increase the capacity to monitor Soviet activities through stations in Iran. I've read that there was some controversy over this project. Do you recall the nature of the debate?

Schlesinger: That was the CIA project?

Q: I think it was basically a CIA project. I'm not really sure.

Schlesinger: Indeed there is controversy, but I don't plan to discuss it.

Q: Was it more a technical kind of procedure or did more technical controversies relate to it?

Schlesinger: It was basically cost-effectiveness issues and questions of U.S. arms people and the appropriateness of the equipment that they might be selling and so forth. There may have been some bureaucratic conflict, too, though I don't recall the nature of it. But the central questions, as I recall them were cost-effectiveness issues and disagreements of management issues.

Q: Okay. I read that it was finally abandoned. Was that before or later on this whole project?

Schlesinger: You'd have to ask somebody at the agency.

Q: Okay.

Now during the mid-1970s the Shah's human rights policy became a matter of public debate. Within the Nixon and Ford administrations was there much concern expressed internally, in private discussions, about the Shah's policy towards domestic opponents?

Schlesinger: Not very much. That was unfashionable. It would certainly have elicited a contemptuous guffaw during the Nixon years. Ford had been more inclined to be more sensitive to the domestic political repercussions and to the extent that he had domestic displays of worries, then him might have been more sensitive to that. He would not have been inclined to scoff at the issue as would have been Nixon's tendency, but he certainly did not pick it up so far as I know.

Q: Did the Shah discuss these charges with officials? Did he complain about there was a Congressman making accusations and so forth?

Schlesinger: I think only indirectly. It was not a central concern. Ford was very much guided in these matters by Kissinger. He did not regard himself as an authority on foreign policy issues. Kissinger certainly retained the most favorable attitude towards the Shah and, consequently, the Shah would not be harassed by anyone within the administration. There was no Bureau of Human Rights or whatever the devil it's called in the State Department, and expressions on Capital Hill tended to come from liberal Democrats, those who were regarded as leftist democrats, and they were simply brushed off. I do not recall any specific conversations but I'm sure that if the subject came up that it would have had the reaction that, "Oh, that's X and he's always

off on some leftist line. Don't pay any attention to him."

Q: Okay.

We'll go onto the Carter period. In January of 1977, President Carter appointed you the Special Assistant for Energy Affairs, and later you became the Department of Energy Secretary. Now during this period--

Schlesinger: As assistant to the President, my primary responsibility was in energy affairs but I dealt with other issues if they had interest to the President.

Q: During this early period of 1977 and 1978, were you involved in any issues concerning Iran and OPEC, the Shah and OPEC?

Schlesinger: Yes, indeed. Although, our relations with the Shah over OPEC matters were very touchy because the Shah tended to be a bit of a hawk on prices, we preferred to work with the Saudis but the Saudis had tended to resist more aggressive moves as regards OPEC pricing. We encouraged the Saudis to resist the request for higher prices and the Saudis tended to do so.

OPEC issues tended to be back burner issues during that period. The price of oil remained stabilized at roughly thirteen dollars a barrel. The problems with OPEC began to arise as the Shah was falling Under those circumstances, they were both secondary and they were hardly things that one discussed with the Shah. So the brief answer no, we didn't talk about OPEC matters.

What was the other thing?

Q: Excuse me?

Schlesinger: Well, we didn't discuss extensively with the Shah the price of oil.

Q: I heard when the Shah visited Washington in the fall of 1977 and he made some sort of agreement to try to get OPEC to hold the line on any further price increases. I guess President Carter asked him to go along with this. Do you recall this issue particularly?

Schlesinger: I recall that but it was not the central line of our efforts. Obviously, when you are with a major oil producer, during the conversations you would, as Carter was inclined to do, touch all bases. He would say, "I hope you are going to hold the line on oil prices." But as I've indicated that it was not a serious problem in 1977. By 1978, it became a serious problem but that was because the Shah himself was falling and it was not the central issue of our relationship to him and he had little control over the problem. The proximate cause of the rise in oil prices in 1978 and 1977 was the strike of the oil field workers in Iran against the Shah, which he would dearly have liked to have been able to settle but was not in a position to do so.

What was the other issue that you raised?

Q: I don't think there was another one but I was going to ask how you would characterize President Carter's approach to the Shah and Iran

during the year and a half or so before the revolution erupted.

