

444 Days in the Dark: The Iran Hostage Crisis

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On November 4, 1979, student supporters of the new Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini, stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, breaching the walls and taking all 66 Americans inside hostage.¹ The two sides entered a standstill that lasted 444 days filled with frustration for the American negotiators and impassivity from Iran.² As the U.S. frantically tried to resolve the crisis, the situation forced them to realize a new threat: radical Iran. In the eye of this storm was American president Jimmy Carter. Carter lost the 1980 presidential election because of his inefficiency in handling the crisis, however this would have been the case for any president. The reason the crisis lasted fourteen months was not the fault of Carter, but the stubbornness of Iran to avoid negotiations and the desire of their leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, to disgrace Carter and America.

The Prelude

Iran harbored anti-American sentiments ever since 1953 when the CIA and British intelligence orchestrated a coup d'état to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq and reinstate Mohammad Reza Shah.³ The Shah headed an absolutist government with a

¹ "Iran Hostage Crisis." *History*, A&E Television Networks, 2017, www.history.com/topics/iran-hostage-crisis. Accessed 17 Oct. 2017.

² Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

³ "Iran Profile - Timeline." *BBC*, 8 June 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14542438. Accessed 12 Dec. 2017.

democratically elected prime minister.⁴ The Shah was obsessed with the Western lifestyle and attempted to create an Iran that mirrored American ideals (Appendix A).⁵ Iran was primarily Islamic, but Westernization promoted secularism, which angered many Iranians. Despite this dissatisfaction from citizens, Great Britain, and by extension the United States, supported the Shah, albeit sensitively (Appendix B). The two countries did so to protect Britain's part in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOL) which has now become the British Petroleum Company.⁶ On April 28, 1951, Iranian parliament voted to nationalize the British owned company, transferring Britain's private assets to the public.⁷ Iran was highly upset with the previous system, typically receiving only 15% of the total profit, while 85% went to Britain.⁸ America attempted to work out a 50/50 deal in which Iran would receive one half the profit and Britain would receive the other, but both governments rejected it.⁹ Though initially opposed to military intervention, when Mossadeq forced the Shah into exile, America knew action was necessary.

⁴ Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

⁵ Cox, Savannah. "Life under the Shah: What Iran Looked like before the Islamic Revolution." *ATI*, 5 Jan. 2018, all-that-is-interesting.com/shah-iran#10. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018.

⁶ Anglo-Iranian Oil Company." *New World ENcyclopedia*, 19 Jan. 2009, www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Anglo-Iranian_Oil_Company. Accessed 13 Dec. 2017.

⁷ Felton, John. *The Contemporary Middle East: A Documentary History*. CQ Press, 2008.

⁸ Anglo-Iranian Oil Company." *New World ENcyclopedia*, 19 Jan. 2009, www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Anglo-Iranian_Oil_Company. Accessed 13 Dec. 2017.

⁹ "Anglo-Iranian Oil Company." *New World ENcyclopedia*, 19 Jan. 2009, www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Anglo-Iranian_Oil_Company. Accessed 13 Dec. 2017.

Though it was an open secret that the CIA played a major role in the coup, it wasn't until 2013 that declassified documents proved their involvement.¹⁰ Operation Ajax's goal was to unseat Mossadeq, reinstate the Shah, and protect Britain's monopoly over Iranian oil. The coup was successful, but only deepened Iran's hatred for the Shah and created a new resentment towards the United States. It was at this time that the Shah began enforcing his rule with a brutal secret police force, the Savak.¹¹ Today, some believe that Ajax was a mistake. Mike Metrisko, a political officer who was one of the hostages of the crisis says, "There was a failure to understand the vast degree of hatred that had been caused by our bringing about the collapse of the Mossadegh government. That was Iran's chance to become democratic. We screwed it up."¹²

Political tension was high in Iran after the coup. It was the perfect breeding ground for radical groups and ideas. Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini was one such radicalist. A Shi'ite religious scholar, Khomeini believed that government and religion should be intertwined and that the Shah's push towards a secular state was the opposite direction the government should be going.¹³ After his first public protests in 1963 against the Shah's policies, Khomeini was arrested and exiled.¹⁴ During his time in exile, Khomeini developed his political theories of a

¹⁰ "Declassified Documents Reveal CIA Role in 1953 Iranian Coup." *NPR*, 1 Sept. 2013, www.npr.org/2013/09/01/217976304/declassified-documents-reveal-cia-role-in-1953-iranian-coup. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018.

