

The Iranian Hostage Crisis: A War of Words, not Worlds

I. Introduction

U.S. media presented the Iranian hostage crisis as a decisive attack against America and therefore the American people. Initially, the media discussed only factual information on the crisis and referred to the players according to their occupation; however, every hostage soon appeared as a victim whose life hung in the balance of terrorists, led by a religious fanatic. No longer were the hostage takers viewed as students under the orders of a religious leader. The purpose behind the embassy takeover and atrocities committed under the U.S.-installed shah regime were never mentioned, at least in the U.S. media intended for the public eye. The absence of the other side's perspective led to the formation of a unilateral opinion regarding the Iranian hostage crisis, the hostage takers, and the hostages; surely, it was a battle between good and evil forces. President Carter's administration preached passivity; other politicians, such as former Texas Governor John Connally, devised daring rescue plans in an effort to gain political clout in a fragile America. No matter the course of action advised the victimized hostages had been the main concern and the loss of one life as a motive for war between the U.S. and Iran. Both countries publicly presented their own agendas with conflicting outcomes and neither country was willing to negotiate, a sign of weakness. The outcome of the crisis was the last 52 hostages being freely returned to the United States 444 days later, leading to an unforeseen turn in events. Many of the hostages, who had been depicted as abused and tortured, told stories of sympathy and remorse. Some questioned why America saw the hostage takers as terrorists and not students, while others questioned why America built the hostage crisis into such a spectacle. The hostages'

accounts of American imperialism and Iranian hardship did not make the ten o'clock news; their stories may have led to a more balanced take on the hostage crisis. I intend not to say which view, the hostages or the medias, was correct or wrong, but to present both sides of the Iranian hostage crisis dialogue and analyze the vivid contrasts between the two; I also intend to analyze the internal divisions within the hostage accounts. In a time of great danger, U.S. politics and media worked as one entity and presented an argument drastically different from that of many hostages.

II. First Reports

In order to illustrate the evolution of terminology displayed in U.S. coverage of the Iranian hostage crisis, I will analyze a series of U.S. media articles chronologically. The articles will originate from both national and regional newspapers, providing a more extensive portrait of U.S. perception with regards to the hostage crisis. Due to the extensive amount of written material on the event, I will limit the majority of my analysis to articles written in the first week of coverage, specifically November 4th through November 9th. All of the articles I intend to analyze have already been compiled in the Mark Bowden collection. Bowden, author of *Black Hawk Down* and reporter for several Philadelphia-based newspapers, sorted and organized hundreds of articles pertaining to the Iranian hostage crisis. He would later use the extensive collection of articles as a resource for his book, *Guests of the Ayatollah*, which was published in 2006.

The Associated Press released the first two articles responding to the crisis on November 4th, the first day of the takeover. The opening sentence of the earliest article reads, “After a three-hour skirmish with U.S. marine guards, Iranian students seized the

American Embassy in Tehran Sunday and took about 100 of its staff members hostage” (4). It is important to note that the hostage takers are referred to as students and the embassy was seized following a “skirmish.” The article also claimed, “the student invaders bore great pain with fortitude and in an Islamic manner” (4). The issue of Islam immediately becomes tied to the student invaders. Later on the idea of religion will play a more potent role as the hostage crisis develops and the world begins to question the Iranians’ objectives. Finally, the article simplistically states why the students took over the embassy. The hostage takers accused the U.S. of “assisting the refugee counter-revolutionary elements against the Islamic revolution [and] hatching cowardly conspiracies in different parts of [their] country” (4). The second article printed by *The Associated Press* on November 4th, begins to mark the transition in coverage of the crisis. In contrast with the previous article, the first sentence reads, “A mob of Iranian students overran U.S. marines in a three-hour struggle Sunday and invaded the American Embassy” (4). The students begin to assume the mob identity and the previous small-scale skirmish with the marines evolved into a “struggle.” The language appears starkly more militaristic, by using words like “overran”, but the article does state the students used no weapons. Also in contrast with the first article, the number of hostages in the second article largely fluctuates. According to the report, “an Iranian Ministry Spokesman said he believed it was fewer than 45” (4); on the other hand, “State Department spokesman Jack Touhy said it was estimated 59 persons” (4). No one seems to be exactly sure as to the number of hostages, thus adding a sense of mystery to the unfolding plot. At the end of the article, *The Associated Press* confirms that “Television film broadcast in some Western countries showed a few hostages in front of an embassy

building who were blindfolded and either bound or handcuffed” (4). It is important to note how quickly the U.S. government and media released images of the hostages being mistreated. Such images functioned as a scare tactic and attention grabber; now the public had no other option but to read the papers and watch the news.

By day two of the hostage crisis, *The Associated Press* began to release articles discussing the politics at stake, the specific actors, and possible courses of action. The reader sees a shift in not only the language referring to the event, but also a transition from factual statements to hypothetical situations. No matter the future outcome of the hostage crisis the U.S. remained in a state of helplessness. Moreover, the newspapers began to focus less on the number of hostages and more on what the hostage crisis meant to the country. In order to present a strong exterior to a weakened U.S. government, “The State Department today rejected the demand of the Iranian students”; the shah would remain in the U.S. and undergo cancer treatment (5). Although many saw this as an easy decision, Ali Agah, the Iranian charge d’affaires, reminded reporters that the current government under Khomeini, “reflects the demands of the people that the shah be returned to Iran before the hostages are released” (5). Such quotations supporting the students and designating them as the voice of Iran and not the Ayatollah would cease to appear at later dates. President Carter’s Press Secretary, Jody Powell, informed the public that the President would not take an aggressive stance on the hostage crisis, seeing as it might result in American deaths. A staunch believer in passivity and waiting the predicament out, President Carter was immediately under fire from several other politicians running for his office; in the eyes of the opposing politicians, hoping for the hostages to be released was playing into the hands of the hostage takers. One Republican

Candidate, John B. Connally, said that “If appeasement were an art form, this administration would be the Rembrandt of our time” (5). Other politicians, without a stake in the upcoming presidency, agreed with President Carter’s discretion; the Iranian hostage takers would eventually break under U.S. and international pressure and release the hostages out of frustration or hopelessness for their cause. One official wishing to remain anonymous, confessed, “Since we don’t have the Shadow or Superman, even to discuss publicly a military option is a sure way to get their throats cut” (12). This official reflects a trend soon to come in every newspaper; the hostage takers were no longer students, but militants capable of killing. For the time being, the Iranians knew they had the upper hand. To bury the U.S. further in grief, the students announced “a break in relations with the United States” (5). From the viewpoint of President Carter this meant approximately, “900,000 barrels [of oil] a day that amount to 5 percent of all U.S. oil” quickly disappearing into thin air (5). The United States, or “the great Satan”, according to Khomeini, might as well have been another hostage in the American embassy.

