

# Foundation for Iranian Studies

## Program of Oral History

TWITCHELL, GENERAL HAMILTON

INTERVIEWEE: GENERAL HAMILTON A.

INTERVIEWER: WILLIAM BURR

WASHINGTON, D.C.: APRIL 1 AND JUNE 3, 1988

COPYRIGHT © 1992 FOUNDATION FOR IRANIAN STUDIES

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy and recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Oral History Office of Foundation for Iranian Studies.

IRANIAN - AMERICAN RELATIONS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of  
General Hamilton A. Twitchell

Oral History Research Office  
Columbia University

1989

## **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 General Hamilton A. Twitchell in Washington, D.C. in April 1 and June 3, 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.

The manuscript may be read, quoted from and cited only by serious research scholars accredited for purposes of research by Foundation for Iranian Studies; and further, this memoir must be read in such place as is made available for purposes of research by Foundation for Iranian Studies. No reproduction of the memoir either in whole or in part may be made by microphoto, typewriter, photostat, or other device.

## PREFACE

The following oral history memoir is the result of two tape-recorded interview sessions with General Hamilton A. Twitchell on April 1 and June 3, 1988. The interview was conducted by William Burr in Washington D.C.

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.

General Twitchell has reviewed the transcript and made corrections and emendations. The reader is asked to bear in mind, however, that he or she is reading a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Form H

Dear Dr. Grele:

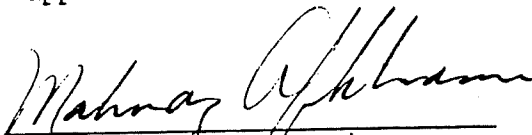
This letter will confirm my understanding and agreement with the Foundation for Iranian Studies Oral History of Iran Archives and Columbia University with respect to my participation in a series of interviews conducted by the Columbia University Oral History Research Office.

1. The interviews will be taped and a transcript made of the tapes. The transcribed interviews will be maintained by the Oral History of Iran Archives and the Columbia Oral History Research Office, and the Hoover Institution.

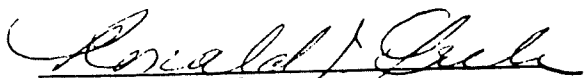
2. I hereby grant, assign and transfer to the Oral History of Iran Archives all right, title and interest in the interviews, including the literary rights and the copyright, except that I shall retain the right to copy, use and publish the Work in part or in full until ~~the earlier of~~ my death or \_\_\_\_\_ 19 .


3. The interviews will be made available for use by researchers at both institutions in accordance with Foundation and University rules and general policies for research and other scholarly purposes with (no) (the following) restrictions.

- A) No attribution to the undersigned about any of the persons named in the transcript without my agreement.
- B) No quotations or direct citations from this transcript without my review and approval.

  
Dr. Mahnaz Afkhami  
Foundation for Iranian Studies

Very truly yours,

  
Ronald Grele  
Oral History Research Office

  
Hamilton A. Twitchell  
Date Oct. 18, 1990

## CORRECTIONS LIST

PP.20 and 22  
PP.23,64,98,102  
P.54  
PP.58,66,69,73,80,93-94,  
98-99,104-106  
P.63  
PP.64,98-99,103-104  
P.99  
PP.99 and 101  
P.120  
P.121

Hedjezi should be Hajazi  
Ariana should be Ariyana  
Homayoun should be Homayun  
  
Toufanian should be Tufaniyan  
Ghadessi should be Qadesi  
Djam should be Jam  
Minbashian should be Minbashiyan  
Rassai should be Rasa'i  
Abbas Amire should be 'Abbas Amiri  
Amouzegar should be Amuzegar