¹¹ "Operation Ajax: CIA, Muhammed Mossadeq, and the Shah of Iran." *The Cold War Museum*, www.coldwar.org/articles/50s/OperationAjax.asp. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018.

¹² Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007. www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

¹³ "Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini." *Biography*, A&E Television Networks, 13 Oct. 2014, www.biography.com/people/ayatollah-ruhollah-khomeini-13680544. Accessed 18 Oct. 2017.

¹⁴ Dabbagh-Kuwait University. *The Encyclopedia of the Middle East and North Africa*. Edited by Phillip Mattar, 2nd ed., Farmington Hills, Thompson Gale, 2004.

religious government, all the while amassing followers and support.¹⁵ In January 1978, the first protests against the government took place because the media attempted to slander Khomeini.¹⁶ It was becoming apparent that Khomeini had more influence over the public than even the government, and he was still in exile. The protests became more frequent, pressing, and violent. Throughout 1978 and 1979, citizens of Iran protested the government constantly. Nothing was peaceful. On September 8, 1978, thousands gathered in a religious demonstration in Tehran.¹⁷ After the protesters refused to disperse, soldiers fired into the crowd, killing dozens. This day became known as Black Friday, the turning point of the revolution at which all hope of compromise was shattered.¹⁸

By January, the Shah was beginning to see that this was the end of his government. After failing to quell disturbances, the Shah left for a “vacation” with no intent to return to Iran.¹⁹ This opened the door for Khomeini’s return. When he arrived on February 1, he was welcomed with celebration, and ten days later the remaining government fell.²⁰ In the spring, Iran nearly unanimously voted to declare a new state under Khomeini, who on April 1, 1979, victoriously

¹⁵ "Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini." *Biography*, A&E Television Networks, 13 Oct. 2014, www.biography.com/people/ayatollah-ruhollah-khomeini-13680544. Accessed 18 Oct. 2017.

¹⁶ Dabbagh-Kuwait University. *The Encyclopedia of the Middle East and North Africa*. Edited by Phillip Mattar, 2nd ed., Farmington Hills, Thompson Gale, 2004.

¹⁷"Iran’s Black Friday: Massacre of Thousands in 1978." *Iran Front Page*, IFP News, 7 Sept. 2016, ifpnews.com/news/politics/local/irans-black-friday-massacre-thousands-1978/. Accessed 11 Dec. 2017.

¹⁸ "Iran’s Black Friday: Massacre of Thousands in 1978." *Iran Front Page*, IFP News, 7 Sept. 2016, ifpnews.com/news/politics/local/irans-black-friday-massacre-thousands-1978/. Accessed 11 Dec. 2017.

¹⁹Felton, John. *The Contemporary Middle East: A Documentary History*. CQ Press, 2008.

²⁰ Dabbagh-Kuwait University. *The Encyclopedia of the Middle East and North Africa*. Edited by Phillip Mattar, 2nd ed., Farmington Hills, Thompson Gale, 2004.

said, "I declare the Islamic republic of Iran on this auspicious day, the day of the nation's leadership and the day of triumph and victory for the nation... burying the satanic regime in the annals of history forever."²¹ After two long years, the Iranian revolution was a success.

Day One

To the Embassy, November 4, 1979, was a normal day. A large protest started to move towards the Embassy, which it would demonstrate in front of before moving to a nearby university.²² The protest was nothing unusual, anti-American demonstrations took place outside the Embassy regularly.²³ The protesters, the majority comprised of university students, numbered in the thousands.²⁴

The breach came suddenly, footage of the protest shows a sea of people outside the Embassy's high walls, when suddenly, they begin to scale the wall closest to the gate (Appendix C).²⁵ Bruce Laingen, Chargé D'Affaires, the most important man in the Embassy, was not there when the walls were breached, but was communicating with the Embassy via phone, and was eventually forced to tell them to surrender. He never ordered the marines to fire, only to use tear

²¹ Felton, John. *The Contemporary Middle East: A Documentary History*. CQ Press, 2008.

²² Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

²³ Laingen, Bruce. "The Iran Hostage Crisis Part I." Interview by Chris Sibilla. *Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*, adst.org/2012/10/the-iran-hostage-crisis-part-i/#.WeYb7FuPLcs. Accessed 17 Oct. 2017.

²⁴ Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

²⁵ "Iran Hostage Crisis 1979 (ABC News Report From 11/11/1979)." *YouTube*, uploaded by ABC News, 12 Oct. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8bC1DEYbI4&app=desktop. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

gas, which the students resisted easily.²⁶ After the surrender, the hostages were tied up, blindfolded, and taken outside to be paraded in front of waiting cameras, while the crowd yelled “Death to America”.²⁷ Thus began the fourteen month crisis.

The first days were crucial. President Carter wrote, “The first week of November 1979 marked the beginning of the most difficult period of my life.”²⁸ Carter had refused to close the Embassy after Khomeini returned, a decision criticized by many.²⁹ However, America was not as concerned as it might have been a year prior. The previous February, a similar breach had taken place.³⁰ Neither the February attack nor the crisis had been coordinated by Khomeini, and the result of the February breach was the freeing of the Embassy by his armed supporters.³¹ The crisis was not approved by Khomeini and the students holding the Embassy were concerned that they would be ordered to release the hostages.³² To their relief, Khomeini fully supported the breach.³³ However, not all of Khomeini’s followers were happy, such as Abolhassan Bani-Sadr,

²⁶ Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

²⁷ "Iran Hostage Crisis 1979 (ABC News Report From 11/11/1979)." *YouTube*, uploaded by ABC News, 12 Oct. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8bC1DEYbI4&app=desktop. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

²⁸ Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Book, 1982.

²⁹ Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

³⁰ Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

³¹ Felton, John. *The Contemporary Middle East: A Documentary History*. CQ Press, 2008.

³² Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

³³ "Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini." *Biography*, A&E Television Networks, 13 Oct. 2014, www.biography.com/people/ayatollah-ruhollah-khomeini-13680544. Accessed 18 Oct. 2017.

the first president of Iran, who said, “Taking hostages from an embassy in the heart of our country was no victory... I felt as if we had reversed the Revolution. We threw America out the door, to find them climbing in the window.”³⁴

Failing Negotiations

In addition, there was the issue of the Shah. After fleeing Iran in January, the Shah had found refuge in Egypt, only to desperately request entry into the U.S. to receive cancer treatment in October.³⁵ The U.S. accepted him, but neither Iranians nor many Americans were happy. After Ayatollah Khomeini took over, Iran was calling for Shah to be returned to Iran to stand trial for the injustices he caused while in power.³⁶ American opinions varied drastically. Citizens in San Antonio, where the Shah was living in a military base, were generally supportive, but did not think keeping him in the U.S. for long was a good idea.³⁷ One soldier said to Nightline, “They probably should get him out of here, but don’t give him to the Iranians, send him somewhere

³⁴ Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

³⁵ "Iran Hostage Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, 20 Oct. 2017, www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/iran-hostage-crisis-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017.

³⁶ "Iran Profile - Timeline." *BBC*, 8 June 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14542438. Accessed 12 Dec. 2017.

³⁷ "Iran Hostage Crisis 1979 (ABC News Report From 12/3/1979)." *YouTube*, uploaded by ABC News, 12 Oct. 2012, m.youtube.com/watch?v=b9COJXrHHQ. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

else.”³⁸ The Shah’s brief stay in America lasted less than two months and he departed for Panama on December 15.³⁹

During the first weeks, the Iranians released all women and people of color from the Embassy and allowed them to return to the United States.⁴⁰ Khomeini declared, “Islam has a special respect towards women... Blacks live under American oppression and tyranny.”⁴¹ Two women and one black man remained for the entirety of the crisis, as they were under investigation for espionage by the Iranian government.⁴² After that, only one person would be released before the crisis was over, and only because they were suffering from severe health complications. On November 17, Carter ordered that all of Iran’s assets be frozen. Bruce Laingen called it, “the smartest thing he ever did in this crisis.”⁴³ On December 4, the UN Security Council called for Iran to release the hostages, but it had no effect on the situation.⁴⁴

³⁸ "Iran Hostage Crisis 1979 (ABC News Report From 12/3/1979)." *YouTube*, uploaded by ABC News, 12 Oct. 2012, [m.youtube.com/watch?v=b9COJXrHHQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9COJXrHHQ). Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

³⁹ "Iran Hostage Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, 20 Oct. 2017, www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/iran-hostage-crisis-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017.

