

layman with good contacts among the clergy. He provided some bits and pieces from time to time that I was able to piece together. What it showed was that the Soviet Embassy had a very active program among the clergy. I believe it was a cultural attache--I can't tell you his name right now; I might think of it. He was obviously with KGB. He had regular contact with some of the clergymen. He distributed beautifully printed copies of classical Iranian literature, poetry, beautifully printed copies of the Koran. I don't know where they were printed. I suppose in Moscow. Certainly, he couldn't buy them in a Moscow book store at that time. The propaganda line that this man followed in his conversation with the clergy was to compare this material that they were giving to the clergy with the kind of material that was available from the United States, the accent on the flood of things like "Playboy Magazine," and similar magazines that you could buy in almost any of the kiosks on the street. His line, this KGB-type's line being quite obvious: "Here's what the Americans are sending you. Obviously, it's designed to have a demoralizing affect on Iranians and Iranian youth. Then look at what we are giving you." Also, at least a couple of times clergymen were invited to symposia and meetings in the Soviet Union.

Q: And Savak monitored this?

Oney: I imagine that they did. If they did not monitor it, they were certainly remiss in their duties.

Q: Did your source provide any indication as to what was the clergy's reaction to the Soviet overtures? Were they receptive, indifferent?

Oney: Apparently they were pretty receptive. One meeting that the imam jume'h of Teheran --

Q: [unclear] imami.

Oney: Imami went to one of those meetings, apparently, and when he came back, again according to this source of ours, he expressed a great surprise, a great interest in the fact that Islam was so widely practiced and permitted to be practiced in the Soviet Union.

Q: Even though he was government appointed?

Oney: This is something that was surprising, at least to me and anybody else that wanted to think about it, but it's indicative of the impact that the Soviets were able to make among even somebody like the imam jume'h. Obviously, he saw and heard what the Soviets wanted him to see and hear, because in those days you just didn't move freely and talk freely with anybody you wanted. If you bumped into somebody on the street and stopped to talk to him, that was permitted because he had been put on the street specifically for that purpose.

Q: Let me ask you this. When the events of '63-64 finished, the faith of Khomeini, the suggestion that mosad or C.I.A. had their own views as to what should be done with him, and that General Pakravan was instrumental in getting a mere exile, as opposed to a harsher punishment. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Oney: So far as I know--I can't speak for [unclear]--so far as I know, CIA had absolutely no position on that. It was seen purely as a problem for the Shah to solve. As I suggested earlier, Khomeini was not seen as enough of a problem to warrant any position on the part of the US and on the part of the part of the Agency. Although, Pakravan was instrumental, at least this is what I gathered from my conversations with him, he was instrumental in getting Khomeini exiled rather than some harsher punishment, which the Shah would have liked.

Q: Was Alam a big mover in this whole episode?

Oney: Amir Asadollah?

Q: He was the counterpart, as you would, to Pakravan in the sense that he pushed for harsh response as opposed to a docile one.

Oney: That doesn't surprise me, but I don't remember any particular thing at the time. But I would have thought that Alam

would have followed whatever line the Shah was --

Q: Did you see any effect on the Savak as a result of this?

Oney: On Savak?

Q: On its mentality, on its operations as a result of these riots and agitations? In the thinking of its leadership, how they perceived their duties? Did it mold the organization in any sense?

Oney: I think -- Now, the next year, let's see. Let me get my years straight. These riots were in '63.

Q: '63-64.

Oney: Yes. At the time of Moharram --

[end of tape 2, side 2]

Q: So you were saying by Moharram '64.

Oney: Yes, by Moharram '64 there was a great effort in Savak to monitor and to try to head off any demonstrations before they got going. I think they wanted to avoid the necessity of any harsh response. I was in the Teheran Savak office when they were doing some planning for this. Obviously, since I was there and talking

or at least listening, they, in this kind of conversation, may not have shown their hand completely. After all, I was a representative of a foreign intelligence organization. The overall impression I got from these meetings, there being 15 or 20 Savakers in there, was a strong interest in monitoring all aspects of it ahead of time to try to take actions that would prevent the formation of large mobs and that would channel any parades and demonstrations, channel them in such a direction that the crowds couldn't coalesce into a big mob, and in general, very strong desire to avoid a situation that would mean they had to call out the troops to put it down, literally. So I think to that extent and to the limited capability that I had to observe what was going on, yes, I think it obviously affected Savak's approach, at least on the next occasion. As I recall, for the next ten or a dozen years, there were no significant, large-scale demonstrations.

