especially when there are cultural differences. An advisor must be able to blend his professional knowledge with the culture and background of the recipient, regardless of what country we're talking about. Many times the recipient will agree, even though he doesn't really understand, or maybe he doesn't even agree, there is this gap which can vary. This is the reason that it's so important that individuals going on these assignments have an understanding of the country, both historically, culturally, and ideally be able to speak the language of the host country.

Q: How true was that of the officers who were assigned?

Twitchell: Generally they had very little background before they came. For the most part they had a two week orientation course here in the United States. There were a few who spoke Farsi, because they had had language training in connection with an area specialty program.

Q: But that was a very small group of people, I suspect?

Twitchell: That's right.

Q: But there weren't any real problems between the Americans and the Iranians? There weren't any feelings of nationalist resentment on the part of the Iranians? Were there any problems that arose?

Twitchell: I think there might have been individual problems, but I don't recall any issues that came up in that context which became a matter of command concern.

Q: You mentioned the various small groups that were stationed around the country at the various--

Twitchell: Cities and installations.

Q: Installations and cities and so forth. What kind of responsibilities did these teams have? Were they just mostly training in weapons use?

Twitchell: It varied depending on the installation. They were at schools, particularly army schools. They were also at units. In the case of the Army, they were at the same location as the army or division commander. There their job was to assist in training, organization maintenance and support matters.

Q: Now how closely did you work with the U.S. Embassy?

Twitchell: Very closely. As far as I was concerned, I had excellent relations with both Ambassador MacArthur and Ambassador Armin Meyer.

Q: I guess Meyer was ambassador when you first arrived?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: How would you evaluate Meyer as ambassador? Or how would you compare the two as ambassadors?

Twitchell: I considered both very able and felt that they carried out U.S. policy in a highly effective manner and that they had excellent relations with the Shah and the key members of his government. With the Shah intimately involved with military matters, especially arms purchases, it was extremely important that the Embassy and the MAAG keep each other currently informed and that out positions with the Shah be coordinated. All in all I considered that the relationship was excellent.

Q: How often did you meet with the Shah?

Twitchell: I suppose on an average every five weeks.

Q: You met alone?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: You kept a record of your discussions?

Twitchell: I submitted a record of my discussions to the Shah and to the U.S. State and Defense Departments.

Q: These are all preserved somewhere?

Twitchell: I suppose some may still remain in the official files.

Q: Were your discussions pretty wide ranging or did they stick to military subjects?

Twitchell: They were wide ranging. The Shah usually started the discussion by reviewing the overall political-military situation-- particularly developments in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Subsequently the discussions entered on matters pertaining to Iranian military issues, especially U.S.-Iranian military relations.

Q: How did the Shah explain his military force requirements when you met with him during this period?

Twitchell: The overall force structure was pretty well-established and our discussion generally focused on advance weapons needed to modernize existing forces or additional forces. On several occasions we also discussed other measures and issues which would have to be solved in conjunction with the new or additional equipment. In this regard I believe it was in 1969 or 1970 when the Shah first discussed with me his desire to obtain additional ships and aircraft because of Iran's need to extend

its naval presence into the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean to protect vital sea lanes.

Q: What were some of the issues that you saw as questions that had to be solved?

Twitchell: Primarily personnel. The adoption of a comprehensive personnel and training program for the procurement, training, and retention of personnel to command, operate, and maintain the advanced weapons that were being purchased. Insofar as the procurement of officers was concerned, I felt that the curriculum of the military academy needed to be increased from two to four years and that it needed to be upgraded considerably. I also thought it was important for the government to determine its overall requirement for skilled personnel-- civilian and military-- and to establish priorities for this allocation. There was a limit to how fast the military could absorb the equipment that was being purchased.

Q: How responsive was the Shah to that line of thought?

Twitchell: Well, at least during our discussions, he appeared responsive to the basic recommendations. I don't know how longer term personnel recommendations were carried out. But I did observe a tremendous change between the time I was there in '62 and the time I left at the end of 1971.

Q: How would you define that change or characterize it?

Twitchell: Well, of course they were better equipped. They also had improved their military schools and their unit training. In addition, a significant number of the younger officers had taken courses at U.S. and West European service schools. The Iranian Air Force, which was almost totally equipped with U.S. equipment, had made a tremendous improvement. Both the Army and the Navy improved considerably. However, there was still the absorption problem, particularly maintenance.

When the Congress reduced the strength of the military advisory groups, it authorized the so-called TAFTs, Technical Assistance Field Teams, which the Iranian government paid for.

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

Q: You were talking about the TAFTs.

