out there. One was the Times correspondent, and he did the unthinkable thing. He said, "Your Majesty, do you intend to buy the Concorde?" And the Shah was so surprised, he said, "Yes." And that's how we sold three options to the Shah!

Q: And why was -- You said something about Hazeltine behaving badly. In what way?

Ramsbotham: I mean, I thought he was arrogant as far as I was concerned. That's all. I expect ministers -- especially junior ministers as he was -- to treat a senior ambassador rather better than he did. It was just my impression at the time -- confirmed by more recent events in January, 1986.

Q: You said, I must tell you the story of how you got the Shah to come here, to go to Windsor.

Ramsbotham: I'll probably exhaust my repertoire. But this was a different story and a longer one, so we may not take it on this tape. In 1972 and 1973, one of the policy changes of the British government at the time was a retreat from east of Suez. We'd been declining in power ever since Suez itself in 1956 and had had to give up our Indian Ocean fleet and had to withdraw from Aden. And now the time had come when we no longer felt that we could maintain defense responsibilities for the Trucial states. We wanted to convert that relationship into a Treaty of

association and friendship and not of defense, which meant really that the power to defend the Persian Gulf would no longer be in British hands. And the Shah, who exaggerated everything, was concerned that the lifeline for his oil, going down through the Gulf would be at the mercy of Iraq or even further down at the Straits of Hormoz, where it narrowed there. Anyone could hold him to ransom there, he thought. The Israelis, I think, the year before with a bazooka on an island had held up an Arab ship, and he said an enemy with bazookas on one of the islands in the middle of the Gulf could hold him to ransom, and so he must have control there. When you give up, and hand over to the Trucial states, and create the United Arab Emirates, when you do that, I must be certain that I can control my own defenses down in that Gulf. There were two islands in the middle there -- called Abu Musa and the Tumbs. Abu Musa was an island off of Sheikdom of Sharjah -- almost in the middle of of the Gulf -- and the Tumbs -- the Greater Tumbs and the Lesser Tumbs further down -- also almost in the middle of the Gulf. They belonged to the Sheykh of Ra's al-Khaymah. The Lesser Tumbs, it was practically empty -- I think nothing at all. On the larger Tumbs there was a lighthouse and a few Indians in a sweltering climate -- a lot of snakes -- and that was all it was. And the British were responsible for their defense on the Sheykh's behalf through a defense treaty. The time was coming when we would be announcing our withdrawal. And the Shah wanted to make sure that he took over control. All the maps which had been drawn in the past by officers from the

Indian Army and the Admiralty -- they were all British maps, and they showed that these islands belonged to Sharjah and Ra's al-Khaymah. The Shah disputed that and said they really belonged to Persia. He had no proof. So the problem was what we were going to do about these islands when we withdrew, because the Shah would have gone to war -- entered with his troops -- and a lot of people would have been killed, and we'd have been responsible, as usual, and that sort of thing. We had endless negotiations with the Shah. He used to make us go all the way out to his palace on the Caspian that he would cut off this contract and that. Finally, the day before -- I can't remember exactly -- we were due to leave the Gulf and the Treaties of Defense were going to be converted into Treaties of Friendship. I went to see the Shah, and rather casually, talking about other things, told him that this would happen in the next twenty-four hours. He didn't know. I gave him twenty-four hours before we were going to move out, although I think we may have blurred the issue and said it would be later, but that was enough. And the next day the young admiral, Shafiq, who was later assassinated, was sent down with some of the hovercraft (which we'd sold him, incidentally) and took Abu Musa and the two Tumbs. I think one Indian was killed or something like that. Everyone was given an award. We pretended to look surprised that the Shah had done this. But that was how we solved it. The Sheykh of Ra's al-Khaymah was upset, and we said, "I'm terribly sorry that this could have happened." It wasn't very honest, but it was the only way we

could solve the problem.

