

Oney: Yes. At the time it was formed, there was a substantial number of the military that had been detailed. For one reason, they were about the only ones that had had any intelligence experience. But at the same time, Bakhtiar was recruiting young, well educated civilians. Alikhani was one of them. I'd have to stop and think of some of the other names. Gholam reza Tajbakhsh was one. Can't name everybody right now. My memory's going back many years. For the military it was based on their experience; civilians it was based on their education. Both Alikhani and Tajbakhsh, of course, had French Doctorates. Even some of the military, Colonial Pashai, who was I think technically an artillery officer, had a law degree from Paris. So in the analytical section--this was Department 7, Foreign Intelligence.

Q: So you only worked with Department 7.

Oney: Yes, that was most of the work was with Department 7.

Q: Similar units were working with other departments? Similar educational units sent from US?

Oney: There was one of our group worked with the counter-intelligence people. One worked with the Department 2, which was foreign intelligence collection. I worked with the analytical people. The Chief of our group and his deputy usually worked with the higher ranking Savak officers on such things as logistics and financial planning, that sort of thing. On that

level there wasn't all that much to do, I think, because they simply carried into Savak most of the bureaucratic practices that they were familiar with from other agencies

Q: Do you recollect some of the people you trained?

Oney: What's that?

Q: Do you recollect some of those who you trained in that year?

Oney: I'd have to stop and think about it, and I don't know how many I would remember. Some of them--maybe half of that first group I really never got to know because they were from the Provinces. They'd come in for the course and go back and perhaps we'd never see them again or maybe only see them once or twice. Of course, I kept no written records on that.

Q: Now, let me ask you this. The analytical bureau, it analyzed the information that came in from the 3rd and 2nd bureaus?

Oney: No.

Q: Where would it get its raw information?

Oney: Mostly the 2nd bureau, because this was foreign intelligence. Now, Department 3 was Internal Security. If you like, Internal Intelligence. Something like our FBI. They did

their own recording and whatever analysis was done.

Q: Was CIA also involved in training that department?

Oney: Was who?

Q: Was CIA also involved in training that department?

Oney: Third Department?

Q: Third Department.

Oney: Only in so far as they might have sent--I think I said earlier in one of our earlier conversations--we didn't have a great deal of contact with the 3rd Department because, as internal and domestic intelligence, with the nucleus of those people coming from the Secret Police, they were not inclined to share information with us on purely domestic problems.

Q: After the revolution, for instance--if I can pose the question this way--there was a lot of charges made that foreign intelligence, particularly CIA, was involved in training the internal security and even tortures and things like that, as farfetched as that allegation is. But even as far as setting up methods and procedures and initiating internal security apparatus, was that also a contribution by CIA in that regard?

Oney: Only in so far perhaps as specialized things. For example, polygraph trainers, training interrogators. One of the most difficult things to do with police and intelligence officers, interrogators outside of Europe and the Americas, one of the hardest things is to persuade them that you cannot beat useful information out of people. Do you understand what I'm saying? Good interrogation, you don't do it by pulling out fingernails. You don't do it by beating people. You know, you beat anybody long enough, he would confess to anything that you're looking for, and in intelligence interrogation you're not looking for confessions that you can try somebody for in court. You're looking for information that will lead you through a network and ultimately to whoever is running the operation. You don't get useful information by torturing people. You do get it by sophisticated and intelligent interrogation. This sometimes takes a long time. Good interrogation can take a long time. A lot of Third World types get impatient with this and they start beating on the soles of somebody's feet to make them talk. That's not the way you do it. You don't get anything useful that way. The polygraph, again, you can train people to operate polygraph. We can do it or they can come over here to a private school and learn how to do it, but that's something else that takes skill and training to operate. Probably the biggest asset that a polygraph has is strictly psychological. You know, you hook somebody up to a machine and say, "If you lie to me, the machine will tell you." That has great psychological effect and tends to make people honest. It isn't quite as simple as that.

