

was evident that if the forces were going to be provided more sophisticated equipment, there would be problems, not only in terms of training the Iranians to use the modern equipment and to maintain it, but also to advance their thinking in terms of modern warfare-- particularly joint warfare.

Q: During this period, when you were involved in this mission in '62, how much concern was there about the possibility of a Soviet military attack?

Twitchell: Direct Soviet aggression against Iran seemed unlikely because of the U.S. commitment under the CENTO treaty and the possibility of nuclear war. Indirect aggression was more likely.

Q: Or was it more the regional problem that was considered to be serious?

Twitchell: Yes. I think however that we questioned whether the regional problem was as serious as the Shah felt. The two most likely threats, Iraq and Afghanistan, were seen as potential threats particularly because of the increased Soviet influence in and assistance to the two countries. In 1962, however, neither appeared capable of carrying out sustained aggression against Iran without Soviet support,

Q: Before we get back to some of these military questions, what

was your sense-- at this time, if you can recall, what was your sense of the Shah's position in his country in the early sixties? How secure do you think his position was in the early sixties?

Twitchell: There were the riots in '62 and '63. There were other indications that there were problems. The new middle class was dissatisfied with conditions in the country. The National Front was the principal opposition but it was essentially negative and offered little. I think the members of the Embassy and others concerned felt that if the Front came into power Iran might revert to neutralism.

Q: Now you mentioned the Iranian Chief of Staff, General--

Twitchell: Hedjezi.

Q: Who were some of the other military figures that you worked with on the Iranian side?

Twitchell: We met with the three services. Our principal contact was Brigadier General Afkhami, and he's the one we arranged all of our meetings with, trips and so on. The team visited the various installations in the area. The Air Force representative wanted us particularly to check all the air installations. The Navy Captain on the team and I went to

Khorremshahr, Abadan and the Gulf.

END OF SIDE ONE; TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO; TAPE ONE

Q: You said you went on several surveys of the country when you were in Iran?

Twitchell: Yes. We visited all the installations and the critical areas, both in terms of the forces and the terrain.

Q: How able did you think that the military people you met with were, the Iranian military men, the military leaders?

Twitchell: Well, as I said, I think the leaders varied. Probably the chief of the Air Force, General Khatami, was the outstanding commander. I really didn't have a chance to assess all of the commanders in that short period of our visit. Although some of the leaders had attended courses in the U.S. and Europe, most had only a limited knowledge of modern armed forces. For example, General Ariana-- who subsequently became Chief SCS-- was noted for his role in combatting the Kurdish insurgence in northwestern Iran. I can answer your question a little better when we talk about the 1968 period when I returned to Teheran. At that time, I thought they'd made considerable improvement.

Q: Now after making your survey, what kind of recommendations did you come up with generally?

Twitchell: We recommended an overall defense concept to provide for the various contingencies, a forward strategy to deal with external threats, and missions for the three services. We also made recommendations regarding the force structure, the kinds and amounts of equipment, and other support for the forces including an airfield development program and an aircraft control and early warning system.

Q: What kind of a force structure did you think was necessary?

(Pause; rereading materials)

Twitchell: With regard to the defense concept for the country, you need to take into account the necessity for military security within a broader context. This point was made in the U.S. memorandum to the Shah.

Q: This is the report that you drew up you're reading?

Twitchell: I'm reading from the memo from the United States to the Shah, which has been declassified, and which included the following points:

Iran's security involves military, economic and political aspects. The development of a defense concept

takes into account the necessity for assuring military security within the broader context of the needs for strength and political unity and an internal capacity to resist subversion and the need for continued economic development.

So this was the point we tried to make at the very beginning.

The memo also pointed out that: "the concept for defense must provide for all contingencies, insuring a balance of the capabilities to meet each threat." It recognized the capability of the U.S. and its allies to deter Soviet aggression, and should deterrence fail, to defeat it. It also takes into consideration the collective security arrangements in the CENTO treaty. The concept anticipated that Iran's armed forces should be called upon to support other Iranian security forces directly responsible for Iran's internal security. The point was also made about the need for the forces to participate in the civic action program.

The concept for defense against an external threat was based on a forward strategy, utilizing the natural mountain barriers on the northern border. The strategy envisaged mutual support of ground, sea and air forces. The concept for ground defense called for a forward strategy, using maximum use of terrain to achieve economy of force.

