

Q: Was he in Iran in 1961?

Tiger: Yes.

Q: But you don't recall if there was any pressure on the Shah?

Tiger: I think there was but I don't recall--

Q: You don't recall the details.

Tiger: But I think there probably was.

Q: Yes. You were talking a few minutes ago about the foreign aid programs. You said they were mostly as a bailout?

Tiger: That was my impression.

Q: Was there any kind of a long term view taken of how they tried to apply aid to get certain--?

Tiger: Well, the AID people were disturbed by this and wanted very much to do that. But they were sort of swept under by the trust of American policy and they objected to going along with this kind of approach. This happened with many aid situations. But there was really no way of avoiding it. And they were not able to prevail against the thrust of American policy.

Q: So there's not much really strategic thinking that was put forward?

Tiger: There was a lot of thinking, but it didn't make its way into policy. It so often happens the policy was rough and ready and just had to proceed in terms of bailout.

There was a person who was very, very close to some of the Iranians engaged in economic maneuvers of various kinds during that time who was in the embassy. I don't know what's become of him. He was economic development officer. His name was John Patrick Walsh. He was there in my time. Later, he became ambassador to Kuwait very briefly and then left the service rather early on. But his insight into this kind of thing would probably be very helpful.

Q: Well, I'll see if I can pursue him.

Tiger: I don't know where he is. I have no idea of his present whereabouts.

Q: I heard the Iranians had a plan organization which they set up to administer their economic development plans?

Tiger: Yes.

Q: Now, was there much U.S. input on this?

Tiger: The Harvard group.

Q: This is the Harvard group?

Tiger: Yes.

Q: Part of the Harvard organization?

Tiger: Well, it was an advisory group to the Plan Organization. That was an international group.

Q: Okay.

Tiger: I believe that the staff officers on it, the technicians, were mostly Americans. But the director after Kenneth Hansen was a Canadian named McLeod from Winnepeg, very good man. There is a man living Washington now who might be willing to talk about that who was on that group named James Baldwin, who is now in the World Bank. His name is Jim Baldwin. But his first name is really something else like Charles or something--I don't know. It's one of those things where you get to be called Jim for some reason. I saw him not too long ago. So I know he's living in Washington. He is very good and very sharp on this kind of problem. There was another one named Charles McNeely.

Q: He was an advisor for the Plan Organization?

Tiger: I think so. Then the deputy director of AID was a very, very knowledgeable person, he's now in Rome, the director of FAO. His name is Maurice Williams. He is very keen. Of course, he's done so many things since then he may not remember the role in Iran. He's been mission director in Pakistan and deputy director of AID and so forth and so on.

Q: Now I've read somewhere that the Plan Organization for sometime was autonomous from the Shah's influence?

Tiger: I think that this was a fiction. I think it was on paper autonomous. But at that time, there was nothing that went on in an official sense in Iran that was autonomous of the Shah. He had a very tight hold on everything.

Q: Is that so? In terms of foreign aid programs, efforts, I've read that there was much concern in Congress in the late 1950s about the use of foreign aid plans in Iran, about the possible wastes of funds on projects, on project assistance and so forth, that the funds went to the military budget instead of to their designated purposes.

Tiger: I wouldn't know.

Q: Was that--you didn't see that?

Tiger: Well, I think there was concern like that in the Congress at all times. Again, I think that a person would know a considerable

amount about that, in addition to Phil Talbot, would be Jim Grant.

Q: Who was he?

Tiger: James Grant was one of the deputy assistance secretaries under Phil Talbot. I believe he was concerned with this kind of thing to a very large extent, aid programs. He is now the director of UNICEF in New York. Yes, he's still around. He is a very sharp guy, very good.

Q: You mentioned a few minutes ago that there was an IMF stabilization, an IMF role in Iranian affairs?

Tiger: Yes. There was an IMF team that was sent out there.

Q: How did they get--do you recall how they became interested in Iranian financial affairs?

Tiger: You mean why they were brought in?

Q: How they were brought in?

Tiger: Because Iran applied to the IMF for a short term balance of payments assistance. The IMF said: We won't do it unless you let us come in with a financial stabilization program. So they accepted it.

Q: The Iranians accepted the plan as a condition for financial aid?

Tiger: They had to accept the team coming in to try to put through an economic stabilization program. The team was headed by a very dour and cynical Dane named Erik Elmholt who just took a very dim view of Iran and all their programs--not without reason.

Q: Were you involved in any of the discussions?

Tiger: Yes I was. I was involved with them a lot. They weren't very successful.

Q: They weren't?

Tiger: No.

Q: I read that there was quite an inflation problem at this period.

Tiger: Yes, there was.

Q: They were trying to get them to constrain their monetary supply or something?

Tiger: Yes.

Q: But they didn't have much of an impact?

Tiger: No, no. Not much more than our technical assistance had.

The thing about technical assistance efforts in the field of financial and economic management is--and this goes for India as well where I was after Iran--is that unless the country is really committed to something, no amount of foreign technical assistance is going to do any good. I think you could say the same thing about narcotics control. It's just that we as a nation tend to delude ourselves greatly. The Iranians understood that the acceptance of technicians in this field was the price of the financial aid that they were getting. They needed the financial aid desperately so they accepted the technical assistance. It's a very cynical approach but--

Q: So the aid really didn't give that much leverage to those that were administering the aid programs?