Then, not long after, Iraq, incensed by all that had gone on, summoned Iran to the Security Council, and the Shah suspected that we were behind the move. Whenever anything went wrong, he through the British were responsible. So it seemed that Anglo-Persian relations were going to go bad again. Then I had a bright idea -- I think it was me -- if one only could remember these accurately -- We asked the Queen if she would invite the Shah and the Shahbanu to spend Ascot Weekend with them and all the Royal Family at Windsor Castle, and they accepted. Now this was something which neither the Kremlin, nor the Elysee, nor the White House could conceivably have done. Only the Queen could do this. The Shah was in seventh heaven. He rode down the Ascot race course in an open carriage with all the crowds cheering, with the Queen at his side. He had a most marvelous time -- purring with pleasure -- forgot about his suspicion of us. I wrote and thanked the Queen, because it was such a sacrifice for her. Ascot Weekend is an occasion when the Queen has all her family with her at Windsor and they play charades and family games and all that and go riding. She had to sacrifice a lot of that. The Shah was not the most amusing of men, you know, but she did it for the national cause, and it made all the difference. And the evening before, the Queen gave a large dinner at Windsor Castle. The special silver and gold plate etc. Every member of the Royal Family except Snowdon was there. And after dinner, the Queen took us around the Royal apartments,

Ramsbotham: No, but I talked to the Queen on a number of occasions about the Shah. She came to Tehran once when I was there, and she had met him several times before then at Royal funerals, and especially during the state visit to London in 1973. He had no small talk. The Queen doesn't want to talk about industrial or political matters all the time. I think she found him interesting but also boring. He was not a man for a woman to talk with for a long time. She could learn in half an hour all she wished to know or needed to know about population rises and what Persia was doing about this and the other, but there was little beyond that, as far as I know.
[end of side two, tape one]

Q: Tape two. Still the 21st of January, 1986, with Sir Peter Ramsbotham. This is the continuation of his time in Iran.

Now, what I'd like to ask is, when you were called back to England only after three years, what did you do then? Did you go and see the Shah and --

Ramsbotham: I wasn't called back to England. I was offered the post of British Ambassador to the United States, which is why I left Persia. The Shah wasn't very pleased at my going after a relatively short time. But he was rather flattered that the British Ambassador to his country was going as Ambassador to the United States. He always thought in terms of comparisons with Iran. So that was a way of conveying to him that the British had

a high regard for Iran, because they were appointing Ramsbotham to America. So he didn't mind too much for that reason. There were several occasions when I said good-by. I think probably it was on one of those last occasions when we did talk about his future -- when I made the remark that he shouldn't take all the credit for everything and should allow his people to do so. He was very nice, and received me especially warmly and gave me -- I think one of the first of its kind -- a new type of colored photograph -- it looks like a portrait -- which he and the Shahbanu had both inscribed for me.

Q: Another thing -- although you say that it's in Roger Louis' book and everything, but of course, books are different from this work of oral history, and I believe that there was a documentary a little while ago on the BBC called "End of Empire."

Ramsbotham: That's right. Yes, I was on that.

Q: And you were on that and, frankly, very good too, I was told by friends who'd seen it. Unfortunately, I haven't seen it. And you did talk about the demise of Mossadeq and the coming back of the Shah. I wonder whether you could --

Ramsbotham: The coming back of the Shah I knew little about, because it happened after my time, and I'd already gone off, was going off to Washington and my new post. I had little to do with

the plans of undermining Mossadeq and bringing the Shah back. My time started before Mossadeq, when we hoped that Razmara, who was Prime Minister, would be able to put the Supplementary Oil Agreement through the Majles, but he failed and he was assassinated. I started about then, and I ended my time as head of the oil desk in the Foreign Office just when the Consortium was being fashioned and the sanctions against the sale of nationalized Iranian oil were completed -- just about that time. So I knew little about the Rashidiyan Brothers and anything like that.

Q: Well, what did you talk about on the film?

Ramsbotham: On the film we talked about Mossadeq, and the negotiations that failed with Mossadeq, and why they failed, and could we have done better, and did the Americans put pressure on us, and all those sorts of things.

Q: Did they?