On day three of the hostage crisis, the U.S. media strengthened the image of the U.S. held hostage and began to refer to the students as “terrorists” and the Ayatollah as a “maniac.” In my opinion, November 6th marked the day of the biggest transition and evolution in terminology concerning the hostage crisis. First, *The Associated Press* ran an article saying, the “Iranian demonstrators threatened today to execute some 60 Americans held hostage...” (6). The term “execute” is extremely militaristic in nature and reflects the war like atmosphere the press is trying to create and convey. In response to this supposed threat from the Iranian students, State Department officials said, “You’re dealing with a mob. It’s not surprising that some of them would say that” (6). Thus, the

mob mentality mentioned once previous to this date, begins to grow and take root in the minds of the American people. In using the term “mob” as opposed to “students” it appeared the press suggested that hostage takers were capable of irrational behavior that could result in the loss of American lives. In addition to the normal coverage of the event, *The Associated Press* featured an interview with one of the hostage’s fathers. The father of Sergeant Paul Lewis described his take on the Iranian threat and what should be done. In a moment of rage, he stated, “If you start letting them blackmail you, you’ll have every pipsqueak in the world making demands” (30). Nonetheless, he went on to say “All we can do is wait” (30). The media consciously interviewed the father of a hostage in order to humanize the men and women inside the embassy. Soon these interviews would become commonplace and every hostage appeared to have “weeping mothers and stoic fathers” (22).

Newspapers around the United States, both local and national, began to viciously condemn the actions of the hostage takers. As a result, Khomeini was labeled, “the fanatical Ayatollah Khomeini,” (6) and the student mob as “fundamentalists” (6). The *Indianapolis Star* urged President Carter to take military action because the U.S. could no longer “grovel at the feet of petty tyrants” (6). In addition to labeling them as fanatics and tyrants, the *Washington Star* angrily denounced the hostage takers as “Moslem student terrorists...continuing [the] bloodthirstiness of the regime that overthrew the government of Shah Reza Pahlevi” (6). The media was stepping into uncharted waters and no longer felt any need to exercise discretion in its coverage of the hostage crisis. This transition to the extreme becomes more apparent and solidified when the *New York Times* refers to the Iranian hostage crisis as, “not just a diplomatic affront; it is a

declaration of war on diplomacy itself, on usages and traditions by all nations, however old or new, or whatever belief” (6). The crisis was no longer an attack against America, but a war against all humanity and the entire world; there were no boundaries. Only three days into the hostage crisis the U.S. began to solidify its image as the victim of a malicious terrorist attack. According to the *Washington Star*, the only solution to the crisis was persuading Iran “to dissociate itself from the savage terrorism of student extremists before a minor crisis becomes a major catastrophe” (6). No matter the title of the hostage takers, one thing remained indisputable, every one of them lacked humanity.

Day four of the hostage crisis reports emphasized three main points: every American in Iran was in danger, the hostages inside the embassy were being mistreated and abused, and the shah was a cancer patient, not the former leader of Iran. Although never outright saying the Iranian students were targeting other Americans in the country, the State Department strongly advised all Americans to leave as soon as possible. This recommendation by the Carter administration was facilitated by America sending planes over to Iran twenty-four hours a day to evacuate American citizens. In addition to writing about the State Department’s recommendation, the newspapers actively interviewed representatives of U.S. based companies with employees in the region. One spokesman for Morrison-Knudson, a company responsible for highway construction, said his employees were “just fine. They have no plans to leave” (29). Whether or not the State Department wanted to spread fear of future student attacks against Americans is a matter of opinion, however, Morrison-Knudson’s employees in the region confirmed there was no immediate danger. In response to President Carter and the State Department’s recommendation for Americans to leave Iran immediately, one of the

hostage takers “accused the United States of creating, ‘an atmosphere of fear and insecurity,’ for foreign nationals in Iran, especially Americans” (7). In an effort to ease tensions between the two countries, the anonymous student reassured the American people that “any molestation of foreign nationals, even American nationals,” would be considered “counter-revolutionary” (7). America was operating under the assumption that the students were terrorists led by an “authentic paranoid,” however; the students were carrying out the embassy takeover in the spirit of Islamic revolution (7). Whether or not the U.S. viewed the Islamic revolution as a terrorist movement is another question. The Carter administration was trying to win over public support by evacuating other Americans; what other action could the President have taken to not endanger the hostages inside the embassy? Although not fully appeasing the American public, President Carter was depicted as heroically rescuing Americans, albeit not the Americans in the embassy.

The *Associated Press* accuses the Iranian hostage takers for the first time of physically mistreating the American hostages. According to an anonymous U.S. official, the hostages were being “pushed around, abused, intimidated, and mishandled” (29). Without actual hard evidence for his claim, the official clarified, the hostages have not been “beaten, stabbed, or shot” (29). It is important to remember U.S. officials had not been let in the embassy, had no source on the inside, and could only hypothesize what was going on behind the embassy walls. Thus, why is the *Associated Press* releasing reports of hostages being beaten this late in the Iranian saga? Day four of the hostage crisis also marked the day President Carter sent former Attorney General Ramsey Clark and William Miller to Iran in hopes of directly negotiating with Khomeini for the release of the hostages. In sending negotiators and having the media report hostage abuse,

President Carter was attempting to convince the American public that he was doing all he possibly could to force the Iranians' hand; every resource, every staff member, and every course of action was being viewed and reviewed to solve the current crisis.

Similar to earlier articles, but with greater exaggeration, the majority of reports published on November 7th depicted the shah as a dying man, not a former leader or tyrant. *Al Ahrām*, a newspaper published in Muslim Egypt, asked, "Does Islamic fervor really mean persecuting a sick man, who lies between life and death, and demanding he be hanged" (7)? It began to appear that the shah's oppressive regime in Iran never existed or was completely irrelevant to the current hostage crisis, all of his actions as the former leader of Iran disappeared into thin air as the cancerous cloud loomed over his head. Khomeini's decision to seize the embassy in hopes of forcing America to return the shah was harshly criticized as an inhumane demand. *The Daily Telegraph*, queried Khomeini's sanity and humanity when stating, "with expressions of delight at the news that [the shah] has cancer—[Khomeini] seems to show a form of dementia" (7). Such articles urged the American public to sympathize with the shah and blindly hate Khomeini. As voiced by *Al Ahrām* and *The Daily Telegraph*, in an effort to recapture the shah, Khomeini himself became viewed as a tyrant inside and outside of the U.S domain.