A polygraph is much more complicated and more difficult to interpret than simply that, you know, it's psychological. So that would have been the sort of thing that Department 3 interrogators might have had training in. Intelligent interrogation, if you like. Again, since most of the interrogation that I'm aware of was directed at such things as border crossers from the Soviet Union who might have an intelligence mission in Iran, this would have required on the part of the interrogator a considerable knowledge of Soviet modus operandi, of Soviet organizations, especially of the KGB border guard. An interrogator establishes supremacy over the guy that's being interrogated by demonstrating that he knows so much that he can catch the guy in a lie. Sometimes this is true; sometimes it's just a pose. But the more the interrogator knows about the background that the guy being interrogated has, the better he is at catching the guy in a lie or inconsistencies and so on that will lead ultimately to the guy professing the truth. Again, as I say, you don't get at this sort of thing in a half hour of pulling somebody's fingernails out. You get at it by sitting down with the guy and talking to him, going over his story time after time, picking out inconsistencies, picking out lies, making him explain them. Pointing out that, "Well, you said this, but I know this is really the case. It's a psychological mind play, if you like, but that's the only way to do it. So that's the only place that -- And certainly some of the people that had this kind of training probably came from Department 3. Whether or not it had any effect on them when they actually went to work, I

don't know. Americans did not sit in on interrogations of domestic dissidents to see how it was going. That was just never done.

Q: At that time when you went to Iran on this project, in your opinion, what was the Shah more interested in, internal security or counter intelligence against Soviets, which one would assume was America's main interest at that time?

Oney: I suspect--I hadn't thought of it in those terms--but I suspect that, for obvious reasons, probably his priorities would have been internal security to begin with and counter intelligence, counter Soviet operations probably next in priority, foreign intelligence. This is a guess based on my assessment of what the Shah's interests probably were.

Q: How did you find Bakhtiar and his governance of Savak, of the intelligence establishment in those years?

Oney: I had a few conversations with him, but not nearly as many as I did with General Pakravan. The chief of our group was the main contact with General Bakhtiar, but my impression was he was enthusiastic. He was energetic. Had a good idea of what was needed and at that point had the support of the Shah, and therefore, the ability to do a lot of the things that he wanted to do.

Q: Was there at that time any areas of disagreement between what the Iranian side wanted and what CIA wanted to do?

Oney: There may have been, but I'm not aware of any. At least nothing that affected what I was doing. I would have been surprised if there weren't some, simply because of two completely different groups of people trying to work out on a common problem.

Q: Do you have recollections of any other leaders of Savak in '57, '58? People who later grew to prominence in the organization, but you met them at that time?

Oney: Of course, Bakhtiar had two deputies and one was General Pakravan. The other one was General Hasan Alavi-kia, who is in Paris now.

Q: You met both of them at that time?

Oney: Oh, yes. Then I saw Alavi-kia off and on, even during my second tour, also.

Q: What was your impressions of them at that time?

Oney: I liked them both. I got along very well with both of them. Pakravan was a very well educated, cultured gentleman who favored the soft approach. He favored the soft approach in

almost all cases. In '63, the time of the riots, he counseled the Shah against taking any forceful action against the mobs. I think he argued that by sending the troops out and dispersing the mobs by force would only increase the level of --

Q: Of antagonism.

Oney: Of antagonism, the intensity of the conflict. For the first couple of days the Shah seemed to follow that advice. Unfortunately, that was interpreted, I think, as weakness on the part of the mobs and mob leaders, and things got worse and worse. It was at that point that the Shah appointed Nasiri, who was then chief of police, to settle things. Of course, he went out with the troops and the clubs and ended it in short order.

Q: What about Alavi-kia?

Oney: Alavi-kia, I liked him. We got along well. I know there were various stories about him. You know, you go to a cocktail party, you could come home loaded with so many stories about so many people that you could either believe everything, or nothing, or in between. But I think he did a good job whenever he had the chance. Bureaucratically I think he knew the rules, even if he did occasionally bend them. My big problem is that I have found very few people that I didn't like, and unless I know definitely something adverse or something that I didn't like, it's kind of hard to dream up -- For what little I saw Bakhtiar, for



example, I found him pleasant. I found him interested. I know he later had a reputation for corruption, but then if you listen to all the stories, there was nobody that didn't have. I do know that he had two wives, at least that I know. His number one wife he left at home; the other one he brought to parties, which was all right, you know.

Q: But at that time did you sense that Savak was growing a particular dedication to Bakhtiar? That it was his organization?

Oney: Growing in its dedication to Bakhtiar?

Q: Right, above and beyond the regular chief.

Oney: I think there were a few people who worked with him in the early days, perhaps in the military government, who felt a personal rapport, a personal relationship with him. That kind of "old school" sort of thing that probably over rode any institutional loyalty, which again, is not necessarily bad.

Q: Would it have been enough for you, in your opinion, to warrant the Shah's suspicion a few years down the line and cause Bakhtiar's removal?

