

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ken Follett
FROM: Ross Perot
DATE: November 4, 1981

The periods of greatest emotion for me during the rescue were as follows:

- 1) The telephone call to Vail, informing me that Paul and Bill had been arrested. We had just been assured by the State Department at the highest levels that they would be free to leave the country after the meeting. My principal emotion was anger. Carolyn's recollection of my comments is probably accurate -- "I don't want Paul and Bill in that jail for another damned minute."
- 2) In early January, after the family returned from skiing, Ross and Nancy were leaving to go back to Vanderbilt. Ross knew that Col. Simons was here and could figure out the rest. He and I had talked about it in an abstract way.

He had been through this type of experience before when he was a boy.

Nancy did not know about the plans for a rescue, but I knew and that made it more difficult to say goodbye to her.

As Ross was leaving, he gave me a big hug as usual and said, "Love you, Pop". The only thing unusual about his departure was that Ross had tears in his eyes.

- 3) I felt frustration to a degree that I had not known it ^{before} during early January in our repeated efforts to get help from our government. I just assumed our government would help us and was shocked to learn that it would not.
- 4) I entered into the conversation with the rescue team members with great concern, not knowing what to say, how to say it, or if anyone would volunteer. This feeling gave way to a sense of pride and gratitude that I have never felt before or since, as the rescue team members volunteered.

5) My conversation with Mother is one of the great moments of my life. She knew she was dying, but never discussed it. She was in great pain. She knew she might not see me again. She knew I could also be detained in Iran, and yet she firmly and emphatically urged me to go -- "You have no choice. These are your men. You are responsible for them. They haven't done anything wrong. Our government won't help them. It is up to you to get them out".

6) The day I visited Paul and Bill was an emotion-filled day. My strongest emotions occurred after the visit.

As I entered the prison, I felt the normal tension you would expect.

On seeing Ramsey Clark, my initial reaction was that I would probably be picked up. This gave way quickly to a feeling of being lucky, when the General reacted in a positive way to the fact that I knew Ramsey and Ramsey did not give the General an indication of who I was.

As I walked through the prison to meet Paul and Bill, I realized for the first time exactly what an Iranian prison was. The thought of being held there for weeks was now something I could relate to.

The meeting with Paul and Bill was filled with emotion. It was a positive meeting. It was a meeting that was good for them and good for me. I was glad we had it.

We we drove to the prison and then back to the hotel and I looked at the mob activity all through the city, I distinctly remember feeling that time was running out. The country was disintegrating. The Shah would not make it.

7) When I met with Ambassador Sullivan in the U.S. Embassy, I felt --

-- Anger at his arrogance and rudeness.

-- Annoyance at his refusal to allow me sanctuary in the Embassy when there were obviously empty facilities. (Military attaches later told me these facilities were being saved for friendly Iranians.)

-- Surprise at his comment, "Why are you here?" I replied, "Mr. Ambassador, I am here to get my men out of prison, just as you would if your people were being detained." He missed my point entirely replying, "That's

ridiculous. Embassy employees have diplomatic immunity. This could never happen to our people."

Several months later it did happen. Sullivan had gotten safely out of Iran. He did not go back.

As I left the meeting with Sullivan, several of the military attaches were waiting in the hall. We sat on a bench in the hall and talked.

They were genuinely concerned. They wanted to help, but could offer no insight into who in the Iranian government would order Paul and Bill's release. As one of the attaches said, "No one is in charge."

I left the Embassy meeting angry at Sullivan and disappointed once again that we could get no help at all from our country.

I did not anticipate that Iranian Embassy employees would immediately leak word to the revolutionaries that I was in town.

8) My visit with General Gast and General Huyser was poignant. They greeted me warmly, and although both were very busy, they ordered their aides not to interrupt them and talked with me at length. Their concern was genuine.

I asked them to use their leverage with the Iranian generals who were running the country at that point to get Paul and Bill out.