By day five of the hostage crisis the Iranian hostage takers insisted the seizure of the embassy was an action against the American government and not the American people, the shah appeared to sympathize with America's inability to act, and the American people began to mobilize for the hostages' immediate release. Following reports of hostage abuse the previous day, one anonymous hostage taker inside the embassy stated, "in Islam we don't believe to hurt someone...[the hostages] are very well

and we know their rights” (8). His statements had little effect on both public and international outcry against the students’ actions, but did stand up to critics claiming the students were acting against Islamic principles. The Muslim student went on to emphasize, “we are not enemies with people, but with governments” (8). From the perspective of the students, the embassy seizure was not an attack on Americans, rather the American government for sheltering a former oppressive leader. The embassy takeover was a desperate, strategic play to force the United States’ government to return the shah. Nonetheless, the student’s pleas fell on deaf ears; American lives were at stake, so how could this terrorist claim it was not an attack against American people? Matters were not helped when the shah became closer aligned with American interests and the country’s incapacity to act. In the shah’s eyes, he was the reason that the embassy was taken over, he was the former leader of Iran. Also, he was the one offered medical treatment by the United States, the country that had coincidentally returned him to power. In order to ease tensions between the U.S. and Iran, *The New York Times* reported, “[The] Shah has volunteered to return to Mexico to ease the crisis” (17). Such newspaper articles made the shah appear sympathetic towards the American hostages. As a result, the American people, instead of reaching out towards the oppressed Iranians under the shah’s regime, reached out towards the ailing shah; a man willing to move his hospital bed to Mexico if American lives were saved. At the same time as the shah offered to move to Mexico, the American people began to sign petitions to release the hostages. A trade lobbyist, Gary Bauer, began a petition with “the hope that some of the people would be moved in their own offices and schools to take similar action” (8); action that the American government could not take.

The hostage crisis placed the lives of individual Americans in danger, in addition to the archetypal American family. As mentioned earlier, many Americans began to leave Iran with their families, believing the country was no longer safe. The fear surrounding the evacuation from Iran was conveyed by one young businessman, “[who arrived] in London with his blonde wife and 3 year-old daughter” (8). The blonde wife and infant girl are used to humanize the evacuees, to provide a face to those running from danger. The same businessman, although running in fear for his life, casually reported he would immediately return on business to Iran. As for now, he just wanted to get his “wife and family away from the front line” (8). The usage of “front line” conveys the military perspective of the hostage crisis even though no side has taken any direct military actions. The Iranians were committing an atrocity by holding the Americans hostage; likewise, America was seen as harboring a tyrant when providing the shah with medical treatment. With neither side willing to negotiate it appeared the crisis would endure until someone broke the standoff. The humanization of the Americans fleeing Iran and held hostage inside the embassy, partnered with the dehumanization of the hostage takers, favored the United States in the eyes of Americans and the world; The U.S. was right and the Iranians were wrong.

Approaching the end of the week, verbal attacks on the Iranian hostage takers appeared throughout most of the American media. In addition to the open critique of the Iranian students’ actions, many politicians began to launch campaigns against “the Iranians,” signaling the start of the “us versus them” mentality. The cause for this mentality was clear, the average American was unable to respond to the hostage crisis directly and passivity remained as the chief political strategy. Although President Carter

encouraged all Americans and particularly American politicians to exercise discretion towards the crisis, some politicians could not control their needs to voice disapproval. The Transportation Secretary, Neil Goldschmidt, demanded the Iranians to “Give [America] back our people and keep your damned oil” (1). Secretary Goldschmidt continued to voice his rage by saying, “I’m sick and tired of being blackmailed by them, and I think most Americans feel the same way” (1). Secretary Goldschmidt’s comments reflect a number of issues pertaining to understanding the hostage crisis. First, Secretary Goldschmidt and a number of politicians tied the issue of oil to the crisis. Although oil had nothing to do with the Iranian students’ demands, it remained as a constant factor in the media and on politicians’ minds. Secondly, Secretary Goldschmidt generalizes the actors involved in the hostage crisis, he does not hold the Iranian students responsible, rather, Goldschmidt says America is being attacked by “them,” America is being held hostage by “them.” Such comments reflect great negligence in handling the situation and could potentially lead the way to violence against Iranians on U.S. soil. On another note, the Iranians responsible for holding the Americans hostage were no longer students; they were full-fledged “Iranian militants.” Articles appearing on November ninth presented the readers with several, thought provoking pictures. These pictures had nothing to do with the article’s content, but were incorporated to remind the readers of the ongoing battle against an inhumane enemy. One article, written by Bernard Gwertzman, discussed the ongoing negotiations between the U.S. and the PLO. According to President Carter, such discussions could lead the way to the hostages being freed. However, the picture attached to the article was captioned, “Photo of blindfolded hostage at US embassy in Tehran” (18). In another article, John Kifner wrote about the Iranians’ rejection of future

negotiations with the PLO. The photo attached to this article was captioned, “machine gun used by student to shred documents at embassy” (20). The pictures are not meant to coincide with the article’s content. The purpose of the photos is to provide further evidence that the hostage takers are irrational militants.

In addition to provocative photos and rash political statements, the U.S. media began to run mini documentaries on the hostages, made possible by interviewing the hostages’ families. Mike Sager, a writer for *The Washington Post*, wrote an article on the life of William Reeder. Reeder, a marine being held hostage in Tehran, was a high school drop out who later learned discipline by joining the marines. Reeder’s mother, Laura Mae Reeder, is quoted as not understanding why America does not just hand the shah over. According to Laura, “The shah is just one man. Let [the hostage takers] have him. There are 65 other lives at stake here” (28). It is evident that all citizens do not support the passivity of the U.S. government; however, all citizens do condemn the unjust actions of the Iranians.