Ramsbotham: Not directly. Not while I was out in Iran. On the whole, they were reasonable. I think they wished us to make further concessions at that time. As it turned out, they were wrong. But nor do I think that we were right at that time. It so happened things worked that way. And when the Eisenhower regime came in, they supported us more fully on that question

than Truman and Acheson. I think the Americans and we made a lot of mistakes. It was difficult for us not to go on backing the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company throughout -- not only because the British government shared in it, but it also represented a major British interest. So we were to a certain extent tied by what the AIOC did, and this was a handicap to us. I think we made mistakes in insisting too much on the legal niceties of the recognition of expropriation and the degree of compensation and those things. I think we could have managed it more easily. I don't think it would have done us any good, because I think Mossadeq had become the prisoner of his own extremism by then. He went around in fear of his life most of the time because he created this emotional nationalism, which was endemic in the Persian people, born of their humiliations and frustrations and fantasies. And he evolved all that. Both on the extreme right -- the National Front, it was called -- and with the Tudeh Party, the Communists. He unbuckled them, so to speak, and he became a prisoner of their extremism. He had no room to maneuver at the time we were negotiating with him on the Stokes Mission in August, 1951. Even if we conceded everything he was demanding, he still couldn't have agreed, I don't think. And there was an Ayatollah Kashani at the time, who was similar to Khomeini today, who could have taken over very easily.

Q: And was he, as they said, and at the time one heard that because the British controlled the clergy, was Kashani in any

relation with you?

Ramsbotham: We didn't control the church. I wish we had done -- We didn't control much by then. These were all the myths of earlier influences -- British influences -- dating probably from before the first World War. Certainly, when we sacked Reza Shah and from there onwards, from the days of Reader Bullard, we didn't have much control or influence. I imagine other countries had just as much influence. The Israeli Intelligence Service was much better informed than ours on what was going on in Iran.

Q: So Kashani wasn't connected at all?

Ramsbotham: Not at all. He was a weirdy to us. We had no idea what he was up to, and we had no connection with him.

Q: What about Khomeini? Everybody believes Khomeini is probably, too.

Ramsbotham: I didn't have any contact with Khomeini. Unlike, perhaps, the American Ambassador, the British Ambassador controls the local British Secret Service. I wouldn't have had it otherwise. You can't have another arm of power of your government operation unknown to you. So the British Ambassador is in charge of the local Secret Service. When I say in charge of, they had their own instructions from London, but no major

move of a political kind which would impinge on what he's responsible for, which is policy matters, could take place without his approval. And the whole time when I was there I hardly heard of Khomeini. He was in Iraq. He counted for little then. In religious circles, people paid attention to him, but in terms of power, such as I was naturally concerned with -- power factors in Iran -- he was unimportant at that time. And certainly we had no contacts with him. But whether or not later on things changed, I don't know. I doubt it. If you asked Tony Parsons, he might have a view.

Q: Yes, he did. He also denied that they had anything to do with Khomeini.

Ramsbotham: We didn't have that sort of power then. People who think like that attribute far greater deviousness, power, intelligence, and skill to the British Intelligence Service than they had. I don't think any power, no matter how skillful nowadays could do that sort of thing.

Q: So wouldn't you say that you also had under your supervision or under your jurisdiction also the Intelligence Service, British Intelligence Service operating in Iran, but the Americans didn't. That means that they were totally independent. The C.I.A. were totally --

Ramsbotham: I think that used to be the case. I think it has been greatly improved. I can't swear to that, but I think that the C.I.A. used to be much more independent -- I think it depends on how powerful the head of the C.I.A. is. I suspect that in Dulles' day it was more independent and powerful. I think it has been shifting and changing during my day. The C.I.A. headquarters in London, the monies they had far surpassed anything that MI6 could ever have hoped to have had. Secondly, MI6, at the top, came under the Foreign Office anyhow. There was somebody alongside them in the Foreign Office. I don't think that was true of the State Department and the C.I.A. They had liaison officers, but not the same control.

Q: And what was the role of the British Intelligence Service in Iran?

