

and have the son inherit a regime that was more stable.

Miklos: There were certain things that he did that obviously suggested to us or anybody analyzing it from the outside that he was very conscious of his own mortality, and that he hoped to put in place things that would lead to an orderly succession, not so much in power terms. As a matter of fact, I think, recalling talking to him, again, briefly, or hearing him expound on this subject of, "It's not going to be the same with my son. It's going to be a different time, a different situation, and I have to anticipate that. He's not me and I'm not him," and so on and so forth. "So let's do what we can and think about the future." He set up this--I don't remember whether it was an amendment to the Constitution or just a provision, it was sort of a will, as it were, a last testament and will. I don't remember the legal technicalities of it, but it provided in the case of his death, that if his son was still a minor, certain things would happen, there would be a council, and the Queen would be regent, as I recall. So it was all set up.

Q: Apparently, around this time, mid-1976 or so, the Shah allowed strong criticism of the U.S. to appear in the Iranian media. For example, there were articles criticizing U.S. reliability as an ally. How much did you know about these articles criticizing American policy, generally?

Miklos: When you say "allowed," do you mean they were planted or inspired?

Q: James Bill talks about this in his book, and he suggests that they might have been inspired or planted in some way. Again, I don't know. Was that discussed at the embassy, whether they were planted or not, or whether there was some kind of purpose?

Miklos: I can't recall any specifics, and I can't recall that there was any great anxiety or heartburn about any particular stories, although I think I can recall our public affairs guy mentioning this from time to time, "There was this nasty story about the United States," or about this or that, in such and such a paper or such and such a publication. I don't want to say there was speculation, because I just don't remember whether there was speculation or not about whether this was officially inspired or not. I can't recall that it was. And Jim has his own view.

Q: Did you get a sense of how the Shah felt about Carter's election in the fall of '76?

Miklos: Well, he didn't know what to think. Dick Helms had left, and I was in charge for a long time, so I was perhaps more conscious of what was preoccupying him than I might have been otherwise. He was looking for some sign, one way or another, of

what the new administration's attitude was going to be toward Iran. Of course, back in Washington, there was a lot of turmoil and papers being written and recommendations being made, so on and so forth. But nothing had come out to Iran, certainly nothing to me, to go in and say, "Here's the way it's going to be with this administration," outside of sort of broad, general reassuring messages. I think we got one or two from the President and maybe from [Cyrus] Vance, that "We love you, and we're allies," and that sort of thing, but nothing that they could feel they could get their teeth into.

As a matter of fact, this sort of became an issue at one stage, because I think it was General Jones who was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, wanted to come out, and I said, "Nothing doing until we make up our mind about what our position is going to be on future military sales, because unless you have decided that, this is going to be a signal to them which, if you don't want that kind of a signal, then he shouldn't come." This was not greeted very happily back in Washington. I mean, if the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs wants to come to Iran, he can come. Well, there was a certain amount of toing and froing about that. Finally, I said, "Okay, just understand what this is going to mean as far as the Iranians are concerned and as far as the Shah is concerned." As it turned out, it fitted. I mean, we did continue our military supply relationship, etc., so fine. But there was a period where there was considerable uncertainty about it, and it was obvious that they were getting increasingly

nervous. A new ambassador had not been named.

Q: What accounted for the relatively long hiatus between Helms and Sullivan? It was close to six months, I think.

Miklos: I think part of it was just bureaucratic horsing around and a new administration preoccupied with a lot of other things, and a new administration that didn't know a whole lot about a lot of things, just learning its way as it went along. Iran was not one of the major preoccupations, so they got around to it in due course.

Q: Did the absence of an ambassador cause any concern in Iran, that the U.S. hadn't made an appointment fairly quickly?

Miklos: I don't want to exaggerate it, but there was obviously a certain wonderment, if not concern. "How come a new ambassador hasn't been named? Are you going to be the new ambassador?" Many times questions to me, so on and so forth. But deep anxiety, no. It was just a part of this larger question of, "What is the new administration's policy going to be toward Iran?"

Q: Of course, Sullivan was appointed ambassador. I think he arrived there in June of '77.

Miklos: As I recall, something like that, yes.

Q: How would you characterize Sullivan as ambassador? How effective was he on the job?

Miklos: Personally, I'm very fond of Bill Sullivan, and secondly, I think he's a very smart guy, very smart, and he picks up things very quickly. He may say in, I thought, false modesty, "I didn't really know that part of the world," and all that sort of thing, but it doesn't take him long to catch onto much of anything. So I thought that to the extent that I was with him for a while and then even later on, I thought he handled himself extremely well. I think part of the proof of this is that when the going got really tough, the Shah and his ministers were after Bill incessantly for all kinds of advice. So to suggest that he wasn't effective--

Q: What kind of relationship did he develop with the Shah?