We also recommended that the force structure take into account not only the concept for defense, but also the capabilities of the forces, and the equipment and resources which can be presumed to be available to them. We also said that the most effective Iranian military force, which could be supported

for the next five years, would be one limited to a total strength of about a hundred and sixty thousand personnel.

Q: This is a reduction in the size of their army, right?

Twitchell: Yes. Within this total force there should be: 1-an army of seven infantry divisions (ten thousand men each), a specially tailored and equipped frontier force (approximately 10,500 men), and necessary combat and logistical support units; 2-an air-force of about 12,000 personnel; and 3-a navy of about 3,000 men. We also stressed the need for more effective training and the need for highly skilled personnel to maintain and support the forces.

Q: Now would future U.S. military assistance be conditioned upon the reduction in the size of the army? Was that a condition for further military assistance by the U.S.? Was it couched in that way or was it more--

Twitchell: We also proposed an air field development program. An early warning program and the construction radar stations at Hamadam and Dezful-- tied it into a Cento early warning system.

Okay, in answer to your question re. conditions, the memorandum indicated that in furtherance of its intent to assist the Iranians, providing for its defense, the U.S. would be prepared during the next five years to provide equipment and

other support for Iranian forces. It also stated that it is understood that the provision of this support will be dependent on the transition of the Iranian armed forces over the next two or three year period to the agreed manpower level, on demonstrated capability of the Iranian armed forces to absorb and effectively utilize and maintain the equipment, and on the ability of the country to provide housing and support facilities.

Q: And you presented this memorandum to the Shah?

Twitchell: I didn't. The ambassador did. I participated in the drafting of it. I went back out to Iran in September.

Q: Oh, you returned?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: Did you discuss these improvements with the Shah at any meetings or was that up to the ambassador to do that?

Twitchell: I discussed certain aspects of the draft with the Shah during my audience with him just before the team departed Teheran. When the Ambassador presented the memorandum they discussed it briefly.

Q: Did you discuss these issues with some Iranian military

people that you were working with? Did you talk about these goals with them?

Twitchell: Our report was not finalized until we returned to Washington. However, we met with key Iranian military people and exchanged views. In this regard we did not discuss our proposed recommendations. Insofar as goals and recommendations were concerned, I did not discuss them until the memorandum was presented to the Shah. Since I left Teheran almost immediately afterward I saw only one or two of the senior Iranian officers before I left.

Q: Did you get a sense of how the Shah reacted to this memo?

Twitchell: When the Ambassador presented the memo to the Shah they reached an understanding on several points. Later in the day, the Minister of Court in a memorandum to the Ambassador confirmed the Shah's agreement to the five year program and the understanding they reached orally. Based on the Ambassador's comments to me and the wording of the memo from the Minister of Court, I felt that although he would have liked more equipment and support, he accepted the program in general. The extent to which the qualitative improvements would be achieved would in large measure depend on the cooperative efforts between the U.S. team and the Iranians.

Q: You drafted the memo?

Twitchell: Two other officers and I prepared the draft which was based on the team report.

Q: Who did you work with on that? Do you recall?

Twitchell: Colonel Eddie Broussard of the Air Force and Colonel Richard Kennedy of the Army.

Q: Did your report schedule estimates of military assistance requirements also?

Twitchell: In general, we dealt with types of equipment that was on hand or contemplated under the U.S. military assistance program.

Q: So that was all part of your report?

Twitchell: Yes. Specific types of equipment, including armored personnel carriers, vehicles, combat support equipment, aircraft, and two frigates.

Q: So these were all things to be delivered in the future under the military assistance program?

Twitchell: Yes. There was the usual caveat that this assistance was subject to the availability of funds and so on. As I mentioned earlier we stressed the importance of qualitative improvement, particularly in the Army, and the need for procurement and training of long-term personnel. In regard to the question of the ability of Iran to effectively use the sophisticated equipment and the amounts of equipment that the Shah had in mind; but that problem is not peculiar to Iran-- it applies to any developing country.

Q: Did you follow up the report's implementation? Did you do any follow-up work after September?

Twitchell: No. Oh, I heard from time to time about how things were going, but I didn't have any official responsibilities or involvement with the specifics of what was going on.