Ramsbotham: Well, it was primarily evaluative, and liaison with SAVAK.

Q: About what, though?

Ramsbotham: About all the threats in the Middle East -- the possibility of Communist uprisings and all that sort of thing.

Q: I see. It was in relation to sort of more general relations with Russia.

Ramsbotham: Yes. Exchanges of information, in regard to Russia and matters of general interest. Obviously, SAVAK wasn't going to tell us too much about things which were not in the Shah's interest for us to know. We had to find that out for ourselves if we wanted to know. So we could operate as far as we could independently of SAVAK, but a lot of the valuable information came from SAVAK, and they got a lot which was valuable from us. For instance, I would myself use MI6 reports to tell the Shah something about what was going on in Iraq which was dangerous to Iran.

Q: I see. Because at the time you were sort of backing Iran against Iraq?

Ramsbotham: Not necessarily. Maybe we would have told the Iraqis something that was useful for them to know about Iran. I don't know. It depends. It depends what is valuable to the country -- what is valuable to know -- Khrushchev made the suggestion to Eisenhower that they should exchange spies -- a most sensible suggestion!

Q: I mean, what would be the purpose of it?

Ramsbotham: Then they wouldn't be so frightened of each other! There was too much imagination in Persia that the British were

behind a Mossadeq or a Khomeini, and all that. Fears are born of imagination. And fears like that are the worst counselors. Fear is the worst counselor, whether for individuals or for nations. And wars are more often started because of misjudged merits born of fear than any other causes. So one major objective for an ambassador who is seeking a peaceful relationship for his own country's sake, is to allay fears as far as possible. If he does that successfully, he is a good ambassador. One of the ways to allay fears is to remove the cause of the fear and give an assurance which can be believed that the suspected facts are not true.

Q: In 1953, it was alleged, and one doesn't know what the truth is behind it, that the C.I.A. connived to bring the Shah back three days after he had left the country and overthrow Mossadeq and so on, and spend a lot of money. And what was the role of the British in that particular coup, if there was such a plot?

Ramsbotham: I've forgotten now. Monty Woodhouse writes all about it in his book, I think, thought I haven't read it thoroughly. I rather think that we were as much responsible -- through the Rashidiyan Brothers I'm told -- for having set the thing up -- the undermining of Mossadeq. One time we were wanting -- before Zahedi came forward -- we wanted another Golab, Golan -- what was his name now, Q U or something or other -- we wanted him to succeed, to take over Mossadeq. Then he failed.

And I think a lot of the work involved in setting it up and arranging it was done by MI6's contacts. I don't think the C.I.A. had such good ones. And then Archie Roosevelt (Kermit Roosevelt) -- a brilliant man in his own way -- came and supplemented all that, and I think it became a joint operation towards the end. The Americans probably put in the clout, with their money and things like that, and maybe the British contributed the subtler ingredients.

Q: On the intelligence side, you mean?

Ramsbotham: I think they probably operated together. But it is not well documented. The Shah came back, but he changed, of course. The first of the attempted assassinations sobered him up enormously. He used to be a playboy and go to nightclubs. I remember Sir John Russell, who was a counselor then in our Embassy -- I think it was the early 1960's -- telling me he used to go to nightclubs with the Shah a lot. I think the Shah sobered up. On one occasion, one of his praetorian guards tried to shoot him, and the bullet went through his cheek. Thereafter, he thought he was preserved by some divinity. Archbishop Makarios thought the same, when he too had a similar miraculous escape when I was in Cyprus as British High Commissioner. It was bad for both of them. They thought that they were divinely protected. Curiously, the Shah, although he went rather perfunctorily, used to attend Muslim prayer meetings and go and