## TWEITCHELL, GENERAL HAMILTON

NAME	PAGE
Afkhami, General Mansur,	22
Agah, Manuchehr,	121
Amiri, 'Abbas,	120
Amuzegar, Jahangir,	121
Ariyana, General Bahram,	23, 64, 98, 102
Arndt, Richard,	61
Azhari, General Gholam Reza,	99, 103
Baldwin, Hanson,	93
Bill, James,	111, 121, 123
Broussard, Edward,	29
Bundy, William,	14
Carpenter, William,	118
Casbier, Roy,	38
Conway, Theodore,	83
DeGaulle, Charles,	32-33
Eisenhower, Dwight D.,	4
Ennis, Thomas G.,	67
Fish, General Howard,	77
Fornarb, Gene,	67
Forrestal, James,	7
Foster, Richard,	118
Gilbert, Stephen,	118
Gruenther, Alfred,	8
Haig, General Alexander M.,	61
Harwood, Robert,	38
Hayden, John C.,	19
Hejazi, General,	20, 22
Holmes, Julius,	19, 61, 112
Homayun, Daryush,	54
Jablonsky, Harvey J.,	35
Jam, General Fereydun,	64, 98-99, 103-104
Johnson, Louis,	6-7
Johnson, Lyndon B.,	55
Kennedy, Richard,	29, 61
Khatami, General Mohammad,	23, 93, 98-100
Khomeini, Ayatollah Seyyed Ruhollah,	101
Khosrowdad, General Manuchehr,	101-102
Kissinger, Henry,	92
Laird, Melvin,	78-80
Lemnitzer, Lyman L.,	5
Lenczowski, George,	121
MacArthur, Douglas II,	42-43, 55, 112
McNamara, Robert,	14
Metaxis,	38
Meyer, Armin,	42-43
Minbashiyan, General Fathollah,	99
Nitze, Paul,	14
Nixon, Richard M.,	55, 85, 91-92, 96
Noyes, James,	81

# TWEITCHELL, GENERAL HAMILTON

NAME	PAGE
Pahlavi, Mohammad Reza Shah,	4-15, 18, 21-22, 24, 27-28, 31, 43-45, 47-52, 54, 57, 62, 65, 73-75, 78-80, 82, 86-97, 100-104, 106-107, 123
Patton, Oliver,	38
Philips, Warren,	37
Pranger, Robert,	81
Price, Harold,	38
Qadesi, Mohammad,	63-64
Rasa'i, Admiral,	99, 101
Rockwell, Stuart,	19
Roosevelt, Kermit,	67
Rostow, Eugene,	121
Schuyler, Cortland,	8
Sober, Sidney,	121
Solomon, Anthony,	121
Throckmorton, John,	83
Tufaniyan, General Hasan,	58, 66, 69, 73, 80, 93-94, 98-99, 104-106
Wheeler, Earle G.,	81-82
Williamson, General Ellis W.,	73
Zahedi, Ardeshir,	91, 121
Zand, Jamshid (James),	67

VA

Interviewee: General Hamilton Twitchell

Session #1

Interviewer: William Burr

Washington, D.C.

April 1, 1988

Q: The following interview with General Hamilton Twitchell, by William Burr, took place in Washington, D.C. on April 1, 1988. The interview is part of a joint project by the Columbia University Oral History Research Office and the Foundation for Iranian Studies.

General Twitchell, I thought we'd start with some background questions first. Where were you born and raised?

Twitchell: I was born in Portland, Maine. However, I was raised in several places-- Portland, then Colorado, and Arizona. I went to Kemper Military School for high school and then junior college, and then to West Point. I entered West Point in '31 and graduated in '35.

Q: What were your major fields of studies at West Point?

Twitchell: Basically it was a Bachelor of Science course. There weren't any electives at that time. We took math, English, history, French, Spanish, law, chemistry, physics, engineering, mechanical drawing, political and economics subjects.

Q: The whole range of them?

Twitchell: The West Point curriculum was devoted toward a B.S. course at that time.

Q: And what was your first assignment after graduating from West Point?

Twitchell: In September 1935, I went to Fort Jay, Governor's Island, which was where the 16th Infantry was stationed.

Q: And what did that assignment involve?