Q: Do you recollect how and why General Pakravan left Savak?

Oney: I think he left Savak, basically, because the Shah thought that Pakravan had given him poor advice at the time of the '63 riots. Pakravan obviously did not lose the respect or the friendship of the Shah, because he then appointed him Ambassador to France, and later when he returned from that, he was made a special advisor in the Royal Court. So I think the Shah lost confidence in Pakravan's advice at that point. No, he was moved first to the Minister of Information. I think this was the

Shah's way of moving him out of Savak and still not into disgrace. There were a couple of other cases where the --

Q: Nasiri was removed in the same way. He was sent as Ambassador to Pakistan.

Oney: Yes, much later.

Q: And [unclear].

Oney: General Palizban, who was the army intelligence chief. He was removed. I'd have to try to recollect. I forget the exact year, but in a way it was kind of a parallel case with Pakravan and maybe with Nasiri where the Shah lost confidence in the man in the particular job he was doing, but he did not arouse the Shah to the point that he was dismissed in disgrace. Palizban had failed to discover a long time Soviet agent on the General's staff.

Q: Moqarrebi.

Oney: Moqarrebi. Savak made this discovery.

Q: And it looked bad for Palizban.

Oney: It looked bad for Palizban, so Palizban was removed as J-2, but the next year he was appointed a Senator.

Q: And then Governor to Kermanshah.

Oney: And then Governor to Kermanshah. Palizban was from Kermanshah, I think, originally. I heard one story--maybe you've heard it. I don't know whether it's pertinent to this or not, but that Palizban was some kind of a relative of the Shah's. I was never able to run that down. It was kind of an interesting side light. The only thing I could think is if they were somehow related, it was probably through Reza Shah's fourth wife, Esmatoddowleh, who was from the Dowlatshahi family of Kermanshah.

Q: Oh, yes. Palizban later became well known after the Revolution for alleged counter revolutionary guerilla warfare.

Oney: Yes, he apparently went back into Kurdistan. I don't know what he's doing now. I don't know if he's still there.

Q: He's in Los Angeles.

Oney: He's in Los Angeles. My God. [tape turned off]

Q: To what extent your activities in Iran, training and later information gathering when you were Washington, did you have contact with the military's intelligence in Iran?

Oney: No.

Q: No contact whatsoever.

Oney: None. Contact with the military intelligence was generally through the US Army Attache.

Q: I see, but did the defense intelligence in the US maintain the same kind of relation with Iran's military intelligence that CIA had with Savak? Sort of exchange of information, provision of training?

Oney: Yes, I think so. I don't know how much exchange of information there was. I assume that there was--and I say this is an assumption--on problems that were of common interest, such as Soviet order of battle.

Q: But say, for instance, who trained military intelligence to do its counter intelligence job against Soviet infiltration in the armed forces? Was Savak providing the training, or who was training discovery of moles and things like that?

Oney: I don't know for sure. I'll start out by saying that. Some military officers came to the United States for training of various kinds. I don't know specifically of Iranian intelligence officers coming over here for intelligence training. I wouldn't be surprised, I just don't know of it. They might have gotten some training from the British, from the French, or even from the

Israelis.

Q: What was the nature of relations between the military intelligence and Savak? Organizationally, at least, how did they operate, cooperate?

Oney: My impression was that, although there was contact and perhaps cooperation on the highest level, generally they were competing organizations, which is not surprising, as attested to the Moqarrebi case. Ideally--ideally, I don't know what ideally is--in the United States a Soviet spy that was discovered, say in the Pentagon, would become at the very least a joint operation between our military and the FBI because that's the way it's set up. The FBI is responsible, basically, for counter intelligence operations in the United States. This has occasionally raised problems in relations with the Agency. None that weren't solved and didn't lead to any slashing and burning. Suppose, for example, the Agency has a penetration, an agent, say, in the Soviet Embassy in Cairo. This man is then transferred to the Soviet Embassy in the United States. When he comes to the United States, this is a counter-intelligence problem, so far as the FBI is concerned. So how is that handled? This is the kind of problem that arises.