Miklos: I thought a good one. I mean, it was, at the beginning, the usual kind of relationship--correct, formal. But as time went on, and I'd gone by then, but from what I heard later on, I think it developed into quite a close relationship. The Shah, notwithstanding what he may have said in his memoirs and so forth, I think he trusted Bill, and I think that he relied on him for advice, not exclusively by any stretch of the imagination. I

mean, Tony Parsons was up there, as well, and so forth. It was not a relationship that you could in any degree characterize as antagonistic or distant or cool or all of those pejoratives; I don't think it was that at all.

Q: How did he run the embassy?

Miklos: Bill, again, is very active, interested in everything that was going on. He took a more direct interest and role in the military procurement side of things and the military relationship than had been the case with Dick, not to say that Dick didn't have an interest, but Bill was much more involved in some of the detail. But insofar as running the embassy was concerned, he was a very professional, able guy, and ran it the way you'd expect somebody like that to run it.

Q: Any basic change from Helms, besides the question of procurement that you mentioned?

Miklos: Bill was full of idea, and he was constantly thinking of different things and so forth. Just on a personal level, he had a little bit different approach. I remember he had a barbeque for the security guards in the embassy that sort of left all the Iranians somewhat bewildered. I mean, they didn't quite know how to take this. I mean, that's not the way, you know, the Puka Sahib deals with the security guard, but I mean, that was just a

question of style, not of substance, per se.

Q: Did your duties as DCM change in any ways as he settled in as ambassador?

Miklos: No. I basically carried on about the way I did before. I continued to have a more operational role in the question of nuclear energy and things like that that I'd had under Dick, and I continued to be sort of the general manager and editor of what went in and out of the embassy. No, basically the same.

Bill and I had a very good relationship. I learned later on that he appreciated the attitude I'd taken, feeling I might have been a little hostile or something like that, being sort of the old Iranian hand, one, and having been in charge as long as I'd been, that it would have been a more difficult relationship to develop. But I didn't have any problem. I respected him for his professionalism and abilities, and we got along fine.

Q: Had you known him earlier in the Department?

Miklos: No, really never even heard of him, like I'd heard of Doug MacArthur [III]. (Laughter)

Q: Who were some of the principal officers of the embassy by this time, by '77?

Miklos: Well, let's see. Who did we have? Hawk Mills was the political counselor, and Brewen was the economic counselor. I'm trying to think of who the PHO--Jack somebody was the public affairs guy. Lew Goetz was the counselor. We had a couple of MAAG guys. We had one who had been the son of the former chief of staff.

Q: Vandenberg?

Miklos: Vandenberg. Who came after Vandenberg?

Q: Gast?

Miklos: [Philip] Gast. Well, Gast was there. There was somebody else, I think, in between there, before Phil. Who was it? Vandenberg didn't last all that long; he's not a MAAG type. It was a mismatch. I think we had somebody else there before Phil Gast. Phil's still active, as I recall. I think I read he's lieutenant general now somewhere in the Pentagon. I'm sorry, I haven't thought of--of course, Henry Precht was our politico-military guy.

Q: You can sort of generalize about the various counselors at the embassy. How able were these people?

Miklos: By and large, I thought they were professionals. We had



a good crew. Not all of them had the experience I would have wanted ideally, but wherever you are, that's always a problem, or the area knowledge or the country knowledge that you would hope. There's always a sort of getting-up-to-speed process with people who are new to a country, and there's always turnover and all that sort of thing.

I'm happy to say on our administrative side, we had a couple of very able administrative counselors, thank God. There were a lot of things I didn't have to worry about there. That's just sort of internal things.

Q: Were there any Farsi speakers on the staff?

Miklos: Oh, yes. Hawk was not a Farsi speaker, but as I recall, we had six, seven, something like that, language qualified, and were getting more. Mike Metrinko was one, and we had one in Isfahan.

Q: Gaffney? He was somewhere else.

Miklos: He was in Tabriz for a while, and then he was in Isfahan. He was one of the hostages.

Q: As well as Metrinko?

Miklos: As well as Metrinko.

Q: Tomseth?

Miklos: Tomseth, yes. Very able guy, and he was language qualified. Then we had--what's his name? A couple of political officers. The younger officers, consular officers, it may well have been more than seven, a fair number.

Q: With proficiency in the language.

Miklos: Yes.

Q: A major focus of Carter's public diplomacy was the human rights question. He made his campaign appeal partly on human rights and controlling arms sales and other questions like that. What were the practical implications of this emphasis for his policy towards Iran as it actually developed during the course of '77 and '78, while you were still at the embassy? What practical bearing did the human rights emphasis that he'd taken earlier have on policy or practical implications?