They told me that could not do this because they had no leverage with the Iranian generals who were asking for aid and we were refusing it.

Gen. Huyser seemed extremely tired. He was much changed from his normally dynamic personality. I later learned that he had been sent to Iran by President Carter to convince Iran's top generals to remain in Iran after the Shah's departure.

Anyone who understood the situation knew that the general^s who remained would be shot. Huyser's job was to convince the best military men in Iran to remain in the country -- for the privilege of being executed. Those who stayed were shot.

Military flights were still operating into Tehran daily. Both Gast and Huyser repeated what Gen. David Jones (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, our top military man in the U.S.) had told me. "Ross, if you can get them out of jail, we will get

them out of the country".

I told both generals in confidence that Col. Simons was in Tehran to look after the men after we got them out of jail. I made no mention of a rescue team, or considering a rescue. Huyser saw through this immediately. For the first time during our meeting, he smiled and then started laughing. Gen. Gast quickly grasped what Huyser was laughing about and joined in. Both of these men knew exactly who Simons was and what he was up to.

As I walked out of the door, Huyser gave me a knowing look and said, "Remember, Ross, if you can get them out of prison, we can get them out of the country."

As I drove away, I felt that I had been with friends who genuinely cared, and would do whatever they could to help, but were involved in events within the country that had drained them.

Gen. Gase^T had sent a bullet-proof car over to the hotel to pick me up for the meeting and return me back to the hotel. The driver was a young Iranian officer. I remember wondering which side he was on.

9) I remember meeting in Tehran with the negotiating team members after a particularly difficult session. Dadgar had threatened them with arrest.

-- The government was falling apart.

-- The Shah was leaving in hours.

-- The negotiating team was tense, tired and understandably concerned.

I asked them if they felt they should discontinue negotiations and leave the country. We appeared to have reached a stalemate.

I told each man to make his own decision. The team members gave no consideration to leaving.

At that moment I had very deep feelings of pride and admiration for these men.

A few hours later, the bribe intermediary called.

Here was a way out for all of us.

-- It was legal.

-- We could settle for 50¢ on the dollar.

-- The negotiating team could leave the country.

-- The rescue team would not be needed.

-- Paul and Bill would be released.

I vividly remember the totally negative reaction by all of the team members.

Col. Simons felt the bribe would not work. Time was running out. If we pursued it, we could lose Paul and Bill, if it failed.

Col. Simons felt it could be a Persian trick to seal Paul and Bill's fate and all of the members of the negotiating team. Dadgar would simply go public that we had attempted to bribe him.

This was an emotional time. I clearly remember the strength, hard-mindedness and good judgement of the men. They had examined all the escape hatches and decided to stay. They could have easily rationalized that this would work. They could have left Iran. If and when it failed, it would be too late to go back.

It was obvious to me that Col. Simons had changed these people from normal men. They were different from the men I had known in Dallas. Nothing would deter the rescue of Paul and Bill.

I clearly remember lying awake all night thinking about how normal men are capable of rising above normal behavior when involved in events that require them to be great.

10) As I was leaving Iran, I had a lot of concern about getting through the airport. After I got through the checkpoints and had to spend 8 hours in the waiting area waiting for the plan to leave, my thoughts were mingled between concern about being picked up and the anticipation of spending a few days with Margot in London.

I had called Margot from Iran two days earlier and asked her to meet me in London. We did not discuss why. We both knew. This would be a time we knew we would have together. Once the rescue started to unfold, no one could predict the future.

I remember thinking as I sat in the Tehran airport that in our entire married life, Margot had never reduced her concerns to a personal level. During the POW years, she never complained about the absences or the risks. She never complained about the security problems to herself or the children. Even in our private conversations during this period, she spoke only of her concern for the men who were prisoners and their families. She had handled the Iranian situation in the same fashion. It made all the difference in my ability to stay focused on what I had to do, and block out negative thoughts that would cause me to rationalize inaction.