Twitchell: Initially, I was a platoon leader. A few months later I was put in command of two companies; the Army was on a very austere footing during the 1930s. Subsequently, I also served as an assistant to the Governor's Island Quartermaster. I stayed at Governor's Island from '35 to the spring of '37. While I was at Governors Island I took some courses at Columbia University.

Q: In what area?

Twitchell: Primarily, business administration.

Q: And then you went to--

Twitchell: Hawaii.

Q: And what were you assigned to do in Hawaii?

Twitchell: My first assignment was with the 19th Infantry, a regiment in the Hawaiian Division. A year later I was transferred to the Division Military Police Company and remained there for about a year.

Q: Where did you serve during World War II?

Twitchell: When war broke out I was stationed with an anti-tank battalion at Fort Benning. The day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, I left Benning temporarily to go to Fort Leavenworth for a short course at the Army's Command and General Staff School. Upon my return to Fort Benning, I was ordered to the Infantry School as an instructor for several months. In August of 1942 I was ordered to the Pentagon for temporary duty prior to going overseas. At that time the Pentagon was just opening up.

The Army initiated a course, or a program, to develop younger officers for General Staff duty, which was called the Task Force Staff Officers Pool. We spent about six weeks in the course, and were then ordered overseas temporarily. I went to Puerto Rico as a member of a team for a month, came back, and when we returned to Washington was assigned to a job in the Operations Division of the Army General Staff in connection with shipment of troops

going overseas for the landing in North Africa. Next I went to Cairo in December of 1942. I was assigned to the Headquarters of the U.S. Army in Middle East for about two months. In January of 1943-- shortly after the Casablanca Conference I was ordered to the Operations Division of the European Theater Headquarters in London. About a month later, I was ordered to the planning staff, which was being organized to plan for the invasion of Europe. It was a small British-American staff called COSSAC-- Chief of Staff Supreme Allied Commander Designate.

I remained in on that assignment until General Eisenhower came to England and took over as the Supreme Allied Commander. The COSSAC staff became part of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force [SHAEP]. I served in the Operations Division until the end of the war in Europe.

Q: So you remained in London?

Twitchell: No. We went from London to the Cotentin Peninsula, to Paris, to Rheims in France, and then to Frankfurt, Germany.

Q: Were you in the D-Day landing?

Twitchell: No, I was still in the SHAEP Headquarters which was located outside London.

Q: When we first talked about the interview, you said that you

were in Iran very briefly during the war?

Twitchell: During the time I was in Cairo, I went on a trip to Saudi Arabia, Teheran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

Q: What did this mission involve generally?

Twitchell: Several members of the headquarters in Cairo accompanied the Chief of Staff on a tour that he was making, places where we had representatives or which the U.S. and the British were interested in.

Q: But you were just there very briefly?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: I think after the war you were at plans & operations in the Army, is that right?

Twitchell: In August of '45 I left Europe and was assigned to the Operations Division of the Army's General Staff, where I stayed until '47, when the Joint Staff was established under the Unification Act. I was assigned to the Joint Staff for about two years. Part of that time I was working as an assistant to General Lemnitzer who was the head of the Foreign Military Assistance Program in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. I

stayed there until August of 1950, when I was ordered to Europe.

Q: According to the information I've seen, you worked for the Joint Strategic Plans Group for a while? Around '48 or so?

Twitchell: Yes. Well, that was in the fall of '47 until some time in '49.

Q: What did that work involve?

Twitchell: We did a variety of strategic studies and reports on budgetary matters, political-military policy issues. I personally was involved in some of the planning with regard to U.S. military assistance for Western Europe before NATO was established. I was involved in the U.S. planning for creation of NATO.

Q: Did this involve any work on war plans or anything along that line?

Twitchell: General strategic plans, but we didn't focus primarily on a specific war plan. That was in another section.

Q: Oh, I see. Okay. Now when you were working with Lemnitzer, he was assistant to Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson?

