

because he was being undermined. From, I would say September, 1980, Bani Sadr took a very open position against Khomeini in his famous presentations. He said, the Imam and I do not agree on all issues. And this was the first time, to my knowledge, that someone in Iran had actually said that. From then on, Bani Sadr became kind of a de facto symbol of opposition to this expanding religious power -- All kinds of political forces, gradually -- People who completely disagreed with Bani Sadr and all that. All kinds of liberal forces congregated. Once again, in this situation, when conflict Bani Sadr and Khomeini, Beheshi and Islamic Republic Party developed, the left unanimously took the side of Khomeini and all that, and they treated Bani Sadr the same way they had treated Bazargan. He is a liberal and, theoretically, ultimately, he is the antithesis of this and that -- in a kind of static, frozen almost, idiotic way of looking at the world, which was completely ahistorical and unempirical. So, this is what they did.

When the war broke out, Bani Sadr asked me to join him as a member of his negotiating team. Because immediately after the war, the United Nations, Islamic Conference, and the Non-Allied Movement formed mediating commissions. They were coming to Iran to talk. So, when they come to Iran, they have to talk to the President and all that. So, Bani Sadr asked me to join him in these efforts, and I did.

After the war, for a very short period of time, there was a subsiding of internal differences because of the occupation of the country. So, from late September, early October of 1980, I

got involved in negotiation with these international commissions as an envoy of Bani Sadr when they came to Iran. Also, I went to Europe in January and February. Again, largely in vain. We were asking during this entire period for simultaneous cease-fire and withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Iran with all these three commissions. Here it was another learning experience. Because when these commissions came to Iran, they had to meet with the Revolutionary Council. The Revolutionary Council at this time was really abolished. But with the entire representatives of the Iranian government. Khomeini sent his men, Majles sent their men, and others came from the military, air force, navy, and the ground forces, as well as Foreign Ministry. The Iranian delegation was something like fifteen. And the most important team of mediation that came to Iran was the Islamic Peace Conference, representing twelve presidents and prime ministers: Ziaul-Haq, the Prime Minister of Turkey; and Sekotore.

[end of side one, tape seven]

-- came to Iran, and also the Foreign Minister of the Non-Allied Ministerial Committee, consisting of four foreign ministers, headed by Foreign Minister of Cuba and the political officer of PLO and Zambia and India. We get together with -- Rafsanjani was always there. Khamene'i was always there. Beheshti never attended. He was extremely clever. He always tried to be above

these contacts as head of the judiciary, where he managed to gain real power over the institutions of the society.

And I sat with Bani Sadr and his advice. These sessions were like almost student movement -- Generally speaking, they want to establish a cease-fire because Iraq wants a cease-fire in place, followed by negotiation, which means defacto acknowledgement of occupation of Iran by Iraq. Nobody wanted this in Iran. We say, "Withdraw. Cease-fire, withdraw, simultaneously." These meetings were kind of revealing with respect to some anecdotal, behavioral, off-the-cuff remarks coming from various leaders, but they didn't really produce anything substantial with respect to resolving the conflict. One important, interesting kind of development was when the Islamic Peace Conference came. Exactly at twelve o'clock, Ziaul-Haq interrupted the meeting and said, "It's time for prayer." This suggestion, coming from Zia, was extremely [chuckles] embarrassing to the clerical elements who were sitting there.

Another very interesting thing -- Ahmad Khomeini was attending these meetings as representative of his father. The first time we went to the meeting, it was in the headquarter, Markaz-e Setad, the center in Shemiran Avenue.

Ahmad Khomeini entered the room. It was like five minutes before the meeting was to have started. He asked an officer, he said, "Where is my place?" Before waiting for an answer, he said, "I want to sit next to Aqa-e Bani Sadr." [chuckles] He said, "Next to Bani Sadr Farhang is sitting because they have to talk to each other if there is any kind of debate and all that."

And then, he said, "I don't want to sit next to Akhundha."

Q: Really?

Farhang: It was incredible. It was such a revealing moment that, for him, initially, he wanted to associate himself with the secular religious type of people, and not with the mollas. One specific thing that he said, which was really mind-blowing to me, he said, "I don't want to sit next to Sheykh 'Ali Akbar," which meant Rafsanjani. So, he managed. Bani Sadr was sitting here. I was sitting next to him. Ahmad was sitting next to me, and next to him was Fakkuri. He was a colonel and Minister of Defense. So, he, for the entire meeting, about four or five sessions altogether we had with this thing, he made absolutely certain that he sit between me and Fakkuri. Initially, it was Fakkuri and I were supposed to sit together. There was nothing ever to be discussed by us. But if there was negotiation, obviously, we were going to consult politically and militarily and all that. It was logical that we should be close -- But since there was no such thing --

When Ziaul-Haq interrupted the meeting, they were very upset. They had not done this the first day. The next day, when the meeting opened up, Khamene'i said, "Before we begin the meeting, I would like to ask Aqa-e Parvaresh," who was a member of Parliament from Esfahan, and he was one of the two people representing the Majles in the negotiating session. He and

Rafsanjani, who was the speaker, Rafsanjani was automatically there, two other members beside Rafsanjani: Mohammad Montazeri and Parvaresh. They were selected by Majles to participate in these sessions. Just a couple sessions, and then two of them changed later on. So, they said, "Well, he should begin with reciting a verse of Qur'an," which was obviously [chuckles] a retaliation to counter Ziaul-Haq's embarrassing remark.