Twitchell: Yes, the only TAFTS which were in Iran when I was there were Air Force. Even though they were not assigned to the MAAG, the Chief of the MAAG Air Force Section supervised their work. The members of the TAFTS were billeted on Iranian Air Force and this created administrative and cultural problems. In addition, some of the team members felt they were mercenaries, which created morale problems in some instances.

The TAFTS became an increasingly important augmentation of the advisory effort during the next few years when the delivery of equipment, particularly aircraft, accelerated. At one point the number of personnel in TAFTS was more than half the number of U.S. government personnel in Iran.

Q: When you dealt with the Shah from time to time, did he discuss his perceptions of military or security threats to Iran?

Twitchell: Yes, particularly the threat posed by radical Arab states and the direct and indirect threat posed by the Soviets to Iran and the Persian Gulf states. He was also concerned over the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the possibility of another war between India and Pakistan.

Q: Things you touched upon earlier?

Twitchell: Yes, especially the question of the Soviets and what they were was trying to do in the Middle East. Of course, in the light of what had happened in our tilting towards India in the Pakistani-Indian conflict-- in '65, I think it was, I have to check the dates on that, but there was this concern about the steadfastness of the U. S. commitment, the reliability of it.

Q: Did he raise those concerns with you directly?

Twitchell: Yes, in one particular case. He raised the question of our commitment and whether or not we would follow through. So it did come up.

Q: You mentioned this a little bit earlier, but what did you think about his assessment of threats?

Twitchell: Well, naturally he would see both the regional and the Soviet threat as more menacing than would somebody who is eight thousand miles away. But I think he had a pretty good understanding of the military situation in the area. Although he felt that the CENTO Treaty essentially protected Iran against a major Soviet attack, he had doubts about whether Western support would be provided in case of local aggression. He was especially concerned over the U.S.S.R.'s supply of advanced weapons to Iraq.

As time grew on, particularly in the seventies, he became more concerned about the defense of the Gulf, and as I mentioned before, the need to protect the sea lanes in the Gulf of Oman and out into the Indian Ocean; for the protection of supplies coming into the country and for the oil being exploited. That's the primary reason he moved towards a modern "Blue Water Navy". That was just developing when I was there. He started thinking about larger ships and longer range patrol aircraft. Previously, he had been primarily concerned with protecting the Gulf itself.

He also placed great stress on the ability of the military, particularly the Army, to deal with threats to Iran's internal

security. Because of the distances involved in the Middle East, he looked on the Air Force as a deterrent force which would strike at the enemy and defend Iran against air attacks.

Q: From my reading, I've got the impression that the civic action was encouraged to some extent by the Armish-MAAG earlier in the sixties as part of the counter-insurgency training, or thinking generally?

Twitchell: Well, I think this was a factor; designed to contribute to the welfare of the people and to enhance the public image of the military. He also used the military as the cutting edge of his modernization program-- civilian and military. For example, the number one man in aviation (including civil aviation) in the country was the Chief of the Air Force.

Q: Now at this time did any of the Armish-MAAG programs include counter-insurgent training in a more narrow sense, or was that already-- I think there had been earlier in the decade maybe.

Twitchell: The MAAG's training program was primarily concerned with conventional training. However, a limited amount of the training dealt with counter-insurgency matters, particularly the provision of support to the Gendarmerie and the National Police.

Q: What were your impressions of the Shah around this time? Had

he changed much since you first met him in the early sixties?

Twitchell: I just saw him on two occasions in '62. They were much the same. Well, I can only give my impressions that: 1) as I saw him as a public figure during ceremonies and so on; 2) as I saw him in his office; then 3) the way he related to his commanders.

During the audiences, there was a very easy discussion. I never felt inhibited in saying-- tactfully-- what I thought the problems were, what needed to be done to solve them, and he was very open to them. At least there was a good deal of discussion back and forth about the problems.

In public, he was imperial and very formal. The Iranian people never were too critical outwardly. At least to me, and I think probably most foreigners. Although I did meet with a number of Iranians who from time to time would say something indicating the need for the government to be more open than it was. My own feeling was that when he-- say '73, '74, '75 period-- when the Shah began talking about Iran becoming one of the six major powers in the world that the pace that he set was somewhat influenced by the fact that he knew he was ill and that he wanted to have the programs put in place before he died or left the throne. For example, one time in 1969 or '70 shortly after a public birthday celebration for the Shah, the question of the education of his son came up during an audience. We had a long discussion about what kind of an education it takes, what sort of

an environment it takes to prepare the prince to meet the responsibilities that he was expected to meet as Shah.