visit the mosques. But I don't think he was a Mohammedan at heart. He had lurked back to the days of Cyrus the Great and Zoroastrianism. Tony Parsons told me that, since my day, the Shah had tried to change the calendar back to a Zoroastrian one. And when I was there, in 1972, I remember, he went to Paragarde to commune with the bones of his so-called ancestors. They weren't his ancestors at all. It was a very Wagnerian attitude -- rather unhealthy. And Asadollah Alam told me that the Shah, like Socrates, had this "daimon" on his shoulder, you know, who would caution him. I think he did believe he had his "daimon" of fate. It was, as I say, a Wagnerian type of attitude -- mixed with Zoroastrianism, which was not at all healthy. But it did get him through, and he felt that he was being preserved by fate for these great works in the world. And that was a very different Shah, from the one we met in Mossadeq's day in 1951, when he was a timid, cautious, rather frightened person. And, of course, anybody who had been brought up like that by Reza Shah would have been. You may have seen those photographs of this young, rather chinless man, in a big cap, standing beside this enormous fellow in an Army coat -- Reza Shah -- on some railway going through from the Caspian -- they used to go around together. He must have been terrified of his father who was exacting so much from him -- very difficult for an adolescent. And that background, mixed with his European schooling at La Rosay in Switzerland must have been an awkward environment in which to grow up. He was a lonely person. He lived and worked

for this country, with a ruthlessness and also a streak of cruelty, which was a sign of weakness in him. But I think that his decline must have started when the French doctors came out to treat what I believe was skin cancer. I think they also treated his mother who was very ill. From then onwards, I suspect he gradually lost confidence in himself, as the cancer grew worse. It was only a skin cancer. I don't think it was a serious one, but I think it troubled him a lot.

Q: You said something about it is about time that somebody really rehabilitated the Shah. Apart from the fact that, of course, events have so far rehabilitated his reign, because what has happened since is just so horrendous, do you mean that personally somebody ought to rehabilitate him?

Ramsbotham: If you compare this Shah with some of the 19th century shahs, here was a man who was really trying to perform a mission for his country. I'm sure he lined his own nest and everywhere satisfied his own interests -- the Pahlavi Foundation and all that -- Shapur Reporter getting his cut off all the time and all those things. Of course he did, but he also worked twelve hours a day. Not many people did that. He denied himself a lot of relaxation. And although you may not believe half what you read in Mission for My Country, he did achieve a lot -- you could go out and see the Education Corp, the Health Corp, etc. The standard of living in the villages was greatly improved, and

so too the literacy rate. The agricultural cooperatives -- and he was really keen on these agricultural cooperatives, which Nancy Lambton promoted. He tried these things. He was interested. He would have experts in to bring these things to his country. He wanted better roads. At that time, apart from the students abroad, most Persians were rather pleased. They liked criticizing him privately, but they were pleased with what he'd done. Not many people could have achieved what he did. You look at the absolute rulers today and see how many achieve what he achieved for his country. Right, SAVAK and all that is judged as lamentable today. But what annoys me -- it was true too of his End of Empire TV program -- is that it is so unhistorical, importing judgments from 1985 from Britain on what was going on in another country set in a different time scale, and which can't be compared with Britain. They don't have an established civil service going back three hundred years. They do have a civil service, but it is not yet respected and limited with delegated power. They don't have a police force such as we've had for a hundred years and more, with their staunch traditions. Why not? Because they don't have a -- Persia's history is so turbulent -- In Britain, we don't have a country which is beset with tribes -- Bakhtiyari, Turks, Kurds, and with threats from everybody. For two thousand years, Persia has been threatened and invaded. When I was there, the Iraqis were training saboteurs just over the border and in places like that. What do you do to hold such a country together? You have to be ruthless. The only thing you

could compare with SAVAK would be the star chamber in Elizabethan times in Britain where hostile elements were treated with similar harshness. That was about the level you should compare it with historically. Instead of which, we start judging it as thought time is at the same level. I get annoyed by this, because people do not understand that countries are separated as much by time as by space. They understand space. That's easy. They don't understand that peoples in different historical position are separated by time. You don't make a judgment on space. Why should we make a judgment on time? You cannot judge whether another country should be developing at the same time speed as your own. It may be faster -- it may be slower. And we're doing it all the time. And I don't read historians or journalists who write like that. It's unhistorical and meaningless. You ask me about rehabilitating the reputation of the Shah. He's been judged on the wrong time scale -- not only on the wrong time scale, but not taking into account the conditions in which he had to operate and any Persian ruler would have had to operate. And if you'd sent Atlee or someone else to be Shah at that time, he'd have had the same problems and would have had to resort to the same measures or get out, in my judgment.