Once they met with Khomeini and Khomeini's dismissal of all these people -- When they returned, they came back twice. They were really involved in heavy negotiations that Saddam absolutely refused to submit to the suggestions. When they returned, they again wanted to see Khomeini. At this time, being with Khomeini was useful to all of them, politically, back home. Khomeini, at this time, really was a giant in the Islamic world. I think he remained a giant for significant sectors of people in the Islamic world. But this time it was really very prestigious for them to be seen by him. Khomeini the second time said, "No, I don't want to see these people anymore." So, they sent Yassar Arafat, which was really mind-boggling because why do they have to go through so much trouble just to be seen with Khomeini. So, they send Yassar Arafat a day earlier to arrange another meeting with Khomeini. They came to Bani Sadr and Arafat said -- it was his idea -- "If we are not going to meet with Imam and have a discussion with him, how about if we go to the mosque where he prays and pray behind him?" which was mindboggling-- The idea was kind of appealing to Bani Sadr, so he immediately picked up the phone and called Ahmad. In those days, they were very close.

In fact, whether it was his way of gaining Bani Sadr's confidence and knowing what he was thinking -- I do not know. In those days, they used to think that Bani Sadr had organization and strategy, which was absolutely false and preposterous. He had absolutely nothing. Or he felt genuinely a sense of affinity with him. So, he called Ahmad. Ahmad came over and they talked about the idea, and Khomeini was persuaded. They all went there, and he came. They were all there. Khomeini walked in, stood before them. He was the prayer leader. They all prayed. And the cameras covering this event. The Prime Minister of Turkey -- I don't think he had ever prayed in his life. [chuckles] And it was so obvious that he didn't know exactly the movements and all that. Without saying a word, he came and did his thing and left. That was the extent.

Another interesting event -- Olof Palme was the only one with a genuine commitment to a resolution of the conflict. He was appointed by the UN. The person who accompanied him, Iqbal Reza, a Pakistani diplomat, seasoned and very intelligent. They worked very hard, and they came up with some very fascinating and interesting kind of proposals. Apparently, initially, they managed to get some inclination from Saddam Hussein that he would accept simultaneous cease-fire and withdrawal. When the idea was presented to us as feasible, realistic, and all that, then Palme said, "But simultaneous cease-fire and withdrawal is not technically possible because if there's a cease-fire, still it takes some time. They have come

into Iranian territory along a stretch of about five hundred kilometers, anywhere from five to seventy kilometers in. It takes time for them to return." Bani Sadr could not answer this directly. He said, "Let me talk with Imam," and all that. So, he went to see Khomeini, and he presented this idea. And Khomeini said -- First of all, his response was that, as good Muslims, we will not shoot retreating soldiers. So, if they need some time to evacuate and to withdraw, we will give them the necessary time. But that has to be informal - that we cannot recognize that as part of an agreement that they have two weeks. And then, he went on telling Bani Sadr an anecdote which immediately, I went home and wrote it down instantly and again used it in an article because I thought it was very interesting with respect to Khomeini's thinking. Khomeini listened to this situation, this withdrawal at the time. He said there was a man who entered a village. It was in the middle of the night, and it was very cold. He knocked on a door and asked the owner of the house, who opened the door, for a place to sleep. And the man, the host, said, "Welcome." When they went through, he showed him the room and said, "Here is your room, but I apologize to you. I don't have a blanket to give you, and it's a very cold night. I'm ashamed to mention it, but I do have a palun to give you if you wish to use that to protect yourself against the cold."

And the man got very angry and said, "No, no. I'll sleep in the cold. I prefer to sleep in the cold. I don't want the palun."

The host left the room. The guest couldn't go to sleep

because it was so cold. After a few minutes, he got up and he called on the host and said, "Please bring that thing, but don't mention its name." [chuckles]

And then, he said, "You go ahead and accept simultaneous cease-fire and withdrawal and give them some time to withdraw, but don't mention the name."

We were very hopeful for a couple of days. They went to Baghdad. For some reason, it died. The idea died. Saddam refused to accept it. He wanted the stationing of his troops there even if he was willing to withdraw. He wanted to drag it on and make a point that "I'm able to occupy Iranian territory." But what happened -- You know the erratic nature of his response to all the situation. But anyway, that effort also was a complete failure and disappointment. It went on until March.