III. Later Coverage, Same Trends

The Iranian hostage crisis became the centerpiece to every cover page in U.S. newspapers. The event was talked about in the “International” section, the politics behind negotiations under “Washington”, and predictions of how the Carter administration should act appeared in opinion polls. The hostage crisis unfortunately spared no part of the newspaper; the deaths of the Delta Force rescue team members were listed in the obituaries. It is evident that the Iranian hostage crisis consumed both the American media and public, but were the trends appearing in the first week congruent

with the trends months later? Since I cannot read every article, I will limit my analysis of further media articles, beyond the first week, to articles that coincide with major dates central to the hostage crisis. The dates will be as follows: December 4, 1979, the day the UN Security Council advised the Iranians to release the hostages, July 27, 1980, the day the shah passed away in Cairo, and January 20, 1981, the day the remaining 52 hostages were released. Any noticeable shifts from the first week trends, such as a relapse into factual reporting, will be documented. Likewise, if the trends remain the same, I will address how these constant themes relate to the changing historical context.

On December 4, 1979 the UN Security Council demanded the hostage takers to release the remaining 52 hostages; a request ignored by the Iranians. December 4th also marked the day President Carter gave his first public address in relation to his re-election and explanation for his lack of prior campaigning. President Carter began the televised speech by gravely saying, “I speak to you at a somber time. Fifty Americans continue to be held captive in Iran, hostages of a mob and a government that have become one and the same” (9). The above opening statement reinforces a trend noticed in the very first week of coverage; the Iranians were a mob and Khomeini was the mob boss. However, President Carter goes one step further than previous U.S. reporters by equating the Iranian government to a mob. Thus, the Iranian government, the hostage takers, and Khomeini were all responsible for the hostage crisis; they were a single entity united under the “mob” front. Another article, by Dick Dabney, draws comparisons between the Iranian hostage crisis and the 1707 best selling novel, *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion*. This novel documents the plight of its author, John Williams, as he was held captive by Indians; the same Indians that forced Williams to watch the slaughter of his

children and wife. According to Dabney, the Iranians are similar to the Indians; Williams' story is being retold in Iran. However, this time, "the wigwams have been replaced by Kafkaesque office buildings, the bows and arrows by submachine guns...And those massed, raging haters are no longer 100 pretend-savages who don't really mean it, but 100,000 Iranians who do" (14). Thus, not only does Dabney equate the Iranians to savage Indians, but firmly states the Iranians were more savage than the Indians. In my opinion, this comparison proves quite troublesome. The Indians were known to taunt their captives before killing them and the Iranians had been documented as jeering the hostages, however, none of the hostages suffered the same fate as Williams' wife and children. Such statements further dehumanized the hostage takers; they were more savage than the savage Indian.

On July 27, 1980 the shah passed away and politicians around the world released statements to express their deepest condolences. Former President Nixon, a close friend of the shah, released the following statement:

"For over 30 years the shah was a loyal friend of all of the United States and [a] personal friend as well. Tragically, he died a man without a country. Now that his personal ordeal is over, the government of Iran has no excuse [whatsoever] for continuing to hold innocent Americans hostage" (10).

Former President Nixon makes it appear as though the Iranians seized the embassy for no reason other than claiming to want the shah to be returned. In the eyes of former President Nixon, the Iranians primary goal was to overrun the embassy, as opposed to asking for the shah to be returned and then taking over the embassy to force America's hand. Also, nowhere does Nixon mention the shah's political relations with Iran, he only

states the shah's warm relations with the U.S. and how "he died a man without a country," as if Iran deserted him and not the other way around (10). Another article by George Gedda, of *The Associated Press*, contained official statements from around the world, with regards to the shah's passing. One statement released by former CIA director Bush, stated that, "the shah was a 'long and loyal friend,' and while 'his regime was not perfect, it was greatly preferable to the fanatical government of the Ayatollah Khomeini—a government which continues to hold 52 Americans hostage'" (15). Bush's statement gives the allusion that Khomeini was officially running the Iranian government, not the recently elected President Abdollhassan Bani-Sadr. Thus, according to Bush, Khomeini was in the seat of power in a "fanatical" government; the same accusations against Khomeini can be easily traced back to the first week of media coverage.

On January 20, 1981, the day the final 52 hostages were released, a number of papers ran articles on the hostages' families and the emotions they were experiencing. For example, wife of Staff Sergeant Michael D. Moeller reflects on her husband and other hostages' return home, by saying, "They're coming home, because if they don't, Iran doesn't get its money...All they want is their money" (27). After 444 days of hostage crisis coverage, Mrs. Moeller concluded Iran seized the embassy for financial gain; It did not matter that the Iranians claimed they seized the embassy to force the U.S. to return the shah. Another article tied the election of President Reagan to the hostage crisis. The article begins by stating, "Ronald Reagan took the oath of office Tuesday, pledged as 'year of national renewal' and pronounced his first day as the nation's 40th president 'perfect' because the 52 American hostages were released" (26). Already there is less focus on Iran and more focus on new, U.S. beginnings. The hostage takers no

longer make the press because Americans are being airlifted out of Iran; America could now turn its head to the human right's situation in Iran because the issues of the shah's government and Iranian plight were no longer on its front doorstep.

IV. Important Events and Election Nightmares

The Iranian hostage crisis became the focus of nearly every newspaper reporter in America, beginning November 4, 1979 when the embassy was seized and ending January 20, 1981 when the remaining 52 hostages were released. After having analyzed reports originating in the first week of media coverage, I will now present a timeline of the major events during the 444 days of the hostage crisis. The purpose of the timeline is not to catalog every minor detail, but to provide the reader with factual knowledge of major events leading up to the hostages' release.

A little over two weeks since the embassy had been seized, the Iranian hostage takers decided to release thirteen of the 66 hostages. The thirteen hostages, five women and eight African-American males, were released over the course of two days, November 19th to November 20th. Seven of the eight males were members of either the U.S. Air Force or the U.S. Marine Core; the one exception was Lloyd Rollins who served as an administrative officer in the embassy. Four of the five women were secretaries at the embassy; the exception was Sergeant Ladell Maples, an embassy guard employed by the U.S. Marine Core. On December 4, 1979, a vote unanimously passes in the UN Security Council demanding the Iranians to release the hostages (3). However, Iran offers no signs to abide by the UN Security Council's wishes. Following the January 25, 1980 election of Abolhassan Bani-Sadr as President of Iran, the United States severs political

