

Q: Did any other senior Defense Department officials come through?

Twitchell: When you say senior?

Q: Well, like his deputy or one of his assistant secretaries?

Twitchell: Jim Noyes, a Middle East expert from ISA, came out. He's in California now.

Q: And he met with you then?

Twitchell: Bob Pranger, who was in ISA, also came to Teheran. They were the two senior civilians that came out from OSD. In addition, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs came out in connection with a CENTO meeting. Also the C in C of the U.S. Strike Command came to visit the MAAG.

Q: Who was that at that time?

Twitchell: [Earle G.] Wheeler was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Q: And you met with them during their visits?

Twitchell: Yes. I went with Wheeler when he called on the Shah.

And then I saw him socially.

Q: He came to discuss CENTO matters with the Shah?

Twitchell: The CENTO Military Committee was meeting in Teheran. So he attended that session. His call on the Shah was more a matter of formality.

Q: Did you have anything to do with CENTO when you were there? Did you play any role regarding CENTO issues when you were with Armish-MAAG?

Twitchell: Very little. I saw the American representative to the CENTO staff-- the permanent representative-- when he came to Teheran, particularly in connection with CENTO affairs. And from time to time there were questions that came up involving the U.S. role in CENTO and in Iran. But generally CENTO channels were different.

Westmoreland came out after he became Army Chief of Staff, on a visit.

Q: He met with the Shah as well?

Twitchell: Yes. Generally, whenever the commander of CINSTRIKE came out, he met with the Shah.

Q: Who was that at that time?

Twitchell: John Throckmorton was one of them and Theodore Conway was the other.

Q: Throckmorton--

Twitchell: Another was Ted Conway, Theodore Conway.

Q: You mentioned earlier that in terms of the chain of command, you reported to CINSTRIKE? The commander of CINSTRIKE?

Twitchell: I reported to CINSTRIKE for those matters which the JCS were responsible. Some of the matters in connection with military assistance programs, particularly the implementation of them, I handled through OSD. There were also times when there would be a State-Defense telegram which I would contribute to, which the embassy sent in to State and Defense. We determined which particular headquarters to deal with, based on the subject, involved and kept the others informed as necessary.

Q: Now since CINSTRIKE-- what does that stand for?

Twitchell: Commander-in-Chief Strike Command.

Q: And what was that command?

Twitchell: It was a joint command under the JCS, to deal with contingency situations other than the European and Pacific theatres.

Q: So it included the Middle East, but other areas as well?

Twitchell: Yes.

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BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE:

Q: Now was CINSTRIKE located at the Pentagon or did they have a central office somewhere else?

Twitchell: Tampa.

Q: And what issues did you deal with them? What questions did you deal with CINSTRIKE?

Twitchell: Primarily on our manning tables and the military assistance programs. They inspected us once a year. They were in the chain of command for development of the military assistance programs. We received our guidance for the development of the annual military assistance program from them and forwarded our recommended program to them for approval and submission to the JCS.

Q: That was the basic issues that they--

Twitchell: Yes. Well, basically. They were responsible to the Chiefs for the recommendations regarding the program. And we were under their control in terms of administrative matters as well.

Q: Did you ever return to Washington for consultations, for meetings of--

Twitchell: No.

Q: Now this is an issue you sort of addressed before, but I thought we'd go into it some more. Now the Nixon administration's approach to Iran was strongly influenced by the late '67 British decision to pull their military forces from east of Suez. They had a balance of payments crisis in '67. They decided to reevaluate their military posture in the region. I guess this decision was made shortly before you arrived, several months before you arrived in Teheran? What kind of issues did this decision raise in your mind?

Twitchell: Well, Nixon wasn't-- he didn't come in till '69.

Q: That's right, but his decisions were influenced by this British decision that was made two years--

Twitchell: The British announced it in '68.

Q: Yes.

Twitchell: The Shah apparently knew about it-- at least that's what I've read-- before then.

Q: So what kind of issues did this decision raise in your mind, in terms of the U.S. role in the Middle East, or the U.S. relationship with the Shah? Was there much discussion on the British decision in Armish-MAAG? Over possible policy options that would--

Twitchell: No. See, the last thing on my mind was Iran in '67.

Q: No, I'd say when you arrived in mid-'68.

Twitchell: Yes, but by that time the--

Q: Of course, by that point the British decision was already public and it would be something that you might have thought about when you--

Twitchell: The proposed withdrawal raised two questions: first, whether the U.S. would increase its naval presence in the Gulf; and second, whether the military assistance programs for Iran and

Saudi Arabia would be increased. Insofar as Iran was concerned, there was a '62 study, which was a five-year study. Then there was a '64 study, which upgraded that. Then the Iranians were requesting additional equipment in the spring of '68. So I would say that basically the Iranian government had already decided that they wanted to take steps to increase their presence in the Gulf.