I went to Europe in January and February of 1980, and contacted all kinds of people - the French government, particularly the new Socialist government in France -- they were coming to power and all that -- in Germany, in Austria. One person who was Ambassador in Tehran and really initiated many of these contacts, was Chancellor of Austria who died recently - Bruno Kreisky. He was really genuinely helpful. He apparently had some contact also with Iraq. He got very involved with the Germans and the French through the International Socialist Conference and all that. That effort failed. Saddam absolutely refused to budge. Bani Sadr on the part of Iran, in late 1980 and early 1981 -- Iran made very desperate and serious

attempts to settle the conflict. The reason that it didn't even come close to being successful, the United States was categorically indifferent or opposed to it. Great Britain was indifferent and opposed to it. The Soviet Union was completely indifferent and opposed to it. The major powers saw the conflict as an instrument of their own foreign policy. I was absolutely convinced that we were not going to get not only any help from this group -- And this is exactly what Palme finally told me when he withdrew from the situation: "There isn't much reason for peace right now. Either Saddam and Ayatollah Khomeini have to come to realize that they are just destroying their own resources and make peace, or there has to be serious international pressure on Saddam Hussein to withdraw." He said, "The international pressure is not there. In fact, there is effort to perpetuate it and prolong it, and Saddam is not the man to be convinced. Saddam can get international assistance to humiliate Iran and remain in Iran for his own aggrandizement and delusion of grandeur and so forth." The conclusions that he reached were very accurate. They were really accurate.

Q: When you were negotiating, did the Iranian team decide among themselves what position they were going to take? Or did various representatives --

Farhang: The Iranian position was very clear. It was very straightforward and simple. We wanted the Iraqi troops to withdraw. We were incapable of else. Fallahi, Fakkuri, and

Zahirnejad who were from the Iranian military, were unanimous and categorical: We cannot expect that Iraq is militarily now -- And all were hopeful that gradually we can, but right now, we cannot. They were right in gradually we can, but to the point that Khomeini forced them to take offensive action and everything was reversed. So, that was the military input. If you could secure a negotiated settlement of Iraq's withdrawal, that is to our advantage. And that's what Bani Sadr said, and there was no --

When it came to details of some conflicts and difficulties they had with respect to the border in the 1975 Treaty of what is to be done and all that, there were some people in the State Department from the previous regime who knew much more about these things than we ever did. I started studying the documents and all that, but there were some really competent experts in the Foreign Ministry, but we never got to that point. The first thing was Saddam's agreement with the suggestion of withdrawal, which he never did.

Q: We have to go back to the Non-Allied Conference that you went to?

Farhang: Non-Allied Conference, yes. When we decided to go to Cuba, I started studying the agenda of the Iranian delegation and various meetings that had already been arranged. One meeting was with the Iraqi delegation. Saddam was going to be there as there were all heads of states. We discussed it among ourselves,

and it was very clear that the Iraqis are going to ask us about the 1975 Treaty. Iraq had not yet renounced the Treaty. They were testing the Iranian resolve with respect to renegotiating, whether or not Iran was open to the idea of renegotiating the Treaty, but it was all informal and, at this time, Khomeini was paying absolutely no attention to formal diplomacy, and the people in charge didn't know any of that stuff. Khomeini's agenda about Iraq was helping, through his own representatives, he had and supporters, helping the Shi'ite movements against Saddam Hussein and also because Saddam had executed Ayatollah Sadr, he was so completely adamant and opposed to Saddam that the notion of negotiation did not enter his agenda.

So, Yazdi finally decided that when we went to say goodbye to Khomeini in August -- That was the first time that I actually saw Khomeini, except that he introduced us and all that. We didn't have any kind of conversation. We went to Qom, and Yazdi and Khomeini went to the back room. The question Yazdi put to Khomeini at the time said, "We are going to Cuba." We had discussed it in Yazdi's office in the Foreign Ministry in detail, actually. He said, "We are going to Cuba, and the Iraqis are going to ask us about our view of the 1975 Treaty. What should we say? Do we accept it?" In principle, this is an agreement that serves our interest, and everybody was convinced of that - that we definitely want to preserve this agreement and confirm Iran's commitment to its provisions.

Khomeini's response, again, was very classic. It was, "Don't say yes; don't say no: na begid baleh, na begid na."

So, when Yazdi told me this, I said, "Why?"

He said, "A treaty signed by Saddam Hussein and the Shah, two men he hated most, would be unacceptable to him."

So, we were very indecisive. We had a meeting with Saddam Hussein for about two hours, which was another story. We didn't have a position. We simply did not have any position, which was kind of embarrassing and stupid. They were not particularly too anxious to push us, either, because they were bluffing. Yet, they were undoubtedly interested in negotiating, in contacting and having a cordial relationship with Iran. I cannot deny that. Saddam Hussein reiterated over and over his desire to have no more than friendly relations with Iran. For his own political purposes at the time, the Iranian Revolution was immensely and intensely popular in Iraq. He did not want to have a confrontational position with Iran. Yet, he wasn't afraid, either. He didn't particularly seem alarmed. He was very thuggish and, yet, conciliatory; a realist and, yet, a high-risk gambler and all that, as he has always been. We did not respond. The general consensus and impression was that negotiations and an understanding between the two countries will gradually emerge as the Iranian -- It was in the midst of still Majles-e Khobregan. Yazdi used these issues to say the reason about slowness or indecisiveness of Iran has to do with absence of institutionalization - that power is not sufficiently consolidated, and so forth.