Tiger: Well, they did. Just think about it this way: if one of these people would have said, "Look, unless you implement the programs that we're teaching you about with our technical assistance we won't give you the dollars anymore." And if they could abide by that well and good. But the Iranians probably understood very well that we weren't going to let them go under. So the threat that neither the carrot nor the stick had any great--

Q: You just couldn't do that?

Tiger: Yes, you just couldn't do that. And they knew it. So the undertaking was not a success in that regard.

Q: I've read that under the Kennedy Administration, when Kennedy came in in 1961, that there was an interagency task force that made an intensive study of Iranian--?

Tiger: I think there was. That's right.

Q: Did the embassy have any input in that respect?

Tiger: Yes, we did. We did have some input.

Q: Do you recall anything about the discussions in Tehran, about what kind of recommendations to make to Washington in terms of alternative policies that were being considered, anything?

Tiger: I remember it fairly dimly. I don't remember it in great detail.

Q: I recall they were discussing alternatives like supporting military coups, supporting Mossadegh elements, all support for the Shah--

Tiger: Well, I'm not sure. I'm not sure that that came into it. Was that in the documents, in the material--?

Q: Yes. They reviewed alternative policies, and they said, "It's not possible, let's go on--"

Tiger: If I was involved in that, I've really forgotten the details.

Q: Okay, okay. I think we should talk about the Amini thing to some extent. When Amini was brought in as prime minister in this, say, May 1961, do you recall if the embassy officials had any specific idea of what they hoped Amini could or would accomplish? You mentioned land reform was one. Were there other things that they hoped for?

Tiger: Financial reform in general. They hoped that he would also be able to bring some kind of order into the whole problem regarding the Shah's fortune. This was a great problem even then. Popular perceptions of it were such that it worried us as to the way people were talking about it. We thought that the Shah should really put his fortunes out where everybody could understand them and do something with them. He never did really. He always thought that he could solve the problem by putting up a shadow play of some kind about it. He always thought that he could. This worried us a lot.

Q: So it's land reform, financial reform, and the question of the Shah's fortune. Were those the main thrusts that they all could be worked on?

Tiger: Oh, I think industrial development, also. We thought that the Shah--and he, too. He felt quite strongly that he should diversify so that all of his financial prospects, economic prospects,

wouldn't be in one industry. He always wanted to stop selling so much oil and develop the petrochemical industry, for instance, and do various other things.

Q: That was discussed at that period?

Tiger: Yes, I think so.

Q: Now, I've read that Kennedy advisors like Walt Rostow had great interest in encouraging the growth of an urban oriented middle class, an urban middle class developing in developing countries. Did this kind of interest percolate down to the embassy level?

Tiger: Yes, yes, it did. Yes, this is another thing we hoped would happen. We thought we saw some movement in that regard at the time of the Shah's White Revolution, particularly his alliance with the Bazaaris and his--

Q: What does that refer to--Bazaaris?

Tiger: Well, he made common cause with the bazaar people.

Q: Oh, bazaars.

Tiger: Yes, the bazaar merchants who were, after all, the nucleus of the rising middle class in Iran. And they supported him, I think, at the time. They supported his reforms program. There was a kind of a

crisis in, I believe August 1963 when the Mullahs tried to stage a real revolt against the Shah's reform programs, particularly the emancipation of women. And there were riots in Tehran. That was when the Bazaaris came to his support. That was also when Ayatollah Khomeini was exiled. We felt that the Shah won that on rather thumpingly. I felt, myself, that the Shah was onto a reform program that would really lead somewhere and modernize the country. I think I was a little premature in that at the time. What I was mainly not recognizing, not reckoning with, was the obscurantism and the paranoia in the Shah's personality which I think is the most unfortunate thing in this whole equation, and his complete subservience to his family, his inability to control his family which really let him down very badly.

Q: In terms of the efforts to support Amini in 1961-62, do you recall there was a clear idea of what this would mean in terms of Iranian politics over the long term? Did they see the effort to support Amini as a way to change internal politics in Iran?

Tiger: Yes. It was felt by our people that if Amini prevailed that it would be the beginning of perhaps a truly representative government in Iran, elections which people would credit as being open and free, and that the Shah would stop fearing the outcome of such a thing. The Shah feared that if elections were not strictly controlled, the wrong kind of people would get in. And we wanted him to get over that. We wanted a truly representative form of government, or at least a more representative form of government in Iran.

Q: Do you recall or did you hear about whether the ambassador, I guess it was Julius Holmes at this time, was discussing with the Shah possible changes in the political system?

Tiger: I think he discussed it. I think he discussed it a lot, yes.