⁴⁰ "Iran Hostage Crisis 1979 (ABC News Report From 11/11/1979)." *YouTube*, uploaded by ABC News, 12 Oct. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8bC1DEYbI4&app=desktop. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017

⁴¹ Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

⁴² Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

⁴³ Laingen, Bruce. "The Iran Hostage Crisis Part I." Interview by Chris Sibilla. *Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*, adst.org/2012/10/the-iran-hostage-crisis-part-i/#.WeYb7FuPLcs. Accessed 17 Oct. 2017.

⁴⁴ "Iran Hostage Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, 20 Oct. 2017, www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/iran-hostage-crisis-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017.

At first, everyone was on board with Carter. His approval ratings, which had been at 31% in October, skyrocketed after the start of the crisis and by the end of the year were 57%.⁴⁵ However, as the new year came and little progress had been made, Americans began to lose faith in their president and the ratings dropped even lower than before the crisis.⁴⁶ Carter commented later, said, "I could certainly understand these feelings, because I shared their anger and frustration about the hostages."⁴⁷ However, it seemed to many that Carter did too little too late. Carter finally cut diplomatic ties with Iran on April 7, 1980, three days after the five month mark of the crisis, a decision many had been pressing him to choose since the beginning.⁴⁸

A major issue many had with Carter's approach to the crisis was his lack of military intervention. There was only one attempt to rescue the hostages through force, in a mission called Operation Eagle Claw. By then, it was April, and still no progress had been made.⁴⁹ Carter was growing desperate, by now the crisis had lasted six months with no end in sight. Eagle Claw was supposed to be the hostages' ticket home. Carter had been strictly diplomatic up to this

⁴⁵ "Presidential Job Approval F. Roosevelt (1941) - Trump." *The American Presidency Project*, Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley - The American Presidency Project, 1999, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php?pres=39.

⁴⁶ "Presidential Job Approval F. Roosevelt (1941) - Trump." *The American Presidency Project*, Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley - The American Presidency Project, 1999, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php?pres=39.

⁴⁷ Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Book, 1982.

⁴⁸ "Iran Hostage Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, 20 Oct. 2017, www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/iran-hostage-crisis-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017.

⁴⁹ "Iran Hostage Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, 20 Oct. 2017, www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/iran-hostage-crisis-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017.

point, everyone around him urging him to take the captives back by force, but he would have none of it.⁵⁰ They were still trying to work with Iranian president Bani-Sadr, who was sympathetic towards the Americans and the Carter administration.⁵¹ The CIA had been working since March to convince him to release the hostages.⁵² But when Bani-Sadr finally announced in April that the hostages were to be released, he was immediately stopped by Khomeini.⁵³ It was clear that Khomeini held the fate of the hostages in his hands, and would not give it up so easily. So Carter gave permission to execute Eagle Claw, a top secret rescue mission that would be difficult, but not impossible.⁵⁴ But there were problems right away. By the time the team of helicopters and airplanes made it to their starting point just outside Tehran, they had abandoned two helicopters out of the original eight.⁵⁵ On the day of takeoff, a severe sandstorm hit the team, causing malfunctions, including a fatal helicopter crash that killed eight servicemen.⁵⁶ The mission was aborted.⁵⁷ There was still no end in sight to the crisis, and after learning that the very thing they had been asking Carter for had failed, the entire country was crushed.

⁵⁰ Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Book, 1982.

⁵¹ Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Book, 1982.

⁵² Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Book, 1982.

⁵³ Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

⁵⁴ Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Book, 1982.

⁵⁵ Kamps, Charles Tustin. "Operation Eagle Claw: The Iran Hostage Rescue Mission." *Air University*, 21 Sept. 2006, www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/apjinternational/apj-s/2006/3tri06/kampseng.html#Kamps. Accessed 18 Oct. 2017.