In the middle of a conversation, one moment Yazdi said, "We

overthrew a two thousand five hundred year monarchy," as a way of bragging about it.

Saddam Hussein interrupted him and said -- He had two interpreters. He said, "It took a long time." [chuckles]

That was the end. But remember, after all this, Khomeini said to Yazdi -- This is September 1st or 2nd, 1979. Exactly a year later, when Iraq has invaded Iran, ten days after that invasion, Khomeini's son-in-law, Borujerdi, was the Cultural Advisor to the Foreign Ministry. Khomeini personally ordered him to issue a statement on behalf of the Foreign Ministry about the 1975 Treaty, after Iraq declared unilateral rejection and dissolution of the Treaty. Then, the Foreign Ministry, with the direct order of Khomeini took the opposite position: "The 1975 Treaty is valid. We accept it as a solid international treaty. Both sides have to live by its provisions," and so forth. While, a year earlier, he had said, "Don't say yes; don't say no." His change of position was a response to a pragmatic necessity.

Q: Let's go back again to the war negotiations.

Farhang: The war negotiations failed. Not only that, but by this time, by March, 1981, Bani Sadr had become completely powerless. He wanted to send two people. North Korea invited Bani Sadr to go there for the anniversary for the revolution and all that. He didn't want to go. He wanted to send a couple people as his representatives, but he was unable to obtain diplomatic passports for them because the Foreign Ministry says,

"We only respond to the Prime Minister's request or the Minister." At that time, there was no Foreign Minister. Raja'i was actually the functioning Foreign Minister. And Bani Sadr refused to submit a request to Raja'i. So, he didn't. He couldn't even hire a guard for his own house. People who were supposedly, theoretically, his guards were actually working for -- with the exception of a couple relatives who were probably protecting him for free. They were more in contact, they were under the order of Beheshti and his crowd.

During this period, it was the intense period of writing right before the shutdown of the newspaper, and speaking and making various conferences in Tehran. There was a place called Daftar-e Hamahangi-e Ra'is Jomhur, the Office for Coordination of Presidential Activities and so forth. We used this as, in fact, the headquarters of the opposition. Largely, people that used to come there that were academic, middle-class, university-type because it was beginning to be really dangerous to be identified with opposition forces, with Bani Sadr.

At the same time during this period, Mojahedin recognized the emptiness of Bani Sadr's presidency and absence of any organization in his apparatus. So, they managed to penetrate the office of the President. There was one section of the office, the publicity section. How it happened, I don't know. But the Mojahedin managed, literally, to take over and put their own agents. There were other -- Beheshti and his men had also managed to penetrate other parts of the office. They had their

agents. And Bani Sadr had some individual friends from way back that he used to see regularly and discuss various matters without having any possibility of implementing anything. So, Mojahedin, at this time, were extremely influential in radicalizing Bani Sadr's position. His vulnerability, his egoism was very susceptible to the kind of demonstrations and public support, which was largely artificial, Mojahedin were able to create. For example, when Bani Sadr is giving a lecture in Hoseiniyyeh-e Ershad or any other place, they are so well organized that they pack the place in advance and they put their cadres in front. They have their slogans and, at the right moment, they begin to scream and shout their slogans. They did it so systematically and so consistently that, over a period of two or three months, Bani Sadr saw all this outpouring of support as general popular support - not knowing that it was a well orchestrated act on the part of the Mojahedin. Mojahedin, during this period, saw Bani Sadr -- And I'm saying these things retroactively. At the time, I could not. I knew that they were active, but I had absolutely no idea that they were doing it with such systematic strategy of building him up and using him in pursuit of their own political agenda. And Bani Sadr fell into that trap, given the fact that he had no organized support of his own. It was some general sentiment on his behalf, and some people saw hope in his presidency simply because they didn't find it anywhere else. But when it came to organized political support, he had none. And Mojahedin filled that vacuum. In the process, they radicalized him and they pushed him to take the kind of position that a

rational, political actor would not take - challenging Khomeini without having any possibility of backing it up.