As I flew to London, wedged in the center seat of a dirty, all tourist class airplane, I reflected on how fortunate I had been all my life -- my parents, the Naval Academy, Margot, the children, EDS, the fine people in the company, and finally, the men I had just left in Iran. Maybe my luck would hold through the rescue.

I remember thinking that if a person has a given amount of luck in life, surely by the time the rescue is over, I will have used mine up.

I thought about how my life had been like a spider web and all of it had come together around the rescue. I knew Col. Simons, and could call on him. I had contacts all through our government that I knew well and could ask for help. There was no logical pattern to any of this, and yet it had occurred.

In spite of all these contacts, in the negotiating efforts nothing was working. This left me feeling that I could only count on the team. Time was running out.

11) The call that the prison break had occurred and that Paul and Bill had arrived safely at the hotel came early in the morning while I was still asleep. I was elated! It was all over. The U. S. military would do the rest.

Margot remembers me saying repeatedly, "Get out of the hotel".

12) I immediately chartered a lear jet to go to Washington. I felt absolutely terrific and could have flown to Washington without the jet. All I had to do was make arrangements with the military to fly the men out. When I got to the Pentagon, I found that Khoemini had cancelled the U.S. military flights into Tehran. All commercial flights to Iran had also been cancelled. Nobody knew when or if flights would be resumed.

To make matters worse, our government had lost all communication with Iran. Gen. Gast was in an underground bunker surrounded by revolutionary troops. By now it was Sunday evening. My mood was reversed. I was deflated, but we had come too far to stop now.

I sent word to Col. Simons to get ready to come out overland.

I called Dallas and told them to find a long-range aircraft with single sideband equipment, and have it ready in Washington Monday night.

I called Dallas and left instructions to have the Turkish rescue team in Washington by late Monday afternoon. I instructed Dallas to find light airplane and helicopter pilots and have them in Washington Monday afternoon. I told Dallas to do whatever it took to buy a light airplane and helicopter and have them in eastern Turkey within 72 hours, ready for use.

Late Sunday night I went back to the Pentagon to get maps and abandoned airport data. I took a cab. When I left, I could find no transportation. Fortunately, a military officer recognized me and gave me a ride back to the hotel. I was tired, and frustrated, but determined when I went to bed.

All day Monday I made the rounds of the State Department and the White House to see if our government could help us at all in getting the men out. We were told again and again that our government could do nothing.

We tried to get the State Department to give us Paul and Bill's passports. They declined to return them because they were concerned about offending the Iranians.

I bought cold weather clothing at a sporting goods store late Monday afternoon.

Washington was covered with ice and snow. It is Monday night. Gary has the airplane. It is in Washington. It has a transponder problem that must be fixed. Gary is looking for the parts.

The Turkish team is in Washington. The helicopter and aircraft pilots are in Washington. Simons knows he will have to come out overland and that we are on the way to Turkey.

Mort Meyerson, the President of EDS, spent the evening with me at the Madison Hotel. We went over EDS business affairs in detail. Neither of us mentioned why we were doing it. We were both tired.

In the middle of our business conversation Mort said, "Ross, your mother is very ill. You should stay here. I will go in your place."

My emotions were very strong here because Mort understood the risks involved.

I discussed Mort's idea with Tom Marquez and Merv. We couldn't really consider this option because I had too many things in my head. Mort couldn't replace me at this point, but his offer meant a great deal to me. It said a great deal about him and his friendship. It was the only good feeling I had had since coming to Washington.

I slept for awhile.

Everybody was worried that I could not get to the airport because of the ice. I took a cab about 2:00 in the morning and rode to the airport without difficulty.

They were still working on the airplane when I arrived. Gary Fernandes was there. I stretched out on a bench and napped. Finally, about sunrise we were ready to go. I went aboard the aircraft and was shocked at how luxurious it was.