Twitchell: Initially it was [James] Forrestal. And then when Forrestal committed suicide, he was replaced by Louis Johnson.

Q: And you worked out of that office through 1950?

Twitchell: Yes, I would say August of '50.

Q: Did you participate in any of the work related to NSC-68, either the initial study or the follow-up studies?

Twitchell: No, I didn't participate in those.

Q: And after 1950, where were you assigned?

Twitchell: I became the regimental executive officer in the 18th Infantry, which was in the First Division.

Q: This was in the United States?

Twitchell: In Europe.

Q: Where were they stationed in Europe?

Twitchell: Aschaffenberg, Germany, about 20 miles east of Frankfurt.

Q: And I guess after that you went to SHAPE, is that correct?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: And what were you doing?

Twitchell: I was a member of a small staff in the office of the Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff.

Q: Who was the Special Assistant?

Twitchell: His name was Schuyler, General Cortland Schuyler.

Q: Did you work on questions involving European rearmament or German rearmament?

Twitchell: Basically on matters affecting U.S. participation in NATO, particularly the Allied Command in Europe, our military assistance program and other special studies that were assigned to the office by the SHAPE Chief of Staff-- General [Alfred] Gruenther.

Q: Now did you do any work on the Plevan Plan, involving German rearmament in the context of the European army?

Twitchell: No, a special group was set up to look at that, at the mediating aspects of Germany's entry into NATO, particularly Germany's military contribution and its overall role in Allied Command Europe. The specifics regarding the German rearmament proposals were in their early stages and were a factor in our general assessment and planning.

Q: Can you talk briefly about what kind of considerations shaped the push for a European military buildup? How great was the concern about a Soviet military attack on western Europe? Was that seen as a real serious problem?

Twitchell: Yes, I think it was generally accepted by Western analysts that there remained some thirty Soviet divisions stationed in eastern Europe, a number of which were in Germany. In contrast, the Western nations had reduced their active forces in Europe to small occupation forces. For example, the U.S. had only one division, the constabulary, until the Korean War. If I remember correctly, the Western European countries had only ten divisions along with some independent brigades in Western Europe until 1950. In addition, the European forces were not well equipped.

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Berlin crisis created a climate of increased concern over Soviet capabilities and intentions. Insofar as conventional forces were concerned, it was considered that the Soviets could overrun Europe very

quickly. The United States military had undergone a pell-mell demobilization which not only reduced the number of forces and the readiness of the active, but also our ability to mobilize rapidly. The Soviets demobilized somewhat, but not to a significant degree. Given the balance of conventional forces, the U.S. strategic nuclear capability was the deterrent to Soviet aggression.

Q: My impression from reading about this period is that there was more concern probably about an accidental war triggered by diplomatic miscalculations rather than a deliberate attack on the west. Is that correct?

Twitchell: While there was concern over the possibility that the Soviets might miscalculate the West's reaction to further moves by the Soviets, the major concern was that given the disparity of forces the Soviets might attack. Toward the end of World War II, Roosevelt and others thought that the end of the war would provide an opportunity to show the Soviets that there could be cooperation between the East and the West. Churchill saw the situation more realistically.

It became very clear during the last days of the war, with regard to entry into Berlin and the occupation zones in Germany, that there were going to be major problems between the Soviets and the West. There was much criticism over whether the West should have halted its forces on the Elbe instead of going to

Berlin. I remember that some in SHAEF felt that the occupation zones should be such as to enable each of the four powers to have direct access to Berlin, rather than having to enter through the Soviet zone. But that was again in that kind of, if you will, wishful thinking or unrealistic thinking about our relations with the Soviets.

Q: Now from SHAPE-- I guess it was in Paris?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: Where did you go next?

Twitchell: I went to the National War College for a year. '53 to '54.

Q: And from there, you were--

Twitchell: I went to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, to a regimental combat team for a year. Then I came back to the Pentagon.