Schlesinger: Ambivalent. The curious thing about it was that he had an ambivalence towards the Shah that continued throughout the Shah's tenure, but the public expression of that ambivalence grew less and less as the Shah got into greater trouble. He began to talk glowingly of the Shah and, as I recall it, visited Iran in the beginning of 1978 and said some glowing things about the Shah. That shouldn't have been taken too seriously because Carter tended to say glowing things about whomever he was visiting or who was visiting us. But Carter had deep, deep concerns about the human rights issue in contrast to Nixon, who would have scoffed at them, and Ford, who paid little attention to them and would be encouraged not to pay any attention to them by Kissinger. Kissinger was not known to be a crusader on human rights.

Q: Did you get the sense that Carter was actually putting pressure on the Shah to liberalize or was it more indirect or subtle?

Schlesinger: I don't know the answer to that because I was not privy to the most intimate conversations between him and the Shah. It was not beyond Jimmy Carter to press his case directly. But the Shah clearly heard that a central concern to the new President of the United States was the issue of human rights--that was something Carter tended to talk about almost every time he spoke publicly--and in his quest to accommodate the incoming President of the United States, with whom he hoped to get along, the Shah would take into account that this was a central concern in general and would apply it to his own country and

thus attempted to ameliorate human rights conditions as a way of propitiating Carter even if Carter never asked him to do it directly. I do not know if he did or he didn't. I suspect that, given Carter's nature, that he could not refrain from at least a hint in that direction in his private conversations. He would have regarded it as inappropriate to indulge in a harangue on that issue.

Q: In terms of the basics of policy, fundamental policy, was there any really major shift away from the policy support that Kissinger had articulated, the basic policies during the Shah's tenure in Iran?

Schlesinger: I don't think there was ever a basic shift away, if you mean a change in policy.

Q: Yes.

Schlesinger: However, the Shah was viewed with much greater skepticism than he had been previously and he knew it, and that, even though there was not any declaration of a shift, that policy had indeed shifted because instead of all-out backing as our chosen instrument in the area, you would have an attitude of this is our ally, he is important in the region but he himself has serious political flaws to answer for That would be the attitude of the Carter people and it follows from Carter's long-term, consistent, deeply-felt stress on human rights. The surprising thing was that he kept that under control as much as he did during the last days of the Shah.

Q: Now as you know, revolution broke out in the fall of 1978. On November Sixth the Shah declared a marshal law government in Iran. What was your initial reaction to this emerging situation?

Schlesinger: My initial reaction to the emerging situation was primarily concern about pushing energy legislation through the Congress which preoccupied me until the fall of 1978.

Q: This is the bill to create the Department of Energy?

Schlesinger: No, that had passed early in 1977. This was the National Energy Act, which consisted of five legislative parts. During much of the spring and summer of 1978, I spent endless hours up there on the Hill trying to move the Natural Gas Act as a component of the National Energy Act, trying to move each House and so forth. So my time was more or less devoted to those activities. I had little enough time to devote to them.

I did receive a letter from one of my former subordinates in the D.O.D., Fritz [T.A.] Kraemer, in March or April which said, in his cryptic style, "Sir: the Shah is in mortal peril. Yours sincerely, F.T.A. Kraemer." I often cited that later on as indicating that the developments in Iran were not so obscure as some of the U.S. intelligence committee might have wanted to pretend.

But towards the end of summer, beginning with the development with the fire in Abadan in September, somewhere then I began devoting an increasing part of my time to the developments in Iran. As the legislation finally passed just before my trip to China, which started

in October, that October the fifteenth, I was devoting substantial time. I had the entire resources of the international arm of the Department of Energy to work with and the Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Harry Bergolds, was devoting most of his energies to monitoring developments in Iran for me. I mention this because in his book Gary Sick suggests that the Department of Energy did not have the staff or manpower to handle these kinds of things. It had a hell of a lot more manpower than did the NSC staff. They were not as intimately related but manpower or staff problems were never a source of difficulty for us.

Q: Were there people in Tehran who could report to you what was going on? Energy Department people?

Schlesinger: No, I was following the Intelligence. Bergold was picking the gossip on a daily basis.