Q: Now, let us go back to your time in Iran, and after you left, you went to Washington. Was it at the time when Zahedi was Persian Ambassador in Washington?

Ramsbotham: Yes.

Q: Did you keep in touch with each other?

Ramsbotham: Oh, very much so. I do now, too. He rang me the other day. He was a poor Foreign Minister, but a good ambassador for his country in Washington, which is a naive place. They're children really when it comes to a hooknose of a Persian ambassador with bags of caviar and all his money. They'd all flock to his parties. They were naive in that sense. They loved that. He was good at that sort of thing. As to how good he was on the political side, I'm not sure it mattered very much, because he certainly made his mark there. As Foreign Minister, he was too emotional. He said to me once that he would act as Mossadeq had done. I can't remember what the issue was, but it was a ludicrous thing to threaten the British Ambassador like that. I couldn't get on with him when he was Foreign Minister, and the Shah should never have appointed him Foreign Minister. But he was good when he went to Washington -- good in that sense -- and he did that job very well for the Shah. And he now lives in Geneva. He came over the other day to have lunch with Julian Amery. Julian invited me, but I couldn't go.

Q: And you became interested in the Iranian special brand of mysticism called Sufism. So did you ever get in touch with the

Sufi circles while you were in Iran?

Ramsbotham: Well, only with the Ne^{c}matollahi Order, which was based in Mahan, that lovely place tourists very seldom go to. It's an oasis. Just out beyond Kerman on the way to Bam and quite beautiful. And the real spiritual feeling prevails. It was in the 12th century, I think, that the Ne^{c}matollahi Order was founded. The 12th century was unique. I think the Persian Sufis have been trying to regurgitate the 12th century ever since. It was the most beautiful time in Persia -- the greatest mystics, the best writers, mostly up in that area, which is now on the Afghan border. And at Gorgan and in Shapur -- all those areas there. And that's the time I would liked to have lived in Persia. I think it must have shone like a beacon in a darkened world at that time. And those people were so great that it takes centuries for those lights to die out, you know. And although I think that it has gone down, adulterated and darkened, I think it is continued. I don't know much about the other orders, but I think the Ne^{c}matollahi Order has been very pure and remained very pure since and serious. And Dr. Nurbakhsh, who was a psychology tutor at the University in Tehran, had been trained in the Sufi Order as a young man and then had been adopted and had been a disciple and had been through the whole thing very seriously. So he'd really been through the works, which was quite a thing, because you have to be subjected wholly to your teacher and give up everything to him. And he continued the work. But he then

intellectualized it much more, which you may or may not agree with. I rather regret that. I think that's a pity. And not only intellectualized, but externalized it by going abroad in recent years and founding several Khaniqahs, starting in Los Angeles and New York, Washington, Seattle, all over the place now -- very popular in America, very alive, but strict and correct -- no fantasies there. And of course, in London in Nottinghill Gate, Chepston Road -- where it must have been well endowed by some Persians, because they have bought the house next door. I don't know where the money comes from. And I've helped them a bit with the Home Office who had to be cleared. And I vouched for them that they are right and correct and so on. I've helped his wife come over here once on a visa. I like him and I go and see him. He's a witty man. I don't think he's handing on very much, which he should be doing, to someone to come after him. And I don't think he himself necessarily has reached the very great heights. I don't think that was his role. I think his role was probably the one he's performing, which is not a high form of mysticism in itself, but a considerable knowledge -- real knowledge of all the ingredients of what has made up Sufism in its various forms. It's highly complicated -- too complicated for me. I mean, I don't break down the spiritual experience quite in the literary way in which it's broken down by them. But that is how it was, and he hasn't invented these things. He's put it together. He's an encyclopaedist in a way. And no doubt, he's brought a great deal of satisfaction to a lot of people in

the West and -- I've seen some of young disciples in London. They are sensible and serious and joyful and happy, and what more could you give anybody as a disciple?