Q: I guess you worked at the International Security Affairs offices during that period?

Twitchell: Yes. Initially I was concerned with our various treaty commitments, NATO, SEATO and CENTO. Several months later,

I took over the NATO affairs office and I remained on that assignment until the summer of 1958.

Q: I guess at one point you were chief of the ISA's Office of Special International Affairs?

Twitchell: That was the name of the office I was assigned to initially. It dealt with our commitments and the military aspects of our commitments to the SEATO and CENTO organizations as well as NATO.

Q: Did you take part in any of the discussions or decisions that were made of role of tactical nuclear weapons in NATO strategy?

Twitchell: The NATO affairs office was the staff section in ISA primarily concerned with NATO matters which involved the Pentagon or political-military affairs involving State and Defense. So that we were involved in the considerations leading up to the decisions on the role of tactical nuclear weapons and the subsequent implementation of that decision.

Q: I guess later in the decade you were chief of the Coordination Group in the Army Chief of Staff's office?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: What were the purposes of the Coordination Group?

Twitchell: The group had the basic task of carrying out special projects for the Chief of Staff and the Vice-Chief. We prepared special studies and reports.

Q: Do you recall any of the projects you worked on in particular?

Twitchell: For example, we drafted the "Posture Statements" for the Secretary and the Chief of Staff in connection with their presentations to Congress concerning the Army's budget. We also did some studies on the relationship between strategy and weapons development, especially the need for the strategic planners to provide some strategic guidance to the agencies which were developing weapons and equipment.

Q: As to the coordination group, what--

Twitchell: After the Coordination Group, I went to Korea as Assistant Division Commander of the First Cavalry Division.

Q: So this is I guess in the late fifties, right?

Twitchell: I went to Korea in January 1961 and left there in April of 1962.

Q: And then you came back to the United States?

Twitchell: When I came back to the United States I was ordered to the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations. In late April or early May I was designated to head a team to go to Iran to survey Iran's equipment needs, and make recommendations regarding equipment to be provided under the U.S. Military Assistance Program.

Q: I guess around that time the Shah had already visited Washington?

Twitchell: Yes. During the Shah's visit to Washington in the spring of '62, he and the Secretary of Defense agreed that a team should be sent to Iran to discuss Iran's defense programs with the Iranian military.

Q: Did you talk to any of the higher-ups about the survey? McNamara or Paul Nitze?

Twitchell: I talked primarily with the Assistant Secretary of Defense I.E.A, Mr. Bundy.

Q: Oh, William Bundy?

Twitchell: Yes. The team was under the supervision of the Joint

Chiefs, who were responsible to the Secretary of Defense. Our report was initially submitted to the Joint Chiefs who forwarded it to the Secretary of Defense.

Q: What was your survey supposed to accomplish? What were your stated responsibilities before you left for Iran?

Twitchell: We were to consult with the Iranian military and examine certain issues which were not resolved during the Shah's visit regarding U.S. proposals for the reduction of Iran's force levels. This required that we consider the overall strategic situation, Iran's view of its defense needs and the ability of the Iranian military to use and maintain the equipment which the Shah requested.

Q: Now you left for Tehran in April of '62?

Twitchell: The team remained in Washington for about three weeks, reading ourselves into the problem. I think we went out either late April or very early May and stayed out there about six weeks or so.

Q: At that time how would you describe the major purposes, or purpose, of the U.S. military aid program for Iran?

Twitchell: I think that the program has to be seen within the

overall objective of strengthening Iran's sense of security, which involved military political and economic considerations. The more specific purposes of the military assistance program were to strengthen the nation's will and ability to: 1-resist internal subversion-- especially efforts by the Soviets to undermine the government; 2-to effectively deal with a wide range of Soviet supported external threats, eg. the employment of proxy forces by neighboring states; and 3-Iraq and Afghanistan were considered to be potential threats.

Q: Now was internal security a major consideration, the Shah's internal security, in terms of finding military assistance?