Q: That raises a lot of questions though in itself. How could he approach the Shah that he had to change his system? Would that require very artful--

Tiger: Julius Holmes was a very artful man. I think that he just tried to persuade him that his regime would go down as the true modernizing regime, which is what the Shah wanted, and not endanger itself if it would reckon with the rising intellectual classes and the rising middle classes and give them the kind of enlightened government that they seemed to want and that this would release the productive elements within the Iranian people. That's the way the Shah would really go down in history. The Shah was very conscious of his place in history and it wasn't difficult to play upon that when trying to persuade him of something. If he could have been persuaded that his place in history would be more assured by an enlightened leadership than by repression, that would have been a great thing. But he couldn't be--that was the point--and that was his downfall.

Q: Was he sort of reluctant to go along with this?

Tiger: Oh, yes. He wanted to assure his place in history by bringing Iran into the twentieth century and bringing into an enlightened form of government with him doing it all.

Q: Not with prime ministers and so forth taking some of the limelight.

Tiger: Right.

Q: I see. Amini was a power from May 1961 to, I think, August 1962? How smoothly did his reform efforts go? Do you recall much about it?

Tiger: They seemed to be doing all right. When did he get out?

Q: In August of 1962.

Tiger: 1962? And Ali Mansur came in then?

Q: I think so. Do you recall much about the happenings of the time?

Tiger: I think the Shah--this is only a guess on my part--I feel that the Shah was frightened by how far Amini was going and pulled back and got in essentially a nonentity, Ali Mansur, a toady. He didn't want to play around anymore with a strong-minded man like Amini. Mansur was assassinated when? Do you remember?

Q: In the 1960s. I'm not sure.

Tiger: He wasn't around too long.

Q: Now, I guess one thing that went on during the Kennedy Administration besides the efforts to support Amini as prime minister was military aid programs towards Iran in 1962. There was a discussion of a five year military systems plan.

Tiger: I thought so. I don't recall too much about what that--I know that everybody who's had arms to sell was trying to sell to the Shah because he was making money--the Brits and the French. And we had a lot of discussion with Brits who resented our selling them certain things. But this was the kind of thing that the desk at the State Department had very little control over.

Q: So it was mostly Pentagon influence?

Tiger: Yes, it was. I believe that Julius Holmes was on our side. When he would have his visits here, he seemed to be, but in the end he was not able to prevail against the Pentagon. He also tended to repeat the Shah's arguments. I think he saw that it was a practical matter; we just had to do it. The AID people thought it terrible and particularly didn't like financial bailouts at the same time the Shah was spending his own money on arms. This was anathema to them. One understands it.

Q: They were a restraining influence. They tried to restrain

private sales.

Tiger: Yes, but it didn't work.

[end of interview]

IB

Interviewee: M. Gordon Tiger Date: April 10, 1985

Interviewer: William Burr

Q: In late 1962, you became country desk chief for Iran in the State Department. What were your major duties there in general terms?

Tiger: At that time, the State Department had an organization somewhat different than it has now in that the geographical bureaus were divided into offices and each office was divided into a desk. The office I was in was the Office of Greek, Turkish and Iranian Affairs. And I was the officer in charge of Iranian affairs on the Iran desk. The present organization is for country directorates and it's a rather higher set of organization. One country directorate can cover several countries, more or less like the office level.

As Iran desk officer, I was sort of the first line coverage for all relations with Iran from the State Department side, which meant that whatever came up I was supposed to handle one way or the other with the help of whatever other United States Government agencies were involved or with the consultation with my superiors and so forth.

Q: Can you describe how the policy on Iran was generally made? How strong a hand did the State Department in the general policy towards Iran? Was it the leading agency?

Tiger: At that point, the primacy of the State Department in the formation of foreign policy was being eroded from various sides. I think that it is very difficult to answer that question. The State Department still felt it would like to and felt it would like to be to be at least the channel of all policy initiatives and approaches to Iran but, unfortunately, in not only Iran but in the case of many other countries, other agencies with overseas interests sometimes pre-empted the State Department's responsibilities in that field and caused, in my opinion, a considerable amount of discoordination and appearance, a particular appearance to foreigners of discoordination. I think this got worse later. Later, I was deputy director of the India country directorate. And I thought at that time it was particularly bad. But even at the time, in the early 1960s, I would not say that the State Department had the last word.

I think there was an NSC at the time. I can't recall whether there was or not. There was? Yes. In this case, the agencies with interest in any given country were supposed to coordinate those at the NSC level. Who was director of the NSC then?

Q: Bundy was the advisor of Security.

Tiger: Who?

Q: Bundy was Kennedy and Johnson's National Security Advisor.

Tiger: So Bundy was in the same relationship that Kissinger was to Johnson, I see. I remember dealing with one man on that NSC, a man

named Ko mer who later became ambassador to Turkey, Robert Ko mer. He had a fairly high position on the NSC.

Q: How strong an interest did Rusk have in Iran at this time, you know, the mid-1960s?