relations with Iran and passes down economic sanctions. As stated by the initial media reports, President Carter preached passivity and saw any rescue attempt as endangering American lives. However, President Carter began to fear the hostage crisis would never end and a militaristic solution was the only means to freeing the hostages. This secret, militaristic ploy was code named “Operation Eagle Claw.” According to President Carter’s plan, an elite group known as “delta force,” would attempt to infiltrate, by helicopter, the desert and mountains surrounding Tehran. However, “Operation Eagle Claw” failed and was ultimately aborted when one of the U.S. helicopters crashed into a transport plane attempting to refuel over “Desert One” (3). The crash resulted in the death of eight highly trained personnel from the Marines and the Air Force. Overall, the mission was regarded as a horrific failure that would haunt President Carter and his hopes for re-election. On July 27, 1980 the Iranian’s main goal, forcing the shah to return to Iran, was no longer feasible; the shah had passed away in Cairo. September 12, 1980 marked the last major event before the U.S. Presidential election. On this day Khomeini stated four conditions, if met, would ensure the release of the hostages. The conditions included: financial compensation for the money embezzled by the Shah, “cancellation of American claims,” unlocking of Iranian finances in U.S. banks. and the U.S. swearing to not play an active role in Iran’s future dealings (3). All of the above dates are vital to understanding the complexity of the Iranian hostage crisis. Miscalculations, such as the rescue mission, resulted in the loss of American lives; however, every action taken by Iran sealed the fate of its country’s image for years to come.

The United States was eventually able to negotiate with the Khomeini enabling the final hostages to be released. However, President Carter had lost valuable time on the

campaign trail. In an effort to sway the popular vote President Carter attempted to play “Rose Garden Politics”. This political strategy is described by Alison Mitchell, a *New York Times* reporter, as, “when a President facing a re-election campaign would use the majesty and aura of his office to rise above all challengers” (23). Although many people respected President Carter for attempting to free the hostages through diplomacy, the majority of the American people were fed up with a lack of results; the hostages remained in Tehran and the rescue mission had resulted in eight fatalities. This frustration was reflected in the voting polls when “Ronald Reagan won the electoral vote 489-49, and enjoyed a 10 percent bulge in the popular vote” (24). In the end, I agree with Elizabeth Drew, a political journalist, who said the hostage crisis “undid” President Carter (24). President Carter was defeated by Ronald Reagan in the election of 1980, but was crushed by the prolonged Iranian hostage crisis.

V. The Hostages Speak

After having read excerpts from U.S. media reports, analyzed the trends and transitions appearing throughout the media’s coverage, and cataloged the critical, historical events, I will focus the second half of the essay on interviews with the hostages; the interviews I intend to analyze are from the Tim Wells collection. Tim Wells, like many other Americans at the time, was fascinated by the Iranian hostage crisis and specifically the accounts of the hostages. Wells admits that his quest for what really happened behind embassy walls was very difficult, considering “Hard facts simply did not exist” (33). After nearly 2 ½ years of gathering information from the hostages, resulting in over five thousand pages of interviews, Wells released his compilation of

interviews, *444 Days: The Hostages Remember*. In the foreword of the book, Wells pays thanks to all the book's contributors, for freely giving their time and opening up their houses to Wells during his whirlwind tour around the country. Wells also acknowledges that the interviewees did not receive any sort of financial compensation for the in depth interviews that sometimes lasted several hours. It is important to note all of the interviews took place three to four years after the hostage crisis; the memories and emotions stirred by the crisis were still fresh in the minds of the men and women held captive in Iran. Wells' purpose for compiling the interviews is simple; he gives the hostages a chance to speak and reflect on their ordeal, whereas one hostage claimed, the media would print only "the most sensational aspects of the story" (33). His compilation functions on two levels: it points out the contrasts between the media reports and hostage accounts, and it also makes clear the dissention amongst hostages over what happened at the embassy.

As soon as the hostages began trickling out of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, they were bombarded by hundreds of reporters and blinded by camera flashes. The highly anticipated moment was characterized by emotions of jubilation and excitement. However, the emotion taking precedence above all others was curiosity. Reporters and the American public wanted to hear first-hand the hostages' tales of survival and victory against all odds. Instead, some hostages told tragic stories about the conditions of the Iranians under the shah's regime and how their conditions in the embassy were nothing in comparison. Sergeant William Quarles was released approximately 2 weeks after the students seized the embassy. Although being held hostage for a relatively short period, Quarles conveyed his sympathy for the Iranians when he stated, "I learned a lot from

what I read and saw, and was very saddened by some of the things going on under the shah” (32). Quarles admits in a later interview with Wells that he was not going to condemn the hostage takers, due to his still close proximity to the embassy, but also how he “wasn’t saying something that they told [him] to say” (32). In addition to discussing the shah’s oppressive regime, Quarles also said, “I think the American people have...to turn around and look at...the other side of American imperialism” (32, 33). At a later date, Quarles elaborated on this statement by comparing the American presence in Tehran to the “English in Africa,” and the French elsewhere in the world (32, 33). Baffled reporters meticulously jotted down all of Quarles’ responses, knowing full well his statements would make every front page in the country, if not the world. In order to minimize the effect of this new released truth on the hostage crisis, Quarles was made to appear distraught by an “ABC reporter [who] explained to viewers that Quarles’ apparent sympathy for his captors was a syndrome well known to psychologists” (22). This was one of the earliest attempts to silence the hostages’ perspectives if they were detrimental or contradictory to the U.S. media coverage and U.S. political agenda.

Sergeant Quarles was not the only hostage to convey unforeseen opinions on the hostage crisis and American politics in Iran. Some time after Quarles and others were released, some hostages felt undeserving of the medal of valor, bestowed upon them by President Carter. Other hostages questioned America’s curiosity in the incident and the media’s portrayal of all major actors. Robert Engelmann, one of the last 52 hostages to be released, was one of several to question American politics and agendas in the region and abroad. In a later interview with Wells, Engelmann openly admits, as if it was common knowledge, that “in all honesty some of [the hostages] were the horned evil. I

mean America plays games in other peoples governments” (32). Besides the large role of politics in the hostage crisis and ensuing stages of negotiation, Engelmann questions America’s curiosity with regards to the event and the actors involved. In the same interview, as mentioned before, Engelmann describes how he “went to New York for the ticker tape parade...and [how] the last thing on earth [he’d] of ever predicted was that [he’d] be in a ticker tape parade” (32). Engelmann never saw himself as a hostage or victim in the hostage crisis, but rather a human being; nevertheless, America still viewed him as a former hostage. In response to being selected as a participant in the parade, Engelmann said, “It must’ve meant something to somebody” (32). In another instance similar to Engelmann being recognized by the American public, Colonel Leland Holland, also one of the last 52 hostages to be released, was given the medal of valor for his time spent in the embassy. Instead of being gracious about receiving the prestigious award, Colonel Holland agreed with a man who called into the radio and stated, “they don’t deserve anything. They had a picnic over there...” (32). It is true that the words of these hostages do not represent the feelings of all the hostages, but it is important to recognize that every hostage did not fit the media’s definition as an identity characterized by helplessness, abuse, and struggle.