Miklos: It was made to become an issue, and as an issue, it was part of official discourse between us and the Iranians on various occasions, on various levels. It became part of our reporting program. We had to include this as an objective in our planning of country plans, we call them, for Iran, where we would lay out

a bunch of fairly explicit goals that we would seek to achieve. I'm not sure I could say much more than that.

Q: How did the State Department under Carter define human rights? Did they mean simply repression, or did they actually mean a political system that was more broadly based, with more input by the--

Miklos: The emphasis more, insofar as Iran was concerned, since it had this image in the United States or in the West as being authoritarian and repressive, the emphasis on human rights, so far as Iran was concerned, was that, and not so much on more democracy, a parliamentary system on a Western model, or that sort of thing. I can't recall that, in contrast to going way back to earlier, more innocent days. But it was more in that area of fair trials, public trials, an opportunity to have a fair hearing if you were charged with something, and more openness insofar as the press was concerned, in those areas.

The Iranians would, of course, give us pretty good arguments about all of the things that they characterized as human rights that they were addressing--employment, improving economic conditions, better standard of living, health, education, women's rights, a whole lot of things. "You talk about human rights, I mean, we've got a full tray here that we're dealing with."

Q: In May of '77, Secretary of State Vance visited Iran for a

CENTO meeting, where he met with the Shah, I guess, for the first time at this meeting. Do you recall what the thrust of their discussion was? There's a picture that shows you and Vance. I've seen that elsewhere, but you were present.

Miklos: I was present.

Q: We have proof. Do you recall the broad nature of discussion that they had?

Miklos: It was the kind of conversation that Secretaries have with the Shah, the broad-brush world view, then regional view, the Secretary making some comments, the Shah making his little speech, as usual, one that I'd heard many, many times. The Secretary did raise the question of human rights and imprisonment and so forth, and the Shah describing to the Secretary what Iranian laws were, that communists were outlawed, that he was following law, that these people were killing innocent Iranians, they were killing Americans, which was true. You know, I mean, he made a pretty spirited defense of Iranian behavior and policy, which made an impression on the Secretary.

Q: How did Vance respond to the Shah's arguments?

Miklos: I can't recall any specific response. I can recall a comment that he made to me later, which will go unsaid.

Q: Can you say what the thrust of his comment was, if not the exact wording?

Miklos: I think that he revealed from his comment that he had a better understanding than he had before he talked with the Shah about what the problem was.

Q: Did Vance try to put any pressure on the Shah, saying, "You should move forward on this human rights question," or did he take a very subtle approach?

Miklos: I think it was much more subtle and sophisticated. It wasn't a BANG!-on-the-nose kind of thing by any stretch of the imagination.

Q: I take it that there was discussion back in Washington over the extent that the U.S. should apply greater or lesser degrees of pressure on the Shah to move forward.

Miklos: Lots of discussion, lots of discussion.

Q: What about the embassy? Was there similar type of discussion as to what kind of strategies or tactics should be applied to make progress on this question of human rights?

Miklos: Not like in Washington. You had a lot of political appointees floating around in the State Department and Washington with their point of view, which we didn't have, although we did have one political appointee. I've forgotten his name now, an ex-congressman from one of the New England states, who was sent there to be part of the USIA. I forget what his job was now. But he was pretty far to the left in the sense of a liberal point of view. As a matter of fact, in the end, he said that his conscience would not permit him to remain in Iran and work. We had a long discussion. You might say it was his exit interview before he left.

Q: Do you recall his name?

Miklos: I don't now. Bill something. I remember when we were informed he was being assigned, I said, "Jesus Christ, that's all we need, an ex-congressman."

Q: They don't show up at embassies very often, do they, not in an official capacity?

Miklos: It was a relatively subordinate position, too. I mean, I was really surprised. He wasn't head of anything; it was just a job.

Q: Another theme of Carter's diplomacy was the reduction of arms

sales, of arms exports by the U.S. How would you describe the policy approach on arms sales that Carter and Vance developed towards Iran during the course of '77?

Miklos: I'm trying to think. Could one describe it as being substantially different than the previous administration or the Nixon Administration? It's pretty hard for me to give you a concrete example of where it was significantly different.

Q: There was a lot of continuity, you're saying?

Miklos: There was certainly more continuity than otherwise. Questions that had always been asked continued to be asked in the context of, "Do you really need this? If you do, do you understand the implications of it, the cost, the manpower costs, not just the dollar cost, the ongoing cost, the maintenance problems, how it can be integrated into the force structure," and on and on and on. That was really not very different than it had always been. If it was a question of new technology, how willing were we to release this to Iran? Had we released it to anybody else, to any other ally? Did Israel have it? All of these considerations. But as I say, I do not perceive it to be substantially different.