Tiger: My impression is, not very strong. I think he felt that it was a country with which we needed to remain on fairly friendly terms, though I think he had a rather, not supercilious exactly, but a rather diffident view toward Iran. He expressed himself about the foreign minister and thought that he was something of a ninny. I don't think he accorded it a very high place in his scheme of things. So that at the time when McNamara put pressure on him, for instance, to further arms sales, I don't think he resisted very strongly. I believe he was interested in a lot more other things than Iran. I don't think he took very seriously, for instance, the Shah's position, which he transmitted through his then ambassador, that he thought Iran should be appointed as our deputy to take charge of things in the area east of Suez as the British withdrew. I don't think he took that very seriously. Nor did I, I must say. I thought that it was very early in the game of Iran's power projection to take on such a role. I thought that it was a position reflecting partly the Shah's own hubris and certainly a ploy to make sure that he got the maximum in military assistance from us.

Q: One major policy development during this period of 1963 was the Shah's announcement of the White Revolution.

Tiger: Yes.

Q: Did this come as a surprise to you as a government officials?
Was there prior consultation before the announcement?

Tiger: No. There was no prior consultation. But the Shah, I think, had two motivations and I believe that we played a part in one of them. He wanted to impress us with his bonafides as a reformer and, too, he really had a very strong sense of history. He wanted to go down in history as a reforming monarch. He often said, and many people considered it in a pipe dream type of context that he wanted to be the modernizing monarch, the monarch that brought Iran into the twentieth century, that made it the equal of the most advanced European country. And he felt that with the oil revenues that he was receiving that this was not impossible and that he was the man to do it.

Q: What was the initial reaction in Washington to the Shah's proclamation?

Tiger: The White Revolution?

Q: Yes.

Tiger: Well, it's hard to say "Washington's" because Washington was so divided on these things. I think that the well wishers and

admirers of Iran and people that thought the Shah was a pretty good ruler welcomed them with a lot of satisfaction. I think everybody else did, too, but in many circles there was skepticism, such as in AID and in the Bureau of the Budget with Hansen. There was a feeling that the Shah was play-acting again. There was a lot of mistrust of the Shah and his motivations.

Q: In March 1963, President Kennedy asked for a review of policies toward Iran under NSAM 228. To what extent was the announcement of the White Revolution an impetus for this initiative?

Tiger: I don't recall the connection between the two if there was any. My recollection of the call for the NSAM is that it was generated by pressure from Ken Hansen, who was then in the Bureau of the Budget, and it was generated because he felt very strongly from his previous experience as head of the Harvard group in Iran that the Shah was a malign influence on Iran and our support for the Shah was a poor policy.

Q: Now one classified document was called "U.S. Tragedy for Iran. Response to NSAM 228." Did you prepare this document or help write it?

Tiger: No. That was Ken Hansen's document completely. He was the author of it. I believe he's even so identified--

[tape interruption]

--worked on for so long. I'm not quite clear. From perusing

it--it sounds like something that I might have formulated.

Q: One of its basic points was that the U.S. should support the Shah's reform efforts rather than to directly try to intervene in its formulation, to keep back a little bit.

Tiger: Yes.

Q: Was this approach generally accepted by the NSC and Kennedy or higher level officials, that the U.S. should sort of not try to directly intervene in the Shah's efforts to--?

Tiger: Well, I believe there was a strong school of thought in the NSC, represented mainly by Ken Hansen, which mistrusted the Shah so much that they felt we should keep a tight rein on him. And if he said that he was going to undertake a reform initiative, that we should make sure that he really did it, that we should look with a very skeptical eye on everything he said and did. We at State had a different point of view, mainly that he was, for better or for worse, in charge of his country, that he had a considerable amount of pride and that he would not brook any kind of interference of the kind that some people recommended. So there was considerable difference of opinion on that subject.

Q: Did Hansen's arguments have much influence on national policy?

Tiger: Hansen was a very influential man for the Kennedy family. At

the time of the Kennedy Administration, there was considerable skepticism about the Shah and his intentions and his abilities and so forth.

Q: Now, the reply to NSAM 228 suggests that there were some officials in Washington who were concerned about the extension of the land reform program in 1963, they were frightened that Iranian businessmen would disrupt food production.

Tiger: That sounds like a CIA position.

Q: Were there any proposals to try to get the Shah to modify or slow down his land reform efforts? This response to the document that we have here suggests that there were some efforts to prepare a proposal to intervene in some way. But that part is sanitized from the document. You can't tell what the proposal actually was or who was proposing it.

Tiger: I can't recollect anything like that. I think that there was more concern on the part of people in the United States Government, like Ken Hansen, that the Shah wouldn't go far enough with land reform, that it would be shadow boxing and play acting and not a genuine movement. I don't recall any movement to slow it down. I think perhaps there was a CIA input into this NSAM reply which may have made that point. But I don't remember that.

Q: The report also suggested that intervention was to be considered.

For example, efforts to insure the land reform program offered in a rational, more efficient way. Were there any efforts to convey to the Iranians what land tenure arrangement would be considered rational or efficient?

Tiger: I don't remember.

Q: The report also suggests that the Shah should loosen up fiscal and credit policy. There was sort of a recession in 1963. They thought the Shah and his people should loosen up credit supply and money supply as a counter measure to boost the economy. Was this--?

Tiger: I don't remember that either. That sounds contrary to IMF's policy but it may have been late enough so that it was okay.