Now we left around October the twentieth, I would guess, for China. During the trip to China, of course, there were only occasional opportunities to look at the press and to note that the difficulties in Iran were increasing. The difficulties throughout Iran were increasing. I believe that by then the oil fields were pretty well shut down and there was deep concern. When the Shah declared marshal law, it was on a day that we were flying north, I believe, into what the Chinese now call the Northeast but what we refer to as Manchuria, and we devoted several hours during that day to considering the implications of that development. I had the desire, and I expressed it at the time, to take the government aircraft which we were using and

just fly directly to Tehran, because I was the only official in the U.S. government who traced back to the Nixon years and the one who had the longest personal association with the Shah, just to buck up the Shah under those circumstances. I did not follow that inclination because I could not. President Carter had agreed to delay the official signing of the National Energy Act, all five of them, until I returned for the signing ceremony. And that took place, as I recall the date, on November the ninth, 1978, and I had to be back here for that signing ceremony and obviously could not, under those circumstances, go to Tehran but I was strongly tempted to do so. I felt, without having seen the Shah, that he needed bucking up under the circumstances, that the Shah tended to be quite timid and that he would need to be encouraged by the Americans that once having declared marshal law that he should back real marshal law. He did not do so. He put in place a general who was not decisive, who indeed promptly had a heart attack and who throughout that official period of marshal law was claiming that the Shah didn't have his heart in it. As a result, the marshal law kind of backfired.

When I returned to the United States, from the day I landed here, my principal concern was attempting to preserve the Shah's regime, in the course of which I visited with all the principal advisors, political advisors, to the President. I had extensive conversations with [Zbigniew] Brzezinski. I attended many of the National Security Council meetings on the subject and Brzezinski brought me in, more or less, as a supporter. I talked to all Carter's principals. I talked to [Hamilton] Jordan and to [Jody] Powell. I talked to the lawyer from Atlanta who---

Q: Kirbo?

Schlesinger: Yes, Charlie Kirbo. Charlie Kirbo, to say the least, had less of a geopolitical sense than any man I encountered. And all that he was concerned about was whether there was going to have to be "gasleen" rationing, as he put it.

I tried to convince all of them, and I was successful with Jordan and Powell, that the President was going to have to realize what the political stakes were for him. I recognized by that time that one could not--

[end of side one of tape one; beginning of side two]

Q: We were talking about the political stakes involved in the revolution for President Carter.

Schlesinger: I recognized by that time that one had to discuss the political stakes involved, that there was little point in approaching the President on the basis of real politik or the strategic interests of the United States or the geo-political role of the Shah or anything of that sort, and that the way to affect the President was to deal with his domestic base by dealing with those advisors who were closest to him. So I talked with Jordan and I talked to Charlie Kirbo. I thought Kirbo could best be moved on the political issue. He could not be. First of all, nobody has less of a sense of international politics than Kirbo, but moreover he was totally convinced that the position of the President was totally impregnable and that nothing could occur to

damage it. That was his long-term view.

Jordan was very sympathetic. Jordan promised to go and speak to the President. He kept making that promise on and off because he was a great procrastinator until the middle of December by which time it was getting very late in the game.

Q: Did you personally ever approach President Carter with your plans for a special representative?

Schlesinger: Well, yes, indeed. I did do that and I can come to that later on.
First I have to deal with the Ball issue.

Q: One plan that did come up by George Ball for a council of notables, which I think he recommended in mid-December of 1978. How did you assess that plan?

Schlesinger: Well, I had seen a fair amount of Ball. He was introduced towards the end of November into these discussions. Brzezinski said that he had brought him in. Blumenthal said that he had brought him in. I don't know just what the origins were but he was to do a study for the President. At the time, I thought less of Ball's recommendations than I do today. In retrospect, I think that they were better than I thought at the time. I would say that Ball's views were quite different from mine and Brzezinski's. We thought that any visible attempt of the United States to undercut the Shah would be devastating because it would cut the confidence of the military

establishment in U.S. support and in the Shah and that the military were the critical element in sustaining the regime. I think that is correct and I have always thought that that is correct.

Ball's views were quite different. He wanted to ease the Shah out in favor of a council of notables. I regarded that then and regard it today as rather academic because the Western oriented notables had no political base in the country to speak of and we thought they had a political base because they associated with Americans and spoke pretty good English. But they were relics of the past, basically. They reflected the remnants of the National Front and Mossadegh and the like. There were some eminent people amongst them, but they did not have independent standing. In order to control the country, one needed the throne and the army. I don't think there was a full enough appreciation of that. In retrospect, I think less harshly of Ball's views because we know now what we did not know then--that the Shah was mortally ill, and that the Shah knew that he was mortally ill, and that the Shah might have been persuaded indeed to move aside because of illness and establish a regency. Then you could have used the regency to attempt to broaden the base.

But the essential stand-off in the country was between the elements of authority, represented by the military, and the elements of insurrection, represented by Khomeini. One had to look at these simple features, in my judgment. If you had had a regency, say, in favor of the Crown Prince, you would certainly have wanted to attempt to broaden the base and to take advantage of that shift to bring in other elements that had been alienated by the Shah, the bazaars. I don't think there was much to do about most of the clergy, by the way. They were

following Khomeini and had the bit between their teeth.