Q: I think I've read or been told that under Carter, there were more restrictions on what the embassy officials could do to

assist businessmen engaged in the sale of weapons to other countries. Does that ring a bell in any connection? That might have been one difference from the previous administrations. I remember Bill Lehfeldt was talking about that when I interviewed him. He was complaining about this problem that he encountered, that the embassy was much more distant.

Miklos: Bill was before the--

Q: He worked with the GE after '75 and experienced this problem, I guess, or his colleagues did at GE.

Miklos: Yes. My only memory of this, to the extent that there's any memory at all, is more with the MAAG, in that there was a feeling that the MAAG should back off, that they were becoming too much like salesmen, and they should stop acting like that. To the extent that that was fair or accurate is another question.

Q: What do you think? To what extent do you think that was fair?

Miklos: You know, it's a very difficult thing to say. The Iranians hear about this or that or another thing, and so who do they ask about this? They've got all these American military advisors there, and they say, "Well, what about this?" or, "What about that?" And the guy's a professional, and he knows about



this, that, or the other thing, and he'll tell them. He's an advisor; that's what he's there for. So is he selling something or is he being an advisor, doing his job?

Q: Providing information.

Miklos: But the word was passed, in effect, "You don't have to volunteer. You don't have to become a salesman. You can be an advisor, but you're not a salesman." And maybe Bill was reacting to what MAAG was able to do, insofar as when he was there as GE representative, but not when he was there as our economic counselor.

Q: That's right. During the summer of '77, there was intense controversy in Washington over the proposed AWACs sale, which Congress nearly scotched. Why did the Carter Administration attach such importance to following through on this sale of AWACs to Iran? Apparently it did attach a fair amount of importance to making the sale, having it go through Congress, and there were great efforts to persuade Congress.

Miklos: I think it was in the context of our overall relationship with Iran, and this was something that the Iranians attached a high importance to, for reasons that we discussed earlier. Certainly a more efficient, economic, viable alternative to putting up a lot of expensive radar stations

around the country. So it was all of those things, but it was in that context of the overall relationship. Of course, there was opposition to it. I don't remember, but I think also one of our arguments was in the sense of its enhancing regional stability, because Iran was an ally, that it could provide a service, an intelligence service or whatever, that was not going to be otherwise available.

Q: Did any congressional opponents of the sale visit the embassy during this period to find out more about the sale?

Miklos: Per se, no. I mean, God, we had congressmen and senators coming and going all the time like--I'm not in government anymore--a pestilence. [Laughter] And included in a number of these delegations, they usually came out in delegations--

Q: CODELS.

Miklos: CODELS. God! And they were always generally in very vocal opposition to military sales to the Shah or God knows what, just opposition. These guys, you know, with their outsized egos were not at all shy about piping up and spouting off about all manner of things. So, yes.

Q: How did the Shah react to congressional efforts to halt the

sale?

Miklos: The Shah, by that time, he'd been through this sort of thing year-in and year-out, so he'd grumble about it and all that sort of thing, but he understood, I think. Fundamentally, he understood what was going on, and felt that the administration was doing the best it could. We would explain to him what was going on, and he knew from his own sources what was going on. He had a very active ambassador in Washington, as we all know, Ardeshir. So it was part of a day's work, not a necessarily welcome part of the day's work, but part of the day's work.

Q: Is it true that he suggested that he would take his radar business elsewhere, to another seller, if the U.S. did not--

Miklos: I think at one time or another, something was mentioned about the British system. I've forgotten the name of it now.

Q: They had kind of a competing system in some ways?

Miklos: In some ways, yes. I don't know that that caused us deep anxiety, but it was run by.

Q: To what extent was the Department supporting the sale? You said there were strategic and political reasons involved in the continuing relationship with the Shah. There was concern about

oil prices at this stage of things, trying to get the Shah or induce the Shah to take a more moderate stance than OPEC, to prevent another price increase that would be coming up. Was there any element of that involved, that this would help expedite the--

Miklos: I think I tried to describe to you before, when it came to oil and oil prices and so forth, while there was a certain element early on, anyhow, if not later, of national pride involved, my perception of their approach to oil and oil prices was a very pragmatic one, it was a quite profound knowledge and understanding of the international oil market, and what could and could not be done in that area. That's the way they approached it and dealt with it, and sentiment was not a particularly relevant consideration one way or the other. In other words, "We're not going to do you any favors, but you're not going to do us any favors either, so we both know that."

Q: This will come up again when we talk about the Shah's visit in November of '77. During '76 and '77, the Iranian economy underwent a period of retrenchment. Oil revenue was falling by that point, in the wake of a world recession in '75, and inflation was worsening, which caused economic growth to slow somewhat in '76, especially in '77, I think. How much concern was there at the embassy about this change, that slow growth might lead to some kind of internal social, political