Q: By that time anyway?

Twitchell: By the time I arrived it wasn't a matter of discussing the options. I think the F-4s were already ordered. So generally speaking, during that time I was there, it was a matter more of the Shah's seeing or feeling the need, particularly in 1970, '71, to have a greater capability to protect not only the Gulf, but the sea lanes leading to and exiting from the Gulf. This was reflected in the Shah's later requests for more sophisticated aircraft and ships.

Q: Well, after the British made their decision to pull out of the Gulf by '71, was there much policy coordination between the U.S. and the British over how the pull-out should be made? The extent of it and so forth?

Twitchell: I would imagine that there'd been numerous discussion between the two ambassadors, but there was little in terms of the



MAAG dealing with the British attache, although I saw him quite frequently. But such contacts as I had were only in terms of certain items of equipment. Both the British and the French were anxious to sell equipment to Iran, and the British were also very anxious to provide instructors for the Iranian defense college.

Q: I have a couple of questions on some of the regional issues that came up during the late sixties and early seventies. I read in the New York Times an article from '69 that that year the Shah declared that the U.S. would have to withdraw from its naval base at Bahrain by the time the British had withdrawn from the Persian Gulf generally. Did the Shah discuss this issue with you at any point?

Twitchell: No. And I'm not sure what the basis for his making that statement was. Obviously there were indications that the Bahrainis at some stage might not want the U.S. to retain their Persian Gulf command there, but they later withdrew from that position. I think it was primarily a decision or announcement by the Bahraini government, not so much what the Shah had to say, but I don't deny that he said that.

Q: Now during that same year, 1969, and the following year, 1970, tensions between Iran and Iraq were on the upswing, mainly because of the controversy over control of the Shatt-al-arab River. Did the Shah discuss these problems with you, the problem



of Iraq and political tensions with Iraq?

Twitchell: Yes he did. I think he was particularly concerned about Iraq and Syria and the combination of the two. So he very frequently compared the build-up of forces of Iran and Iraq to Iran. At one stage I think he pointed out that Iraq had more aircraft than Iran did. More tanks. And particularly the imbalance if one considered the total number of Syrian and Iraqi tanks. He was very concerned that the tension and actions along the Shatt-al-arab border not get out of hand and lead to an all-out war.

Q: Was there some possibility that it could lead to a war at that point? Were the military leaders apprehensive about that possibility, that tensions could escalate into something?

Twitchell: Well, I think it was more that the Shah wanted to keep it under control. I think at any time in that area of the world a conflict can escalate in a hurry. The Iranians decided to test the waters, so to speak, by sending ships up and down the Shatt-al-arab and making clear that they intended to have access.

Q: Around the same time, the late sixties, the U.S. had plans for a naval base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and the idea was to increase the U.S.'s over the horizon naval presence in the Persian Gulf region generally. Did you know how closely

the U.S. consulted with the Shah about the plans for Diego Garcia?

Twitchell: No.

Q: Did he ever discuss with you the question of U. S. bases in the area generally? Was it ever a topic of discussion?

Twitchell: If it was a topic of discussion, it would be only in the general sense. Iran had bases and if something happened I think they would have been available. But I don't remember it being made a major point of discussion.

Q: Now over the years the Shah developed a fairly close military and intelligence relationship with Israel. When you were in Iran in the late sixties, or in the seventies, how evident was this relationship to you?

Twitchell: Only in the sense that I knew that there were contacts with the Israelis, particularly in terms of arms purchases. The Israelis were interested in selling certain types of equipment. Again I think, the Shah's concerns over the radical Arabs, that there was a feeling of compatibility there that they both faced a common enemy. In addition, the Israelis had a very competent military force, and the Iranian military could learn a good deal from them and maintained contacts with

them.

Q: Did you learn very much about the substance of the relationship? What kind of programs? Specific programs or what the areas of cooperation and consultation were? Did you learn much about the details of the relationship?

Twitchell: Not much. The Iranians didn't discuss the matter very often and the Israelis maintained a low profile.

Q: Around September '69 the Shah visited Washington for a state visit to meet with President Nixon. From what I've read-- there were some New York Times articles about this-- at this time the Shah wanted the U.S. to increase oil imports, so that he would have more dollars to buy F-4 jets, F-5 jets, and so forth. Did he discuss this plan with you, any plan to get the Americans to buy more oil, so he could raise his dollar income for military sales?