Q: But between Savak and military intelligence there was more personnel continuity. I mean in the sense that Savak recruited extensively, or at least did at one point, from military

intelligence.

Oney: Yes, they did.

Q: And it was military in its own --

Oney: Yes, they did. In the early years of Savak, many officers came in from the armed forces, but after about--again, this is only an approximate date--say, sometime in the early '60s, the military people in Savak had to make a choice whether to return to active duty military, or retire from the military to work with Savak. At that point they had to decide whether to become civilians working for Savak, or whether to go back to the military. Most of the high ranking ones, I think, decided to stay with Savak.

Q: The commander of Savak had usually higher rank than the commander of the [unclear]. In a sense, General Nasiri was a four-star general.

Oney: Yes, I guess I'm not quite sure how that worked.

Q: He could pull rank whenever it was necessary.

Oney: Yes, but then you had [unclear].

Q: But Fardust was also Savak, wasn't he?

Oney: Yes.

Q: He was the Deputy of Savak at one time.

Oney: He was the Deputy of Savak, but he was also head of the Special Office, I think they called it.

Q: Edareh-ye-vizheh, which was a special investigative bureau reporting directly to the Shah.

Oney: That's right. He was head of that at the same time he was the Deputy Director of Savak. In a sense he was more powerful as the head of the Edareh-ye-vizheh than he was as Deputy Director of Savak.

Q: Right. Let me ask you this. Those years you were in Iran, '64, did you work with, for instance, General Kia?

Oney: Haj Ali Kia?

Q: Haj Ali Kia, the Director of G-2 at that time?

Oney: No. I met him. I talked to him a few times, but I did not work directly with him. Whatever liaison there was would have been at the higher level, but I did not. You know, of course, he left more or less in disgrace after the scandal over

that big building that he financed in Teheran. What did they call it? "Where did you get it from?"

Q: Where did you get it from, Az koja Awardi.

Oney: Yes. I saw him, I don't remember how or why. I saw him a couple years later and he was no longer in the military. He was importing Swiss goods, acting as an agent for Swiss companies into Iran. I asked him, "How's business?" He said, "Oh, it's fine. I'm a millionaire again."

Q: And what about his successor again in G-2, General [unclear]. You again didn't have direct dealings with him.

Oney: No, no.

Q: Let me ask you, you mentioned Fardust a number of times. You knew him personally?

Oney: Yes, as a matter of fact, in the period '62 to '64 he was my main contact in Savak.

Q: Your liaison.

Oney: Yes. Again, we talked primarily about training matters.

Q: What were your impressions of him?

Oney: It's kind of interesting. He was very quiet, very soft-spoken, almost diffident. He was not given to long conversations, especially conversations that were designed to elicit information from him. If you hadn't known him, known a little bit of history and what his relationship was, you would have considered him kind of an ineffectual, almost a milk toast sort of person. But, as I say, if you just met him at a cocktail party or something, not knowing what he really was. Nobody knew very much, practically nothing, about his personal life, about his home life. Nobody had ever met his wife, if he had one. As a matter of fact, I was kind of surprised many, many years later to find out that he had a son in New York. Maybe you know that.

Q: He had two wives.

Oney: He had two wives?

Q: Not at the same time.

Oney: Is that right?

Q: He had children. One is at the World Bank here.

Oney: Oh, is that right? [tape turned off]

Q: Were you therefore surprised when these allegations came

about about General Fardust later on?

Oney: Yes.

Q: About his cooperation with the revolution and the Soviets?

Oney: Yes. First, his cooperation with the revolution and, as I said, the information we had at the time is that he had sent an emissary to Khomeini or to one of Khomeini's supporters.

Q: What year was this?

Oney: Oh, gosh. This would have been, I suppose maybe in '79.

Q: Right at the end.

Oney: Yes, although it wasn't until after the revolution had succeeded that it became clear that he was working with it. The information was to the effect that before, even before the Shah left, which I suppose would have been sometime in the last half of '78, that he had reached a deal with Khomeini.

Q: And this was corroborated by your sources in Iran?

Oney: Frankly, I don't remember exactly where that came from.

