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PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
June 21, 2006

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Authority 969000  
By *AK* Date 7/1/02

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*RS/AN*  
*PO4 IRAN*

# AIRGRAM

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RM/R	REP	AF
1		
ARA	EUR	FE
NEA	CU	INR
		6
E	P	IO
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L	FBO	AID
AGR	COM	FRB
<i>Pm</i> <i>2</i>	<i>45</i> <i>10</i>	
INT	LAB	TAR
TR	XMB	AIR
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ARMY	CIA	NAVY
3	16	7
OSD	USIA	NSA
34	10	3
<i>nsc</i> <i>6</i>		

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NO.

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO Department of State  
**RECEIVED**  
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SEP 19 4 55 PM '72

FROM *RS/AN*  
ANALYSIS BRANCH  
AmEmbassy TEHRAN

DATE: September 9, 1972

SUBJECT: Journalist Argues that Unchecked SAVAK Power  
Constitutes Long Term Danger to Iranian Regime

REF : Tehran 4789  
*m*

### SUMMARY

Associated Press correspondent in Iran, Parviz Raein, cites the mistreatment by SAVAK (The Iranian Security and Information Organization) of a prominent Iranian citizen and SAVAK's mis-handling of student protests over increased bus fares in Tehran two years ago as examples of unchecked power by the Iranian security authorities that, in his view, create opposition rather than dispose of it. Raein charges that SAVAK Chief, General Nematollah Nassiri, has become extremely corrupt and that Iranian officials, even those very close to the Shah, are afraid to cross the Intelligence Organization. Raein professed to be personally worried, as were many of his friends, about what the future holds for Iran unless the power of Iran's security apparatus is checked.

\* \* \* \*

During a recent call by the reporting officer on Associated Press Iran representative, Parviz Raein (protect), the subject of urban terrorism came up. Whereupon Raein launched into a dissertation, the central theme of which was that SAVAK itself is primarily responsible for the phenomenon. Raein said he was not attempting to deny that there were basic tensions and strains in present day Iranian society on which terrorists might feed. Rather, he was arguing that over reaction and inflexibility by SAVAK constituted the critical spark that had led to violence.

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*26 Sept 72*

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In  Out

Drafted by: POL:AIKillgore:jm *AK*

Contents and Classification Approved by:  
DCM - Douglas Heck

Clearances:

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Raein continued that with a terrorist incident, such as a bombing or shooting, occurring almost every day in Tehran, it was hard to remember that there was no real terrorism in Iran before the summer of 1970. In that year bus fares were suddenly increased in Tehran from two to five rials\*. Students at Tehran University had reacted vigorously against the hike in fares, breaking bus windows and overturning some vehicles. SAVAK had then reacted savagely.

Raein charged that SAVAK had arrested hundreds of students, beaten some of them nearly to death and expelled 50 of them permanently from the University. The expelled students were not permitted to work, to go abroad to study or to enter any other university in Iran. In short, they were left in limbo. That is still the situation they find themselves in. The students had signed an apology and various efforts by family and friends had been made to secure clemency from the Shah, but all attempts had failed. The supplicants had gotten to General Fereidun Jam, Chief of the Supreme Commanders Staff at that time, with a petition, pointing out that at least two of the expellees were in their next to last year of medical school and that it seemed unfair to prevent them from completing their professional training. But Jam refused on grounds that he could not intercede with the Shah in what was SAVAK's business.

The Associated Press representative said it was no wonder that university students made up the bulk of the terrorists. University students all over Iran believed that SAVAK was acting unjustly in keeping the expelled students in a state of "living death," and bitterly resented SAVAK's high handedness. It was outraged students who made up the bulk of the terrorist groups, Raein contended. Moreover, the students had plenty of sympathizers, not only among their families and friends but among others who feared SAVAK power.

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Raein said he wished to cite another example of SAVAK tyranny that had even less justification than had SAVAK repression against the

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\*\$1.00 = 76.25 rls

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students. This example involved a single individual, Sadiq Behdad, and since SAVAK's action against him had occasioned no public outcry, or even notice, Raein felt a little uneasy because he realized that the same thing could happen to anyone in present day Iran, including himself.