Oney: Yes, I think so. I think probably. Bakhtiar may have been talking beyond his capabilities, but there were people who lost out because of their support or because of their perceived

support of Bakhtiar. Pashai was one. Pezhman might have been one, except he foreclosed it by hastening to inform Teheran what was going on. Pashai was Savak Station Chief in Beirut when Bakhtiar came through going to Baghdad. He told me he knew nothing of Bakhtiar's plans, but he did not report to Tehran. Pezhman was Chief in Baghdad.

Q: I suppose Alavi-kia.

Oney: Alavi-kia made the transition to Pakravan in pretty good shape, so far as I know. One of the last times I saw him, which I guess must have been in '64, was kind of a going away party when Alavi-kia was transferred, I think, to France as military attache or something of the sort. He only said that the Shah had seen fit to assign him abroad. What was behind it, I don't know. A lot of the bureaucratic interplay we simply ignored because, if you spent too much time trying to figure out "who hit John," you wouldn't have time to do anything else. It was kind of fun sometimes just to see the interplay of personalities and so on, and it helped in understanding what was going on, but it wasn't our job to --

Q: Monitor that.

Oney: Monitor it. You couldn't avoid it.

[end of side 1, tape 2]

Q: Oral History Program, Foundation for Iranian Studies, interview with Mr. Ernest Oney. Interviewer [unclear]. May 29th, 1991, Washington, DC.

Mr. Oney, let us begin this session with the events of 1963-64, the riots that were precipitated by the Status of Forces Law and the White Revolution, and your own impression of those events.

Oney: Well, of course, I was in Teheran at that time and I think the intensity of the demonstrations took almost everyone by surprise. Perhaps not so much surprise at the fact that there were demonstrations, but at the fact that they were as intense, and apparently as well organized as they were. I don't know, even now, any details about how or who organized or who led them, but they obviously were well organized, not just a mob that arouse spontaneously.

Q: There are charges that General Bakhtiar was involved in this.

Oney: I know. I don't know for sure. I heard the same sort of things that you did. You know, there was a lot of publicity to the effect that Egypt was involved and that Egypt had provided funds. General Pakravan told me that--and I saw this later in a newspaper, I believe--that a Lebanese--I've forgotten his name--was arrested coming from Egypt carrying large sums of

money. He was arrested at the airport and he was carrying large sums of money, ostensibly to pay for the rioters. Do you remember, also, that Iran and Egypt were not on very good terms at that point? I was talking to General Pakravan right at that time and I mentioned and he said, "Yes, that was the official line." He said he wasn't completely sure of that himself because the man that was arrested was a well known money smuggler and had been in and out of Iran several times. He said, of course, the fact that he was a money smuggler might have made him a logical choice to bring in funds for the riot. Publicly, however, General Pakravan followed the official line. I don't know that it was ever resolved one way or the other. The fact that this well known money smuggler showed up right at the time of the riots is sort of perhaps circumstantial evidence. I think at the same time there was a clandestine broadcast from Egypt over, I think it was called the Free Voice of Iran, [speaks in foreign language].

Q: [says "Free Voice of Iran" in foreign language]

Oney: And the main announcer or announcers on that effected a mullah-like, a cleric-like pronunciation that almost sounded, even in ordinary broadcasts, almost sounded as if they were preaching a sermon.

Q: But before this date was there any evidence of collaboration between the clergy and Egypt?

Oney: Not that I'm aware of, no.

Q: And was there, for instance, the year you were in Teheran working with Savak, was there any awareness that the clergy might be preparing for something this organized or they would be a potential source of trouble of this magnitude or of this nature?

Oney: Nothing that they shared with us. Nothing that Savak shared with us.

Q: You were taken aback by this?

Oney: By the intensity, yes. There had been rumors or reports that there would be some kind of demonstrations. This, after all, was during Moharram, I believe, and that's always an appropriate time for some kind of demonstration. So the fact that something happened was not surprising, but what was, I think, generally surprising was the fact that it was so strong, so large, so well organized. You know, groups split off and went to specific targets. It wasn't just a sort of a free form rioting.

Q: Had the United States known beforehand that this could be this intense, would it have made them not to push for a Status of Forces Law?