⁵⁶ "Iran Hostage Crisis." *History*, A&E Television Networks, 2017, www.history.com/topics/iran-hostage-crisis. Accessed 17 Oct. 2017.

⁵⁷ Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Book, 1982.

The Release and the Aftermath

On January 20, 1981, minutes after his inauguration, Ronald Reagan delivered the news America has been waiting for. “With thanks to almighty God, I have been given a tagline, the get off line that everyone wants... Some thirty minutes ago, the planes bearing our prisoners left Iranian airspace and are now free.”⁵⁸ After 444 days in captivity, the remaining 52 Americans were coming home.

The release had not come easily. After the failure of Eagle Claw, no one dared to attempt another military intervention. The situation came to a standstill. After the Shah died from cancer in July, Khomeini demanded that Iran’s assets be unfrozen and the Shah’s wealth be returned, but he made no promises for the hostages, so no deal went through.⁵⁹ Then in November, a door opened. Iran was willing to negotiate via Algerian delegate middlemen.⁶⁰ Khomeini’s meaning was clear. He was willing to negotiate in November of 1980. Carter had just lost the election to Ronald Reagan. From November to January, the administration worked nonstop to settle the agreement for the hostages’ release.⁶¹ The terms were finalized the day before Reagan’s inauguration.⁶² The “Agreement to Release Hostages” is three pages long and lays out the terms

⁵⁸ "Jan. 20, 1981: Inaugural Ceremonies for Ronald Reagan." *Youtube*, uploaded by U.S. Presidential Inauguration, 21 Dec. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkptgX535E4. Accessed 12 Dec. 2017.

⁵⁹ "Iran Hostage Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, 20 Oct. 2017, www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/iran-hostage-crisis-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017

⁶⁰ Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Book, 1982.

⁶¹ Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Book, 1982.

⁶² "Iran Hostage Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, 20 Oct. 2017, www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/iran-hostage-crisis-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017.

in five sections: General Principles and Points I-IV.⁶³ Points II-IV cover the terms of how Iran's various assets will be unfrozen, something Iran had been desperate for. Yet Point I is even more important. It reads, "1. The United States pledges that it is and from now on will be the policy of the United States not to intervene, directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran's internal affairs."⁶⁴ To Iran, this was a major victory, since they still felt the wound of Operation Ajax. America knew this, a declassified CIA document from before the finalization reads, "Ayatollah Khomeini and other Iranian leaders will seek to portray the release of the hostages as a great victory for Iran. [They] will portray the end of the crisis as the triumph of Islamic justice over the 'Great Satan.'"⁶⁵ It was a long battle for Iran, but there was no rest yet. Four months ago, Iraq had invaded, beginning the Iran-Iraq War.⁶⁶ America too would have a hand in the Iran-Iraq War, aiding Iraq.⁶⁷ To this day, any relations between America and Iran are tense, the thought of the crisis not far from either's mind.⁶⁸ In a 2009 interview with Bruce Laingen, the former Chargé

⁶³ Felton, John. *The Contemporary Middle East: A Documentary History*. CQ Press, 2008.

⁶⁴ Felton, John. *The Contemporary Middle East: A Documentary History*. CQ Press, 2008.

⁶⁵ "Iran: Ending the Hostage Crisis and Afterwards." *Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room*, Central Intelligence Agency, 31 Oct. 1980, www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp85t00287r000102490001-7. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018.

⁶⁶ "Iran Profile - Timeline." *BBC*, 8 June 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14542438. Accessed 12 Dec. 2017.

⁶⁷ DelViscio, Jeffrey, et al. "Iran, the United States and a Political Seesaw." *The New York Times*, New York Times Company, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/07/world/middleeast/iran-timeline.html#/#time5_219. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018.

⁶⁸ DelViscio, Jeffrey, et al. "Iran, the United States and a Political Seesaw." *The New York Times*, New York Times Company, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/07/world/middleeast/iran-timeline.html#/#time5_219. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018.

D'Affaires expresses his belief that it is unfortunate that the U.S. and Iran has not resolved the past, "When I look back I feel a sense of regret that 30 years later we have not yet found the basis for a relationship between the United States and Iran. That is deeply regrettable for both countries."⁶⁹ But while the crisis still lingers in the minds of Americans and Iranians, diplomacy seems nearly impossible.