Q: Let me ask you this, did any of the Iranian intelligence

figures have any kind of information that would be damaging to the US had they had fallen in the wrong hands, whether as prisoners or if they had gone over to Khomeini's side? Say somebody like Nasiri or Fardust? Did it cause sort of a panic in CIA that, "This man knows too much about this or that?"

Oney: I suppose it might have raised some concern in some quarters. It always does when your friends, people with whom you've been closely associated, fall into this predicament, but I didn't sense any great deal of concern. Mostly because I can't imagine what any of them could have said or what they would have known that would have been damaging in a real sense to the US. The Agency was concerned, presumably any Savaker that had been involved in cross border activities could have talked about that.

Q: What about the training methods, teaching methods, intelligence gathering methods, the Soviets?

Oney: The only thing the Soviets would have gained would have been some feeling about how much the US knew about Soviet operations and techniques, in so far as we were willing to reveal them to the Iranians. But so far as training and that sort of thing is concerned, there's nothing very esoteric about it.

Q: What about the information that air force commanders, like General Berenjian or General Rabi^ci must have had about the US listening posts and Salt II treaty and things of that nature?

Oney: I don't know how much detail Berenjian knew. I think by the time that Berenjian had fallen into disfavor or had been arrested by the Khomeini regime, probably the Soviets had a pretty good idea of what the listening post was doing, and they should have had enough technical knowledge to make a reasonable guess or a reasonable estimate of how much we knew. See, the listening posts were aimed primarily at the Soviet missile launching tests sites in the Tyura Tam Missile Test Range and one other out there [Kapustini yar]. That was their primary purpose. The kind of information that they gathered was technical information from the telemetry that was associated with these tests. By moving the sites up where they were at Behshar and over at Jaojab, they were able to pick up the first few minutes of a new test flight. This provided important technical information as to how the rocketry was going in the first few minutes because afterwards the telemetry would cut out and a new type of telemetry would be provided. So it was important to be as close as possible to get the initial information. You know, I suppose probably within three or four years after the sites went into operation, '57, '58, the Soviets must have known what it was doing simply because that's the kind of stuff you can't conceal. What the Soviets did do later, clearly indicating that they knew that we were monitoring this stuff, was they started encrypting their telemetry. So that the telemetry information that was coming back had to in turn be decoded, if you like, according to a system that the Soviets had built into it. Do you follow

that? The Soviets did at one time--and I just now remembered it. It was kind of interesting at the time but it didn't loom large and I'm trying to remember the details. The Soviets sent at least one Tudeh Party member up to Behshar to try to get a job up there, just to, I suppose, provide some details on what was going on there. He came back and reported that he had no luck in getting a job there. I think this was probably an attempt at a low level penetration, and that's all I know about it. I don't even remember the guy's --

Q: Then after the revolution the fedaiyan, the site at Kapkan.

Oney: Of course, Behshar was evacuated pretty quickly and Kapkan hung on a little bit longer. I think that during the period before the Khomeini regime really firmed up its control -- Of course, we had [Shahpur] Bakhtiar who was in there for a while. I think that some of the American policy makers thought that once the initial flurry was over and you had some kind of a Nationalist government in, that relations could be resumed and that maybe Behshar could be preserved because it would have been quite feasible. I'm sure it would have been suggested that the same information that you we been giving to the Shah would go to the new government because they should have had an equal interest in what the Soviets were doing. Of course, after Bakhtiar and the Nationalists lost out, then it was clear that the Khomeini regime was not going to be a reasonable one. There was no point in trying to keep Kapkan or anything else. Plus the fact I think

we paid twenty-five million dollars to evacuate our people out of Kapkan.

Q: That's right.

Oney: But there was nothing left at either one of those places at all. The sensitive equipment had either been destroyed or already evacuated. It was a loss, but again, about that time or certainly within the next few years, those sites would have been closed out anyhow, because the job was taken over by satellites.

Q: Earlier you eluded to the capture of General Moqarrebi, and it happened along with two other discoveries by Savak. Operative in the Prime Minister's office and I think had retired to the old Tudeh general Derakhshani.

Oney: Derakhshani. He had gotten in trouble earlier in 1946 when he surrendered, I think the Tabriz Garrison, and he was cashiered from the army, sentenced to a period in jail, but was pardoned by the Shah. Then he just disappeared until 25 years later he shows up.

