

from Iran

August 4, 1960

Dear Wes:

It was good to hear from you and to hear a bit about the "old Vietnamese hands." I appreciate your asking New York to send on the reprints of articles.

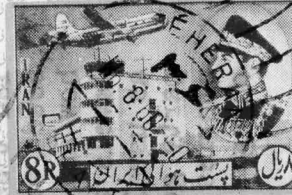
No one here is willing to commit himself on when the change of regime, if any, will take place. Foreigners maintain a kind of permanent floating pool on when it will be, but we don't really have any inside information. My own guess, for what it is worth, is that the regime is solidly installed and not likely to change for some time yet. On the other hand, the present elections have generated much more criticism of the ruling party (but definitely not the Shah except by implication) than I think they were supposed to. The Shah has said the elections will be free, but the populace apparently doesn't believe him. On the other hand, they appear to be creating a "put up or shut up" situation and likely will be able to express a good deal of their popular demands without really having an election as open as we would like. There appears to be little Communist influence operating, even covertly. Russians are not looked upon with great favor here, and the Irano-Russian society has just closed its doors for lack of popular and official support. Meanwhile, the Iran-American ~~SMELLY~~ Society has almost round-the-clock activities and a special student branch at the University of Tehran, and branches—somewhat lethargic—in at least two other cities. But, candidly, much that needs to be reformed in order to stave off more violent reactions and to encourage economic development appears solidly entrenched. Real progress in agricultural productivity depends on changes in tenure structure to permit a closer relationship between effort and reward. (But one landlord friend of mine ~~XXXX~~ says I should visit his village soon since he won't own it within 5 years, and says villages can hardly be sold because of the general expectation of tenure changes.) The Government has passed a land reform bill, but it isn't serious. Only a few acres will really be affected. Yet the seeds are planted and are sure to grow; it is only a question of how and when. Sometimes I feel the government is not as aware at top levels as it should be of what must be done. And as for the Americans, as usual they seem to gather their information from cocktail party gossip and appear—despite Christian Science Monitor ~~XXXX~~ stories to the contrary—to be unaware of much of the desire for change.

On the Plan Organization side, where I am working, we are confidently outlining an economic development program which implies a substantial amount of change in income distribution, a growth of power in the private sector, and a real increase in agricultural productivity which will mean tenure changes when they come can be much less disruptive of food and industrial crop supplies. Certainly there is widespread general agreement that ~~much~~ more resources must be channeled into development activities and less into luxuries, and a surprising willingness—at least at this stage—to permit us to plan on a program which assumes reduced imports of luxuries, higher taxes, etc. When the parliament receives the plan we may have a clearer indication of the true temperament of the influential circles.

Drop us a note again when time permits.

Sincerely yours,

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