

TO: Ross Perot  
FROM: Jay Coburn  
DATE: November 2, 1981  
SUBJECT: HIDING OUT IN TEHRAN

Where were you on 28 December?

Your presence in E.O.S.

Is your journal in a...

among

present

Preparation

intelligence

details.

Plan.

*Date.*  
*hotel.*  
The entire team was staged in Paris, as more flights were going to Iran from there. We obtained one confirmed reservation and two standbys to Tehran through Zurich. The Colonel, Joe Poche and I went to Zurich. There was no standby room on the plane and the Colonel gave me instructions to proceed to Tehran. I took the case with the false bottom and my gear and proceeded to check in for the flight on to Tehran from Zurich. Talk about standing out like a sore thumb! There weren't very many Americans heading back into Tehran at this point.  
*Slight*  
*Why these three?*  
*Date*

*Date + time*  
No one in Tehran knew of my arrival so there was no one to meet me at the airport. The security at the airport was just about as normal. It was a very typical airport scene, chaotic! My luggage was not checked anymore than usual. It was a breeze getting through the different passport checks and the case was not checked. I hired a taxi and proceeded to the Bucharest office. There was a lot more military hardware sitting around the city than normal.  
*how many?*

*perkins*  
*conductor to Tehran*  
At the office, I found Keane Taylor and told him I was going to need his help. The cover story for Keane was that my responsibility was to plan for different alternatives to get everybody out of the country if everything else failed, meaning the airports closed, etc. He assisted me in getting keys to various apartments that we had throughout the city, locating vehicles, fuel, etc.  
*what else?*  
*how many?*

*example: how many, additional*  
The next two days were spent identifying places where we could locate the entire team when they arrived. Also, relocating vehicles to use at a later time and finding more detailed maps in preparation for the Colonel's arrival.  
*read map*  
*what*

*date, do not know*  
*where?*  
On the third day, the Colonel and Joe arrived and we stayed at Keane's place. We spent the evening going over the situation with logistics and developing a route for the recon of the jail the next morning.

*who?* *vehicle?* *discussion*  
*Date.* Our first drive down to the temporary detention center was exciting in that we got caught up in a number of demonstrations. There were literally thousands of people walking through the streets with their banners and posters. It was slow going, but eventually we worked our way down to the area and drove by the jail twice.

*more.*  
The grounds were not laid out the same as we had planned for and the fence was a lot higher than what we had been led to believe. We anticipated traffic being congested but the spontaneous demonstrations going on would be difficult to predict. For the next few days we proceeded to alter our plans to penetrate this location based on our first-hand observation. The Colonel wanted to get one of us in there to physically see what it was like on the inside and what the guard routine was like. The negotiation team had visitors in to see Paul and Bill, so he decided that we'd send somebody in with this group on the next visit.

*who?* *date*  
An Iranian employee, Rich Gallagher and I went there and I was introduced to the guards as a friend of Paul and Bill. They did not do a body search prior to entry and the routine was loose. I mentally took notes and told Paul to do the same on the area I could not see and report to me on subsequent visits.

*more, what was Paul to look for?* *detention*

The Colonel debriefed me in his normal detailed manner, making sure that he had gleaned every possible bit of information out of me. This process of getting intelligence and refining the snatch plan continued and in addition the Colonel began to identify the options for our escape route from Tehran and out of the country. *list the options*

*date* *who?* *to answer what question*  
He sent Glen Jackson from Paris to Kuwait to gather information on the Persian Gulf option and to be there as a contact. Many options were investigated but the overland options appeared to be most practical and for these we needed reliable four-wheel drive vehicles. One of our Iranian employees located two Range Rovers and purchased a number of spare part items to insure on the spot repair. This took about a week and preparations for a recon trip to the Turkish Border were made while waiting. *details*

*How do you find out?* It was during this week also, that the biggest blow to our snatch plan took place. The situation in the country was continuing to deteriorate and the decision was made by the Iranian officials to move Paul and Bill to a more secure location. They felt they could better protect Paul and Bill at a more secure location, Ghasre prison.