Q: The response also suggests that, discusses using military aid as a lever to influence resources allocation in Iran, to prevent excessive military spending compared with the development efforts at home, you know, using more resources for internal development efforts. Do you recall anything about this policy? It was called the Multi-Europe MAP Plan, the MAP Plan.

Tiger: I remember that that was a consideration. I believe that the State Department input and particularly my own views squared very strongly with that. I, myself, was very concerned about the overemphasis on military spending on the part of the Shah. I felt that there should be some way that we should not encourage that.

This brought me in direct conflict with the Department of Defense policy. I don't know if I mentioned last time that there was a very strong message that came over which suggested that we should get out of the way of the military sales policy, because I was at that time writing papers and developing positions which suggested that we should go easy on arms sales in order to keep the Shah from devoting too much resources to the military. There was a phone call, I'm told, directly from McNamara to Rusk telling Rusk that his people should get out of the way.

Q: Was this more like a difference over whether there should be a limited arms sales or how much they should be limited by?

Tiger: The amount. The amount of the arms sales. I felt they should be strictly limited. My assistant secretary, who was at that time Philip Talbot, agreed with me or said he did.

Q: But were they, the people like McNamara, saying that there should be no restrictions at all on arms sales or just a higher level would be allowed?

Tiger: I can't remember whether they said no restrictions. But my impression was that if the Shah were willing to spend every cent of the money that we gave him as aid, by shuffling resources, of course, on military sales, that they would have been quite happy with that. There seemed to be no conscience on that subject in the Defense Department, at least in my way of thinking.

Q: So was their assumption that military aid, whether limited or excessive, was an important factor in stabilizing the situation in Iran, stabilizing the Shah's position?

Tiger: No, no. I think the consideration was, 1) the Shah wanted it and would be our good friend if he got it, and, 2) it would help our balance of payments. I think that was the only consideration. I don't think there was anything statesmanlike about the considerations there. I know that sounds like a very harsh judgment, but that is what it was or as it appeared to me.

Q: I have some questions about domestic policy developments in Iran during this period. Now, early in 1963, the National Front was pushing for free elections, but apparently Prime Minister Alam refused, or apparently the Shah refused also. Did the U.S. take positions on this issue?

Tiger: You said Prime Minister Alam, Ala, A-L-A.

Q: Ala, who succeeded Amini.

Tiger: Yes, that's right.

Q: Did the U.S. take any positions on this issue?

Tiger: I don't know that we did.

Q: What was the general stance of people towards the National Front? In the State Department what was the general view? These were sort of the Mossadeghist politicians?

Tiger: We didn't think very much of them. Some of our academic advisors felt that we had dismissed them too casually, too easily and also felt, as a matter of fact, that the whole 1953 episode had been a mistake that we had thus thwarted a genuine, nationalistic movement. But we ourselves felt that the people representing the National Front or residual National Front were extremely impractical type people and did not have the kind of support in the country, let's say, Nasser had in Egypt when he over threw the monarchy. This was a comparison which was often made, particularly by Manfred Halpern, one of our chief academic critics.

[end of side two, cassette one; beginning of side one, cassette two]

Q: You were saying how Halpern felt.

Tiger: Manfred Halpern felt that Mossadegh was an Iranian equivalent of Nasser and that it had been a historic mistake to have opposed him. We felt that Mossadegh was the person who never could quite get his act together and that his followers were in the same way and that instead of them there was a ruler who was running the country who did have his act together and perhaps needed to be watched a little bit, and encouraged, particularly on his propensities for overmilitarism, but at least somebody who did have charge of his country.

Q: Now also in 1963 the Ayatollah Khomeini began a campaign against the Shah and U.S. influence in Iran that culminated in uprisings of the Shah suppressed, I think, in June 1963.

Tiger: August 1963.

Q: Oh, August. Had U.S. observers taken any special note of Khomeini before these events?

Tiger: U.S. observers noted in general the religious opposition of the Shah. I don't know that Khomeini himself was signaled out for particular notice. But it was known that the Shah's reform program, particularly the emancipation of women, had raised a lot of hackles among the clergy. And, in general, I think the U.S. government felt that this move of the Shah was a correct move, that the clergy was not a forward looking or useful or friendly force in Iran. I think subsequent events have borne that out with a vengeance. We, therefore, had no particular brief for their activities. As a matter of fact, we thought that when the Shah put down the bazaar uprising in August 1963 and exiled Khomeini and some other religious leaders that this was a very beneficial show of his strength. We were very much in favor of that.

Q: Were there any attempts to influence his response to the social movements?

Tiger: No.

Q: I mean, to the sort of degree of violence used at that time?

Tiger: No. As a matter of fact, I don't know if I should say this, but I believe that the degree of violence he used was something that his forces learned from our police advisory efforts.

Q: Apparently in 1963 there was greater cooperation between religious and nationalist opponents of the Shah and help from overseas. Was this something that officials took note of over time, greater cooperation of the religious opposition and the nationalist opposition?

Tiger: I personally began to lose touch with Iranian affairs in the middle of 1965 when I left to go to India. Before I left, I am not aware of any such thing as you mentioned there.