But the notion that a council of notables would have sufficient legitimacy to control the country struck me as a weak notion and still does. I am more persuaded today that, in light of his illness, it would have been a good idea to ease the Shah out and move towards a regency.

Q: Did you assume at the time that the military would in fact--that if a special representative was sent to the Shah, to buck him up, as you say, that he could reinforce his will to impose or strengthen--

Schlesinger: I'm not sure that we got that on the tape, did we?

Q: I think that you had mentioned that earlier, the idea of bucking up the Shah.

Schlesinger: Well, yes, I wanted to buck up the Shah. And I knew that he had felt keenly the ambivalence of the Carter administration and that he would be wavering, given the Shah's nature, and that what we had to do, if we were to salvage the throne, was to give an unequivocal demonstration of support. That could come only from people that he knew were solid supporters. I think that it's clear that he did not regard Bill Sullivan in the embassy as a solid supporter. I urged Jordan that not only do we make clear what our stand was but that we do so effectively by sending myself or Brzezinski out there.

The reason I felt that I myself would have been appropriate was that I traced back to the Nixon period and I had the longest personal

relationship with the Shah. That's why I thought of flying there from Peking. But I urged Jordan and Powell to recognize the importance, as well as others in the same conversation with Brzezinski, but I didn't have to spend much time arguing with Brzezinski since he was there before I had gotten to him, how important it was for us to continue to display fidelity to the throne. And that the best thing to do, I urged Brzezinski as well as Jordan, was to send myself out there or him out there and Brzezinski carried that to the President. Jordan kept saying that he wanted to talk to the President about these matters in order to convey quietly the political consequences for the President of such a move. Being Jordan, he never got around to it because he was a man who devoted himself to one thing at a time.

Part of the problem of the American government in that period was that it was so preoccupied with a number of things, including the breakthrough with China, which came more or less concurrently with the SALT negotiations and the like. Cy Vance was totally devoted to the SALT negotiations in that period. And Jordan himself was sort of a one-issue man. He just procrastinated. In the middle of December, he told me that he hadn't gotten around to it and suggested that I go see the President myself. It was very late in the game.

I continued to work with Brzezinski on trying to shore up the overall position. Toward the end of the month, I suggested that we sent the Constellation, I believe, which was the carrier that was out in the Philippines, into the Indian Ocean as a demonstration of U.S. support. That, incidentally, was less in terms of intimidating the Shah's opponents in Iran, which was difficult to do or not impossible to do, than in terms of bucking up the Saudis and others in the region who sa

our policies wobbling. This would be a visible demonstration of U.S. power and concern. Brzezinski agreed to do that and we attacked that at one of the little NSC meetings. We got Cy Vance to go along with that. Somewhat to my surprise, Harold Brown was on these issues mostly in the middle. The message was sent up to the President at the same time that Harold dispatched the Constellation towards the Straits of Malacca with the notion of staying outside of the Straits of Malacca. That worked just disastrously. If I had ever had any notion that the Constellation would go down the Straits of Malacca and then be turned back, I would never have made the suggestion in the first place because that at the time tended to confirm the image of a wobbling, waffling America that was under no circumstances prepared to use its power. It gave just the opposite demonstration to what we wanted.

I wondered what had happened to it. At the time, I had suspected that Vance during his trip to Camp David had persuaded the President not to send it. I suspected that Vance was ambivalent. But according to the account of Gary Sick, that was not the problem. The problem was the leak, that Carter had heard about it, and he was infuriated, and he turned it around for what I'll call issues of presidential pride that had nothing to do whatsoever with the geopolitical questions of the region.

Q: Now, a minute ago you mentioned that you had taken your proposal for a special representative to President Carter.

Schlesinger: I did indeed. I forgot to say that, by the end of the month, by the end of December, I was beginning to despair of the

situation in the region. There was talk of the Shah's departure. I went to the President early in January and we spent some considerable time together. Now I've got to stress that my relations with Jimmy Carter always, almost invariably, were very good. They were warm. He tended to have a considerable affection for me. And we usually had a good deal of spirited discussion that passed beyond the usual dry conveying of facts. This was true of my experience in many areas, most notably but not confined to the energy discussions.

The reason that I mention that was that on that occasion early in January when I visited with the President, that the relationship was very cold, very cold indeed. I talked to what--I expressed my concern as to the consequences of the fall of the Shah and the importance of the army. The President indicated--these things are not going to be released until I want them released, are they?