I shook hands with Julian, Dick, the Turkish rescue team and the crew. I said goodbye to Gary and went to sleep. I remember thinking, "Well, it's started."

13) Waiting in Turkey for the team to come out overland is probably the worst experience of my life. I felt more tension here than at any other time, including waiting in the

holding area in the Tehran airport. Finally, the telephone rang in my hotel room in Istanbul and I was told that the entire team was on Turkish soil. I talked with Paul and Bill. The connection was terrible, but I could recognize their voices. I was exhilarated!

14) The greatest moment of my life was when the team came storming into my hotel room. They looked terrible, but they were yelling and hugging and full of energy. The rescue had succeeded!

We called Dallas. Emotions ran high as Paul and Bill talked to the people working in Dallas.

Paul and Bill were then put through to their wives for a private conversation.

Then, some of the rest of us got on the phone with the Dallas group. They were in great spirits and there was a great deal of joking and ribbing. I sent Merv the last coded message and that broke everyone up.

As I mentioned, the three days of waiting with no word were the worst days of my life. This moment was the best.

I remember feeling that we had bet everything and won. Our luck had not yet run out.

15) Leaving Frankfurt we were tired, but everyone felt great. It was over! Col. Simons and the team had pulled it off!

We had just started to enjoy the celebration that we intended to last from Frankfurt to Washington when Capt. Carlen asked me to come forward. Again, my feelings went from one extreme to another as he informed me, "We may lose the aircraft."

My principal reaction was that there was nothing we could do about it. This was an event beyond our control.

I told the men. The celebration stopped. They were calm. We carefully stowed all of our equipment so that it would not be flying around the airplane if we crashed.

Simons went back to sleep. The others sat quietly. I was wide awake. I was concerned by my principal feeling was that somehow we would make it. We had come too far to fail now. When we landed at Heathrow, we all cheered. Another hurdle had been crossed.

16) After we boarded the Braniff flight, the other first class passengers became nervous about the ominous-looking group in the upstairs lounge. The Braniff captain asked if I would go downstairs with the other passengers and put them at ease. The captain had no idea what we had been up to at that point. He felt that most of the passengers would recognize me and stop worrying about the people once they knew they were with me. I briefly told the passengers what Col. Simons and his team had done. Their reaction was far beyond anything I would have anticipated. For the first time I began to grasp what this rescue would mean to the American people.

17) As we landed in Dallas, I was preoccupied with getting ^{Rashid} past immigration and was stunned by the cheering crowd of EDS'ers that had come out on Sunday afternoon to welcome Paul and Bill home.

Margot and the girls were there. It was great to see them.

I remember feeling immense satisfaction at seeing Paul and Bill as they hugged their families. They were back together again.

People had made posters and banners from materials they could find in their homes. The warmth and spontaneity of the welcome was almost too much. I remember feeling tears in my eyes.

I remember wondering if all of these people had even considered what the cost to them might have been if the rescue had failed.

I remember seeing Merv in the crowd and thinking that we could not have done this without him. He kept it glued together, just as he had kept the prisoner of war project together, and many of the other events I had been involved with. He had been a vital part of the team. We could not have done it without him. My principal feeling was that he was a true friend that I could always count on. Whatever it took, he got the job done.

Rashid

Without introducing [REDACTED] I put my arm around him and made it clear to the crowd by my comments that we could not have succeeded without him. The crowd cheered. [REDACTED] Rashid smiled shyly. This was his welcome to America.

Paul and Bill made brief speeches. Col. Simons said a few words.

Col. Simons and I were standing to the side watching the celebration. I was thinking about all of the different places we could have failed. Our luck did not run out. I remember thinking of the proverb , "Success has a thousand fathers. Failure is an orphan."

Col. Simons looked at me after watching Paul and Bill's families for several minutes and said, "I just got paid for the trip." This obviously had been an emotional experience for him, also.