

back positions, I think everyone — and this is what was extremely important — particularly the six people were, if I can use the word although maybe not appropriate, brimming with confidence. They felt that it was set up and good enough to work. I am not suggesting that there weren't some moments of nervousness or concern, or that we didn't try to develop contingency plans in case something quite unexpected would have gone awry.

Q. I am wondering, Mr. Ambassador, you have mentioned some concern about the press reports being broken. But beyond that, is there any time frame that was particularly difficult for you? Was it the final days? Or what did you think, in a kind of a gut reaction, was the most difficult time for you?

A. I think nearing the conclusion, so to speak. I think that was both because of the inevitably increasing number of people who were aware. The phone call and, at the residence. The possibility of a press break, and then the activity of the last seven days knowing that you had a deadline to meet and that the arrangements were tailored to that deadline. And if something unforeseen came up, it would be, again, difficult both from a practical point of view and psychologically to get everybody up again to be as assured of success as had that time, the second time.

Q. How did you keep the secret? Peter Jennings kept saying that he couldn't believe you would have dinner and a drink and not blow it.

A. There is not much to drink in Tehran these days.

Q. I meant tea!

A. I think, as well as people here, you attempted, whenever you were outside your house, to put it totally out of mind. It was not a subject that you let yourself sort of talk about. It was particularly difficult I think when everyone would ask you, but how can you add up the number of hostages. Well, I said, I can never add up the number of hostages. There were 43 there, seven there. And some of the stories coming out were suggesting that, in fact, there were 15 Americans at large. But the stories, fortunately, never went past that point or they lost their way in the thing. So when Peter was perplexed, I was as perplexed as he was sometimes.

Q. Puis-je vous poser ma question en français, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur?

R. Oui.

Q. Voici. C'est une question un peu spéciale. On a entendu hier le chargé d'affaires iranien à Ottawa nous dire qu'un règlement pour la libération des otages qui sont à l'ambassade américaine est en vue. Monsieur Clark nous a répété la même chose ce matin en disant que Monsieur Carter avait discuté de ça avec lui au téléphone.

Maintenant, vous dites: nous avons choisi ce moment pour évacuer les Américains hors de Téhéran. Est-ce qu'on n'est pas un peu tenté de croire que si vous avez choisi ce moment c'est parce qu'effectivement un

règlement est en vue à l'ambassade américaine et qu'il a été plus facile pour vous de le faire vu le contexte psychologique?

R. Non, je ne pense pas. C'est l'occasion de la possibilité de la presse de faire une histoire de cette chose. It was not necessarily tied to the imminent negotiations, it was more tied to the fact that the risk was increasing greatly each day.

Q. Vous n'êtes pas au courant alors d'un effort sérieux en vue d'une possibilité sérieuse de règlement.

A. Yes. I was aware, but there was not a great deal new. Say, we are talking now of two weeks ago. I think that is a decision, as I said, was the decision of the 26th, and that was made a week before, and now it is a week later. I understand there have been some possibly positive developments in the U.N. over the last week and a half, but quite honestly it was not one of the critical reasons for moving at that time.

Q. Mr. Ambassador, clearly there was a discussion among, in effect, friendly Western embassies that decided the Canadian embassy was the most secure. Could you explain why the Canadian embassy was chosen? And secondly on a point of detail, did the six Americans actually work at any time as if they were Canadians?

A. The first question. There was no consultation among embassies where the six should go, although if, I think, there would have been, the Canadian embassy may have been the logical place to go. Its location is out from the downtown area, away from the British, Russian, French, Italian, American embassies — up more in the residential area. Secondly, our relations with Iran are traditionally very good. There was no troublesome aspect to them, so it would have been a neutral place to put them. But in point of fact the decision was taken by the six themselves.

The second part of the question is: No, they were not working or doing anything, they were either in my residence or in another Canadian residence during the time that they were in Tehran.

There is one question you asked this morning, Mr. Gwyn, too, which is very pertinent, I think. And that is the matter of the locally-engaged staff. If I could address that one too. It was a preoccupation to us but, at the same time, there was no Iranian at any time involved in the operation to exfiltrate the Americans.

The locally engaged staff, that is the Iranian staff at the embassy were given instructions on Sunday, January 25, that since I would be away from Tehran shortly the office would be temporarily closed until at least the following Sunday. So if there had been — which there hasn't been — any possible investigation they would not be caught at the office.

Q. Can you tell me why your confidence seemed to continue throughout this entire thing? Why there wasn't more fear? You have alluded to the good spirits that seemed to be present. What was your relationship,