Sadiq Behdad was described as a highly successful Tehran lawyer. Three years ago he was making the equivalent of more than \$100,000 a year. He had been in the opposition as a student but that had been many years before. Now he was legal counsel to a dozen important Iranian firms and a pillar of the establishment.

Suddenly in the late summer of 1969 Behdad disappeared. Nothing was heard of him for 52 days. On the 52nd day his wife was driven to a house in Tehran where she found her husband dazed and inquiring why she would be coming to see him in the night time. In fact the sun was shining brightly outside. Behdad told his wife that he was the prisoner of SAVAK, as she had already surmised.

Behdad's friends eventually put together the incidents which had aroused the suspicions of SAVAK. These were that one of Behdad's close relatives had died. Letters of condolence had arrived from all over Iran and some had come from abroad. One of these was from General Taimour Bakhtiar written from Switzerland. Bakhtiar, a former SAVAK Chief, was in exile at the time. Although the General's letter was entirely innocuous and contained only Bakhtiar's regrets over the death in Behdad's family, the latter remembering his opposition days as a student and SAVAK's reputation for being super suspicious, decided on impulse to destroy the letter. This he did by tearing it to bits and flushing it down the drain.

A few days later Behdad was arrested by SAVAK who queried him as to whether he had heard anything recently from Bakhtiar. The hapless Behdad foolishly replied that he had heard nothing, not realizing that SAVAK knew better. For what had happened was that SAVAK had intercepted Bakhtiar's letter at Behdad's old address photostated it and had it delivered, apparently unopened, at Behdad's newer and more expensive address.

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Not to drag the story out unduly, Behdad was tried in secret and given a seven year sentence. Every effort by his friends to secure his release failed until just a few days ago. Court Minister Alam and the Prime Minister himself were represented as unwilling to approach the Shah on the case, on grounds that "SAVAK's business is SAVAK's business." Raein himself, who claims to be a friend of Alam, said he had personally seen Alam three times on the case. When he last saw Alam about a month ago, Alam tipped him off that Behdad and some others were about to be released. Subsequently, according to Raein, Behdad has been set free but nothing has appeared in the media to this effect. Raein says Behdad's problem now is to try to pick up the threads of his life, but it is doubtful if he can ever again become a prominent lawyer due to the residue of suspicion that will attach to him as a former prisoner.

\* \* \* \* \*

Raein said that the corruption of General Nassiri is widely known. Next to the Shah, Nassiri has become the biggest landowner on the Caspian Sea. SAVAK power has become more and more unchallengeable; and as its power has grown so has its corruption. The Shah unfortunately pays greater heed to SAVAK counsels than he does to anybody else. This is very dangerous because SAVAK believes in handling criticism and dissidence with an iron fist when what is needed is more flexibility and clemency towards dissenters. The handling by SAVAK of the Tehran University students was a perfect example of how iron repression had backfired. If the Shah would only pardon the expelled students much of the heart would go out of the terrorist movement. But Raein had little hope that he would do so because SAVAK was surely advising him against clemency.

The Associated Press representative said he is very much disturbed by the omnipotence of the Security Organization. His own material well-being was about everything he could hope for. He had no real needs and his professional life was full, successful and satisfying. Should he not therefore feel himself an integral part of the Establishment? Yet he did not and it worried him. A man needed not only material wealth; spiritual freedom was also necessary and that was more and more missing in Iran today.

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COMMENT: We are not attempting to say anything definitive about SAVAK at this point. However, Raein is a substantial and intelligent Iranian citizen who fears, as we do, that harsh GOI policies towards internal dissenters may in fact be hardening the attitudes of guerrillas and their sympathizers. We shall be watching and reflecting on the complex inter-relationship between an often over zealous security organization and those Iranian elements who quietly or violently resist such concentration of power. Meanwhile, Parviz Raein's views are of interest.

FARLAND  
*JAD*

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