Q: Now at the time you were stationed in Iran, how secure did you think his political position was generally? You said there were problems earlier in the sixties that you perceived.

Twitchell: Yes. I think the embassy had perceived them as well. There were difficulties that-- I think the general feeling was that a lot was being accomplished economically. There was criticism of the alleged corruption by people on high, about the royal family. That by and large his principals in the government and the military were reluctant to tell him anything unpleasant. I don't know how much he asked them for advice. I do know that there were a number of times when it was suggested that I could say something to the Shah that they felt they couldn't.

Again, there were frequent comments about the capability of a particular military commander, and that the Shah put his friends into positions. Well, I think if you go back and see the threats to the Shah in the past, especially the intrusion of foreign powers into the inner workings of the government, personal loyalty to the Shah could be of critical importance in selecting key subordinates.

The other impression I had was he was too much involved in detail throughout the running of the government, and particularly the military. But during the time I was there, the requirement

for the appointment of colonels to brigadier generals, for example, to have written and oral exams was added. These exams were given once a year and they counted heavily in the selection process and in the Shah's decision.

Modernization was moving steadily until the economy started to overheat in the mid-1970s. All the promises that had been made suddenly evaporated.

Q: You mentioned the problem of loyalty a minute ago, of the loyalty of the military leaders to the Shah?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: Was he concerned about that problem? Did he perceive it?

Twitchell: I never had that feeling. I think all the close advisors that he had, he felt were loyal.

Q: But, in general, during this period, did you have the sense that his position was fairly secure?

Twitchell: I didn't think that there was any internal threat which would indicate that he would be overthrown. I think that there were signs of discontent and concern.

Q: Did you see any evidence of political opposition when you

were there during those three years?

Twitchell: Yes, for example, the Mujahedin tried to run the American Ambassador's car off of the road. While I was there, there also were a couple of incidents with the people in the mission. The Iranians became concerned and insisted on the three MAAG section chiefs and myself having a security escort whenever we went out.

So, you know, it was a tight situation. The families, the wives there in particular, became concerned in the sense that they couldn't do things with freedom in many cases. They weren't encouraged to drive their own cars, not only because of a security problem, but just because of the general differences in the culture. It was a restricted environment for the American community.

Q: Now some analysts argued back in those days, political scientists who looked at Iran closely, some argued that as long as the Shah ruled on a monarchical basis and prevented widespread political participation, that it was really impossible for him to forge a durable, stable political system in the long term. Did this kind of a problem trouble you back then?

Twitchell: Yes. First of all, they tried to adopt our system in some form of the two-party system, but it didn't work. Then after I got back here, they went to the one-party system, the

Rastahkiz. And everybody said, that's just a phoney. My own feeling is that we try to judge everybody too much by our standards and our values, and that somehow we had to understand that what necessarily applies to us doesn't apply to everybody else, and so how do we deal with that and at the same time not-- just because we're going to give aid and assistance to some country, insist on our way of doing things. The basic issues were human rights and the need for increased political participation.

I think-- and I've often meditated about the question; who lost Iran? I've heard that phrase used. Was it our fault, or was it the Shah's fault, or whose? Of course, it was the Shah who had the ultimate responsibility.

But when there was a recognition in Teheran that there was need for political change, once you start this process though, it's very hard to control it, and when you look back at those events in '78, what triggered off that fire down in Abadan, the speech by Dr. Homayoun, criticizing-- I've forgotten who it was, but it was a critical speech. These touched off a series of incidents which led to the fall of the Shah.

Q: Criticizing the religious leaders, the Ayatollahs?

Twitchell: This just touched off a reaction which became uncontrollable. I haven't really studied that phase, but I have been very interested in looking at the problems that arose during

the seventies, during the Nixon Administration regarding the encouragement to-- or at least being party to their going all out economically and militarily, and then the problems that arose in the Carter regime.

Q: Now when you arrived, Johnson was President?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: That was his last year in office and Nixon became President the following year. Did you see any difference in the approach that the Johnson Administration took to Iran compared to Nixon in the following year? Were there any major changes in policy during this period?