Q: He shows up again. These three discoveries came in a row and by many it was viewed as a coups by Savak. Was that the case?

Oney: I think it was, and I'd have to check the chronology, but I think these happened after Fardust had left Savak.

Q: I think he had left much earlier. He had left years earlier.

Oney: So, see, he would have had no direct knowledge of these operations.

Q: And these were masterminded by General Nasiri himself, according to Robert Moss in his article.

Oney: I suppose Nasiri, as head of Savak at the time, certainly would take credit for it. I don't know that there was--I suppose it in a sense was masterminded by Nasiri, but I believe both cases grew out of a very fundamental principle of surveillance. Savak had been for years keeping surveillance on the Soviet Embassy, just like the FBI does here and as the Soviets do on the American, French and British Embassies in Moscow. The Soviets tried, and this was kind of a traditional technique, they tried to avoid or confuse the surveillance by having something like six or eight automobiles with people in them leaving at the same time and spreading out in all directions. Only one of them would be going to meet an agent. So you can see what that would do if you'd have a surveillance team, maybe two or three people and one vehicle. All of a sudden out comes six or seven cars, which one are you going to follow? You have one chance in six or seven of following the right one. So in the case of Derakhshani, I think Savak either increased the number of surveillance teams available or they were lucky enough to follow the right car. I don't know

which was the case, and for reasons of their own, they may have had Derakhshani under surveillance, at least from time to time. I don't know what he was doing all those years. Simply retired, I suppose. I never heard.

Q: Moqarrebi was the bigger fish.

Oney: Moqarrebi was the bigger fish and they may have, at least the story that they put out was that in both cases he had been -- Well, in Derakhshani's case, he was arrested as he was receiving money from a KGB officer, retirement pay. Apparently he had retired from the KGB like a year before, but they paid him periodically, social security, I guess, and he was picked up at that point. In the case of Moqarrebi --

Q: And there was a fellow at the Prime Minister's officer who apparently himself was an officer of the KGB.

Oney: Yes, a civilian who had been in the Ministry of Education at one time, or something of the sort. I have it some place. Apparently that man--I can't think of his name--and the Moqarrebi case were somehow related, or at least they were rounded up about the same time.

Q: How was this whole [unclear] viewed at CIA?

Oney: I think in general they were viewed simply as a

demonstration of how well Savak could carry out these operations. They were very professionally done. Of course, this was twenty years after -- These cases were in the late '70s and we terminated our training missions twenty years earlier. I think it was viewed simply as a demonstration of Savak competence in this sort of operation.

Q: Chronologically we stopped after the events of '63-64. After that, the government functioned and CIA was concerned with its policy making, but this is also a period that guerilla movements began to emerge in Iran.

Oney: Yes, Siah Kal was '69.

Q: Siah Kal was '69. Mojahedin-e-khalq. What was the reaction? Were you keeping tabs on those? Did they go unnoticed?

Oney: No, they did not go unnoticed. They were reported on, but they were not seen as threatening the stability of the government. This was seen, I think, in a larger context as being part of worldwide developing guerilla movements.

Q: Soviet inspired?

Oney: For the most part, although some of it was Chinese. At least some of the early people -- I was never able to run them

down directly, but there were at least six or seven that had gone to China, through Hong Kong, presumably for some kind of training. I don't remember the names anymore. But Iranian dissidents, some had received training in China, some had received training in the Yemen. Down there they had some East German and Cuban instructors. Some of them were trained with the PLO and had actually participated in some of the PLO operations against Israel. Back of all of this, of course, even indirectly, was the Soviets and the East Europeans that were supporting them. A number of them received training in East Germany. The assumption was, and I think it was a logical assumption at the time, that ultimately the Soviets were behind these operations. If not directly, at least in terms of advising, providing equipment.

Q: But what was CIA's main concern with these movements?

Oney: I think the main concern with the movements was simply its trouble-making potential, plus the fact that a more direct concern was that some of them had assassinated Americans. At least two, three American army officers, a couple contractors for an electronics project that was there. Very professional type jobs.

Q: Was there any special project, say, of Savak to flush them out or special training given in anti-guerilla warfare to Savak? Counter insurgency, things like that?