Ayatollah Khomeini took advantage of Carter's desire for diplomacy and used it to disgrace the man that wanted the hostages to be released most of all. Khomeini's deep hatred for America led to the imprisonment of 66 American citizens within their own Embassy. Carter did what he could to free them quickly, but the intractable Iran would not let him. After all attempts of negotiation fell through, Carter finally staged a military intervention, something the public had been demanding for months. All hope was crushed after the operation failed spectacularly and again, progress halted. It was only after Carter lost the election of 1980 that Iran was willing to talk. With the help of Algeria, agreements were struck. After 444 days, Carter had finally freed the hostages. The thirty year story of America in Iran began with a coup and ended with a homecoming. A homecoming delayed not by America, but Iran.

⁶⁹ Laingen, Bruce. "Interview: Former U.S. Hostage Calls for Iran to Change." Interview by Golnaz Esfandiari. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 3 Nov. 2003, www.rferl.org/a/Interview_Former_US_Hostage_Calls_For_Iran_To_Change/1868655.html. Accessed 18 Oct. 2017.

Appendix A



The ideal Iranian family under the Shah's government. Everything was very reflective of American culture, from fashion to the push towards secularism.

Cox, Savannah. "Life under the Shah: What Iran Looked like before the Islamic Revolution." *ATI*, 5 Jan. 2018, all-that-is-interesting.com/shah-iran#10. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018.

Appendix B



American president Jimmy Carter meets with the Iranian Shah. America had maintained a diplomatic relationship with the Iranian royal family in order to protect Great Britain's part in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC).⁷⁰ By Carter's presidency, the Shah was beginning to lose control of his country and would be forced to flee the country in January 1979.⁷¹

Cox, Savannah. "Life under the Shah: What Iran Looked like before the Islamic Revolution." *ATI*, 5 Jan. 2018, all-that-is-interesting.com/shah-iran#10. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018.

⁷⁰ "Anglo-Iranian Oil Company." *New World Encyclopedia*, 19 Jan. 2009, www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Anglo-Iranian_Oil_Company. Accessed 13 Dec. 2017.

⁷¹ "Iran Profile - Timeline." *BBC*, 8 June 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14542438. Accessed 12 Dec. 2017.

Appendix C



The first Iranian students begin to climb the American Embassy's walls. Once inside, the hundreds that climbed the walls would take every American within the Embassy hostage.⁷²

"Iran Hostage Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, 20 Oct. 2017, www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/iran-hostage-crisis-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017.

⁷² Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. "444 Days." *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

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“Iran: Ending the Hostage Crisis and Afterwards.” *Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room*, Central Intelligence Agency, 31 Oct. 1980,

www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp85t00287r000102490001-7.

Accessed 21 Jan. 2018. This declassified CIA document allows me to read exactly how the terms of release came about and how the CIA believed Iran would act after the crisis was resolved. The CIA correctly predicted some of Iran's actions, such as spreading the belief that the crisis was an Iranian victory, which helped me understand how long they had been working on the crisis to predict the opposing side's actions.

“Iran Hostage Crisis 1979 (ABC News Report From 11/11/1979).” *YouTube*, uploaded by ABC News, 12 Oct. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8bC1DEYbI4&app=desktop.

Accessed 22 Sept. 2017. This news report aired a week after the Embassy was stormed and reveals how the US reacting to the crisis early on, as well as some actions that Iran

was taking. The footage includes an interview with a woman who was released from the Embassy shortly after it was taken. Most sources do not address the fact that after the Embassy fell, the captors released more than ten people, all women and/or people of color. This interview with one of the released gives insight into why she and the others got to leave. Again, media is biased, but at this point it was important to report events as factually as possible, so it is less biased than is possible for the news. This footage will help me explain how Iran and America reacted to the crisis and gives early insight into how the hostage crisis was going to be.