Twitchell: I would say that the major difference that I noticed was with regard to the purchase of equipment. The Nixon Administration took a more liberal position regarding purchases that Iran could make directly from companies to Iran. It was pretty clear that in the first case the Iranians did not have the background and the capability to make the technical judgments on the equipment, whether they were buying American equipment or whether they were buying Italian equipment or somebody else's equipment. In the past, earlier, most purchases were through the Defense Department. As a result, one of the issues that came up in connection with sophisticated aircraft was concern about the

ability of the Iranians to judge the technical merits of highly sophisticated equipment. Based on the problems that had arisen, Ambassador MacArthur, at the request of the Iranians, recommended that the Iranians be authorized to purchase equipment, as were the Germans at that time, through the Defense Department, if they so desired. This assured the Iranians that at least the government [the U.S.] stood behind its word, and that they would get a fair price. It was to the interest of the United States in the long run to be sure that the Iranians felt that they were getting, if you will, a program which was in the mutual interest of the two countries and that it was not just something which they wished that they had. I saw cases where they bought equipment that they thought was all right, and it wasn't. In some instances, they bought equipment that didn't have the claimed capabilities. For example, a helicopter that couldn't take off at high altitudes during the heat of the summer.

In some cases I had reservations over some of the equipment they were trying to buy and some of the equipment that people were trying to sell them.

Q: But you said there was this change whereby the government of Iran would make purchases directly from American companies. This happened while you were there?

Twitchell: Yes. But then it was changed, the Iranians could buy, if they wanted to, through the Defense Department. In most

instances, they purchased major items through Defense.

Q: So they had an option? In general, how did the Shah go about making decisions on weapons purchases, from your observations at that time?

Twitchell: Well, generally, of course, the Air Force was almost totally U.S. Most of the Army equipment was U.S. provided. However, between the time I was there in '62 and the time I came back, they'd purchased a lot of Soviet equipment. But again there were limitations which the Iranians imposed on the types of Soviet equipment that they would buy. I'm sure that there were political factors as well as military factors in many of the decisions, whether they bought a British tank or an American tank.

Q: Can you give an example of how that would work out?

Twitchell: Whether they bought the Chieftain tank or the latest U.S. tank. There might be a time factor. I think there was a concern on the part of the Shah about the escalation of the prices. There was also the relationship question between the price of oil and the increased price of materials. There was concern on his part about U.S. policies as a supplier, which would vary by administrations. So this tended to make him try to buy faster. There was also pressure by companies to say you'd

better buy it now, because the price is going up and so on.

Basically Toufanian was the essential staff advisor on procurement, and I think he had the Shah's confidence on it. Toufanian sought the technical advice of the MAAG on many items, in terms of its characteristics, capabilities, and so on. The heads of the services were also consulted about purchases.

Q: Well, how much influence did you have over Toufanian's and the Shah's decisions when they made a purchase? Did they seek your advice often?

Twitchell: Very often. The Shah and Toufanian also met with many of the representative firms interested in selling major items of equipment.

Q: How would you assess your influence?

Twitchell: I've never really felt that I could assess that.

Q: Were there instances when they possibly maybe-- were there instances when they disregarded your suggestions, or was that pretty exceptional?

Twitchell: I think there were a number of times when it came to a point where it was a matter of our saying, here are the options, and then they made the decision. For example, whether

they bought a British weapon or an American weapon. If they asked for a comparison, we gave them what we considered to be a professional comparison. And then they had to take into consideration some of the other factors. But I think the majority of the time that they accepted the recommendations. Our advice was primarily technical.

Now, for example, on personnel, my two years were up in June of 1970, it's normally a two-year tour, or was. But then the ambassador earlier asked if I would stay on for another year and I said that I would. The last year I was there, I became involved in several studies, which the Shah wanted and which the Embassy was anxious to provide him.

When it came time for me to leave in June of '71, there were several studies which we were trying to develop with the Iranians, particularly a personnel program and a five-year recruitment program, both of which I mentioned earlier. These took longer than we anticipated, because of the problems of working it out with the Iranians. So I was extended twice. Once when I was going to leave in April, I was extended to the end of September.

Q: In '71?

Twitchell: Yes. You asked how well did they implement the recommendations? I'll never know how well they implemented the personnel programs.

Q: Now in other interviews I've heard a fair amount about the joint annual review of Iranian military purchases, I guess mostly from the United States, in terms of American credit availability, Export-Import Bank loans and so forth. You were involved in this procedure. I guess it was still going on when you were Armish-MAAG Chief?

Twitchell: Yes. But basically, then you got down to what were the priority needs, what was jointly agreeable to them and to us. Again the review acted as a restraint on how fast the Iranians could go. But I guess again the more important thing was to try to relate this to their ability to handle the equipment, as well as their ability to pay for it. And, of course, price constraints were less of a problem, particularly in '71 and later when the price of oil increased.

Q: Was the joint review procedure phased out while you were there? Or did it continue all the way through your-- was 1970 the last joint review?

Twitchell: I think it was. Because then, you see, they were paying for everything.

Q: That's right.

[END OF SESSION 1]