Oney: Not that I'm aware of, although I would have been surprised if there hadn't been higher level conversations on this. Realize, at this time I'm back here. I'm no longer closely involved in operations. But I don't recall anything special. I suppose because it was considered that the Iranians, between Savak and the military, had a better opportunity to gather information on these groups themselves, and they had the capability, as they pretty much demonstrated, of suppressing, or at least controlling these movements. There was a joint Savak-Police, maybe military commission. I've forgotten the exact name of it. A kind of joint operation that cooperated in following these movements. This was an Iranian commission. As far as I know, we had no representation on it.

Q: At that time the CIA did not view this as increasing opposition to the Shah? They viewed it merely as a Soviet ploy?

Oney: I think it was viewed as -- Yes, perhaps as the same sort of terrorist organization that was being used elsewhere, basically to advance Soviet interests. Even without direct Soviet control or direct Soviet involvement, their actions still supported Soviet interests.

Q: The arrival of guerilla warfare also went hand in hand with instability at the universities at Teheran and other cities. What was the reaction to that?

Oney: Again, I think that that information was overlaid or tended to be masked because you had the same thing occurring elsewhere in the world. Not that there was necessarily any direct connection between, say, riots in Mexico City or in Guatemala or in Cairo, but at least the atmosphere was prevalent in many university circles.

Q: It was seen in Cold War terms.

Oney: Yes. I think there was one other thing that at least was considered and was thought about. It's somewhat ironical, but the availability of university education to students from middle and even lower classes, I think--finally created a problem. Instead of being more or less limited to more elite classes, students were being drawn from the lower middle class and even some of the lower classes. So coming along with this exposure to higher education, pretty much Western style education, you had social attitudes that tended to be in conflict with this traditionally. Social attitudes, many of them strongly religious. In the earlier days in the universities I don't think they had this because the students who went in the early days to the university tended to be from the higher classes, where exposure to Western ideas and Western style education was more acceptable, at least was more understood. I maybe wrong in this, but this seemed to play a role in the student activism where you had traditional social attitudes clashing with modernized

educational system. Let's face it, modern style education in the American sense does clash, almost everywhere. Not only Iran, but with a lot of traditional values.

Q: So what was the prognosis? You thought over time this would resolve? At that point in time, what was the prognosis?

Oney: I think at that point in time the prognosis was pretty much as it was every place where these things had taken place. It indicated a certain unrest or maybe a certain malaise among a portion of the population that would be important in the future. In other words, university students. But again, like the guerilla movement, these were looked at in terms of the threat to the stability of the government. Over the years there have been a lot of student demonstrations.

[end of side 1, tape 3]

Q: You were saying about student demonstrations.

Oney: Over the years there have been a lot of student demonstrations for various reasons. Some of them have turned quite violent. In the early days where it centered around Tudeh activists in university, Tudeh had cells in engineering and in medicine, particularly, I remember. In later years student violence, student demonstrations arose for different reasons, but they have all been sooner or later--mostly sooner--surpressed

Q: What nature information would that be? Anything that reflected on the Shah?

Oney: Oh, certainly anything that would reflect on the Shah, but then you didn't have to collect that kind of thing clandestinely anyhow. You'd go to any cocktail party and you'd spend half of the evening listening to some Iranians complaining about the Shah. It's rather hard to say for sure because I just don't remember the particular situation arising.

Q: Now, the confrontation with the students and guerillas sort of dipped Savak's hands into repression and torture. Did this become a concern at CIA? Was it raised with Savak at any point?

Oney: I think you can say that they were pretty successful in neutralizing the guerillas. Where it broke down is when they started facing the mass movements that simply overwhelmed the assets that they had available. The same thing happened in the military, the army, of course. Guerilla activity certainly played a part in testing and in a sense weakening the state apparatus, but by itself I think wouldn't have won the day. What overwhelmed Savak, what overwhelmed the army was simply the number, the masses that the religious leadership was able to bring to the streets. Plus the fact that there might have -- If you look at what happened at Zhaleh Square, for example, the troops withdrew two or three times from confrontation there before they were finally backed into a corner and opened fire.

But from the reporting that we had, the crowds were attempting, or at least crowd leaders were attempting to provoke a confrontation and two or three times the troops under orders had backed away to try to avoid it. As I say, they were finally backed into a corner and opened fire.

