They already had all the agreements for the Army. Frankly, the agreements were more favorable in Iran than any other country. So the decision was made, "We don't want to negate that bilateral that we already have with Iran." So instead of knocking that out and forming a MAAG, they left the Army Mission as such and added MAAG. So Iran

was the only country in the entire world that had what they called an Armish MAAG, the combination of the two. I'm telling you that because we started off training just the Army at a relatively low level, very, very low for a little while, and then started the expansion.

We had one general over there, a series of generals were operating or training them at a very low level. Then the decision was made for the White Revolution, as it was called, to expand considerably and broaden the deal. So we sent over a chief of mission that was basically a staff officer, General Twitchell. General Twitchell was an organizer, planner. He was a staff officer. We sent him over to organize and plan the expansion program. He did a good job of it.

But then, as luck would have it, when it was about time for him to leave, our Chief of Staff, General Westmoreland, went over to that part of the world and stopped by in Iran. He went in, and he and the Shah were discussing General Twitchell's replacement. Twitchell was coming up for retirement. The Shah mentioned that he wanted a broader individual than just a staff officer. Just frankly, they got charmed by their own voices, and they started talking in terms of, "Well, we ought to have a man that could do this and that." Finally, they wound up with, as it was explained to me, with five criteria. Wanted an advanced degree in foreign affairs so he could take on strategic level,

wanted Army experience, wanted a pilot, wanted a National War College graduate. Anyway, they started talking about all these things. General Westmoreland just didn't come to mind that he had already recommended someone to go over there and replace Twitchell. The Shah remembered it. The Shah didn't want that guy; he wanted somebody with a different type of experience. So the two parted with General Westmoreland basically saying, "Oh, yes, we can furnish a guy with all those capabilities. No problem."

He came back, and he had a total of two major generals available that had all five of the qualifications. He called me in and said, "I'm going to have to do to you a very, very dirty trick."

I said, "What's that?"

He said, "I'm going to have to delay your promotion by two years." And he told me the name of the other guy he thought about. He said, "I just told the Shah that sure, we could do this, it would be no problem. I never realized it would be this much of a problem."

In the final analysis, I went to do my duty. (Laughs)
That's the way it worked.

Q: When did you arrive in Tehran?

Williamson: I think it was July of '71.

Q: Was General Twitchell still there when you arrived, or had he left?

Williamson: General Twitchell stayed for about two weeks after I arrived. He had--actually, the final wrap-up plan for the expansion was being put to print, and General Twitchell wanted to stay and personally present it. So there wasn't an overlap as much.

Q: Did you bring any staff people with you from Washington?

Williamson: One aide. One captain who had been my aide for a short while in Vietnam, just happened to be in Washington, wanted to go with me. I wanted him very badly.

Q: Who was this?

Williamson: Captain [Karl] Santon. He's retired now, a very, very successful lawyer now in Miami, has his own law firm and is doing just great. If you're interested, I have his address. In fact, I just met him in London month before last and had a very enjoyable time with him.

Q: Where was the MAAG offices located in Tehran?

Williamson: In Tehran. We had an arrangement there that was not true, as far as I know, anywhere else. My office and my so-called head staff was in the Imperial Building with the commander of the Imperial Staff, General Azhari, who, incidentally, was the last prime minister over there. But as opposed to having all of my headquarters assembled, I had General Patton, with the Army, General Drewen, (General Price initially) and his Air Force people, with the Air Force staff that was in a different part of the city, and Captain Harwood, chief of the Navy section. So my headquarters was in four different places. Plus I had two field teams, one in Shiraz and one in Isfahan.

Q: You mentioned some of the service representatives. You mentioned their names a minute ago. Who were some of the other key officials or important officials in the military mission? Did you have important advisors that were helpful to you? Who were some of the major people on your staff?