Q: Absolutely.

Schlesinger: The President was taken up in one of his bouts of enthusiasm. He talked about the fact that there was great hope. There was great hope because the Shah was now restoring the constitution of 1906, and that the Majles was going to be reassembled, and he indicated that there would be a new Premier and it would be [Mehdi] Bazargan--that there would be a new premier was kind of in the press at the time, as well as in the cables--and that there was great hope as a result of the restoration of constitutionalism in the country. This struck me, since I had been, as I say, devoting much of my time to this--I believe much more in the role power in such affairs than in the

role of, I'll say, constitutionalism, the politics of generosity, what have you. This struck me as utterly naive. I spoke more sharply to the President than was my wont or that he expected. I said, "Mr. President, that's just kind of American civics. The constitution of 1906 has precious little to do with the outcome in the country," that the critical question is the fidelity of the army to the throne. "In my judgment, if the Shah leaves the country and the throne is in danger, Mr. Bazargan is not going to last six weeks." He reacted angrily, although Jimmy Carter gets colder when he gets angry. He, in his voice, conveyed his disapproval of my message if not of me. He said, "Yes, I understand that the role of the army is critical and that is why we're going to send out a representative of the President as you have suggested and the representative of the President will be General Huyser. He will be going there sometime in the near future, maybe the next few days." And I responded sharply again, as is my wont--I never learned appropriate deference to presidents. I responded quite sharply that, "General Huyser is a man that I know and admire. He used to work with me. He worked during the airlift to Israel. I know him quite well, but General Huyser is just the wrong man to send out there, Mr. President. In the first place, he's stationed in Europe. He has no connection with you. He is not a personal representative of the President and of the United States. He is just a military man. And this will not be taken to be a clear and unequivocal demonstration of American support for the throne, since he does not represent you. He represents the United States in some more limited sense. Moreover," I said, "Dutch Huyser has very limited experience in Iran and relatively limited experience in these kinds of diplomatic matters. And moreover

he very clearly comes from the wrong service, Mr. President. The problem in Iran is that the outcome depends critically on the attitude of the Iranian army, and the Iranian army trusts American army generals, but the Iranian army has been engaged in a conflict with the Iranian air force and Dutch Huyser is an Air Force general and he will not be able effectively to communicate with army generals. I don't know whether there is an appropriate army general but I know that an air force general is wrong." Well, Carter about that point, began to get edgy and made clear signs that the discussion and the interview was coming to an end. He said that he disagreed with me and that Huyser was going to go out there and so forth. Before the meeting, I had pretty well made up my mind that we had reached virtually the end and that if the President, who was planning to depart to the Caribbean, had not taken clear and effective action to sustain the throne by the time that he departed to the Caribbean that you might as well wash your hands of it.

I feel in retrospect to be remiss because I had counted more on Jordan to carry that message for me which he had promised to do, and that because he procrastinated that the message had not gotten through to him in early December or, actually, mid-November when it should have gotten through, and that by the time I actually had been encouraged to go to the President myself it was really pretty much too late. My view of the matter is that by September the Shah was in some degree of trouble, with Abadan fire, but there still probably was a thirty percent chance of saving him.

Q: Thirty percent chance?

Schlesinger: Excuse me, a seventy percent chance of saving him, a thirty percent chance of his going down the tubes. By the time of marshal law, that may have slipped to as low as fifty-fifty that he could survive. But by December, the chances of saving him kept shrinking. By the end of December, I didn't think that the chances were better than twenty-five or thirty percent. And early in January they had fallen still more. When it was clear that the Shah was leaving the country--this was something that I had mentioned to the President, if the Shah leaves the country and the army is cut adrift, that the army will disintegrate. It will not support Bazargan. There was no way of holding the thing together under those circumstances. My analysis of what was going on in Iran, I think, was quite correct. My ability to appreciate what was going on in the President's head was much less notable.

So that, as far as I'm concerned, that was early in January. It may have been the seventh or eigth of January. It may have been earlier.

What was the place that Carter was going down to?

Q: Guadeloupe?

Schlesinger: Yes, to the Guadeloupe meeting. I figured that if he left for Guadeloupe it was all over. I left that meeting convinced that it was all over.

I should say that, as I ran around from person to person in November and December attempting to get interest in what I regarded as

one of the critical geopolitical developments in the post-World War II situation--this being as significant in some sense as shift with China, or almost as significant as the shift of China in 1949--I felt myself more frustrated in Washington than I had at any other time.

