

the Iranian Parliament still stalled for nearly a month.

Finally, on Jan. 15, 1981, with the inauguration just six days away, Nabavi announced that Iran would drop the \$24 billion payoff demand altogether. In fact, Iran would agree to pay \$500 million in cash—the entire debt to the United States—as part of the hostage release package. Two days later, U.S. and Iranian representatives signed the deal in Algiers. On Jan. 21, 1981 the planes took off from Teheran bringing the American hostages back home.

Bani-Sadr met with the Algerian ambassador on Jan. 29, and complained bitterly about the rotten deal struck between Nabavi and the Americans, and the role of Algeria in brokering that traitorous arrangement. The ambassador replied: “On the contrary, we explained to Nabavi that this agreement was not good for Iran, but he told us he would sign it anyway. We were intermediaries in the agreement with Carter, but not the other one, the one Beheshti and Rafsanjani concluded with Reagan.”

Insights and flaws

His account contains many other important insights into the complex events that played out in the Persian Gulf during the 1979-81 period. His account of the transformation of the Iranian Army, from an appendage of the NATO war plan for defending the Gulf oil fields against a Soviet invasion, into a functioning national military force is full of useful observations and lessons. His account of a March 1981 visit by the late Olof Palme (who warned Bani-Sadr that the mullahs had struck a deal with the GOP and that his life was in danger unless he could rapidly end the war with Iraq) provides some suggestive clues about Palme’s own murder five years later.

However, this reviewer was continuously left with the impression that Bani-Sadr never quite figured out the bigger picture. Not once in his account did Bani-Sadr demonstrate any understanding of the role of British intelligence in sponsoring the Muslim Brotherhood. For Bani-Sadr, Khomeini was as much a victim of the mullahs’ power plays as he was a witting player. And as an ideological fellow-traveler of the European Socialist International, Bani-Sadr’s view of the Reagan phenomenon inside the United States was one-dimensional. Ironically, that flaw made his account of the Iranian October Surprise all the more credible, because he did understand the motives and machinations of all the Teheran players so well. Inside the fishbowl called the Iranian Revolution, Bani-Sadr was at home.

It should also be noted that *My Turn To Speak* was not written as a detailed, annotated account of the Revolution and the hostage crisis. In September and October 1988—immediately after the cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war—Bani-Sadr gave a series of lengthy interviews to French journalist Jean-Charles Deniau. Those interviews were the basis for the book. As such, it jumps back and forth between events, omits many important dates, and leaves the reader with more of an impressionistic picture than a clear, concise chronology. Even with these flaws, the book is important reading.

An unusual eyewitness account of the Queen’s visit to Mount Vernon

The brief manuscript below was mysteriously delivered to our offices over the signature of Washington Irving, the illustrious American author who, of course, departed this life many generations ago. While its authenticity may thus be doubted, it should be recalled that Mr. Irving conclusively demonstrated in many of his writings, that simply burying a man does not mean that you have heard the end of him. In tribute to that worthy principle, we hereby share with our readers this intriguing account of the visit of Her Most Britannic Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, to Mount Vernon, on the 16th of May of this year.

I was astounded to hear the news that the present guardians of our nation had decided to permit a reigning British monarch to tread upon the hallowed grounds of Mount Vernon, the venerable home of George Washington, the valiant leader of our Revolutionary War, who secured our freedom from the clutches of empire, and who sagely established the security of our republic as its first President. Having lain peacefully ignorant of whatever vast changes could have brought about such surprising harmony, where deadly antagonism once prevailed, I determined to move heaven and earth, if need be, to become a witness at the scene. I was especially concerned that our foremost Founding Father, being untutored in the modern way of diplomacy, might rise from his tomb hard by his former home, answering his country’s call to repel yet another British invasion.

It was with great difficulty and no less embarrassment—on account of the foolishness I felt at having to make so many inquiries during my journey—that I made my way to the old general’s home overlooking the stately Potomac. A vague sense of anxiety, even of impending peril, took hold of me as my cab driver tore along the highway like a headless horseman, charging in and out among the competitors for the road, who thundered along the broken pavement in motorized vehicles like galloping herds of undersized buffaloes. Rather admirably, I thought to myself, I fought off an inclination to sheer terror, by the happy device of picturing in my mind the pleasant landscape, the fragrant gardens, and the high-columned piazza, with its magnificent view from the rear of the house, where I had often sat enjoying the shade during my visits to the place, while preparing my *Life of Washington*.