The day Bani Sadr was forced out of his office, his office was surrounded by Revolutionary Guards and demonstrators and hizbollahis. When he managed to escape from the back door, he went to his own sister's. He had no place to go. And his sister's house was surrounded. These are the days that Majles was discussing about impeachment procedures. Khomeini still, up to this moment, hoped that he would come and repent. Khomeini's strategy was to use Bani Sadr's prestige to the extent that he had it among certain sectors of bazari's and middle-class and all that, against the Mojahedin --

[end of side two, tape seven]

I was talking about the last days or weeks of Bani Sadr's presidency, about how unrealistic he was with respect to the popular base of support for his position against Khomeini. There was very little and, to the extent that he could see, organized support. It was usually staged by the Mojahedin. When he was forced out of his office, he went to his sister's, and then his sister's house was completely surrounded, and he had no place to go. In my opinion, Mojahedin had played a significant role in the previous six months to bring him to that position, that he absolutely had to rely on them for his own survival.

So, they approached him in his sister's house and said, "We

will save you." They actually took him to the roof of that house and the next roof and, finally, managed to come out several houses away. They put him in a cab and took him to one of their secret houses. Then, they made a more formal contract or coalition with him, thinking that his position and prestige would help their strategy.

And then, they organized the famous Khordad demonstrations. It was very sophisticated. In fact, they brought out all their forces, again thinking that, in this type of confrontation with the regime, that this certain part of the general population would also rise up in their support. That obviously led to failure.

About these days, they started searching for all individuals who were working or cooperating with Bani Sadr or somehow associated with the opposition. Bani Sadr was the symbolic figure at this time. Many individuals who were very critical of Bani Sadr were also in the same category. During this period, in June, 1980, a large number of Iranian activists or academics or intelligentsia were forced underground in the sense that they could no longer go to their homes. In my situation, I was staying at my sister's that I received a phone call that they went to my apartment and looked for me. At that stage, I had absolutely no plan of going into hiding or any idea of exactly what I would do, which was perhaps really an indication of how blind or unrealistic one can become in the heat of political struggle, particularly for those who so closely and passionately identified with the revolution - that there would come a day when

their security and survival is at stake. Still, there was a feeling of disbelief, that it is something which will pass.

Immediately, I remember my mother called and she said, "They moved into the apartment, and they're staying inside. They don't let anyone leave the building." There were three different apartments in that building. It was a three-story place. They have closed the door, and only one woman on the second floor had persuaded the guard that she wants to go out to buy some milk for her child. She came out and called my mother because we were family friends. She called my mother and said, "If you can contact Mansur, tell him that the Pasdars have occupied the apartment. They're picking up some books, papers, and things. Ask him not to come home." They thought that if they go in and make sure that nobody would leave the building, and they had disconnected the telephones in all three apartments, that the chances are that I would return home. Perhaps I would have. I had absolutely no intention. It was just a matter of luck that that particular evening I went to my sister's and had dinner there and spent the night there. I had no plan to stay away from the house.

So, when my mother called, we started thinking of finding a place. If they are going to arrest me at the house, it's likely that they might go to my relatives' homes to look for me. I made a couple of phone calls, and one couple who had even mentioned it jokingly several days earlier that, "If you need a place to hide, you're welcome to come to our house" - people who were not

involved in politics, and they were not in any way known as critics or opponents of the regime. When they first made this suggestion just a few days earlier, I took it as a joke. "Oh, how could it be possible that we would have to go into hiding?" It was not only being over-trusting and thinking that the regime would not be able to do it, but the fact that we were not a threat. I mean, all they needed to do to completely silence us and put us out of business was to shut down the newspaper, which they did. And I think a threat or even just an intimidation, in my opinion, would have done the job in the case of the people in my category because we had no resources; we had no capacity. The only way we could do anything was to write or speak. If there was no newspaper or organization to invite us, we would have been idle and useless. I had kind of reasoned in a logical way that there's no reason for it.

Nevertheless, they did it because of the demonstrations and the general strategy of creating an atmosphere of terror. So, I went to these people's home, which was in the upper part of Tehran, without having any recourse or access to anybody. As time went on, listening to the radio or watching television, reading newspapers, more and more people are being arrested. Lots of people are being executed. Threats are being issued against individuals. It became gradually far more serious. And then, the thought that the only way to survive, to escape, is to leave the country. Yet, we had no connection. I had absolutely no understanding or knowledge of how one leaves the country surreptitiously. But the couple were very helpful. It took him

about two months, but they finally managed to put me in contact with a smuggler. I also established contact through these people with my parents. At that time, both my parents were alive. It was really a matter of what kind of smuggler you come into contact that determined the amount of money you had to pay to be taken across the border. Later on, I learned that there were people who paid only fifteen thousand or ten thousand tomans. There were also people who paid over a million. In my case, it was something like almost two hundred thousand. So, I managed to get the money from family members. Someone showed up, whose name was Haji with his own car. I got into his car, and we drove through Tehran to Qazvin and, from there, to Tabriz. We spent two nights - one night on the way to Tabriz, and the second night in Tabriz. Then, from Tabriz the following day, he drove me to Marand, which is toward Maku. In Marand, he had a rendezvous with two other smugglers, and we waited for these people. They were late for a couple of hours. They finally did show up. It was a very interesting kind of -- He knew exactly what I had given him. I had an expired Iranian passport without any kind of visa or anything. He took that passport away from me in Tehran. He also knew exactly how much money I had and how much of the money was in dollars and how much in toman. I had something like a couple hundred dollars and a couple thousand tomans. In Marand, literally the last minute as he was saying goodbye to me, he said, "I have been doing this for many years, and I have helped lots of people across the border. You can be sure that