Q: Well, secondary works mention this as one of the results. A lot of secondary historical works mention this as a long term result of 1963. But maybe it was a longer term, like late 1960s or early 1970s.

Tiger: Well, it would not surprise me if this were going on. But I don't know anything about, for instance, who the exiled religious leaders might have seen while in Bagdad or anything like that. But I do know this, that when we were able to successfully evict, sort of

by indirection, Ghotbzadeh from the United States for his anti-Shah activities--we didn't really evict him. What happened is we gave him a warning and he went overseas and then he wasn't able to get back in. I believe I described that last time.

Q: Yes, you did.

Tiger: When this happened, he--we found out later, I found out later, at least, much later--that he joined forces with the Ayatollah Khomeini in Baghdad and became his close associate ever since and went to Paris with him. So the alliance between disparate elements of the opposition to the Shah was perhaps under way at that time.

Q: You mentioned the efforts of sort of containing the activities of some of the student dissidents who were active in this country, that had met with Robert Kennedy in Aspen. Was that an unusual occurrence, that one event in Aspen?

Tiger: That was the most striking occurrence of Robert Kennedy's sympathy with the anti-Shah elements. But there were others.

Q: Was this an issue in relation to the Shah?

Tiger: Yes, very much so. The Shah brought it up quite often.

Q: What were the usual response that U.S. diplomats could make to that?

Tiger: He didn't bring it up so much in terms of what the Kennedy Administration was doing and what could we do about our leadership because I think he was too sensitive to meanings of this thing to bring it up in those terms. He brought it up mainly in terms of what went on in the streets of this country: why we could not restrain students from demonstrating against him and what went on in the newspapers. He was very sensitive to unfavorable newspaper commentary. And in spite of many explanations about the nature of our system, he either did not understand it or pretended he did not understand it. He had the feeling, or at least we had the feeling that he thought that just as he in his country could prevent newspapers from printing anything he didn't want them to print, that we, if we were really sincere about our support for him, would tell newspapers not to print bad things about him.

This was a bad problem with us all the time. He would send his ambassador in to complain about things like that. We'd try to explain it to his ambassador. And his ambassador said, or implied that he didn't believe it. It so happens that I am a very close friend of the man who was ambassador at the time then, who is also retired, in exile even. And he had told me many times, that I should understand what he said.

Q: Unofficial duties.

Tiger: Right, right.

Q: Versus official duties. All right. Was there effort to regulate the kind of students who studied in this country, to prevent anti-Shah people from coming in?

Tiger: No.

Q: Or was that sort of like not considered?

Tiger: Well, the anti-Shah people all came in before the fact, so to speak. And if we had made any efforts like that, I don't know really what we'd have done. But I'm not aware of what the admissions policy was. I think anybody who had the money and who could convince our consular officials that he wasn't going to try to immigrate into the United States could come study here. And a great many of them came with help from the Iranian government at the time.

Q: In the first interview, you mentioned the CIA assessment of the opposition in Iran. Did the agency issue these assessments or reports on a regular basis? Were they very useful as assessments of Iranian stability?

Tiger: Oh, every two years or so. I forget what these papers were called. There was a designation--

Q: National Intelligence Estimate?

Tiger: National Intelligence Estimates.

Q: NIE maybe.

Tiger: NIEs, yes. Well, National Intelligence Estimates? That sounds like a big background study document. Yes, National Intelligence Estimates is what they were. Yes, they would do these from time to time.

Q: Were they found useful by the State Department officials?

Tiger: Generally, the State Department took the position, and in retrospect I'm not sure it was the correct one, that casting too much doubt on the stability of a country like Iran tended to bring our policy toward that country into question. And therefore we fought that. And while I was sent in to do battle on those terms, I'm not sure I'm completely in sympathy with that point of view at the moment. I think perhaps I was pushed by my agency's policies, by my agency's position into opposing CIA's analysis a little too strongly from time to time. And somehow or other I was able to prevail against them a good deal of the the time and maybe this was a mistake.

Q: Well, the CIA was actually more dubious about the prospects there than State?

Tiger: Yes, CIA was.

Q: Who were some of the major experts? Did they have Iranian experts in there, in the staff at this time?

Tiger: They did. And I'm not sure that I remember who they were. There was one named Alton, who was and remains a friend of mine. He was there briefly. He's a Soviet scholar at Columbia, Thad Alton. Perhaps he was one who took that point of view. And there was a woman who was quite good and very bright named Thunberg, Penelope.

Q: Who worked on Iran?

Tiger: Well, I think she worked on lots of things.

Q: A Middle Eastern specialist?

Tiger: Maybe.

Q: Okay. Now with Johnson being President in late 1963 and the following years, was there any noteworthy shift in U.S. policy toward the Shah?

Tiger: Yes, considerable.

Q: How can you describe it?

Tiger: Johnson was more favorable toward the Shah as a ruler.

Q: So there was just less effort to--

Tiger: As a matter of fact, it is interesting that the warning-- perhaps I described this last time--the warning which we were authorized to issue to Fatemi and Ghotbzadeh was issued just a month after Kennedy's assassination and Ghotbzadeh was sure that it was because his protector had been killed, or because Jack had been killed and his protector Robert had lost his influence.