“Iran Hostage Crisis 1979 (ABC News Report From 12/3/1979).” *YouTube*, uploaded by ABC News, 12 Oct. 2012, m.youtube.com/watch?v=b9COJXrrHHQ. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

This original news footage is incredibly helpful to understanding the crisis because it allows me to see how the media presented the crisis. The footage is from a month into the crisis and is very helpful to understanding how the US was handling the Shah in their country and how they wanted him to leave because they believed it would help resolve the crisis. Media is always biased, and so this footage is extremely anti-Iran, obviously not to the extreme the Iranians took their anti-American ideas, but there is a definite distaste for Iran. The US's relations with the Shah during the crisis are not touched upon in most sources, so this original news report is very helpful in understanding it. This information will be helpful to my argument because it will help explain an aspect of the negotiation efforts not usually addressed.

“Jan. 20, 1981: Inaugural Ceremonies for Ronald Reagan.” *Youtube*, uploaded by U.S.

Presidential Inauguration, 21 Dec. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkptgX535E4.

Accessed 12 Dec. 2017. This original footage of Reagan’s inauguration helped me see how the news of the hostages’ release was delivered to the public. Being able to hear the exact words Reagan used helped me to better understand just how relieved America was that the crisis was finally over.

Laingen, Bruce. "Interview: Former U.S. Hostage Calls for Iran to Change." Interview by Golnaz

Esfandiari. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 3 Nov. 2003,

[www.rferl.org/a/Interview_Former_US_Hostage_Calls_For_Iran_To_Change/1868655.h](http://www.rferl.org/a/Interview_Former_US_Hostage_Calls_For_Iran_To_Change/1868655.html)

[tml](http://www.rferl.org/a/Interview_Former_US_Hostage_Calls_For_Iran_To_Change/1868655.html). Accessed 18 Oct. 2017. This interview with Bruce Laingen thirty years after he was taken hostage in the U.S. Embassy in Tehran gave me a look at how a hostage felt long after the crisis had come to a close. His view that the U.S. and Iran should work towards a diplomatic relationship was unexpected and insightful.

Laingen, Bruce. “The Iran Hostage Crisis — Part I.” Interview by Chris Sibilla. *Association for*

Diplomatic Studies and Training,

adst.org/2012/10/the-iran-hostage-crisis-part-i/#.WeYb7FuPLcs. Accessed 17 Oct. 2017.

In this interview Bruce Laingen, former Chargé D'Affaires and hostage, Laingen recounts the day the crisis began and how the Embassy reacted to the breach. Laingen was the most important person in Embassy, so hearing an account from him is especially helpful.

Secondary Sources

“Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.” *New World Encyclopedia*, 19 Jan. 2009,

www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Anglo-Iranian_Oil_Company. Accessed 13 Dec. 2017. The webpage dedicated to the AIOC was crucial in helping me understand the politics of Iranian oil. Oil was the reason for the 1953 coup which began anti-American ideas in Iran, so it was very important that I understand what was going on and why a coup was necessary over coup.

“Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.” *Biography*, A&E Television Networks, 13 Oct. 2014,

www.biography.com/people/ayatollah-ruhollah-khomeini-13680544. Accessed 18 Oct. 2017. This webpage is a public biography of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The page avoids bias by stating only the facts of his life. This source helped me understand the man whose ideas and actions directly caused the change in Iran’s government and then the crisis. It mainly focuses on the events leading up to the crisis, but this is helpful to understanding why it happened. This website is very credible and overall very useful.

Cox, Savannah. “Life under the Shah: What Iran Looked like before the Islamic Revolution.”

ATI, 5 Jan. 2018, all-that-is-interesting.com/shah-iran#10. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018. This page contained an abundance of information on what living the Shah’s Iran was. The pictures especially helped me to understand how similar the Shah’s Iran was to America. Understanding these similarities helped me analyze why Iranians were opposed to this lifestyle.

Dabbagh-Kuwait University. *The Encyclopedia of the Middle East and North Africa*. Edited by Phillip Mattar, 2nd ed., Farmington Hills, Thompson Gale, 2004. 4 vols. This encyclopedia was a great way to get an overview of Iran's revolution from start to finish. The encyclopedia contained information on Ayatollah Khomeini which was very helpful for me to understand Iran's leader's role in the revolution and how he inspired his followers.

"Declassified Documents Reveal CIA Role in 1953 Iranian Coup." *NPR*, 1 Sept. 2013, www.npr.org/2013/09/01/217976304/declassified-documents-reveal-cia-role-in-1953-iranian-coup. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018. This article written only days after the documents revealing the CIA's role in the coup were declassified provided me with information about about the CIA in operation Ajax. This helped me understand how the CIA kept their involvement a secret technically, but it was a open secret.