Twitchell: In so far as the provision of military assistance was concerned, it was not a major factor. The bulk of the assistance was for the army and the air force to improve their capability militarily in both external and internal threats. In the case of the army, a considerable portion of the equipment was appropriate for both contingencies. The government considered it important to maintain adequate strength in the major cities and in the tribal areas to deal with any internal threats. In addition the military forces were responsible for supporting the forces who were primarily responsible for internal security-- the Gendarmerie and the National Police.

Q: This is a U.S. Army advisory group?

Twitchell: Yes. In addition to Armish-MAAG, the Gendarmerie had an advisory group called GENMISH. The equipment requirements of the army and the Gendarmerie were coordinated. In some instances both organizations had requirements for the same equipment.

Q: Around this point in time, what made Iran important to policy-makers in the Kennedy administration? How did they define or look at you?

Twitchell: The strategic importance of Iran's location and oil became increasingly clear to U.S. strategists during World War II. The Truman administration and those subsequent considered a free and western oriented Iran vital to the overall stability and defense of the Middle East. As a member of CENTO, Iran served as a vital link between NATO and SEATO.

Q: How were the petroleum reserves of the region factored into the assumptions about security interests?

Twitchell: As far as our study was concerned, we stressed the strategic importance of oil to the U.S. and its allies and took this into consideration in the development of the defence concept. During World War II the U.S. and the British were concerned about the availability of oil in the Gulf.

Q: I guess for Western Europe partly?

Twitchell: Yes, particularly for Western Europe.

Q: I note that during the post-war period the U.S. had listening posts in northern Iran to pick up intelligence information on missile tests and so forth in the Soviet Union. Were those already there by the early sixties, do you know?

Twitchell: By the late sixties?

Q: The early sixties?

Twitchell: I don't know. I believe there were some there by the late sixties.

Q: If you can recall this, how was the Shah regarded in Washington around this time? I read that the Kennedy administration was fairly critical of the Shah, but what was your impression?

Twitchell: Well, I think that they were mainly concerned about the domestic political situation, the harshness of his regime-- as they saw it-- and the need for a more enlightened regime concerning human rights, and the need for more political participation by the country as a whole. The administration also considered that too much emphasis was being placed on the military build-up and that greater emphasis and resources should be given

to the social and economic problems.

Q; Political power was-- ?

Twitchell: It was concentrated surely, authority was overly centralized at the national level and in the Shah personally.

Q: When you went to Tehran in the spring of '62, who traveled with you? Did you have a group of people that worked with you?

Twitchell: There was a joint team. One Naval officer, six Army, five Air Force officers, and myself.

Q: Now who did you meet after you arrived? Did you meet with the Shah or the ambassador?

Twitchell: We worked primarily with the Chief of the Armish-MAAG. Ambassador Julius Holmes was in Washington at that time, and I saw him before I went to Teheran. I met with the deputy chief of mission, Stuart Rockwell, and I worked with him on many aspects. The team worked closely with both the Embassy and the MAAG, the chief of Armish-MAAG, [General John C.] Hayden.

Q: Do you recall his first name?

Twitchell: No, I'd have to look it up.

Q: You met with the Shah also?

Twitchell: I met with him shortly after I arrived and just before I left.

Q: Did he discuss his foreign policy goals or his conception of his security needs with you?

Twitchell: He briefly outlined them. I worked primarily with the Chief of the Supreme Commander's staff.

Q: Do you recall who that was?

Twitchell: General Hedjezi.

Q: What were your impressions of the Iranian military around this time, 1962? What was your assessment-- of its strengths and weaknesses, I guess.

Twitchell: Basically the forces were equipped with World War II vintage equipment. Generally speaking, the Air Force, which was the youngest of the three services, was the more modern thinking force, even though it didn't have much equipment. The Navy had very few ships, since several of its ships had been sunk during World War II. The Army reflected, as I just mentioned, primarily World War II thinking, because of the World War II equipment. It