Q: There was less effort after Johnson was in to push the Shah toward reforms?

Tiger: I think so.

Q: It was sort of a relaxation of some sort?

Tiger: I think there was.

Q: Now, one development that came up in 1964 was the updating of a bilateral military agreement, and under it the Iranian agreed to exempt U.S. military observers, U.S. military personnel, from prosecution under Iranian law.

Tiger: No, they never agreed to that.

Q: They didn't?

Tiger: No. We tried to make them agree to that but it never passed the Iranian parliament. Status of Forces Agreement, right?

Q: It didn't pass? I wasn't sure.

Tiger: I don't think so. I don't think it passed. It was a very bad issue. And as a result of that a prime minister was assassinated, Prime Minister Ali Mansur was assassinated because of his presumed support for a Status of Forces agreement. It was a hot issue in Iran and very strongly opposed by influential parliamentarians.

Q: According to one historian, Barry Rubin, whose book discusses this incident, the Iranian government had suggested that there would be no adverse reaction to the treaty, the immunity bill. But when it ran into trouble, they said that the U.S. should have anticipated problems with the treaty.

Tiger: I can't comment on that point of view. It does not sound unlikely from what I remember about it. It was a very tense situation. I wouldn't be surprised at all if that's the way it happened. He probably researched it. He probably--

Q: I thought you might recall--

Tiger: I don't recall that in detail. I do recall it was a very tense period, that we pushed for it, and it was probably not a good

idea to have pushed for it, and it caused a crisis in the Iranian government.

Q: Now, I've read another issue that came up in 1964 was the Shah's request for foreign military sales credit, the FMS. Do you recall discussion of this issue on military sales credits? Apparently Johnson had first opposed this, then when the Shah visited in August 1964, I think, he changed his mind at that point. Do you recall?

Tiger: It may be. I don't recall. There were a great more meetings between the Shah and Johnson at that time. There was a meeting at the Iranian embassy, I believe, that Johnson attended, a rather unusual affair. I'm not sure. I remember that the Shah came over here and got an awful lot out of the Johnson government.

Q: In terms of military aids?

Tiger: Yes.

Q: Or credits. Now according to some accounts of U.S.-Iran relations--

Tiger: According to whom?

Q: --to some accounts of U.S.-Iran relations, the Shah occasionally threatened, to turn to the Soviet Union, for weapons systems if the U.S. would not sell them to him. Was this a stance that you

encountered when you were in Washington at the country desk?

Tiger: I would think hints of that kind were made. I don't believe we took it very seriously. I think that we rated very highly the Shah's fear of the Soviet Union and I think we were correct.

Q: Was there much competition from NATO allies for the arms market in Iran?

Tiger: Much, great, great competition, particularly the British, particularly as regards anti-aircraft defense. There were lots of incidents. There was a lot of ill feelings on the part of the British, feeling that we had concealed things from them. There was one misunderstanding in which I was a part when I did not understand that our government had undertaken to sell Hawk Missiles to Iran because all of the traffic that I had read--and I'm not an expert in military affairs--referred to air defense systems. And the air defense system in mind was Hawk Missiles. And one of my British colleagues in Washington asked me if we were planning to sell Hawk Missiles to Iran and I said no. He accused me later, outright, of trying to mislead him and I had no intention of doing so. But there were a lot of ill feelings. It was a market and there was competition for it.

Q: Was there a policy to maintain a predominant position for the U.S., for U.S. arms suppliers in Iran?

Tiger: Well, I suppose. I suppose. I can't see how it could be otherwise, assuming that we had arms salesmen in the Pentagon who were interested in helping our balance of payments by doing that. It wouldn't work if other countries were taking our business away from us. So, without any specific memory of that, I just assume that that would have been the case.

Q: Towards 1963 and 1965, Senator McClellan chaired hearings on charges by the exiled tribal leader, Khaibar Khan, that the Shah's personal entourage at the court had diverted large amounts of U.S. foreign aid funds to overseas bank accounts. Did this become an issue to the Shah in the State Department, these charges?

Tiger: A very strong issue. The Shah was absolutely furious about that and we were, too. We felt that Khaibar Khan (Gudarzian) was an out and out crook, and he was just trying to blackmail the royal family, and that his charges meant absolutely nothing. As a matter of fact, I went over to Iran myself with a prosecutor from the State of New York--I forget why he was involved; I think the case was brought in New York--to question people in Iran, with the help of the Iranian government. It appeared to be crystal clear to the prosecutor that this man was a blackguard and a liar. He was a con man. He had taken in an awful lot of people and cheated them various ways. And some of them were so ashamed of having fallen into it that they wouldn't help us. They wouldn't testify for us. One such person was the man who had been the head of the Planning Organization for a long time, a man named Abol Hassan Ebtehaj, a very competent but very

stiff-necked and egotistical man.

This was a very bad affair. This was the cause of the removal of one of the Shah's ambassadors, that one that I was talking about before. The Shah felt that he had not pressed his case hard enough. He was replaced by somebody else who also didn't solve the embarrassing affair. So finally the Shah sent his erstwhile son-in-law over as ambassador, Ardeshi Zahedi. And that was really where that happened. I forget whether that was Zahedi's second tour or his first; I know he had two tours over here. But it was a very scandalous affair and caused great bitterness on the part of the Shah.