Before further discussing contrasts between hostage accounts and media reports, I must first point out that some hostages’ accounts were in concurrence with U.S. newspaper reports. According to the Tim Wells’ interviews, the last 52 hostages were individually informed that they had each been chosen as “a candidate for release” (33). All of the possible candidates were led into interview rooms, one-by-one, and interrogated by a female Iranian. One candidate for release was Joe Hall, a former

warrant officer at the embassy in Tehran. According to Hall's interview with Wells, he would say anything the hostage takers wanted in order to be released. Thus, when questioned by "screaming Mary" (33), the lead interrogator, Hall verbally denounced any mistreatment and claimed he was well-fed and well-treated. In reflecting on this moment years later, Hall told Wells, "all I wanted was to get the hell out of Iran. So I played their little game, and tried to keep my answers as short as I could" (33). Unlike Sergeant Quarles, who spent a relatively short time as a hostage, Hall felt he could not speak freely about his conditions at the embassy, especially with armed Iranians in the room. Other hostages, such as Bill Belk, a former communications officer, were extremely nervous and could not help but speak the truth. Belk remembered being led into the room and not knowing whether or not he "was going to be released, or taken out and shot" (33).

According to Belk, there were several armed men in the room, an atmosphere that made full disclosure of hostage conditions an almost guaranteed prolonged stay in the embassy. After overcoming initial feelings of intimidation and letting his nerves control his answers, Belk freely admitted to the interrogator, "I thought it was wrong to take hostages, but I wasn't the sort of person to hold grudges" (33). Thus, Belk was aware that what he said would directly impact his chances for release, but still openly criticized the approach of the hostage takers. Sergeant Paul Lewis immediately identified the interview as staged propaganda, a forum to make the hostage takers appear they had never harmed the hostages. When asked by Wells to reflect on his interview, Lewis firmly stated, "It was all bullshit" (33). It is clear there was a range of emotions and opinions of the Iranians, some hostages saw them as activists and others reinforced the media's belief that they were all ruthless terrorists. Nonetheless, the media did not

acknowledge the internal division between hostage accounts. Instead, the media depicted only one side of the story, the tale of the angered and abused hostages.

The U.S. media initially labeled the hostage takers as students, but then quickly progressed to calling them terrorists and radicals. Sergeant Quarles attempted to disprove the media's effort to stereotype all the hostage takers as terrorists, and tried to recapture their image as students first and hostage takers second. When asked about the conflicting images of the hostage takers, Quarles stated, "it wasn't what the media portrayed at all. They weren't ignorant militants, but they were educated students" (32). In fact, at no time does Quarles refer to the hostage takers as terrorists or radicals, he always addressed his captors as students. In a later interview, Quarles vividly remembers how "a lot of them were working on degrees, and some of them were working on their Ph.D's and Master's...They would have their books...and they'd have their little lectures" (32). After witnessing all of the above, Quarles admits "[he] was impressed with that" (32). Is it possible Quarles respected the hostage takers because of their intellectual endeavors, in addition to the guidelines the hostages were treated under? Such declarations would place U.S. media claims in jeopardy; the Iranians objective to regain the shah could not be justified. When asked, by Wells how he was treated in the embassy, Quarles described how an Imam instructed the students to let the hostages:

"sleep on the beds while they sleep on the floor. And [the hostages] have to eat first, while they eat last. or what's left. And they can't treat [the hostages] like they were treated under the Shah, because they are above that kind of thing" (32).

Besides these generous codes of conduct, the students provided for Quarles and did not view him as a prisoner, rather a friend. Quarles recalled how one student would “go get [him] a cigarette [and if] there was no more, he’d go all the way out to the store and buy [him] a carton of cigarettes...He’d take...it out of his pocket” (32). Some writers speculate that Quarles was treated kindly because he was African-American; he was not the white horned evil. In my opinion, Quarles represented someone who was willing to listen to the hostage takers’ plight. Quarles may not have agreed with the students’ decision to seize the embassy, but he never viewed the hostage takers as terrorists. Clearly, U.S. media could not write about such kindness and hospitality provided to Quarles. In the media’s defense, they were unaware about the students’ activities and relationships with the hostages; however, they still saw fit to declare that the students were terrorists and the hostages were being abused.

In order to disprove the media’s position on the hostage takers being terrorists, Quarles provided accounts of the hostage takers’ efforts to continue their studies and participate in intellectual endeavors. Engelmann attacked the issue of the hostage takers being equivalent to terrorists in a more direct manner. He argued his captors were not militaristically trained and incompetent in securing the embassy. In his interview with Wells, Engelmann said, “enough of the Iranians were just so unskilled in martial arts that a Marine could disarm six or seven of them and have a field day for awhile” (32). To backup his statement, Engelmann told Wells about how one marine, Greg Persinger, was being walked to the bathroom by a guard when he “grabbed the guy’s revolver...and flipped it around” like a cowboy (32). Engelmann vividly recalls Persinger saying to the guard, “Don’t point it at me unless you’re going to shoot me with it” (32). The Iranian

guard was in absolute shock and did not know how to respond or act, “just like a kid,” much less a militant (32). Another instance demonstrating the students’ inability to watch over the hostages took place when several hostages went to the bathroom. As a rule, the hostages had to knock on the bathroom door to signal the guard they had finished and were ready to go back to their rooms. However, the student responsible for answering the knock had fallen asleep. Realizing the student was sleeping, the men “being good little hostages...blindfolded themselves, opened the door, and walked down the hall blindfolded back to their room” (32). Both of the above incidences further prove the students, or “radicals,” functioned more as caretakers than militants.