*Date* *details* *why?*  
After viewing the new prison from outside, the Colonel decided against a snatch as our force was not enough to penetrate this fortress. The Colonel began looking at options. (1) An inside job, enlisting the aid of a guard or official. (2) Waiting until the situation in the streets got so bad that it would be very easy because of the chaos to break in and get them out. (3) Or snatch them if we could arrange an outside visit.

*all the people*

*why?*  
In considering the options, it became apparent that we would need some type of vehicle to vehicle communications and better maps. Also, the Colonel decided to minimize the number of people that we had in Tehran while waiting. As a result Jim and Pat were sent to round up that gear and bring it back to us at the appropriate time. *What did they get & when did they bring it?*

*who?*  
We again focused our attention on the overland routes out of Iran. We sent an Iranian employee to the Persian Gulf to determine obstacles and develop contacts. *where? - what do I he report?* Even though we investigated all *detail them all.* options, the Colonel felt that the Turkish Border offered more promise than others. He wanted to drive the route in advance and make the contacts personally. We arranged for a trusted Iranian employee to drive us.

*name?* [redacted] Majid *who was?*

The employee also had a cousin in the Turkish border region, and in fact was a professor at the university in Razaiyeh. This cousin was married to an American and due to the deteriorating situation in the country, was worried about her safety and his child's safety and was sending them back to the states. He was going to be in Tehran to put them on a plane and after accomplishing that, would accompany us back to Razaiyeh.

*date & time - Pressed how? what vehicle?*  
The four of us departed early one morning on a route that would take us through Tabriz up around the north end of the Lake Razaiyeh, which would take us very close to Barzagan, the northern most border crossing point between Iran and Turkey.

Mat  
During the trip the Colonel spent numerous hours engaging the two Iranians in discussions getting to know them and find out about the country side we were travelling through. They both spoke excellent English and as the trip wore on the Colonel became more comfortable with each. I was keeping a detailed log of our journey--driving time between points, etc. <sup>what were they like?</sup> <sup>what did he learn?</sup> <sup>Can I see it?</sup>

A fairly uneventful trip until we got to the large city of Tabriz. There were quite a few demonstrations taking place in the city of Tabriz. Prior to Tabriz, we stopped in Zanjan where the cousin had an uncle that was the chief of police. We stopped by the police station and he provided us <sup>— details.</sup> intelligence on our route on up to the Turkish border. The situation from Tabriz on was supposed to be very tense. Interesting to note also along the way, we saw no Iranian military population along the way. They were in their camps along the route, the ones we could see from the road, but they were not outside of their compounds at all.

We made it on through Tabriz and just north of Tabriz we encountered our first vigilante group. It was a pretty mottly looking group of men and boys. It looked like they had just dropped what they were normally doing in their villages and decided to check vehicles. They didn't have automatic weapons or rifles. But they had axes and hoes and machettes and any kind of stick that you could imagine and it was very apparent by the way that they handled themselves at the beginning of the conversation that they were prepared to use them. We knew from <sup>— when? details?</sup> stopping cars that were coming down towards Tabriz and asking them what was up ahead, that this first group we would encounter would be pro Baktiar and Shah. So we stationed our <sup>— when?</sup> picture of the Shah in the window. This was a very popular thing at that point, to have the picture of whoever you were supporting placed on the vehicle.

This group was very suspicious due to foreigners being in the car and they wanted us to get out of the vehicle. The employee and his cousin convinced them that that really wasn't necessary, that we were scientists coming over from the United States to help them with a project in Razaiyeh. The cousin produced the necessary identification to prove that he in fact was a professor at the university and our American passports, so they let us through.