Oney: I was never sure whether the Status of Forces, I was never sure how much that was a cause and how much it was an excuse. The Status of Forces was nothing really exceptional in terms of what it did. It followed very closely similar arrangements that we had with European countries. I think maybe the mistake was in the US pushing for the Status of Forces. Why, I don't know, except it was a way of regulating the relationships that were already existing. I suspect that somewhere in the Defense Department, or maybe State Department some of the lawyers were uncomfortable by the fact that there was no formal agreement as to the status of all the people that were there. I don't remember the details, but from my point of view, it was not an exceptional thing to negotiate. It was not an exceptional kind of an agreement to negotiate because, as I said, there were similar agreements with most of the European countries and I think, also, Turkey, perhaps, where there substantial numbers of military personnel present. There was opposition in the majles to it, rather strong opposition in the majles where it was equated with the old capitulations. Although, if you looked at capitulations as compared to what was provided in the Status of Forces, they were quite different. But it's the perception rather than the fact in a case like this.

Q: It was interesting, I suppose, in the crowds that some of the people who were involved in the street agitations of 1953 for the Shah were again involved in 1963-64 against him. For instance, that famous Tayyeb.

Oney: Tayyeb from the fruit --

Q: Fruit market, yes.

Oney: If I wanted to be real cynical I would suggest that different people paid him at different times. As I said, that's cynical, but you could rent a crowd in the bazaar almost any time you wanted it and for any object. Of course, there might have been an additional thing working, too, and that was that '53-54, or '53, the bazaar and the clergy generally were pro-Shah, and by ten years later a lot of the bazaaris and the clergy had turned against the Shah. So that might well be, if not the whole explanation, at least a partial explanation.

Q: The army also acted with great alacrity. Did you recall how and why, because it particularly stands in contrast to the Shah and the government's behavior in the 1970, '79 revolution process.

Oney: If you remember, the first day, first couple days of the rioting in '64, the security forces barely showed up at all. General Pakravan was by then the Chief of Savak and he counseled the Shah to take a soft approach. Pakravan argued that by going out and trying to crush the mobs, would only inspire them to fight harder and be more intractable. This is what Pakravan told me; that he had advised the Shah to take the soft approach and

conciliatory approach. But after a day and a half or so of very destructive rioting, it looked like the soft approach was not going to work, as Pakravan had believed it would. It was about that point that the Shah, if you like, deserted Pakravan's position and asked Nasiri, who was then chief of police, to take over and clean up the crowds, which he did. It was at that point, I think after Nassiri took over that the troops came out and dispersed the crowds.

Q: What was the general reaction to both the nature of the riot and the way in which the government reacted in the Agency? How was the entire episode read and interpreted?

Oney: Well, let me see. How it was analyzed and reported back here, I don't know, because I wasn't here.

Q: You were there.

Oney: I think generally it was seen as a serious challenge to the Shah, but he had had a number of serious challenges in the past. Nothing quite as dramatic as this. But the speed with which it was put down, the rioting was put down, in spite of the initial day and a half when Pakravan was counseling a soft approach, the speed and what looked like the finality, I think was taken as simply another indication of the fact that the Shah was on top of the situation. When he wanted to take strong action, he had the ability to do so and was willing to do so.



The fact that Khomeini was arrested and finally exiled, I believe, merely backed up, supported the feeling that the Shah had everything under control. I don't believe that there was a realization that this was a definitive demonstration of the clergy's power. For one thing, although we had from some of our sources information and sometimes actual texts of sermons that Khomeini had been preaching, against the Status of Forces, for example, against the formation of the Rastakhiz party and a variety of other things. We had these sermons. We could read them and see how Khomeini felt and what he was saying. I don't believe that there was a feeling that this was a long-term problem or a long-term danger. It was one of those things that happened from time to time, demonstrating the clerical opposition to the Shah's reforms, which wasn't a surprise because everybody knew that the clergy, and indeed some of the National Frontists or Nationalists, joined in some of the leaflets that they put out. It just wasn't perceived as a long-term danger. Of course, it was another fourteen, fifteen years before we did.

Q: At that time was there a perception that the clergy, having demonstrated their ability and potential, would, given the climate of Cold War as it was in Iran, that it could now play into the Soviet-American rivalry in Iran and it could become a useful place for anti-Shah, pro-Soviet or the Constelation of Forces to operate through?

Oney: No, I don't think so. Of course, it's easy in hindsight

to see all those things.

Q: Right.

Oney: But if our foresight was as good as our hindsight, we'd have very few problems. No, I think it was simply seen as a clergy demonstrating, as graphically as they could, their opposition to the reform. Up to that time I don't recall that there was any serious assertion on the part of the clergy that the clergy should be the rulers of Iran.