Now, after I left the President in whatever it was, January sixth or seventh, I had pretty well written it off. I decided that he was going to Guadeloupe and that the Shah was coming out and that the capacity of the Iranian army to stand its ground would immediately disappear and that the army would disintegrate as a way of keeping all power from going to Khomeini. I mention this because I had been, I think, Brzezinski's principal ally in these debates but by that time I had decided that it was all over. And I pretty well withdrew from further discussions of Iranian policy.

Brzezinski went on and occasionally kept me informed about his various hopes which I regarded as Quixotic. Once the Shah had gone, the notion that you were going to have some kind of military coalescence that would result in a military overthrow of--a military take over, the iron fist, might have been employed in November. There was no iron fist to be employed in late January or early February. And Dutch Huyser was not the man to pull it off. I decided that, as I indicated, in early January it was all over. Now Brzezinski, who was at least more persistent than I, was still attempting some of these schemes a month and a half later.

Q: Now in terms of your original proposal to send a special representative to the Shah to buck him up. Was it you sense that this would be a way to get him to impose an iron fist strategy, say, in

November or early December?

Schlesinger: Yes. If you want to put it into those crude terms, I'll answer very simply, yes. You see, the Shah was doing everything wrong. The Shah was doing everything wrong in that time-frame. On Monday, his troops would shoot down some people in the streets and on Tuesday he would come forward and beg the forgiveness of the populace and on Wednesday another incident would occur. This wobbling was conveying to the Iranian public that his authority was really gone. You couldn't wobble under those circumstances. You had to have a consistent policy.

Now, mind you, I was not suggesting that the army indiscriminately fire into mobs and the like, because that would have been almost as bad as the wobbling policy. But we knew who the ringleaders were in the country. There were four or five hundred of them. They could have been rounded up. Which brings me to the whole discussion of Khomeini in Paris and the like. We could have rounded them up. We could have arranged for the termination of Khomeini's communications with Iran. All of that could have been done. All of that could have been attempted and it might indeed have been crowned with success. Mind you, by this time, I thought that the probability of success had fallen to below fifty-fifty. But it could well have been crowned with success.

I should say in passing that I never shared the hopes or illusions of several in the administration that we would be able to work with Khomeini. He struck me as a fanatic. He strikes me as a fanatic. At one of our meetings we had an intelligence briefing from Admiral Turner in which he talked about the post-takeover evolution of Khomeini

towards moderation. And I told him at the time, but I told Brzezinski even more forcefully, that that was absolutely preposterous, that Khomeini was hopelessly anti-American and hopelessly anti-Western. The notion that this fanatic was going to become a regular politician once in power was misguided.

But in any event--what was I on before this?

Q: What the Shah could have done if he had been given--

Schlesinger: Oh, yes. I was talking about cutting off the communications and rounding up the ringleaders and so on. That there was a great deal of power and that once you had done this, that there was a very large probability that you would not have been turning out the mobs that were very well organized and the like. That the sole opportunity at that stage of preserving the throne was to take care of the ringleaders. Now, you understand that under circumstances of that sort, with the demonstration of power of that sort, that the Iranian population might have done what it traditionally does, which is to side with the winner who might well be defined. But whether that was right or wrong, that was the notion that I had in my mind. And that the Shah would have to be encouraged because he was by nature indecisive and, in addition, he had perceived the ambivalence of American policy and that he was not sure that he would be backed up by the United States. That's why you had to have a high level representative known to be close to the President to bring him to this stage.

Now what was wrong with that view? In retrospect, it's plain that the Shah was sufficiently sick that he probably could not have carried

it out.

Q: In reading Sick's book, I have the impression that, despite his illness, he considered the policy of greater repression after a certain point, but he thought that the troops weren't loyal enough to carry it out. He was afraid that there might be a military rebellion if he had a policy of repression. Did you get that impression?

Schlesinger: Well, this was a continuing concern of mine because you could see, as you read the daily take from the country, that what had initially been very faithful forces were eroding in their loyalties, that their capacity to deal with crowds, that there were desertions and so forth, and that the military was a wasting asset, particularly the enlisted personnel. What might have worked in November, when marshal law was first established or when I wanted somebody to go out there, might very well not have worked at all in December. Now, you could have rounded up the ringleaders, and you could have cut off Khomeini's communications and if you had done so, if you had done so, the street actions might well have eroded.

Q: Do you analyze the revolution basically in terms of ringleaders or fundamental social problems? How did you analyze it?