<sup>- how?</sup>  
We learned that in the town of Khoy there was a lot of trouble. The people there were not pro Baktiar but great supporters of Khomeini. Down came the Shah's picture and up goes our Khomeini picture. <sup>when?</sup>

<sup>- describe</sup>  
On the outskirts of Khoy there was another substantial road block. As before, lots of people were milling around, however, these gents were armed with rifles and a few of them had pistols. One kid very close to our vehicle, had a 9 millimeter Llama pistol and he was a very nervous sort and immediately made visible contact with me and became suspicious. We had decided earlier that we would cooperate with anyone who stopped us. We'd stick with our story that we were scientists trying to get to the university to help with problems, that the cousin was having. At this particular road block, since they had weapons and asked us to get out of the vehicles, we immediately got out of the vehicles and a body search ensued. Not a substantial body search, in fact I had a knife tucked in a belt type scabbard in the middle of my back and as this fellow <sup>- describe</sup> was conducting this search, it was not even detected. I'm not sure exactly what ensued with the rest of the individuals in the vehicle because I was preoccupied with this kid that apparently thought I was a Russian, I guess, due to the type of hat, a little wool cap that I had on and my red beard. He felt I was a "Rooskie" and kept saying that over and over. He had this pistol which he was clenching and pointing right at my forehead with very

How did you feel?  
ever been in this kind  
of position before?

white knuckles and I was concentrating on his activities and didn't pay much attention to what was going on with the rest of the group. But later on they told me that they basically did the same thing to them, body search as well as search the vehicle. The Colonel also mentioned that they were very apologetic to him. Apparently they had a great concern for the elderly and that type of thing, and the young men didn't like the idea of having to search the Colonel. He felt this would be helpful at some time. Somehow they bought our story and sent us on our way and having looked down the barrel of that pistol for quite a few minutes, I was very glad to get away from that place.

We took remote roads on into Rezaiyeh to limit exposure. We stopped by the university <sup>where?</sup> then proceeded to the cousin's house. We met with his landlord who was a customs official, not on the border but he was aware of the activities around the border. He fed us dinner and we bedded down. The drive from Tehran took 12 hours.

What? where?  
How did you know?

There was a lot of trouble in Razaiyeh. The revolutionary types were attempting to take over the city. The next morning we did a recon of the area around the apartment which was on the outskirts of the city. It was ideal for staging our group prior to crossing the border. <sup>why?</sup>

Date: What did you see, how

For the next two days we gathered the intelligence we needed on the border crossing and made contacts with local smugglers. A very key contact to obtain weapons locally was also achieved. This was important as the Colonel did not want to risk getting caught with weapons on the long trip from Tehran to the Border. He did feel a need to be armed while going overland on horseback in the middle of the night with smugglers, however.

how? what was they like?  
how? who?

777

We decided to go back a different route than we came up, wanting more than one alternative to get to the border point. We headed south down the west side of Lake Rezaiyeh and across the mountains to Zanzan and this proved to be the better route. *Map.*

*— date.*  
Upon returning to Tehran, we spent the remaining days going over our route, gathering materials for the trip and evaluating all the options.

*what* *what options?*  
One interesting thing that came up during this time involved a guy we referred to as Deep Throat. Ross had mentioned on occasion that overtures were being made by some groups for a payoff situation to get Paul and Bill released, versus normal legal means and that this was a very common thing in the country. Ross was very skeptical of all these in fact, had turned all these down as being flukes. But this particular one kept pursuing things with us and had made numerous telephone contacts. *— conversation.* Ross wanted me to meet with this gentleman and had a phone number that I needed to call to set that up. At this point, it became very much like a movie, spy routine. I called this phone number, *Date.* this gentleman knew I was going to be calling from his discussions with Ross and I identified myself with the proper code to let him know that I was okay. *— what?* And he told me to go to a particular phone booth. *— where?* Told me the location of it and that he would call me and I needed to be there at 8:00. Sure enough, Deep Throat contacted me at 8:00 and told me to go to the lobby of the Sheraton Hotel. He said that I should be sitting at the entrance in the lobby area where it was visible from the front door, facing the front door and that I should buy a Newsweek Magazine and that I should be reading it and he would at that point, approach me when he felt comfortable and he would say "do you know where Pahalvi Avenue is?" and I was to respond "No I did not, I was new in town". I headed to the Sheraton lobby, purchased Newsweek and waited.