Q: This is based on your own sources?

Oney: This is based on information that was coming in at the time. Also, of course, the story was spread that these weren't Iranian troops, these were Israelis. I understand that among them were Azerbaijani troops. I don't know how widespread the knowledge of Azeri Turkish is among the masses in Teheran. I know there are a lot of Azerbaijani there. But somebody--I don't know who it was--speculated that maybe they heard the troops talking to each other in [unclear] and just assumed since it wasn't Persian, it's got to be Hebrew. That was a sheer speculation, but the story was spread that there were Israeli troops. Of course, they weren't but it's a good story to propagate in a situation like that.

Q: With these students there was also a big element of them in the United States at that time in the form of the Confederation of Iranian Students.

Oney: Yes.

Q: Did the CIA or FBI try to monitor or learn about them, since it was on US territory?

Oney: That would have been the FBI's job and I don't know to what extent they did monitor them. I suspect they probably tried to monitor them to some extent.

Q: What about CIA? Would your office have been interested in their literature and publications to see what they say, what they're up to?

Oney: From an intelligence point of view, not an operational point of view, yes, we would have been interested. We were interested in their activities in Europe because it was in Europe, it was outside the US. We didn't get all that much information from the FBI. At least I didn't see it. When we did, it was kind of summaries of meetings or that kind of thing, but so far as CIA was concerned, that was a domestic problem left up to the FBI.

Q: Was Savak at all interested in CIA performing this function of monitoring?

Oney: No. I remember even as early as once when I was there General Moqaddam asked me one time what information we could gather on what the students were doing in the United States. I said I didn't have that information, but I passed on the

request. The answer that came back from headquarters was simply that, "We cannot pass on to Savak the activities of Iranian students in the United States who are not breaking the American law," and that was it. We gave them no information because we had no information to give them. That request was made at another time to another officer and with the same results. It's simply something we could not pass on because the students here were not doing anything illegal.

Q: But the extent and zeal of their activities, did it arouse any concern with CIA, just observing how zealous they were about their beliefs? In other words, did it lead you to any conclusions regarding political stability in Iran and the regime?

Oney: No, I don't think so. Somebody made the comment that it was ironical that there were more students converts to Marxism in the United States than any place else in the world.

Q: But in the '60s, during the time of President Kennedy at least, the students were approached by the Attorney General at that time, Robert Kennedy, confirmation in Teheran.

Oney: I understand that the students went to Robert Kennedy with some of their complaints and he listened sympathetically and probably passed it on the President, but I don't know that anything ever came from that. After all, Robert Kennedy was the Attorney General and even though sometimes he might approach

these things rather freely, he was still the Attorney General and bound by US law and custom in problems like this.

Q: What were your impressions of Savak in the '70s? Say, the later Savak and those who ran it. Say, for instance, Sabeti, Nasiri, of how it operated.

Oney: I think generally we were concerned about Nasiri's over all approach, which was that of a policeman rather than an intelligence officer. I think I alluded to this earlier. By and large a police officer is looking for information to lead to prosecution. An intelligence officer is looking for information that will lead to another step, another contact, to information that will enable you to intercept the hostile line of communication, for example. Strictly speaking, an intelligence officer is not interested in prosecution because as soon as prosecution occurs, that insight, that potential lead that you had into hostile intelligence organization is gone. A policeman looks for a case to prosecute. An intelligence officer would rather avoid that because, as I say, as soon as you prosecute somebody, you've lost a potential window into a hostile organization.

Q: Was there ever an attempt to correct this at Savak?

Oney: What was that again?

Q: You said there was concerns with this, but was there ever any attempts to correct this?

Oney: We were not in a position to correct it.

Q: Were suggestions given, friendly advice?

Oney: I don't know. I suppose it might have. By this time the liaison with Savak is on a very high level. We no longer have the low level contacts that we had in the early days when I could talk to an operations officer almost on a personal basis. We had officers in Savak, but we could visit almost any other guy we knew in his own office. They could come to our office if they wanted to. It was more of a collegial approach, but later on, after the early 1960's, certainly by the late '60s, the Shah, or Savak under instructions from the Shah, started drawing back from this very close relationship. This was not surprising. It didn't surprise us because, after all, it had become a professional organization and professionally, any other intelligence service is, if not hostile, not close friends.