Schlesinger: Well, I think that you can talk about whether my analysis was wrong or what my analysis is of revolutions, because the revolutionary fervor is more evident in retrospect than it was at the time. My view of revolutions is pretty well summarized by de

Tocqueville or by Crane Brinton's anatomy of revolutions. Amongst other things, it is wobbling on the part of authorities, incompetence and wobbling on the part of authorities, that permits the conflagration of revolutionary sentiment to feed on itself. There was no question that the Shah had sufficient instruments of power to do the round up of these ringleaders.

Now if you ask in retrospect, am I convinced that this would have worked, the answer is no. I wasn't even convinced at the time it would work. I thought that we had a chance. I knew that the outcome if Khomeini took over was going to be a disaster for the United States, a disaster not only in Iran but elsewhere in the Middle East because our stock would fall. And it was well worth the chance. If I had believed, with Admiral Turner and others, that Khomeini might turn out to be a moderate and somebody with whom we could work or somebody with whom we could work even though immoderate, then the risks might have been greater than the possible benefits. But I didn't believe that. I thought that it was going to be a dead loss. While one's analysis of the circumstances may have been wrong in retrospect, that Khomeini was going to anti-Western and a dead loss, from our standpoint, that's turned out to be correct.

Now with regard to Khomeini--Khomeini was sitting there in a Parisian suburb making use of French telecommunications. He was taping cassettes by the dozen and these were being shipped out there, being reproduced by the hundreds and inflaming the country. That could have been terminated and that could have been terminated early on.

Q: Were these discussed in the National Security Council?

Schlesinger: I was just about to come to that. Or, I was about to come to that issue.

No, these things weren't really discussed in the National Security Council because, as I pointed out to you earlier, there was just a kind of basic division within the administration which Carter had not resolved or had not resolved at that point. He was drifting towards the Brzezinski view of the world but he didn't quite embrace it. He didn't say, "We're not going State's way." If he had said, "We're going State's way," that would have been fine, or not fine from my standpoint, but it would have been better administratively. But these meetings tended to be polite exchanges, and, save on rare occasions in which we agreed on tactical measures, did not bridge the basic analytical differences about what to do, whether he was supporting the Shah or replacing Shah. The State people tended to take the view that the Shah must go and they used the council of notables etc. We tended to take the view that the throne must be sustained and that probably, although not positively, meant that the Shah had to be supported. It certainly meant that you had to arrange a very nice transition to his son taking over. So that didn't come up in those discussions.

As I mentioned to you, however, I had been to China. One of the things that the Chinese were doing was planning to build a couple of nuclear plants. Nuclear plants were Framatome plants, Framatome being the principal French constructor of indoor nuclear plants and they used Westinghouse's design. The Secretary of Energy as successor to the Atomic Energy Commission would give the authority whether or not those designs could be used or transferred to some third party. So I had a

visit shortly after my return from the French ambassador and we chatted a bit, politely. We talked about China. And he made an official request that we look favorably on authorizing Framatome to use Westinghouse's designs. And I said that there shouldn't be much problem about that. I wasn't very much worried about it commercial matters and so on. And he seemed much relieved. And then I said, "But there's something of much greater importance, Mr. Ambassador, and that is you are harboring in Paris the man who is in the process of bringing down the Shah of Iran. Why don't you curb him? Why do you allow him full access to communications? Why do you allow this insurrectionary stuff to go out of France?"

And he said to me, "We have had no request from the Shah to bring extraordinary measures to bear. Indeed, we asked the Shah what he wanted us to do and he said, 'Let him alone.'" Which stunned me at the time. Stunned me at the time. The Shah had so underrated the problem. The Shah had been busy making his problem worse because he had now put him in a center of Western communications. But the Shah had taken no action to still Khomeini's voice. The French government, which was quite capable of taking vigorous action--there's no country that's better at that kind of thing than the French--a breakdown of French telephone communications, "Monsieur Khomeini, you must know how regretful we are of these developments." The French were perfectly within their rights. The Shah had not made any requests. I was stunned by that.

But if there had been action early on to isolate Khomeini, not to make him a martyr, mind you, but simply to cut off communications as well as rounding up of the ringleaders, it might well have had a better

outcome.