— describe —      — spoke English?

Sure enough this fellow walked up and asked me if I knew where Pahalvi Avenue was and I said no, I was new in town, and he said come with me. And so we went off into one of the back dark areas of the hotel. He proceeded to do a body search. I had a big bulky jacket on and that bothered him quite a bit and he asked me to take it off so that he could make sure there were no listening devices.

Anyway, this meeting was basically to inform us that he was very unhappy about our performance to date, that we had messed him up on numerous occasions by not accepting his offers to negotiate for Paul and Bill's release and that he was going to make his final offer to us, go to bat for us again with his contacts but that this time there had to be no backing out at the last minute. He was a very nervous sort of guy. Very apprehensive about being seen with me, said he was being watched, had to be very careful, etc. So he told me what his offer was and the arrangements he wanted to make which included things like Lloyd Briggs meeting him in Switzerland to sign some type of agreement for a unnumbered bank account there. How we were to get the money there, etc. I passed all this information along to Ross. He told me to recontact Deep Throat and tell him we were flatly not interested, that we hadn't done anything wrong, and at this point we didn't plan on doing anything of that nature and were not interested in his assistance.

7

We settled back into our waiting game as I mentioned earlier and things in the country continued to deteriorate. The Colonel felt very strongly that it was just a matter of time before there was total deterioration in the government, and military. We could at that point count on the mobs reaching the prison compound where they were being held.

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After Paul and Bill were moved to Gasre Prison, the Colonel was preoccupied with developing a new rescue plan. The prison guards pushed their cars inside the prison walls. The Colonel spent hours considering ways to smuggle Paul and Bill out in the trunk of one of these cars. This idea required bribing a guard. We were never able to develop a plan to do this.

The Colonel started spending time in the mobs in the vicinity of the prison. An obvious alternative would be to have the mobs storm the prison . The problem was how to get them to do it.

One day, prior to Ross' visit, he asked me to identify an Iranian that had courage, good judgement, and was loyal to EDS. He emphasized that no one was to know that he was going to be talking to this Iranian. I introduced him to Rashid [REDACTED]. They started going into the mobs together. I knew nothing about what they were doing.

Shortly before the prison break, the Colonel took me for a walk and explained that Rashid [REDACTED] had become active in the mob. On a day which the Colonel would choose, Rashid [REDACTED] would make an impassioned speech, calling on all mob leaders to join in storming the prison to free political prisoners. Rashid [REDACTED] would compare the Iranian revolution to the French revolution and Gasre Prison to the Bastille.

The Colonel told me of this plan because he wanted me, as his deputy, to be informed " . . . in case something happens to me." (I believe that he knew how serious his heart condition was. I believe he was having problems with his heart while we were hiding in Tehran. On several occasions I saw him taking medicine, that later turned out to be heart medication).

He told me that he had briefed Ross on the plan while he was in Iran. He cautioned me that no one else needed to know and that I should not discuss it with anyone under any circumstances. Later I found out that Ross had generally briefed Paul on the plan during the prison visit.

We continued to prepare logistically, monitor the situation in the streets and wait for the appropriate time. Our plans were set until the time was right to get our hands on Paul and Bill.

On the morning of the jail break, the Colonel told Joe and I that this would be the day. The mobs were getting restless and would do the job for us, as we watched from our roof top near the prison. We had numerous eyes and ears at the scene to report to us the activities in the streets.

The word came through that the prison was being overrun and we became anxious about Paul and Bill's safety. If we had not heard positively by dusk the plan called for an Iranian employee and I, on motorcycles to proceed to the prison. Fortunately, they arrived safely at the hotel and we proceeded there to secure Paul and Bill. The remainder is covered in other transcripts.