these two Kurdish individuals will take you there safely and all that. But to make absolutely certain that you will leave the country without any threat and so forth, I think you should give some money to a mosque in Tabriz, that this nazr --" [chuckles] It was impossible for me to say no. And he said, "Every time I leave, it is simply -- And the money has to come from the person who is actually escaping in order to be effective. So, it's a thousand toman. I urge you to give me another thousand toman." Obviously, at that moment, he knew exactly how much.

I said, "Fine. Here is another thousand toman." I gave him the money. You wouldn't believe it. These two other guys who picked me up, they put me in this Peykan, which was a very old car and not really in good shape. We drove about maybe five or ten kilometers out of Marand toward Maku. These people, I learned later on, that they had a rendezvous with two other smugglers somewhere exactly between Marand and Maku. Our car broke down after [chuckles] five or ten kilometers of driving, and these two men in the car, they were obviously drugged, real heroin addicts. They were probably both in their late forties or early fifties with very little energy. So, they came out and they couldn't start the car. Two of us pushed the car [chuckles] and one was sitting behind the wheel. We did this for about half an hour, just pushing it. They finally managed to get the car. It was so comical and frightening, both. It reminded me of something like a scene I would see in a Woody Allen movie.

We went to a gas station on the way. In the gas station, which was not at all crowded, we sat in the gas station for three

hours, waiting for the people who were coming from Maku. Finally, they showed up. It was another Peykan. There were three. Here, the smugglers were very young. One of them could hardly speak Persian - Kurdish and Turkish. But one of them was very good. So, I got into their car and, the first thing, they told me that if we are ever stopped on the way by Gendarms or by Pasdars, "We tell them that we picked you; you asked for a ride. We are just giving you a ride. Don't say that you are related to us, or don't say anything about --" Obviously, when they give you instructions, all you say is yes, yes, yes. And nothing happened.

So, we drove to Maku, and from Maku, they went to this village which was probably five or ten kilometers toward the border. We went there and waited until it was dark. Then, in the same car -- They were very nice. It was a Kurdish village. We did some walking, and one particular part we had to go through some rough areas. They were able to drive on the road even past the patrol stations because there was some agriculture and some villages beyond that. But they couldn't have anyone else in the car. So, one of them came with me. We went a round way through the mountainous area. It took us probably an hour to walk for no more than a kilometer or so.

We got into this car, and I had only one small bag with me - a shaver and few things, and one book, just one book and a notebook. We got into this car and we drove. And here's the road going up the hill. I was told that we had to walk about

five to six miles from where we will be dropped off by the car to this village in Turkey - Koy.

We got into this car and we started driving and, suddenly, driving not even a kilometer, suddenly we saw three Pasdars. Fortunately, their car, which was a small Toyota truck, a station pickup truck, was one side of the road and, on the other side, there was enough space for this Peykan to go by. They were just standing there, and one of them raised the hand to stop our car. They started talking in Kurdish and Turkish to each other. They said, "We are not going to stop." So, we passed by the border guards. They were not really border guards because they had already passed the border. They were Pasdars who were kind of patrolling the area largely with respect to smuggling. I don't think a political-type of thing was any of their concern. Human smuggling. It was a very intense moment. I said, "What if they shoot?"

He said, "No, they won't. They might come after us."

As soon as we went by the guards, they got into their car and turned around and started following us. As we went up the hill, the road became kind of zigzagging. By this time, it was dark. It was a zigzag road with ninety-degree turns. When we drove about ten minutes and they were still following us, this station wagon was still following us, they said, "We will have to let you out here with one of us and let the car follow us. But you will get out." So, in one ninety-degree turn, they stopped the car for about probably no more than five seconds, pushed me out of the car -- it was on the edge of a cliff -- and they said,

"Jump down," and there were wheat fields in the area. So, I jumped into the wheat fields. One of the three men in the car also jumped out with me. He pushed my head down. He said, "Just lay down" on the ground in the wheat field. We stayed there something like for about three or four minutes until the car following us reached this corner. They did it so professionally that they had done this before probably that the car behind us could not see this stop because it was such a sharp turn. So, the car continued to follow the other one. As a result of this, we got up and he said, "Run." I had a terrible time -- The shoes I had were absolutely the most worst shoes you could imagine for walking and running in such rough territory. As a result of that incident, the original plan of walking five, six, we walked eleven hours. A number of times, on the way, I was incapable of continuing the walking, so we had to stop and all that. Nevertheless, we crossed.