Q: What, for instance, Khomeini, sort of his activities, follow once he left Iran? Did you continue to look at his sermons and what he was up to in Iraq or was the issue just put to rest?

Oney: The issue was put to rest. Let me take a phrase out of something that I wrote here, if I can remember where it was. This was a book review that I did, and I commented on that. "At any rate, the lecture notes of an exiled Iranian clergyman, speaking in a mosque in a provincial Iraqi city in 1969 hardly rated high, either as a news story or a policy problem until very late in the game," which I think explains it. I don't believe, even if I or somebody else had been interested in what Khomeini was doing or saying down there, that it would have been possible to mount an intelligence operation to find out what was going on.

Q: And it was not evident that the competitors, like the

Soviets, were making any intelligence --

Oney: No.

Q: As far as the Cold War was concerned?

Oney: No, it was not. I and one or two others sort of kept that in the back of our minds, but we never turned up anything very solid, any solid information on it. I think, as I said earlier, there's something that you would need to keep in mind here, and that was the attitude, the ingrained approach of Americans, and I suppose most Europeans, toward clerical, toward religion. That was by and large simply left out of any political equation. I think I mentioned earlier that, at least in the United States and to a large extent elsewhere in the European world, the separation is very sharp and is very much insisted on. So I think psychologically we were unprepared to see that the clergy, while they obviously had a voice in the masses, they had enough appeal that they could parlay this into political power. For the same reason, I think that if I or anyone of one or two other people had suggested that we try to recruit agents in the clergy in order to give us an inside view of what was going on, I think it would have been rejected by superiors. I can foresee a couple of arguments that would have been used against it. One, that it's a useless target. With your clergymen talking to each other, talking to the masses, preaching sermons, what does this mean politically? Nothing. This would have been the argument against

it. A second argument would have been more on ethical grounds, that it simply is not tolerable to try to subvert the clergy, subvert or even infiltrate them. This I think was part of our mindset, or our psychological mindset that made it almost impossible for us. After the demonstration of the clergy's power in 1979, it became obvious that this was precisely what we should have been doing, and certainly since 1970 should have been attempting to get some kind of sources in the clergy to have a better feeling of what was going on.

Q: Other Western agencies did not have similar sources? For instance, in 1953 the British had their own agents, sources of information, which when the time of crunch came, they could share with you, make a pool. Didn't this exist, that even if you weren't paying attention, maybe they were and they would have information to pass on if you needed it?

Oney: That's a good question. I don't know the answer for sure. Either they no longer had sources in the clergy or they had the information and didn't pass it on. I'm more inclined to the first view because there was a rather free exchange of information that was considered of importance to both countries.

Q: So that other issues you would share information, say on military, on the [unclear] government, on bureaucratic changes? On these kinds of things cooperation existed between Western agencies?

Oney: Yes. Yes, exchange on a high level, although the British and American ambassadors talked to each other on a regular basis and they exchanged information and impressions.

Q: I'll come to that later, but since we're on this subject, James Bill in his book talks of you, as I'm sure you know, that you did prepare reports and that they were sort of looked down upon at CIA. He said that you were called deprecatingly "Mullah Oney."

Oney: Yes. You should understand, we did have--a variety of different kinds of reports that were produced. I have no idea what they are now or what they're called now, but there was a very high level report prepared for the President and his --

Q: On regular basis?

Oney: Yes, daily. Then there was another daily, generally called "The Bulletin," which was more widely disseminated, and it contained 8 or 9 of what was considered to be the most important events of the last 24 hours. Most of the time Iran did not show up in that because there were too many other things that took priority. Then there was another sort of a lower classification, wider distribution, where you had a pretty free hand to write what you wanted. I did a few things in there talking about the clergy, a little bit about organization. I tried to provide a

bit of background for our readers, but this relatively low level publication circulated mostly among the intelligence analysts and served as -- It rarely got up on a policy making level. The policy making level was served by the President's daily brief and by the "Bulletin." This lower level publication circulated among the peons, if you like, the guys that were doing the work. It was used as a way to kind of call attention to other analysts, interesting things that we had seen and, "Hey, did you see this? What do you think?" You know, this kind of thing. To quote ideas and maybe draw reactions from some of the analysts in the other agencies. So this is where a few things that I wrote did show up. We had, and I think I mentioned this before, we had one source who was not a clergyman. He was a layman. He had good contacts among the clergy. At one time he had published a religious magazine and, actually, he had become a source in, I think 1952-1953 as part of what was going on at that time. But no one was very interested in him in the later years, say, in the '60s and into the '70s. He was still more or less available, but no operations officer saw him on a regular basis. The material that he provided was sometimes fragmentary, and I guess, except for me, there was no one that was interested in reading that stuff. As a matter of fact, for a long period of time, five, six years, I thought he had disappeared because I saw nothing from him, and then I discovered quite by accident, in talking to one of the operations people, that he was still available, but he hadn't been talked to on a regular basis because there was no interest or very little interest in the kind of information that