Similar to the contrasting hostage accounts in relation to freely voicing one’s opinion about their conditions before release, some hostages, like the U.S. newspapers, claimed the hostage takers were militants rather than students. Sergeant Rocky Sickmann, a marine security guard who was not freed until the last day, referred to the hostage takers on at least one occasion as “militants” (33). Another hostage, Bruce German a former budget officer who was not freed until the last day, referred to the hostage takers as “goons” (33). It remains unclear whether or not Sickmann’s and German’s prolonged stays at the embassy influenced their use of terminology. However, John Limbert, a political officer, still referred to the hostage takers as “students”, even when they confiscated all of his belongings before he boarded the final plane leaving Iran. The main difference between the hostage accounts and the U.S. media reports was the transition of terminology from beginning to end. The U.S. newspapers, at first, referred to the hostages as students, but then after a few days began addressing the students as terrorists. Some hostages expressed disdain for the hostage takers throughout,

such as Sickmann and German, while others, such as Limbert, always addressed the hostage takers as students. Thus, in my research I found no transition in terminology between the hostages and hostage takers; the Iranians were always militants or always students. The U.S. media, once consciously identifying the Iranians as terrorists, never looked back.

The Iranian students were not qualified to watch over the hostages and even more inept and religiously opposed to disciplining the hostages. In hostage accounts following their releases, there are hardly any mentions of physical abuse. The students were not there to beat the hostages; they sought to inform the hostages of their plight under the shah, sometimes resulting in what some would consider verbal abuse, but to others mere sarcasm. For the most part, the most difficult obstacle for the hostages to overcome was the living conditions inside the embassy. According to Engelmann, the meanest guard there once refused to “give us the soap and he wouldn’t take us to the toilet” (32). These examples of mistreatment seem like child’s play compared to the actions of the students in U.S. newspapers. U.S. media claimed the hostages had routinely suffered physical abuse, but had not been stabbed or shot. Both media claims directly contrast with Quarles first hand account of the situation. Quarles claimed, “[it was] a pain living in conditions like that for a while, but [the students] didn’t make it. I mean I wasn’t beaten up” (32). Quarles places the blame on the logistics of the situation, while the media placed all the blame on the students. Quarles went on to state, “I didn’t even have any resentment against them really.. I don’t resent them” (32). Although Quarles and Engelmann voiced no resentment of the hostage takers, the U.S. media had already won

the general public over to their side. The students would indefinitely be associated as terrorists and the hostages as helpless, beaten victims.

Former hostages, such as Quarles and Holland, spoke out against the shah regime; the message the students had been trying to deliver from the start. Almost every newspaper in the country failed to mention the underlying motives of the students for taking over the embassy, however, every newspaper pointed out the shah was undergoing treatment for cancer. U.S. media, serving as the voice of the government, portrayed the shah in a sympathetic light; every American was aware of the devastating effects of cancer on loved ones. On the other hand, articles sympathizing with the shah and condemning the students did not reach the hostages in Iran. Thus, the hostages formed very different opinions from those of mainstream America. During an interview, Quarles stated, “Yes. The Shah was a –I think he was a tyrant” (32), because “people were being deprived of a lot” (32). Quarles, who was perhaps the most willing to learn about Islam and the conditions under the shah, was told the most stories about the oppressive leader. He recalls the students telling him about SAVAK, the secretly run police organization under the shah. SAVAK was known to carry out several, atrocious acts and routinely abuse and kill all those who stood in the way of the shah and in favor of the Ayatollah. For example, Quarles retells a story about a fire that erupted in a crowded theater where people “were listening to a lecture about the Ayatollah” (32). The people attempted to escape the fire but could not open the doors deliberately locked by SAVAK. Finally, the fire department arrived but “was prevented by SAVAK to put out the fire. So about 700 or 800 people just died...” (32). This atrocious incidence could not be erased from Quarles’ mind; he had been shown several photos of the mutilated bodies. Quarles also

sat down and spoke with an elderly man who retold his dealings with the shah. He remembered how, “[The man] broke out and cried in tears. Really, he was so angry because [SAVAK] killed his brother, his sister, his father, and some of relatives of his too” (32). Unlike the vast majority of America, Quarles had witnessed the devastation under the shah regime and took the students’ accounts as the truth. In my opinion, it is clear the students were attempting to convince Quarles and other hostages that the shah’s regime was responsible for thousands of deaths. Thus, the hostage takers’ argument, to have the U.S. return the shah, appeared justified and rational. Although the hostage takers were promoting their own agenda in telling these gruesome stories, I believe their accounts were convincing and powerful because they were fact-based accounts of real atrocities.

Other hostages were aware of SAVAK and the shah’s regime before the hostage crisis. Colonel Holland already knew SAVAK functioned as the shah’s henchmen to solve daily nuisances and silence the opposition. When asked to describe SAVAK, he recalled:

“they tie you down, if you don’t ask the questions their asking, they’ll bring in your little girl, your sweetheart, your mother or somebody, and proceed to brand her, or ram a jagged coke bottle up their anus, or burn ‘em, use electrodes, whatever, And then you’ll talk” (32).

Such accounts were never published in American newspapers and would definitely never make the ten o’clock news.

VI. Conclusion:

The Iranian hostage crisis demanded the attention of nearly every newspaper reporter in the United States. The hundreds of articles released in the first week of coverage alone heavily reflected the thoughts and actions taken by the U.S. government towards solving the crisis. If the government released a statement advocating non-military action against the Iranians, Americans across the country would launch peaceful protests and sign mass petitions to free the hostages. The American people acted when President Carter had his hands tied and likewise, the media functioned as President Carter's voice. Over the course of the 444 days the hostages were held captive, the media became increasingly more aggressive in its use of word choice; a transition representing the frustration towards the lack of progress in negotiations with the Ayatollah Khomeini and a political ploy to gather support for the hostages and develop hatred towards the Iranians; Americans had to protect American lives that the Iranians were recklessly placing in danger. This all-for-one and one-for-all mentality led many Americans to not question who the shah was and why Iran wanted him to be returned. Images of beaten and blindfolded hostages symbolized a violation of a human being's universal rights; acts of oppression under the shah were not placed on the same plateau and were largely ignored by the papers and politicians alike. In my opinion, the Iranian hostage crisis placed American politics and agendas on the international stage right beside those of Iran. The hostage crisis set the benchmark for America's policy of not negotiating with terrorists. The hostages, or victims of the Iranians, were divided in their views on the hostage takers and their said cause. However, inner dissention between the hostages was never written about in the U.S. media; newspaper articles only quoted the beaten and

abused hostages. Some of the hostages questioning U.S. government actions and the oppressiveness of the shah were granted national air time, but were introduced as suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, or some other psychological ailment that invalidated their opinion. Thus, the media filtered all of the information pertaining to the hostage crisis before it reached the loyal readers. The hostage crisis ultimately led to the election of President Ronald Reagan and changed the role of the media in relation to covering a national and on some levels international crisis. In a time of great political and social change one thing remained certain and unquestioned; the hostages were heroes and the Iranians were villains.