Williamson: I had an assemblage of very, very experienced people. The reason for that was the fact that a lieutenant colonel or a colonel over there on my staff was operating at top

level in a type of position that would have a two-star general here. We were able to give them, in addition to needing, good, experienced people. We were able to give them additional experience on a level that they couldn't have gotten for another six, eight, or ten years here in the States. So it was a reasonably sought-after position. So I had a logistician over there, Colonel Sam Duncan, later Colonel Hall, real fine Army logisticians. Across the board I had good operations men and good intelligence men.

Q: What were your basic duties as chief of Armish MAAG?

Williamson: I had two missions. One, I was commander of the U.S. military personnel. As I recall, there were about 160 people, most all of them officers, very, very few enlisted men, most all of them field grade officers. In fact, the requirement was they were supposed to all be majors and above, and they did have a few captains, not many. So my job was to command them and guide them, coordinate them, do whatever was necessary, as they provided advice to the military departments, as I provided advice to the chief of the Imperial staff. As I mentioned, my office was not only on the same floor, but on the same hall with the top military man.

I also worked very, very closely with General Toufanian, who at that time was Deputy Minister of War for Procurement, so he handled all procurement and all manufacturing in the country. So in addition to working as an advisor among the assistants, I went in periodically, either on my request or the Shah's request, and just sat down with what they called an audience, but it was equivalent almost to a seance, because I would go in. As I mentioned, I tried to go two different places every week, so I had a feel for what was going on outside of Tehran, and I would go in with a fair amount of observations. I would take with me a status report of all the major programs we were working on, which, of course, was a duplication of what he had been told to a great extent by his own people, and then I was subject to anything that he wanted to talk about. That fell into many categories, but, as I mentioned, quite often my information duplicated what he had already been told by his own people.

One day he reached over and put his hand on my shoulder and said, "You will never appreciate how valuable you are to me."

I made some comment about, "That's very kind, but I don't quite understand what you are referring to."

He said, "In a monarchy-type government, it's often hard for the top man to get his subjects to be completely candid. They so frequently work very, very hard, in fact, almost without exception, work hard at telling me what they think I want to

hear. You tell me exactly what you think, and I know that." He knew all the little idiosyncracies of our language, and he spoke with a great deal of emphasis. He said, "I know you don't have a bone to pick. You're not trying to sell me anything. You're trying to tell me what you think, and I appreciate that so much." He said, "If you think I'm wrong, you're polite about it, but you let me know that you think I'm wrong." So I often got myself in a position of just being a bounce board for ideas.

In that, it expanded, after about six months, well beyond the military, and this got me into trouble quite frequently. The State Department just crawled up and down the walls: "Why is General Williamson discussing agriculture in Khuzistan?" Because after each audience, I'd write up a message, called an audience report, and send it back to the State and Defense Departments. The State Department economic counselor would get upset.

(Laughs) I'd have to always go back and say, "Look, I didn't discuss this with him. I listened. He brought up the subject. I never bring up a subject except military items. Any time in an audience there's a subject other than the military, you can always be sure he initiated it. But if he asks me something about fishing, such as he did several times, I either say I don't know, or I tell him what I do know."

But there was another aspect of this, very, very important. I served under three different ambassadors, each one of them

having a personality of his own. Douglas MacArthur II, as you know, was a very, very strong personality. He didn't back off from anything. He was a good man, a little bit hard-headed. Aren't we all? Then Dick Helms was--you can use the word sleazy, [laughs] but he was an adroit type individual that wasn't bang, right down the middle, like MacArthur was. But each of those two was interested in knowing information that helped them do their job better. Each one of them didn't care whether they went to the palace and got it or whether I got it, or who else got it. It just wasn't a contention.

We had one other ambassador over there, Joseph Farland, that was not near as sure of himself as the other two were, and he sort of resented the fact that the Shah talked to me about a lot of things that he should have talked to the ambassador about. But the Shah talked to me not because of my personality, not totally, anyway, and not because of my knowledge, but the Shah knew that he could talk to me and I would get it to the U.S. at State Department, Defense Department level, and it would be considered and worked into the overall mill.

If the Shah asked a question of the ambassador, that technically was the equivalent of his personally asking the President of the United States. The ambassador is the representative not just of our government; he's the representative of the President. The Shah recognized it as that.