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## U.S. Aided Shah Against Paper

The U.S. embassy in Tehran, we've discovered, has attempted to help the Shah of Iran quash unfavorable press criticism in the United States.

Classified State Department cables reveal that former CIA Director Richard Helms, who recently resigned as ambassador to Iran, tried to help the Iranians halt the publication of an anti-government newspaper.

We reported earlier that Helms had cabled Washington about closing down the "Iran Free Press," an often outrageous anti-shah newspaper published in the United States.

The helpful Helms was told by State Department officials that the "matter had been carefully studied, but lawyers had concluded that under U.S. laws there was regrettably no basis for such action."

Helms also asked for information on Nasser Afshar, publisher of the newspaper, who is an American citizen.

Now, additional cables in our possession indicate that Helms at times turned the U.S. embassy into a branch office of the Iranian government.

In a confidential telegram dated May 12, 1973, Helms told the State Department that an official of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had demanded to know how Afshar acquired American citizenship.

The Iranian also petulantly asked why the U.S. government would "permit a U.S. citizen (to) undertake political activities against a friendly country like Iran . . . ?"

The State Department obligingly responded that "Afshar immigrated to the U.S. in January, 1946, and was naturalized as a U.S. citizen on Aug. 28, 1952." Afshar, confided the State Department officials, had been issued a

passport in 1970 after checks with the FBI and other federal agencies.

Helms then reported that one of his diplomatic aides had been summoned to the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for another lecture about Afshar.

His aide, said Helms, told the Iranians that "we have been exploring with Washington for some time whether action could be taken against Iran Free Press, but without success so far."

On May 30, the State Department authorized Helms to tell the Iranians that "the Department agrees that the Iran Free Press is a scurrilous publication filled with libelous, irresponsible and inaccurate statements."

"However," warned State Department bureaucrats, "there are no legal steps the U.S. Government can take against this paper unless and until it violates federal law."

But, the Washington officials added, "we are looking into Afshar's background through the appropriate channels."

The message was passed on to Iranian officials, reported Helms two weeks later.

"Should any further information be developed regarding Afshar's background, cabled Helms. . . . we would appreciate having it."

Micronesian Oil—Giant international oil interests and the Interior Department are joining forces to defoliate a lush tropical paradise. Both want the tiny Pacific island of Palau to become a petroleum superport between the Middle East and Japan.

"Port Pacific" is the brainchild of Robert Panero, a jet-setting American businessman. Panero wants to be the middleman in a deal that would ship Mideast oil to Palau for refining. The

oil would then be transported by tanker to Japan.

The petroleum project, of course, would lay waste a good part of the island's beautiful tropical surroundings. And most of Port Pacific's high-paying jobs would go to imported foreign workers.

Worse yet, Japanese industrial interests allied with Panero are conducting their own "feasibility study" to guarantee themselves exclusive development rights. Much of the study will be kept under wraps for the next five years.

The Interior Department, nevertheless, has given its enthusiastic blessing to the project. Fred Zeder, Interior's territorial development chief, told us he sees nothing unusual or secret about the deal.

The Environmental Defense Fund, though, may challenge the proposal in court.

Disabled Lobby—A secret study by Ralph Nader's new Disability Rights Center shows that makers and sellers of artificial breasts, home respirators and wheelchairs often ignore the needs of those who use them.

The study shows that, despite sky-high prices, there often is little or no training provided for those who buy the products. Emphysema victims, for example, buy home "breathers" but could die from oxygen overdoses for lack of instruction on how to use the units.

The center is headed by Deborah Kaplan, a tough California lawyer, who broke her neck in a diving accident and is now a partial quadriplegic. She has mapped a campaign to rally the 10 million seriously disabled into a massive consumer lobby.

By Howard Post