he could provide. When I found he was still available, I did lay out some requirements and I got some information, some answers back, but I was the only one that I think had enough interest to try to push this. I talked about it to various people, about the clergy and problems. I guess that's where the business in those books came -- I don't know who he [Bill] talked to or whom he got that from. I didn't tell him that.

Q: How many people at any one time, say in the '60s or '70s, would be working on Iran? Only one, but you mentioned "I was the only one of a number of people." You had one person in Teheran. This should be a station officer, and one analyst, being yourself.

Oney: Yes. There were people from time to time in INR, Department of State Intelligence --

Q: Which is at State Department.

Oney: Yes, who had some interest, kind of an intellectual interest more than an operational interest. There was a guy in the DIA, Defense Intelligence Agency.

Q: I see.

Oney: That followed Iran, at least part time, and he had, again, sort of an intellectual interest in it, but again, not an

operational interest.

Q: But their interest would be more in the military.

Oney: DIA?

Q: In DIA.

Oney: Yes. The function of DIA was to follow and report, primarily on military affairs. They sometimes reported on political situations of interest because DIA's job was to keep Defense Department people informed. You know, like the Chief of Staff and Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence and things like that. The Pentagon people, officers and civilians, tended to read the DIA publications. So inevitably, the DIA analysts would sometimes report on political situations, just as a way of keeping their superiors informed. Sometimes they simply reprinted material that we had published elsewhere. They would just lift it and publish it in their publications.

Q: But in Teheran you would have one person, again, who would do the interviews with your contacts and relay information.

Oney: Yes. He may have been seeing maybe five or six sources. One thing I don't think we touched on, but it bears on this problem very directly, and that is that the Agency or any other intelligence organization doesn't just go out and sweep up



information at a whim. There are very definite requirements that come from the policy makers that act as directives on what is going to be collected. For example, during this period of time that we're talking about, preceding the revolution, say the '60s and '70s, the main things, the first priority things that were being requested were things like Iranian oil policy, where what was of interest was the planning actually was, as opposed to what it was said to be publicly. After all, if you believed what Iran said its policy was, then you wouldn't have to collect anything secretly, but in a sensitive situation like that, you want to try to get other sources that you control to try to determine, "Is this policy, indeed, the actual intention." Then there was a problem of arms absorption. The Shah was buying a lot of weaponry. In spite of attempts that our military people made to curb his appetite for this material, he had the money to do it and he could buy material from Germany, from France, from Italy. He had the money to buy from anybody. So there was the problem of the capability of the Iranian military to absorb and learn to use all this material that they were getting. For our military people that was an important problem. So oil policy, arms absorption, there was interest in the Iranian capability to develop a nuclear industry. You know, at the University of Teheran there was a research center and there was in the works plans for nuclear reactors for power. This has been an important, a high priority target world wide for the United States because of the possibility of going from a nuclear generating capacity to the ability to build nuclear weapons.

India and Pakistan, for example. We had no reason to believe at that point that the Shah intended to build nuclear weapons, but there was a very high interest in monitoring it for the capability to do so. At one time when we looked at the problem, say sometime in the middle 1970's, we did little more than look at the problem. The feeling at that time was that even if Iran had started at that point to develop nuclear weapons capability, it would have been ten years before it could have done it.

Q: This was the sort of material you looked at. You were more interested in what the government was up to, rather than how stable it was.

Oney: Yes, and again, I need to emphasize this. The three things that mentioned, and perhaps one or two others were the highest priority. Down about third or fourth priority, and I know this was the case because I put it in, was kind of a broad statement like information on the clergy: a) leading figures, b) attitude toward the Shah and the reform program. Things like that. Not that we didn't know what it was pretty much, but this kind of thing we -- [tape turned off]

Q: You also did some work on the extent of Soviet activities among the clergy. If you can say a little bit about that.

Oney: Well, most of the information that we had on that came, I believe, from that one source that I mentioned earlier, the