DelViscio, Jeffrey, et al. "Iran, the United States and a Political Seesaw." *The New York Times*, New York Times Company, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/07/world/middleeast/iran-timeline.html###time5_219. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018. This extensive timeline reveals Iranian and American relations from 1923 until 2012. It gave me clear dates for key events which helped me analyze why Iran and America chose to act when they did.

Felton, John. *The Contemporary Middle East: A Documentary History*. CQ Press, 2008. This book was incredibly helpful to me because it provides full copies of important documents and speeches from the crisis, such as the terms of release, a press conference with Carter, and Khomeini's translated speech declaring the Islamic State of Iran. Having the raw documents really helped me understand them better and read them in their entirety, versus only reading select quotes.

"Iran Hostage Crisis." *History*, A&E Television Networks, 2017, www.history.com/topics/iran-hostage-crisis. Accessed 17 Oct. 2017. This webpage is dedicated to explaining the hostage crisis's major events. What helped me the most was the focus on Iran's anti-american sentiments, showing why they originated and what they led to. It also provides minor insight on how the hostages were treated. This source will help me explain the events of the crisis logically and help prove my thesis through its information on Iran's feelings about America. This source is credible and unbiased, though it does show sympathy towards the hostages, though this justified because it is hard to explain their situation without sympathy for them.

"Iran Hostage Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, 20 Oct. 2017, www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/iran-hostage-crisis-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017. This brief timeline helped me pick out key events from the crisis to research more and also provided me with exact dates. The webpage also provided me with useful pictures of the breach of the Embassy that helped me understand how the breach took place.

“Iran Profile - Timeline.” *BBC*, 8 June 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14542438.

Accessed 12 Dec. 2017. This timeline provided me with information about most of the key events of the crisis and was useful in helping me understand how one event led to another. The timeline is updated whenever a notable event occurs and so is very reliable and credible.

“Iran’s Black Friday: Massacre of Thousands in 1978.” *Iran Front Page*, IFP News, 7 Sept.

2016, ifpnews.com/news/politics/local/irans-black-friday-massacre-thousands-1978/.

Accessed 11 Dec. 2017. Because Black Friday is the turning point of the revolution, it was crucial that I understood the event. This article provided in depth information about why the massacre occurred and what happened directly afterwards.

Kamps, Charles Tustin. “Operation Eagle Claw: The Iran Hostage Rescue Mission.” *Air*

University, 21 Sept. 2006,

www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/apjinternational/apj-s/2006/3tri06/kampse.html#Kamps.

Accessed 18 Oct. 2017. Operation Eagle Claw can be difficult to understand because it all went wrong very quickly. Luckily, this website lays out an extremely helpful timeline of the mission, down to the minute of crashes and malfunctions. This allowed me to understand how much of a failure Eagle Claw was.

“Operation Ajax: CIA, Muhammed Mossadeq, and the Shah of Iran.” *The Cold War Museum*,

www.coldwar.org/articles/50s/OperationAjax.asp. Accessed 21 Jan. 2018. The page by

the Cold War Museum is very helpful in understanding Great Britain and America’s role in Operation Ajax and why they needed to overthrow Mossadeq. It also gave me information on how the Shah ruled after he returned from his forced exile.

“Presidential Job Approval F. Roosevelt (1941) - Trump.” *The American Presidency Project*, Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley - The American Presidency Project TM, 1999, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php?pres=39. This website is extremely helpful because it gave me exact approval ratings of Carter for everyday they were surveyed. It helped me to see the difference between his ratings only days before the crisis and then days after.

Woodhead, Leslie, and Mick Csaky. “444 Days.” *BBC*, 27 Nov. 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074lwj. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017. This documentary is very useful as it provides interviews with individuals that were involved in the crisis on the opposing side to America, such as some of the students that actually took the Embassy. It reveals their motivations for participating in the event, as well as how they feel about the US today. It will be helpful to my argument because it will allow me to explain why the students participated using quotes from the students themselves. The documentary also provides a clear explanation of the events as well as insights from experts and others involved.