Bibliography:

1. Adams, Jim. The Associated Press 9 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

In feeling helpless to respond to the actual hostage crisis, many Americans and politicians begin to voice anger against Iranians on U.S. soil. The Iranian student and the Iranian neighbor now assume the role of scapegoat, for what “their people” have done.

2. America held hostage [videorecording] : the Iran crisis / presented by ABC News. [S.l.]: ABC News ; [S.l. : MPI Home Video [distributor], 1989.

First noticed in McAlister reading. I viewed the film in order to see how U.S. media covered the Iranian hostage crisis at the time.

3. The Associated Press. “Timeline of the Crisis.” Harvard University. < <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/hnp/iran/timeline.shtml> >.

A general timeline of the Iranian hostage crisis, dating back to when the embassy was seized and ending at the release of the hostages. This proved very helpful to describe events leading up to the hostages’ release.

4. The Associated Press 4 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

The first article identifies the hostage takers as students “seizing” the embassy following a “skirmish.” The second article refers to the students as a “mob” overrunning the marines in a “struggle.” Both articles confirm the students’ demand for the shah to be returned to Iran.

5. The Associated Press 5 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

The State Department is not willing to cooperate with the hostage takers’ demands. The issue of oil is addressed with relation to the Ayatollah Khomeini running the government.

6. The Associated Press 6 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

There is a big shift in language with regards to the Iranian hostage crisis. The Ayatollah is now referred to as a “petty tyrant” and the students’ image is once again solidified as a “mob”, capable of acting irrationally towards the hostages. First look at regional papers in addition to reports in national papers.

7. The Associated Press 7 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

President Carter urges all Americans to flee Iran. The article also takes snippets from papers all around the world that condemn the actions of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as un-Islamic and inhumane.

8. The Associated Press 8 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

American citizens begin to sign petitions for the release of the hostages, since the government continues to follow Carter's passivity. The Iranian students try to convince world media that the hostages are not being beaten. The archetypal American family is brought into the equation along with stronger military terminology.

9. The Associated Press. 4 Dec. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

Article contains excerpt from President Carter's official statement to seek re-election as President of the United States. Carter equates the Iranian government and the hostage takers to a "mob."

10. The Associated Press. 27 July 1980. Mark Bowden Papers.

Official statement from former President Nixon, in relation to the shah's death. Nixon makes it appear that the Iranians were holding the hostages as an "excuse" for wanting the shah to return, not a reason.

11. Bowden, Mark. Guests of the Ayatollah. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006.

Used as a reference for obtaining background information on the events during the Iranian hostage crisis.

12. Cullen, Robert B. The Associated Press 5 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

U.S. political figures will not rush to offensive action because they believe the hostage takers are capable of killing.

13. Cullen, Robert B. The Associated Press 9 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

Claims the hostages have not been harmed physically, which directly contradicts previous reports of abuse and mistreatment.

14. Dabney, Dick. The Washington Post 4 Dec. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

Dabney compares the Iranian hostage takers to the savage Indians in "The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion." The hostage takers appear more savage than the savage India.

15. Gedda, George. The Associated Press 27 July 1980. Mark Bowden Papers.

Former CIA Director Bush describes how the shah was a close friend and did not run as fanatical of a government as Khomeini.

16. Gerstenzang, James. The Associated Press 5 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

The Carter administration is airing on the side of caution while other politicians vying for the Presidency suggest more aggressive action.

17. Gwertzman, Bernard. New York Times 8 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

The international crowd and American people further sympathize and side with the shah when he offers to return to Mexico for medical treatment.

18. Gwertzman, Bernard. New York Times 9 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

Discussions take place with the PLO. The photo attached to the article is of blindfolded hostages, thus unrelated to the article's content.

19. John Kifner. New York Times 8 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

Two Americans outside of the embassy are allegedly kidnapped from their apartments and brought to the embassy as hostages.

20. John Kifner. New York Times 9 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

The Iranian students reject any negotiations with the PLO. The picture attached to the article is of the hostage takers shredding documents with a machine gun.

21. Mark Bowden Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

The source of all the news articles pertaining to the Iranian hostage crisis.

22. McAlister, Melani. Epic Encounters. Berkeley: University of California P, 2001.

Sergeant William Quarles says a series of critical comments about American imperialism and the shah regime that shock reporters.

23. Mitchell, Alison. "The Nation: Presidential Poses; Campaign Trail or Garden Path?" The New York Times 2 July 1995.

This article defines the "rose garden strategy." President Carter used this strategy when he chose to forego campaigning and focus on the hostage crisis.

24. "People & Events: The Election of 1980." American Experience: Jimmy Carter PBS. 2002. < http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/carter/peopleevents/e_1980.html>.

The following article was part of a PBS series on Jimmy Carter's Presidency. The article discusses the role of the Iranian hostage crisis on his chances for re-election.

25. Randal, Jonathan C. The Washington Post 9 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

The hostage takers are first addressed as “Iranian militants” and not students. They are not willing to negotiate with the PLO.

26. Richards, Clay. United Press International 20 Jan. 1980. Mark Bowden Papers.

President Reagan is inaugurated and the focus is now on new beginnings for America and a “year of national renewal.”

27. Robinson, Eugene. The Washington Post 20 Jan. 1981. Mark Bowden Papers.

Wife of Staff Sergeant Michael D. Moeller believes hostages are returning so Iranians can claim their money; the Iranians are only interested in money.

28. Sager, Mike. The Washington Post 9 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

Mother of a Marine held hostage is interviewed. Thus, the hostages are humanized and their life stories are shared with the American audience.

29. Schweid, Barry. The Associated Press 7 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

U.S. employees in Iran are in danger, according to the State Department. Some employees are contacted by their companies and insist they are safe.

30. Springer, Bob. The Associated Press. 6 Nov. 1979. Mark Bowden Papers.

Article interviews the father of Sergeant Paul Lewis. Mr. Lewis appears mad at Iran but agrees with Carter’s plan of passivity.

31. “The Hostages and The Casualties.” Jimmy Carter Library & Museum. 2005. http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/list_of_hostages.phtml

Provided detailed lists of the hostages, their occupations, age, and when they were released. Also listed the men and women who died in the rescue mission.

32. Tim Wells Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

The source of all the interviews pertaining to the Iranian hostage crisis.

33. Wells, Tim. 444 Days: The Hostages Remember. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985.

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