When we got to the border, this guy who was with me -- another interesting thing -- he started making a sound like 'ar-
'ar. I don't even know exactly what the English expression is. Here we were, we were standing. We see the Turkish border post. We also hear their dogs barking - the light and all that. Someone responded exactly with the similar sound, and then he asked me to follow him. We managed to get together to meet at one particular spot. And then, there was one area, I would say probably about, oh, twenty or thirty meters on the hill. He asked me to lay down on the ground and crawl because

sometimes the search lights and can see anything. They didn't, but he said, "This is safe." So, we crawled on. When we got to the other side, he said, "Now, you're in Turkish territory. I can tell you that even if they bust you here, they will not send you back, particularly if you tell them that you are a political person and all that. The chances are that you'll be safe. But still, it's possible, as a good number of people used to get busted in Turkey." But it didn't happen to us.

So, we walked. Very close -- Later, I learned it was like a couple kilometers before we got to the village, I passed out. The passing out was also largely due to my feet were just bleeding and swollen. I just couldn't continue. He asked me to stay by a stream. He said, "Just lay down here. I will be back." He put me there alone, and he went back. He returned. Oh, he returned. They were fantastic. He returned with a horse. He put me on the horse and led the horse to the village. Later on, I learned that it wasn't really a long distance.

So, I stayed in the village. I went in and, after a while, I just -- I spent a day there. It was daytime. When we got there, it was daytime. I spent one night there. The next day, a car came. All these smugglers had connections. It was all part of the same connection with Tabriz and Tehran. This Haji was apparently the ringleader, and he was in contact with them. The next day, I gave them my passport and, from there, we drove to Bayazid, which is a small town of about five thousand people - very close to Bazargan border on the Turkey side. So, they took my passport and I spent seven days there. They said they took

the passport to Istanbul. It had the entrance stamp of Istanbul International Airport. They said, "We have to take his passport to Istanbul to do it and bring it." There was another person who actually stopped by to --

I stayed in this Turkish village. The father was very much opposed to what the son was doing. He knew some Persian. He knew some Persian, so we could communicate. They had a twelve-year-old son who was studying English in the school. I became his English teacher [chuckles] for a week, while waiting and all that. There was nothing to read. I lost my bag on the way. When we jumped down the cliff, the bag was gone and all that. It wasn't possible to -- So, I taught this kid English and, through the English-Turkish dictionary, communicated. But they were extremely generous and kind.

When I was leaving their home, I tried to give them some money. They didn't accept it. The father used to complain to the son who was in charge of my trip, he used the word, "haram" - what you do is -- The money you're getting -- He came home once with a radio and some equipment, and he told him -- I could understand what they were talking about. He was telling him, "You're buying these things with haram money, and you shouldn't be doing it." And they were extremely generous and hospitable - the father, his wife, and they had a young daughter. I took a bath there. They were so fantastic. At the end, I tried to give him dollars. They didn't accept it. Later on, when I came to California, I bought something and sent it to them because the

daughter was getting married.

From there, I took the bus, from Bayazid to Erzerum. From Erzerum, I took another bus. I tried to get a plane ticket and all that, but you had to wait for a long time. It wasn't available. So, I decided to go on the bus, all the way to Istanbul. It took me two weeks. There, Ahmad Salamatiyan and a leader of the Mojahedin had also left Tehran together. They also had a very interesting kind of a story. So, we all got together in Istanbul, and it took us two weeks. I went to the American Embassy to get a visa, and they didn't give it to me - particularly when they gave me the application and they ask you, "Have you ever been to the United States?" [chuckles] "Have you ever had a visa?"

You say, "Well, I used to be a citizen of the United States." So, you immediately become suspicious. They arranged an interview. When they learned about me, they arranged an interview, disguising it under an interview which was related to visa, but it wasn't at all. They arranged the interview for two days later, and the person who came to interview me came from Ankara. There's absolutely no question in my mind that he was an intelligence officer. And I talked to him as if I was talking to a classroom or a seminar. At the end, as a result of that interview, he said, "This interview has nothing to do with the visa." He was open, once he got to know me and all that. He was even apologetic. But the decision has to -- And then, the other guy said, "It has nothing to do with your background, but your children live in the States. You're married and your wife

is in the United States, and all that. It's obvious that you want to go and stay there. So, you're qualified for permanent residency. You could submit the application for permanent residency, and it takes time and all that." Maybe that was accurate, but they could give me a visitor's visa if they wanted. I couldn't, so we got a French visitor's visa to France. I was there for about a month or so, until I managed to get still not a permanent, but a visitor's visa, and came to the States.
[chuckles]

Q: Then you applied for residency.

Farhang: Yes. I went to Princeton for two years. When I went there, I reapplied for permanent residency or change of status, which was easy to get, really, because of my situation.

Q: Princeton was arranged from before?

