

Memorandum for the Record

Washington, January 30, 1980.

[CIA, NSC]

1. Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Executive Registry, Job 95M01183R, Box 1, Folder 3. Secret; Eyes Only.
2. On January 29 the six Americans hidden by the Canadian Embassy in Tehran, left Iran through the Tehran airport under false identification provided by the Canadian government. The Department's briefing of the press on their escape is telegram 25394 to Ottawa, January 29; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files.

[unclassified]

3. See footnote 6, Document . [~~NSC Mtg Min, 11/23/79, 8:15 a.m.~~]

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~~SECRET~~
EYES ONLY

30 January 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation of 29 January 1980

1. We talked about the Canadian Six operation and I gave some details on how that went. There was obvious pleasure at the success of this operation. (S)

2. I discussed the other hostages and, [redacted] I urged more attention be given to the plight of the hostages in our public releases. (S)

3. I then expressed my concern that, despite our hopes, Bani Sadr's election did not necessarily mean that he would be able to take charge and work a release for the hostages. I felt that we needed to have a rescue operation capability on standby for situations such as the killing of some hostages, a prolonged stalemate for all of them, or the release of most but continued detention of the others for an indefinite period of time. I said that the key risk in the present operational plan was loss of surprise. I had rather good confidence once the rescue force reached the walls of the Embassy compound. The weak points were the number of aircraft that had to surreptitiously enter Iran and the capture of the airfield at Nain. I pointed out that's why we wanted to fly our aircraft to look for a substitute landing place. I thought the probability of discovery was low, with the highest risk being danger of crackup on landing. That is one reason we want to do it in full moonlight. Our next opportunity, then, would be the end of February. (S)

I urged that we continue to plan for this and that the Defense Department be encouraged to continue their planning. I pointed out that our exploratory flight, among other things, might just prod the Defense Department into finding still some different solution to this part of the problem. There was agreement that we should continue and the Defense Department should continue, and that there would be a Jones/Turner briefing on this sometime in a couple of weeks--well before a decision on the TWIN OTTER operation for the end of the month had to be made. (S)

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

(b)(3)

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4. I discussed the prospects for negotiating release of the hostages, and expressed my concern that we are in danger of negotiating away everything we can possibly give, only to find that the group we are dealing with in the end lacks full authority and bucks the decision up to a higher level which requires something more. If it weren't for Afghanistan, that might not be so bad. We could always make any kind of humiliating statement or attend some kind of a humiliating tribunal as we did with the Pueblo and then renounce it. In the wake of Afghanistan, however, we are going to need a viable government in Iran. I was concerned that, while the evidence was not hard at this point, the probability of the Left moving into a vacuum that could well be created is just too high. I pointed out that even though we are pleased with Bani Sadr's election generally, and even if he helps us solve the hostage situation, there is very little indication that he has the know-how or the skill to bring the country out of the chaos that it is in. (S)

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STANSFIELD TURNER
Director

(b)(3)

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