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Reference

NBP 333/2

13

Mr Gorham (MED)

Mr. Tatham

Mr. Lacey

May we discuss § 4?

✓ M

Kul 1740

## ANGLO-AMERICAN PLANNING TALKS: IRAN

When we spoke at lunchtime, you asked me to minute about the exchange that took place in our Anglo-American Planning Talks in Washington on 10 October.

2. Mr Precht, the Country Director for Iran, led for the Americans. He opened his remarks by saying that in his view, current events in Iran were the worst foreign policy disaster that had hit the West in many years. He went on to describe the situation there in cataclysmic terms, essentially that the whole population of the country was united against the Shah, wanted his removal. He nevertheless thought that current US and British policy of support for the Shah was right and that there would be nothing to be gained (and serious damage to be done) in trying to reinsure. Since his analysis and his policy conclusions were so obviously at odds (as much to the evident surprise of the American policy planners as to ourselves), we had some discussion of this point. Mr Precht was not to be moved from his gloomy analysis, held out very small hopes of the Shah surviving, but could see no alternative to what we were doing. His was essentially a policy of despair.

3. Our Embassy in Washington commented to us that they had not heard such a pessimistic analysis before, even from Precht himself. They checked it out quickly with contacts in the NSC (including Quandt). Quandt's subordinate on the Iranian side volunteered that he had heard the <sup>a pessimistic</sup> Precht view of Iran from the State Department which he described as "bullshit" and Quandt's own views supported this in less colourful language. Tony Lake, the Head of the American Policy Planning Staff, commented at the end of our meeting that he and his colleagues had said a number of indiscreet and sensitive things in the course of our discussions mentioning Iran as one of them, and asked us to be very careful of the way we handled it. So I report Precht's views to you as only one element in the Washington analysis, but a nonetheless disturbing and possibly significant one given Precht's position. It may be that Precht was letting his hair down and giving vent to his true views in the forum of informal Planning Talks and that he may have been aiming to get a message over to his own policy planners. I do not have my notes with me, but we will in due course produce a slightly fuller account.

4. On a completely different subject in your area, Precht let out in the course of our discussion that he was having to go through the records of the 1952/53 Mossadeq period with a view to their release under the Freedom of Information Act. He said

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that if released, there would be some very embarrassing things about the British in them. I made a strong pitch that we should be consulted which was, I am sure, noted, although somebody commented that there were established procedures for this sort of thing. I imagine that it is American documents about the British rather than documents on which HMG have any lien which are involved. But you should be aware of this possibility.

B L Crowe

B L Crowe  
Planning Staff

12 October 1978

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