Q: What about other personalities in Iran that have sort of impressed you?

Ramsbotham: Everybody knew Hoveyda. I liked him. You couldn't be a more sophisticated man of the world than Hoveyda. His was essentially a French influence rather than an English one. His life had been touched by the French at the most impressionable age and he retained that all his life. He had a sort of a French wit rather than a sense of humor and so on. A very clever man. He had an impossible position, but he held it longer than anybody else succeeded in doing. His successors tried -- Amuzegar and people like that. But they simply hadn't got the character that he had -- all the nimbleness to survive the Shah. It was an impossible position to be Prime Minister to the Shah.

Q: How did he do it then?

Ramsbotham: I think by sheer nimbleness and wit and quickness and cleverness and knowing when to pass the blame on to others. It was in his character.

Q: He never talked politics, did he?

Ramsbotham: Oh, yes.

Q: What did he say about the situation whenever you said, "You are going too far with the petrol -- quadrupling the price? What did he say?

Ramsbotham: I don't think I talked to him on that subject because I wholly engaged with the Shah on that, and I don't think that that would have helped very much at the time. We would not have talked about problems in the Gulf -- the Abu Musa and those islands, and things like that, which might have jeopardized relations with Britain if we hadn't come to some sort of agreement -- because the Shah was so impetuous. In anything like that, he had little interest, and I dealt entirely with the Shah on that. No, on that scale, I wouldn't have done -- we would talk about British relations and education. He was keen on starting the French University at Hamadan, and I wanted to do something else -- that sort of thing. But he would never get into deep politics, because deep politics meant the Shah all the time, and he would never talk to me about the Shah.

Q: He wouldn't?

Ramsbotham: Asadollah Alam was different. There I could talk about almost everything. Alam was the one confidant -- the one

person with whom I could talk about anything that I could talk to the Shah about. But it really wasn't worth one's while, frankly, to talk to others than Alam. I used to see Amuzegar about this or that financial matter, I'd see Hoveyda, if ICI or Vickers would like the privilege of this or that or could we help or vice versa, I would see him or the Economic Minister.

Q: Ansari?

Ramsbotham: Ansari, a little man. It went to his head. He became a little despot. So -- and I would talk with Amuzegar on their departmental businesses, you see.
[end of side one, tape two]

Q: And what about the elder statesmen who in the old days had been obviously very much in the forefront and then gradually were pushed out?

Ramsbotham: I didn't know many of those. Entezam was the one I knew, but not very well. He had been the Persian representative at the United Nations. He was a Sufi, I think, in his own right. I think he had a house in the Bazaar itself, I seem to remember. But I didn't know him well. He was there during the Mossadeq time, too, and was an influence for good. He was always an influence for toleration and understanding. He was a big man who got outside the irritations, and the frustrations of the Persian

skin, which is a difficult thing to do. I don't think I would have done it. I think I would have become a Persian nationalist, feeling strongly all those frustrations. He had the bigness to detach himself. Probably, as a trained Sufi, he was able to. I think he was a big man, and somebody ought to remember him.

Q: Are you talking about Abdollah, who became the head of NIOC or Nasrollah?

Ramsbotham: Nasrollah. He was a Sufi.

Q: They were both.

Ramsbotham: Oh, they were both Sufis.

Q: Oh yes, yes.

Ramsbotham: Well, the one I liked was the one who was at the U.N. -- I think he was head of the General Assembly of the United Nations for a short time.

Q: And you never met Abdollah, who became head of the National Iranian Oil Company?

Ramsbotham: I probably did. I met everybody. A very good family they were. I liked them a lot. Some of the older ones I

didn't know so well. I used to go out and see -- Who was there at the time of Mossadeq? He'd been a pretender -- a very strong man. He was in exile at that time. He lived out on the mountainside, living on yogurts of various kinds.

Q: And pretended to what?

