

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 969 000
By RB Date 04/09/02

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

RS/R FILES

Attention MRs [unclear] He JT
Keep this study together.

November 19, 1970

~~SECRET~~

S/S 14520

Dear Mel:

Copies To:
NEA
NEA/IRN
PM
S/S:RF

I have your letter of October 27, 1970 in which you discuss Iran's desire to acquire additional military aircraft over the next several years.

I am sure you recall the Shah of Iran's visit to Washington in October, 1969, during which he discussed with the President, you and me his security requirements as he saw them. He was, of course, concerned about the growing military strength of radical Arab States, particularly his immediate neighbor Iraq. He commented specifically on the substantial military aid these countries were receiving from the Soviet Union. It was in the light of this situation and how he felt it might develop that the Shah spoke of the need to develop and maintain a security force sufficiently impressive to deter any potentially hostile neighbor or group of neighbors from launching a first-strike against Iran's vulnerable urban centers and vital oil installations. I am certain that he continues to hold to this view and that it would be futile to try and persuade him otherwise as long as current conditions and leadership in his part of the world remain relatively unchanged.

I do believe, however, that our especially close relations with Iran permit us to influence Iranian military decisions more than would normally be the case. This relationship includes heavy Iranian reliance on our MAAG in Tehran for advice on the organization, training, management and operation of its military forces. As you know, there is presently under way a study by the Iranian military forces, aided by our MAAG mission, of Iran's military acquisition plans.

The Honorable
Melvin R. Laird,
Secretary of Defense.

MICROFILMED
BY S/S: CMS

NEA/IRN: A. C. Miklos

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E.O. 12958, as amended
June 21, 2006

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We expect this study will illuminate fully the financial, manpower, training, maintenance and operational implications of these plans, including the possible acquisition of an additional two squadrons of F-4E's. Ambassador MacArthur and Major General Twitchell in Tehran believe that this study should be finished by the end of this year. They expect that upon its completion the GOI will be able to see much better than now how costly its present plans are and to make judgments as to what areas of activity or items might be cut back or stretched out if necessary.

To my mind, this process is the only way we can reasonably expect to influence the size and scope of Iran's military acquisition plans. We must be very careful, however, to avoid conveying the impression that we are better judges than Iran of Iranian priorities and allocation of resources. To do otherwise, I am convinced, would reduce greatly the considerable influence we now have and cause Iran to look elsewhere for military aircraft. I fear also that it could lead to the Shah making a direct linkage between the amount of assistance he expects of us in the future and the very valuable and, in some instances, unique intelligence and security facilities Iran now provides to us, a notion the Shah has scrupulously avoided heretofore.

In sum, I believe that we are on the right track and that we should continue to provide factual and technical information which should help Iran reach informed decisions on its military acquisition plans. Whatever decisions it may reach, we shall of course want to consider carefully their impact on our overall relations and larger interests in the area.

Sincerely,



William P. Rogers

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PM -NEA - Mr. Davies *RA*
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