Q: So during your two visits to the country in '62, what were your impressions of the conditions in Iran?

Twitchell: Well, I think I mentioned earlier, I was greatly impressed with the changes which had taken place between '42 and '62. Teheran had grown and become a relatively modern city. In 1962 I became more aware of the political structure and the problems that the country faced, particularly the relationship between the economic and development problems, the social

problems and the military problems. One point I think it is important to recognize is that the military reported directly to the Shah. The military was a much more closed society than even in our country, for example. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet had very little to do with military matters, which were essentially between the Shah and his senior commanders.

Q: How was the military organized generally? Was there like an Iranian version of the joint chiefs of staff, for example?

Twitchell: I wouldn't categorize it that way. First of all, the Shah was essentially the Secretary of Defense. The Chief of the Supreme Commander's staff had limited authority and was a coordinator in a sense. The fundamental decisions were made by the Shah, dealing separately with each of the service chiefs on matters pertaining to his service. Although there was some coordination between the services, there was little in the way of a joint unified approach.

Q: Okay. We'll talk more about that as we get back to the late sixties. After your special assignment on Iran, where did you go next?

Twitchell: I next went to SHAPE to head the Plans Section in the Plans & Operations Division.

Q: What are the functions of the plans branch?

Twitchell: Basically, to prepare strategic plans and policies.

Q: Did this involve working on NATO war plans, for example?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: And from there, I guess, you went--

Twitchell: I became the Standing Group Representative to the NATO Council. The Standing Group was located in Washington and it had a representative on hand in Paris to maintain liaison with the Council.

Q: Now during this period-- I guess during the late fifties and early sixties, the French, I think, had a lot of disagreements with the U.S. over questions like flexible response, military strategies. I guess the French were starting to reduce their participation in some of the NATO activities during this period, the early sixties. Was there much concern about the possibility of DeGaulle leaving NATO? Leaving the alliance structure altogether, when you were there in '62 or '63? It happened later, obviously.

Twitchell: Yes. I left Paris in '64 and the French withdrew

their forces in 1966. It was very clear that there were strains at the political level before I left. My immediate superior at SHAPE was a French air force general. His superior, a deputy chief of staff, was a German army general. The three of us never had any serious disagreements on the military issues, but it was very clear that there were political undertones which made it more difficult to carry out strategic and operational planning. It was a much different atmosphere than in the early 1950s. And I think it is important to remember that DeGaulle was proud, sensitive, and strong minded. He was difficult to deal with during World War II on a number of political and military issues, particularly the question of his authority. His decision to remove the French forces assigned to NATO and retain them under French control weakened the NATO military structure. Although the French military have continued to cooperate with their military counterparts in NATO and the French continue to participate in NATO at the political level, the question of the relationship in the event of war remains uncertain.

Q: Now you were with the Standing Group of NATO during this period, and then you went--

Twitchell: I went to be Chief of Staff of the Seventh Army in Stuttgart.

Q: I guess during these years, '64 to '66, you were in

Stuttgart?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: During this period the U. S. military role in Vietnam was expanding. Did you discuss the Vietnam War issue with European military leaders? Did this ever come up in conversations with them?

Twitchell: It came up in conversations, but it didn't come up officially, in terms of--

Q: Oh, informally I mean.

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: What kind of views did they express? The Germans or the French?

Twitchell: Well, with the French having been forced to leave Vietnam, you can imagine what their general views were and they were concerned over the problems which we were experiencing. We discussed the problems which both countries faced and the lessons learned.

Q: What about other European military people, like the Germans

or the Belgians?

Twitchell: I never got into any discussions with them on Vietnam.

Q: I guess your next assignment was Armish-MAAG in Iran?

Twitchell: No, I came back to the United States at the end of '66, and I went to Atlanta, Georgia. I was the commander of a reserve corps for six months, and then I became deputy commander of the Third Army until I went back to Iran in '68.

Q: What were the circumstances under which you were appointed Chief of Armish-MAAG? How did this come about?

Twitchell: Well, first of all, General Jablonsky's tour was ending. An army General-- and I've forgotten his name-- had been designated to go to Iran, and for some reason his orders were changed. Consequently, I was ordered to go to Iran on relatively short notice. I am no sure what led to the change in the original plan.