Ramsbotham: Oh, in the 1930's, I think, and 1940's, he'd been a very strong opponent of Reza Shah and tried to form opposition governments. What was his name? Only one --

Q: A tribesman? Was he the head of a tribe?

Ramsbotham: No. I can't remember his name. Anyhow, I'd met him. I rather admired him in his old age, I remember. But the older ones -- there certainly weren't many who could live under the Shah by that time. And the old ʿAla; I liked him, but I didn't know him. Denis Wright would know all these people so much better, because he went back ten years more. They were all retired by then. But what was his name -- a very old man with white hair.

Q: Do you mean Seyyed Ziya?

Ramsbotham: I do, yes. He was living on a mountainside when I went to negotiate with Mossadeq in 1951. Seyyed Ziya. Marvelous

man -- a really big man -- rather like the one who was strong in Israel and went back to the desert. They were good friends, he and Seyyed Ziya.

Q: Ben Gurion. You mean Ben Gurion?

Ramsbotham: Yes, Ben Gurion. They were friends. They were living in the desert together. It was a mountainside, and he was cultivating his own yogurts and things. And he had adoring women looking after him! They adored him, because they loved power. Women like power. Do you know that? I discovered this late in life. They actually like power. And he had them and some very intelligent followers. And I thought at one time he would help us, you know, and we might almost bring him back again to power in Persia -- and replace Mossadeq with him. But it was not a real possibility. Anyway, you asked who were the outstanding men I remember from the past.

Q: But you thought he was too old or why did you --

Ramsbotham: Too old. But he had all that charisma -- immense charisma -- one intelligent man, you know, like the present Prime Minister of Israel. He may be wrong n his policies, but you can't avoid the strength or the power of his face. And Seyyed Ziya was like that. Some men have it, and others don't. Some have it to a degree, and it's repulsive, you know, because it's

all power, and that's too much. But he was loving and sweet and gallant with the ladies -- had all these attributes. He was an all-around man, I thought. Who were the others? I don't remember.

Q: You mentioned Afshar as being a tricky fellow.

Ramsbotham: Oh Afshar, yes, a poisonous man.

Q: Why? In what way?

Ramsbotham: Well, because he was never straight. I mean, he would say one thing to your face, and I knew perfectly well (because I tested this), then report other things to the Shah. And he fabricated things. He was smiling to the British and all that, but he was anti-British underneath. I don't hold it against him for that, but I mean, he just wasn't straight. I don't think he had a friend. There were some that were frightened of him because he could do them harm. I don't think anybody, if you really asked them -- except probably his own family -- liked him. That is always a sign there is something wrong. It can't be a coincidence that nobody did.

Q: That's right. So you mean his period as Special Ambassador here wasn't a great success?

Ramsbotham: No. Just after I left, he succeeded Asadollah Alam as the eminence grise in the court. I think the Shah split the job with somebody else, mercifully; otherwise he would have been an awfully bad influence. The Shah's judgment about people was not good. Fancy appointing little Afshar, who was a jumped-up puppet, really. Fancy appointing him to the great position of Minister of State, you know, of Asadollah Alam's position -- the Grand Vizier, that's what he was, Grand Vizier to the Sultan -- exactly that position. A man with no substance at all -- a two-dimensional figure. The Shah's judgment of people was bad, and that's a great pity. Things would have been different if his judgment of people had been good, if he'd been able to pick good lieutenants -- like Truman did. Truman wasn't a brilliant man, but he had the genius to pick people like Dean Acheson and George Marshall; and that's all he had to do, and to support them loyally. He was a great president of the United States, and that was why. If the Shah had been able to do even a little bit of that, he'd have been one of the great rulers in the Middle East. He simply had no capacity to pick people. If he'd been able to pick the Entezams in this world and trust them to support him, and still work as hard as he did with a lot of his ideas, things would have been excellent. But he would pick someone like Afshar. That's the tragedy, really, of the Shah; far more than all the other things we've talked about, such as greed or importing the inflation which destroyed the confidence of the middle class in the bazaar -- a big factor -- or upsetting the