Q: What were your impressions of Sabeti? Did you know him?

Oney: I did not know him well at all. As I recollect, when he came into Savak, he came into Department 3 first. Captain Zamani headed the Tudeh Party operations in Department 3, and I understood from a couple of other people who worked under Zamani

that Zamani was very worried that Sabeti was being sent in there to take over his job.

Q: Sabeti was a regular recruit from university or did he have a background?

Oney: I'm not sure. That was my impression, but I'm just not sure. I never had a great deal of background information on Sabeti. The fact that Zamani was afraid that he had come in to take over suggested to me that Sabeti must have had some important sponsorship or Zamani wouldn't have been that troubled about it, but Sabeti didn't stay there very long. I didn't stay there much after that. That was late in my second tour. But I don't think Sabeti stayed in Department 3 very long. He moved on to something higher. I heard he was a Bahai. Did you hear that? Anyhow, no, I never knew him personally. I had no personal relation to him at all.

Q: He gained fame with the Bakhtiar episode in Iraq. Was CIA independently aware of Bakhtiar's activities?

Oney: Not that I know. We sort of generally picked up information on where he was and very little on what he was doing specifically. I don't believe anybody maintained any contact with him after he left Iran. Somebody might have dropped in to see him in Switzerland on a personal basis, I don't know.

Q: But you didn't take it seriously that he was trying to create a force?

Oney: Well, I think there was some interest and surprise, but again, I think he wasn't seen as a direct threat. One reason being that the Shah had demonstrated over the years his ability to control and to monitor, control and to counter opposition from all kinds of things. A little bit like Mosaddeq when he was in power. Until '53 almost every plot that had been made against Mosaddeq, he found out about and he was able to counter it.

Q: That brings us to something interesting that's been referred to on and off, and that's the CIA had developed or worked on psychological profiles of the Shah. Was this done routinely?

Oney: Yes, it's done routinely on important --

Q: What were the conclusions and how was he seen then?

Oney: Well, first of all, you're aware of the Jack Anderson article? That's all phoney, except for the first paragraph that says that there was a top secret psychological profile of the Shah. That's true. Nothing else that he said, that I recall in there, was in the actual profile. I don't remember all the details. You know, it's maybe a dozen pages, something like that. It was an examination of things that went into influencing his character, the kind of thing you'd expect psychologists to

-- It was done by a psychiatrist and not by the analyst. Although I worked very closely with the doctor that did it. It talked about family influences, the influence, as far as we can tell, of his father, of his family. In those early days he was pretty henpecked by his mother and by Princess Ashraf.

Q: What do you mean "henpecked"?

Oney: Henpecked. Maybe that's a colloquialism that you haven't run into.

Q: No, I haven't heard that.

Oney: If you've ever watched a flock of chickens, they establish their pecking order, their dominance, their subordination, by pecking each other's head. This has become a colloquialism. A man or a husband who's henpecked is somebody who is criticized, controlled, or whose wife or girlfriend or whatever, puts him in his place. So he was seen as, in a sense, subordinate to the criticism of the queen mother, who always compared him with Reza Shah, and in her mind he didn't match. He wasn't anything like Reza Shah. Then Princess Ashraf, who was a very strong character, tended to criticize him because he was not strong enough.

Q: Even after he was Shah?

Oney: Even after he was Shah. Especially after he was Shah. Whatever stories you hear about Ashraf, she was a strong character, and I think she had a good sense of what she wanted, what she thought was good for the Shah, right or wrong. She rarely shilly-shallied. She didn't vacillate.

Q: Did at first the CIA believe that she would have aspirations for ruling Iran?

Oney: She would have what?

Q: She could have aspirations for ruling Iran, had the Shah passed away? That she was seen as a serious contender, is that true?

Oney: I don't believe so, no. Certainly she was worthy of respect in her own right, although, as I say, a lot of the stories you heard about her were printed the other way. But strictly speaking, as a strong character, she was. I don't remember anything that suggested that she had any aspirations, although at least in the early days, she might have made a better Shah than the Shah did.

Q: But the gist of the reports that were mentioned early on were that had the Shah died in office, that then she might have, with the help of military men, made a bid for power. That this was one of the scenarios that CIA thought feasible.