Now, academics, liberals of all sorts, more than academics and liberals, express doubt about this. They believe, as your prior question suggested, that these things are uncontrollable once they get started. That is the application of splendid hind sight. And just to underscore the possibilities, let me point out what developed in Poland subsequently. When Jaruzelski declared marshal law and either rounded up the leaders or drove them underground, took over communications, he effectively cut off Solidarity that had the overwhelming support of the Polish people. There is a tendency on the part of many here in the United States to underestimate the power of the instruments of authority and to overestimate the zeal and persistency of supposedly mass movements. Quite frequently, when the leaders are taken away, their followers mill around because they're leaderless or just disappear. That has been the prior history in Iran. Certainly, it is what happened to the Shah as he left in 1952 or 1953 and when Mossadegh left in 1953.

Bang! The crowd is with the apparent winner. And part of the reason that the Shah was getting into greater and greater trouble was that there were increasing and legitimate doubts that he was a winner. [end of side two of tape one; beginning of side one, tape two]

Q: You were saying earlier that you compared the significance of the Iranian revolution with the revolution in China in 1949. Now, when you were thinking about this in 1978, what were your apprehensions about the impact of the revolution?

Schlesinger: Well, I didn't think of that kind of parallel because I did not think of the forces at play as those of unconquerable revolution, of unavoidable revolution. One thought of the instruments of authority available to the Shah as much greater than in China and that the military instruments that Mao tse Tung had were simply not available to Khomeini. It was, after all, a military victory of the Communists in China over Chiang Kai-shek. There were no military forces. So this was a question of dealing with public sentiments with which the Shah had become increasingly ill-equipped, as it were, to deal effectively with.

My apprehensions were first that this would enhance the instability in the oil markets, which was my nominal area of responsibility. But I was much more concerned with the geopolitical position of the United States in the region. The Shah, for all the reasons that we have laid out, going back to the 1970s was the central figure, the linchpin of the American position in the region. We could not allow him to fall without destroying, as it were, our position in the region, our image in the region, and it did vast damage to that amongst the Arabs, the Saudis and others.

Moreover, I suspected at the time that the successor arrangement in Iran was going to be of a fragmented, divided authority. I did not imagine at the time--I did not imagine even well into 1979 when I was testifying on these matters before the Senate--that Khomeini would be able to establish and retain the absolute control over the outlying parts of the country and that there was going to be a free field for the Soviets to play in, either by possibly snipping off pieces of the country or by general disruption.

Those were my apprehensions at the time: that we would lose a major asset, that the collapse of CENTO, in which the Shah was critical, meant that the security belt that we had established and supported with greater or lesser enthusiasm since the 1950s, that that security belt would be hopelessly shattered. That belt, the northern tier, had been established in a way to prevent southward movement of the Soviets toward the Indian Ocean. I feared that all of that might take place.

Indeed, many of these fears were expressed when I left the Department of Energy in my farewell remarks. But they had been expressed seven months earlier, as I recall, during a speech that I gave in London to the Pilgrims on the occasion, more or less, of the Thanksgiving anniversary of the Pilgrims in London to celebrate Thanksgiving. And I'd given a speech in which I talked a good deal about the political situation in the Middle East in the light of the threats to the Shah's continuation in office. I held out some dire predictions with regard to the consequences of the fall, though I was not as publicly pessimistic about his chances for survival as reality might have required.

Q: You mentioned earlier about Fritz Kraemer's warning that the Shah was in mortal danger. That was in the spring of 1978.

Schlesinger: It was March of 1978, as I recall. It could have been earlier.

Q: Except for that, though, it seems that the revolution took most

intelligence officials and policy-makers by great surprise. Why do you think that was?

Schlesinger: Oh, I think it was--be careful about that: "Policy-makers" by surprise, more than intelligence officials. Because from the early fall, I would get Bergold to bring over people from the CIA to brief me. It was plain down there at the bottom that they took a view much less sanguine than was being expressed officially by the intelligence agencies.

I think that it was simply a failure of intelligence. Why do I say that? I think it was a failure of intelligence not because of the usual things that have been ascribed to, that the Shah wouldn't let us speak to dissident groups within the country, that we had agreed as a consequence of being in-country and having those facilities up on the northern border not to go fiddle around with dissidents but to take the official path. That's not what I'm referring to because that may indeed have been a condition of our being in-country. The fact of the matter was that most intelligence agencies around the world, including most significantly the Israeli intelligence, had concluded that the Shah was on the skids by the middle of 1978. The British took a more pessimistic view, a far more pessimistic view than we did. We were simply disregarding them and not inquiring as to the attitude of our sister intelligence agencies, some of which were better qualified to make those judgments than we were. We were not sufficiently modest to recognize that, perhaps. But, you know, the Israelis depended upon the Shah for oil. And they took an even greater interest in the well-being of the Shah than we did. But we did not take into account--I doubt