But I think we convinced the Shah, eventually, that we were doing all we could. Again, the issue of the United States press came up. The press reported accurately the things that Gudarzian charged the Shah with without saying that they were blarney. And the Shah was very annoyed at that. He said, "Why don't you tell your press not to do that?" And here again this whole subject came up of how we can't tell our press. As a matter of fact, a deputy assistant secretary and I did make a trip to New York and talked to Abe Rosenthal of the New York Times about this and told him what an issue it was raising between the United States and Iran and just about convinced him that Gudarzian was a crook and that it really wasn't very responsible journalism to report his charges without comment. But we didn't get very far. It was a very bad issue.

Q: Now earlier in the interview, in the first interview we had, you suggested the Shah's system in the late 1950s, when you arrived in

Tehran, was somewhat tentative.

Tiger: His position.

Q: His position, the Shah, his position in Iran was somewhat tentative. How would you characterize it for the mid-1960s when you were handling Iranian affairs directly?

Tiger: The early 1960s. I left in mid-1965.

Q: Well, before 1965 then.

Tiger: I thought that the White Revolution had greatly strengthened his position, particularly the reforms which were very popular with what I considered the forward-looking people. I didn't reckon on the force of the sort of under-privileged Iranian masses, on their religiosity and that sort of thing. I really didn't reckon with that. I felt, perhaps mistakenly, that the hope in Iran lay, the hope for the future lay with its Western educated intelligentsia. And I felt that they were very strongly influenced by the Shah's reforms, particularly, in addition to the land reform, the corps program, in which there was an education corps, a literacy corps, and a number of other corps of young people going out into the countryside in lieu of army conscription. We felt this was very forward-looking and we thought that really Iran had a considerable future and that the "White Revolution" was a good thing. It was the Shah's answer to popular revolution, to be sure, and did not satisfy

observers of Iran who felt that the people should be given their rein. But we didn't think that the Iranian people had the organizational ability to stage an effective revolution. I think we were right. At least it hasn't been effective to date. It's been more effective in some respects than I ever would have dreamed, in the military, for instance, and in the fact that the economy has not collapsed altogether. But it's not exactly an enlightened regime.

Q: You mentioned in the first interview that one oil issue that came up in the early 1960s was the Iran affiliation with OPEC, that the oil companies were somewhat alarmed about that.

Tiger: Very alarmed.

Q: Were oil issues that came up while you were at the State Department desk?

Tiger: Was there what?

Q: Any oil issues that came up?

Tiger: Pricing was the main issue, and the oil companies all urged us to press the Shah not to go along with OPEC price formulas. They told us that they would stop producing oil and that sort of thing, told us to tell the Shah that, that we thought so. I remember my position was with them, and it was a very difficult position to maintain with the oil companies, that all that we would tell the Shah

or the Shah's people is that the oil companies told us to tell them that. The oil companies said, "No. We want you to tell them that you think so." And we kept saying we couldn't do that because we didn't think so. So we got into a little trouble with the oil companies as a result of that. Business interests are often telling the State Department that they're not doing the right thing, as you know. But they tried to put words into our mouth that we really couldn't put to the Shah.

Q: Do you recall what year this was in?

Tiger: Probably it had to be either 1963 or 1964 or early 1965. I don't really remember.

[tape interruption]

So, what little I knew about the development of American policy toward Iran in the years after I left really alarmed me and I still think we were not prepared for the events of 1979. I was only tangentially aware of what was going on in Iran. I had some friends who were there. I was myself in Karachi, which was, to be sure, not too far away. I was there from 1972 to 1975. And I became good friends with my counterpart, the Iranian Consul General in Karachi. I did not like at all what I heard about the course of events in Iran. I felt that there was much too much military input from the United States, that the Shah was becoming paranoid, and that the internal repression was becoming very severe. I didn't quite understand why that had to be that way. I was also shocked at the ostentation of the court. Therefore, I suppose I shouldn't have been

too surprised. I was disturbed at the growing security threat to Americans working in Iran. I still felt that somehow the Shah would pull through.

Q: As he had before.

Tiger: Yes.

Q: --under internal opposition.

Tiger: Yes, I thought so. But apparently things went even further than I had thought. I was really worried about it, though. I was worried particularly about the callousness. The Consul General in Iran was a relative of the Shah's and very anxious to put a good face on it. There had been a number of episodes, in defending internal repression, where he constantly referred to the excesses of the opposition. I think there had been a bombing in a movie theater or something, maybe in--

Q: Fire, maybe, or something?

Tiger: Something like that. And he said, "See, this is what these people will do. Of course, we have to guard against them. They want to wreck our country." I was very dubious about this, about the way things were going. And I thought that the unrest was mounting to a point where--what I really thought is that the Shah was pushing development too fast and pushing people too hard. Iranians are easy

going people; they don't like to be pushed too hard except for religious reasons, then they don't seem to mind.

[end of interview]

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