Twitchell: Basically he didn't get into those things with me. I've heard Zahedi say afterwards that at one time they offered a fixed oil price to the U.S.

Q: I've heard that.

Twitchell: Which we rejected.

Q: Now at these same meetings in Washington, the Shah and administration officials, they discussed at some length, I guess, the implications of the British decision to pull out of the Persian Gulf by '71. Did you learn anything about the general direction of these discussions? Any decisions that were made or a course of action that was agreed upon? By Kissinger and Nixon and the Shah?

Twitchell: No. I assume the Embassy was kept informed. Again, it was generally-- these developments reflected an increase on the Shah's part of his interest to get more equipment, as well as the strategic balance in the area.

Q: So it all boiled down to that basically?

Twitchell: He moved, as I mentioned earlier, from concern over the protection of the Gulf itself, to the problem of getting or obtaining a deep water navy. And, of course, having increased air cover. Generally his concept was primarily to be able to deter aggression in the area and he looked upon the air as being his primary weapon for deterrence, because of the distances involved, the terrain and so on.

The Navy was relatively low on the list until '65 or '66, and then he began to be concerned over the need to build up the Navy.



Q: Now earlier that year, early in '69, the Shah told Hanson Baldwin, the New York Times military correspondent, told Baldwin that if the U.S. did not provide more credits so he could buy more weapons, that he would turn to the Soviet Union for advanced weapons systems. To what extent was that threat more or less a ploy in his negotiations with the U.S. over credit terms and viable weapons sales and so forth?

Twitchell: I don't think it was necessarily a ploy. I think he said the same thing in '67. At the same time, I think he recognized that it was important that he not become dependent on the Soviets, particularly for highly sophisticated weapons. Primarily he wanted to-- and particularly General Khatami wanted to-- have, in effect a U.S. supplied air force. As in the case of the Jordanians and others, if they can't purchase U.S. equipment, they'll go elsewhere.

Q: Did the Shah ever make any of those kinds of threats to you in your discussions? Suggesting that he might go to the Soviet Union to buy an advanced system?

Twitchell: No. I never felt that he was making that comment to me as a threat. From time to time Toufanian showed an interest. He also said the Shah showed an interest in Soviet equipment. However, both recognized the political and military implications.

Q: Was there any understanding with the U.S.-- between the U.S. and Iran-- over what kinds of weapons the Shah could or could not buy from the Soviet Union?

Twitchell: Not that I know of, no. As I say, I think the Shah made it clear that there were limitations in his mind as to what extent he would want to purchase new sophisticated gear.

Q: Now a few years later, in '71, the New York Times published an article suggesting that the Shah's current weapons purchase program had a target date of 1975, and that by that year Iran would be a major Middle Eastern military power. Now to what extent were the Shah and General Toufanian following a more or less systematic long-term plan to build up the military, to reach that target of 1975 as the year when Iran would have a sizeable military strength?

Twitchell: I think they probably were talking about the lead times that would be required to build up such a force. There's no doubt, as of '71, with more oil income coming in, there was a tendency to try to purchase additional aircraft and naval vessels. In terms of the time required to place an order, have it approved and have it delivered, it could take several years, especially if the items have to be manufactured.

Q: But they didn't have a sort of a systematic plan of what

weapons systems to concentrate on?

Twitchell: I don't know, but I think they knew the major weapons they desired. For example they talked to me about purchasing destroyers or ships of that nature, which would fit in with their program. My recollection is that this question of Iran becoming a major world power by-- what were they saying, at the end of ten or twelve years? That happened later on, but it was very clear that with the oil price hikes in '71, the Shah wanted to embark on increasing the amount of advanced equipment.

Q: Now by early in the 1970s-- pretty early, I think maybe by '71 perhaps-- the development of the F-14 and F-15 fighter jets were already under way at Grumman and McDonnell-Douglas?

Twitchell: Yes.

Q: Did the Shah ever bring up his interest in those jets with you before you left Iran in '71?

Twitchell: If he did, it was only in a very minor way, because they weren't available. I don't think that it ever came up as a specific issue with me at that time.

Q: So as far as you know, representatives from Grumman or Douglas had not gone to Tehran to discuss this question?



Twitchell: They could have. I don't believe I ever discussed the F-14 or F-15 with anybody from either Grumman or McDonnell-Douglas.

Q: Now a few months after you left, or some months after you left, in 1971, the Shah was told by President Nixon at that famous Teheran meeting-- the Shah was told that except for nuclear weapons he could purchase any weapons he wanted in the U.S. market. Such as the F-14, F-15, and so forth. Were there any indications before you left Tehran that such an agreement was in the offing?