Such powers of literary imagination, however, proved insufficient to overcome some of the unexpected obstacles which I encountered upon arrival. I immediately feared I was too late, for the grounds were sealed off like an armed camp; and the despised British flag flying over the mansion appeared as an ominous token that the conflict had already been decided. I managed nonetheless to gather my wits about me, partly reassured by the familiar yelps of the gentlemen (and, to my surprise, ladies) of the press, who were dashing about the grounds like a pack of hounds.

Yet due to my lack of such credentials, or perhaps to my antiquated fashion of dressing (for I was fully clothed), I was rudely denied admittance to the place—despite assurances on some of my inquiries that Mount Vernon was held in the public trust, and that all might freely offer their respects to the great hero of the nation. My apprehension of betrayal increased when I learned that, on all occasions, passage through the gate was controlled by a man behind what appeared to be a bank teller's window, from whence he drew in vast sums in what I understood to be the heavily depreciated currency of the day, and certainly greater than those which I had furnished myself with for my expedition.

Resorting to my store of knowledge from previous visits, however, I found a small break in an unguarded hedge and wriggled through. I soon managed to come within earshot of the Queen herself, by blending in with some of the British embassy staff, who assumed from my costume that I must be one of the manservants brought along from Buckingham Palace. Shortly, I began keeping a watchful eye out for the shade of the old general, for I knew he could not be pleased with what I heard.

What, no slaves?

I had learned that the Queen and her consort, Prince Philip, were great defenders of nature, if not of the faith; and, enjoying natural beauty as much as the next man, I was anxious to discover their reactions to the glorious scenes before them. The Queen, however, in tones louder than royal discretion might suggest, was at the moment complaining to the Prince that Washington's residence had no proper toilet bowls, to add to the renowned collection amassed by her son Charles. She also lamented the absence of slaves, since she was certain that on that point she had something in common with Mr. Washington.

One of those tiresome historians among the host party, who always insist on punctilious observance of the facts, caused an unfortunate scene by informing her that Washington maintained his inherited slaves and all their offspring, simply to keep them from the cruelties of the British slave trade. To the credit of her breeding, in reply the Queen confined her tantrum merely to railing against the absence of horses in the stables, for she is a great lover of horseflesh as well.

For his part, Prince Philip got himself into a royal state

fuming about the gardens at Mount Vernon, which still show evidence of Washington's promotion of agricultural science—the very menace which led to America's success in the war against starving Mother England. The Prince, in his pique, now seemed on the lookout for any opportunity to injure the sensibilities of the few honest Americans who had managed to attend the event. His first opening came upon hearing a reference to Belvoir, formerly the adjoining estate of William Fairfax, whose family the young Washington counted among his closest friends.

"Ah, yes, Belvoirrr," the Prince interrupted, in his very best French imitation. "Our naval squadron leveled it to the ground with a *capital* bombardment in 1814," he chortled, slyly referring to that previous British invasion, during the War of 1812, when their marines went on to sack and burn the Capitol and the White House. Alas, here was the very sort of talk I feared would soon bring our country's former Commander-in-Chief bursting from his tomb! The threat loomed larger as the Prince prattled on, for he is a Navy man, I'm told, and loves to recount Britain's glorious exploits of old. "Lord Alexander Cockburn, you know—brilliantly executed campaign, right up the Potomac without a fight," he added with a slight bow, generously offering to receive any belated compliments himself.

Royal erudition

The dreaded moment was certainly at hand, I thought, but the Queen unexpectedly saved the day. "Yes, it's spelled Cockburn," she said, "but you mustn't pronounce it that way. You just snip the 'cock' out of it, you see, and put in a little 'coe' instead, like 'Glencoe' in Scotland, you know, where they had one of those delightful little massacres." This bit of royal erudition gave pause to many in the company, and I prayed that it would do the same in General Washington's case.

Suddenly, to my horror, I thought I beheld his dim specter, advancing up the slope through the trees which shade his resting place. At that very moment, however, I was distracted by a commotion on the lawn, where a knot of rude patriots was being held off by some weasel-faced men with bulky coats. The uninvited guests were chanting something about the Prince, likening him to Beelzebub and Lucifer, and similar outrageous nonsense—though I must confess, many of our ancestors thought as much of George III.

Those dark memories deepened in my mind, when the Prince turned to face the upstarts, and I distinctly saw a reddish glow emanating from his dilated pupils! I wheeled toward where I thought I had seen the specter, and found him close enough to read his features, causing my heart to pound with the expectation of seeing the age-old conflict joined at any moment. One is apt to forget, however, what extraordinary foresight the old general possessed. He too had seen the satanic gleam, and, letting forth a burst of contented laughter, turned and ambled back into invisibility.