

for example, with people like Ghotbzadeh and others? Was it a good one? And did that help give confidence to your house guests?

A. Well, I think the house guests — it was essentially a true test of character. If they saw themselves becoming somewhat depressed, they immediately looked at their position, vis-a-vis everybody else. They never thought that they would not get out, and soon were able to maintain their good relations.

My own experience and own relationship with Iranian government officials was a good one. I think much the same as an ambassador from a medium-sized country — Scandinavia, New Zealand, Australia — there were no particular problems. And I enjoyed the same access to the foreign ministry, as I imagine the rest of my colleagues did.

Q. We all know there were six people in the embassy. But just a little before you were counting people and you said 42 there and seven there. Who is that seventh? And is there another American in Tehran today?

A. No —

Q. Why this number of seven?

A. What I meant is — getting back to the Christmas Eve visit, and I believe at that time they said there were 43 or there were 6, and when I was speaking to Mr. Mills it was to give an indication of the lack of clarity as to the numbers in the compound. I believe it is, as the State Department I believe normally says, approximately 50. So, I meant the six were not the missing six or seven.

Q. You referred earlier to possibly positive developments in the U.N. regarding the release of the hostages. Can you say whether you heard anything while you were still in Tehran that would lead you to place greater credence on this, that would indicate that the release of the hostages is anywhere near at hand?

A. No. I had heard of no new significant developments during the last few days I was in Tehran. I tried to keep pace with what was going on, but our telex traffic was very limited during the last few days, so I didn't have the opportunity to keep as current during those last few days as maybe I would have liked to. But, again, I take some heart from the remarks which were referred to earlier at the U.N.

Q. Would you care to comment on the statement of Mr. Adeli yesterday, the Iranian chargé d'affaires, that the arrangements, such as they were, whatever stage they may have been at, have been set back as a result of the Canadian "caper"?

A. No. I have heard no sort of sense of remark from Tehran of that nature, except Mr. Ghotbzadeh's initial response that it is a probability. However, there has been no other indication that I have heard, either from Mr. Bani-Sadr or from Mr. Beheshti of the revolutionary council.

Q. Mr. Ambassador, I have two questions. You mentioned you had a phone call on or about January 19. I

wonder if you can tell us a little bit more about that; who it came from, or the nature of it. Was it a menacing or friendly phone call?

A. Well, during that period, I started with the assumption that all phone calls were menacing. But it was a phone call when I was not home. It was answered by Mrs. Taylor. They wanted to speak to me. When she said I wasn't home, they said they would insist on speaking to Mr. and Mrs. Stafford. They would not identify themselves, and yet they said "we know there are two people of such names there."

Q. In this circular decision-making route that you described earlier, obviously, Canadians and Americans would have to contemplate the risks involved for the remaining hostages. How, at the time, did you assess those risks? And what then made you determined to go ahead with the escape in light of those risks?

A. I think that was probably one of the predominant worries we had: that the last thing we possibly wanted to trigger was any negative implications for the remaining 50 at the compound. However, our reading of the situation was such that it would not provoke a negative reaction in Iran.

Q. Why?

A. Because of the nature of the time, the Iranians themselves were preoccupied with the resolution of the hostages at the compound. I don't think they were particularly concerned by six having been outside the compound, and that if the six in fact left Iran, it was really marginal to the entire issue at hand.

Q. Mr. Ambassador, I want to ask you something about housekeeping details during this time that you gave hospitality to six Americans. Did that present any kind of a problem? For example, bringing in food and things like that. Who did that? And how was it arranged so that nobody became suspicious because all of a sudden you were feeding six more people than you should.

A. As I said, there were some points where they were in other Canadian residences, so it was spread around somewhat.

Q. You mean the six were spread around in one building?

A. No, not all the time. What I can confirm to you is that at no time were they ever in the Chancery itself — not in the office itself.

Now, the housekeeping and what have you was not as difficult as it may seem. The residence I am in has an unobtrusive side street. The other residences or houses often times have interior garages. In Tehran, food shortages were of such a nature — they were never serious, they were often just spot shortages — that whenever you could buy 50 pounds of that or 30 dozen of that, you did it. So it was not unusual to see someone making purchases of what you would not call a sort of corner confectionery type dimension or magnitude.