Twitchell: No. I don't think that I ever heard it discussed in those terms.

Just to clear the air on this one point. The last year I was there, the great bulk of my own effort-- and particularly a big portion of the MAAG's-- was to try during the last year or year and a half or two, was to demonstrate to the Iranians that they needed to think not only in terms of buying new and additional equipment, but also the need to think in terms of a program which would consider the cost of maintaining such forces, the installations that had to go with the forces, and the question of obtaining people. There was also the training problem. With the equipment becoming more sophisticated, it increased the need to be able to move from a conscription force to a permanent, particularly enlisted force, that would be there

for a longer term. This raised the problem of where I felt it was so essential in the longer run to be sure to try to persuade them that it would be important to have people on hand to be able to maintain as well as to just operate the equipment, and that this would take a long time.

I felt that there was a need for a better assessment of the over-all demand for trained manpower. That they couldn't go ahead on-- for example, the telecommunications program, the industrial programs involving electronics, and the military program-- without having a broader base and a broader understanding of what their requirements were for trained personnel.

Q: Did you make specific recommendations towards that?

Twitchell: Yes. We submitted recommendations on the measures that might be taken to make the military career a more attractive one, with the idea of retaining people, and on what kinds of specialized persons were needed.

Now the Shah had quite a program on of trying to improve the civilian educational system, both in terms of colleges and universities, and to bring them up to the standards of the West. In this regard we recommended that the standards for the military be made comparable to those of the civilian universities and colleges.

Q: These recommendations that you prepared, to what extent was implementation on the way by the time you left?

Twitchell: I was kept over from April till the end of September, preparing a five-year program, and then, second, a personnel and manning problem. I've never really checked to see what happened.

Q: In terms of follow-up?

Twitchell: Yes. But it was very clear that once you saw what happened in the late seventies-- '75, '76-- that they were just overwhelmed with trying to contend with all of the problems which arose with this heated economy, and part of it was the lack of both people and infrastructure.

Q: Exactly. May I ask you some questions about some of the Iranian military leaders that you dealt with when you were in Armish-MAAG. You mentioned some of their names in passing from time to time in the last hour or so, but who were some of the key military figures in Iran at this time?

Twitchell: Well, of course, the chief SCS, when I first went there in '68, was General Aryana. He was succeeded by [General] Djam, who in turn was succeeded by General Azhari. I dealt with them on joint, overall military matters. I dealt with Toufania primarily throughout the three years I was there on the question

of the purchase of equipment. Then I dealt with each of the service commanders on matters pertaining to their services, however, section chiefs dealt primarily with their counterparts. The chief of the Air Force was General Khatami. There were two different chiefs of the ground forces. I'll have to think of their names. The chief of the Navy was Admiral Rassai.

Q: Maybe you'll think of them as we go along. How well did you get to know any of these individuals?

Twitchell: I probably knew Toufanian better than any of the others, although I knew Djam very well and I knew General Azhari very well.

Q: Azhari was with the ground forces?

Twitchell: No, he became the chief SCS after Djam. Minbashian was the head of the ground forces.

Q: How would you evaluate the abilities of these people? For example, Aryana. How able did you think they were? Did you deal with them individually or as a group?

Twitchell: First of all the Air Force was the youngest force in the Iranian hierarchy. Probably Khatami was the most competent commander. He also had the advantage of being married to a

Princess and he was very close to the Shah. But he was a very capable, aggressive, and dynamic commander. He thought primarily in terms of the Air Force. I think you have to go back and recognize that primarily most of these senior people gained their experience, particularly those in the ground forces, from fighting with the Kurds, fighting with the tribes. Many of those older commanders were pretty far along the line in terms of trying to deal with modern technology and warfare.

The Navy had more Admirals than they had ships when I went out there in '62-- they had two old disabled British craft. Two frigates were included in the 1962 foreign aid program. They had a great expansion problem in the latter part of the sixties and the seventies.

I think that considering the background of the key people and that their views were pretty much conditioned, if you will, by a World War II type of warfare, they were just beginning to think in terms of joint warfare. One of our major efforts was to try to assist them in developing a joint staff and have the commanders relate to and understand the necessity of joint operations. Again, you get into the whole problem of the structure, in which the Shah was not only the head of the state, he was his own secretary of defense-- and for all intents and purposes, he was his own chairman of the joint chiefs in our terms.

This really inhibited the development of a joint command structure at the operational level. The Chief of the SCS was