Farhang: I was actually invited there. Richard Falk -- I had been invited before I went to Iran, and I declined. I was in California. There was even a possibility for me to regain my old position, which I didn't want to. I didn't try. It was a research fellowship, so it was acceptable. Then, also, once I was there, I was also asked to teach a course for a year, which I found very helpful. So, I was there. I had a couple prospects for a job in California. But after being there for a couple

years, I was invited to Bennington just for one year. They had a special position as a visiting scholar and all that. I went there. I loved the place. After teaching there for a semester, I was dreaming that they would ask me to stay, and they did. [chuckles] I had no hesitation to say yes. I've been there since.

Q: You knew, firsthand, Bani Sadr, Yazdi, Qotbzadeh, and Bazargan. What do you think of each of these people in terms of their management capacity, political acumen?

Farhang: I would say, politically, the most astute individual is Yazdi. No question about that. Managerially, there's absolutely no question. He's a very good manager. I would say he's even talented in that sense. Ideologically, he was a divided man. In my opinion, he continues to be divided. He has no fundamental, cultural objection to what is happening in Iran and, yet, he has some very strong liberal sensibilities about political freedom that he could not cooperate with the regime. On a more power-oriented basis, Yazdi had a hard time and, in fact, is the kind of individual who has a hard time to be subservient, particularly to the people he does not respect. He is a highly educated man - not only with respect to his profession as a chemist and a cancer researcher, but also he's a learned man with respect to his own religious interests. He has done a lot of work on his own. So, he had a lot of self-confidence - self-made man, self-confidence, manager, organizer, and politically astute.

Finally, at the end, he played with that idea. He broke away from them because he could not submit to the dictation of the people he did not respect. He could not also face the idea of taking part in suppression of people like Bazargan, for whom he had immense respect.

Qotbzadeh was a shrewd political operator.

[end of side one, tape eight]

-- anti-intellectual and uninformed individual. Even when he was active abroad, he had not taste for political discussion or analysis, or even cooperation. He was a loner. He was disinterested in organization or cooperation with others. He was a one-man show. In fact, Qotbzadeh was very much of an Iranian prototype character. Hedayat's Dash Akol is very close to what Qotbzadeh was, and a contradictory individual. On the one hand, he could be very stingy and unforgiving; on the other hand, he could be very generous and very large - the kind of characteristics that we find in Dash Akol. And he was after power and self-aggrandizement. He was not only unwilling, but he was disgusted with the idea of submitting to the mollas - not because of ideological, political commitments, but because of his personality type. When we go back in Iran, for example, the tough guys in mahalleh, their religious leaders could even be a little concerned with their anger and displeasure. They might respect a particular religious leader at certain times, but not

because of power relationship and all that.

Anyway, I think Qotbzadeh's character has to be analyzed in the context of Iranian political culture and dash-mashti and all that. And he was very much -- He died, in a sense, very much reflecting the contradictory and ironic attributes of such character that, at the end, he refused to repent and he refused to say anything that would please the mollas. He remained very adamant and intransigent while they were taking him to his execution. I understand that, toward the end, Ahmad Khomeini sent his brother-in-law, Sadeq Tabataba'i to Qotbzadeh and asked him to repent and request forgiveness directly from Khomeini, and he refused to do that. The person who told me seemed to have first-hand knowledge from hearing it from Qotbzadeh's brother that was involved in this. He went before his execution, and he died and all that, which reflects Dash Akol would do that. At the same time, he could do things which are absolutely absurd and pitied and ridiculous. Bani Sadr should have never been involved in politics. He is a very useful, good, effective individual as a moral critic of any society. He is very learned in his Islamic context. He knows the tradition and the literature and all that. And he also knows enough about the West and all that. He is not a man of power. He has absolutely no managerial talent. He has absolutely no organizational capabilities. In fact, he is resentful of organization. He's anarchist in his thinking, as well as his behavior. It is really, again, ironic that he managed to come that far simply because of the political situation that he was close to Khomeini and he acted as an

individual. One important reason, in my opinion, that he managed to go that far was that Khomeini and his men did not really see any threat in him, any danger in him. They saw him as a loner, and they thought that if he is in a ceremonial position of power or authority, he will stop criticizing or causing them any discomfort about the way they managed the society. And, in that sense, they were wrong. I don't think Bani Sadr would ever be able to accept power or the exercise of power as something fundamentally acceptable to him. And the fact that he ended up as the first President of the Islamic Republic is one of the ironies of the Iranian Revolution. I respect him. He is a completely honest man. He is a very sincere, honest man who is totally oblivious to political operative type of activities. And he could never get along with anybody who appeared to be in a superior position. He related to Khomeini as his father, and he rebelled against his father. So, he is another personality and character that cannot really be evaluated and judged by simple political standards. It's the irony of the revolution that he got to the position of the presidency of the Islamic Republic.

Q: Thank you very much.

Farhang: Thank you.

End of Interview

برنامه تاریخ شفاهی

مصاحبه شونده: آقای منصور فرهنگ

مصاحبه کننده: خانم مهناز افخمی

نیویورک: ۲۱ اکتبر و ۲۰ دسامبر ۱۹۸۹

و ۲۵ فوریه ۱۹۹۰