Q: So when did you actually move to Tehran?

Twitchell: June of '68. Early June.

Q: Now this is a pretty broad question, but what were your responsibilities as Chief of the U. S. Military Mission in Iran?

Twitchell: Well, I guess you can describe them in these terms. One was to administer the Military Assistance Program. Two, to provide advice to the Iranian military and to the Shah regarding organization, training, equipping, and build-up of the forces in furtherance of the defense concept. However, we were not involved in their defense planning. Nor were we involved in internal security matters. Third, as a member of the country team for advising the Ambassador on the military issues and keeping him informed of our alternatives. There were many directives from Washington-- either State-Defense messages or State messages to the Ambassador, in addition to those to the MAAG from DoD agencies which influenced and had a bearing on our actions. I think you have to recognize that many of the issues and problems were more than just military. They were political and economic as well as military.

I was responsible for administration of the military and civilians in Armish-MAAG, including the support facilities.

I'd like to make a general point, I think, which is not too well understood. When you are the head of a MAAG or a mission to a foreign government, your role is a little different than, say, a member of the embassy. You're there as an adviser to the government, and this means that the host government has to have confidence in the chief of the mission that he's interested in

their security and well-being, in addition to his own responsibilities to the U.S. government. This is a very, very gray area sometimes.

Q: We should discuss the implications as we go along, express the specific issues that came up, but you mentioned a minute ago that the Armish-MAAG had no role regarding internal security. Was there still GENMISH at this point?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: But that was not under your--

Twitchell: No, it was separate.

Q: It had its own separate chief?

Twitchell: Yes. And this was always a debatable question, for administrative reasons as well as otherwise, but it didn't really hamper our relationship.

Q: Who was the head of the GENMISH at this time?

Twitchell: I just don't remember his name. [Colonel Warren Philips-- Twitchell's addendum]

Q: Did they have a very big staff or was it a small group?

Twitchell: A small group.

Q: Now who were some of the-- I guess some of the major officers in the military mission? People representing each service's interests?

Twitchell: The mission included a command section, a joint staff, an air force section, an army section, a navy section and a support command. Brigadier General Roy Casbier headed the air force section during my first year. He was replaced by Price, Brigadier General Harold Price. Captain Robert Harwood arrived shortly after I did and he was head of the navy section during the remainder of my tour. Brigadier General Metaxis headed the army section for about a year, and General Patton, Brigadier General Oliver Patton, replaced him.

Q: What was his first name?

Twitchell: Patton. Oliver.

Q: What kind of responsibilities did they have?

Twitchell: The section chiefs were responsible for advising his Iranian counterparts on organizational, training, and equipment

matters. They maintained direct contact with the commanders of the services and their principal subordinates. The joint staff dealt with joint matters and worked closely with the SCS. I dealt with the Chief SCS.

Q: SCS referring to?

Twitchell: Chief Supreme Commanders Staff, the SCS. I also dealt primarily with [General] Toufanian on arms acquisitions, particularly equipment they purchased from the U.S.

Q: How many officers were on the Armish-MAAG staff?

Twitchell: In 1968 there were approximately 150 and in 1971 there were about 130.

Q: But officers were assigned to the Armish-MAAG, the U.S. officers were assigned. For specific Iranian units?

Twitchell: Each service section had advisors in the field. For example, the army section had teams at Shiraz, at Isfahan, at Tabriz, and at Meshed. The Air Force had teams at major air installations. The Navy had a team at Khorramshah, which is near Abadan.

Q: They were pretty widely dispersed?

Twitchell: Yes. Most of them were headed by colonels. They were small teams. The service section chiefs were responsible for dealing directly with them on operational and training matters. The administrative section of the support command was responsible for providing their support, and this was under the joint staff.

Q: I'm not sure this is the right word to use, but how much authority-- or maybe how much clout did the U. S. officers have in their dealings with Iranian officers?

Twitchell: First of all, they didn't have any authority, their role was advisory. Their influence depended in a large measure on their professional competence and their relationship with their counterparts.

Q: So it differed from case to case, I guess?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: Can you generalize about how well the Iranian and American officers got along?

Twitchell: In most instances, I think they got along very well. In general, I feel that the ability of an advisor to communicate with his counterpart is critical to a good relationship,