"No Concessions to Terrorists": A study of American Counterterrorism policy 1973-1991

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Micheal and Judith Nimigon.

ABSTRACT

Following the 1973 attack on the Saudi Embassy in Khartoum, which ultimately led to the capture and death of the American ambassador to Sudan, the Nixon Administration formally adopted the "no concession to terrorists" policy. While in theory this policy was based on sound reasoning (by giving concessions to terrorists you will simply encourage more terrorism), it ultimately proved untenable in practice, due in large part to pressure by the media as well as by victims families' on the government to `do something'. This thesis will briefly discuss the evolution of American counterterrorism up to and including the 1970s, and then focus on three major case studies to show that the rhetoric of the "no concessions" policy does not always match the reality of the situation. These studies include: The Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981, the TWA Flight 847 hijacking of 1985 and the Lebanese Hostage Crisis, in which several dozen Western citizens were kidnapped between 1982 and 1991.

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Introduction

During the past decade, terrorism has been thrust into the media spotlight throughout the world by the highly publicized September 11th 2001 al Qaeda attacks on the United States. One result of this has been an explosion of studies within the field of counterterrorism policy. This thesis will focus on the "no concessions to terrorists or no concessions for terrorist actions" policy that was adopted first during the Nixon Administration and was maintained as an official policy throughout the 1980s. Though this policy is based on sound reasoning, the rhetoric of the policymakers did not always match the reality of the situation and the resolution of the particular crisis. Using three specific case-studies, I will show that the United States violated their "no concessions to terrorists" policy on multiple occasions and made deals with those they consider to be terrorist organizations or state sponsors of terrorism.

One issue that will be discussed during this thesis is the media's involvement during these particular events. As the 1970s began, television and other media communications began to evolve quite quickly. This coincided with a large increase in the number of airplane hijackings and other hostage crises, both within the United States and internationally. Terrorists recognized that sensational acts could advance their political agenda, since they were reported on by the media and broadcast directly to millions of viewers. Though policymakers often invoked strong rhetoric during their formulation and in their defense of the "no concessions" policy, this thesis will show that constant media pressure on the United States Government often played a significant role in persuading them to violate the "no concessions" principle.

One key example of this type of event was the 1968 hijacking of El Al flight 426, used by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) as part of their

efforts to gain international recognition and independence from Israel. The PFLP executed a number of airplane hijackings during the late 1960s and early 1970s and brought much attention to the Palestinian cause. PFLP leader George Habash recognized the evolution in telecommunications and noted that a successful hijacking brought a large amount of attention to the Palestinian issue. Another important example was the kidnapping and killing of eleven Israeli athletes by Black September, another Palestinian paramilitary organization, during the Munich Summer Olympics in 1972. The Olympics have always been closely followed around the world by millions of people and the kidnappings and eventual deaths of the Israeli athletes and the Black September militants were broadcast globally, attracting a huge viewing audience, exposing most of them to the issue of Palestinian independence.

Another theme I will discuss is the fact that during extreme crises, the United States will often resort to opening up negotiations with countries and groups with which it did not maintain friendly relations. As the airplane hijacking phenomenon intensified in the early 1970s, the United States made a deal with Cuba, with whom they had no diplomatic contact. During the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the United States was forced to open up dialogue between themselves and the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to free the Americans taken hostage by Islamist student groups in 1979. Since TWA Flight 847 had been hijacked by Shiite militants allied with Hezbollah in Lebanon, the United States had to contact both Syrian and Iranian officials to help resolve the crisis. Both of these countries had been placed on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list in the 1980s by the United States, but they played key roles in facilitating the deal to free the American hostages. During the ongoing Lebanese Hostage Crisis, the United States once again had to turn to Iran, the state sponsor of Hezbollah, by selling them weapons via Israel in

order to try and free the Americans in an arms-for-hostages trade which ultimately led to the Iran-Contra Affair.

The first part of this thesis will be devoted to the evolution of American counterterrorism policy. This chapter will discuss the United States' first experiences with terrorism and the beginnings of the formation of a national policy to combat terrorism. The first national counterterrorism policy was started during the Second World War in order to prepare for the possibility of an unconventional guerilla war against remnants of the S.S. in Germany. In the years following the war, the issue of airplane hijacking became a national concern in the United States and various policies were enacted to combat domestic hijackers, including airport screening and the deployment of sky marshals on occasional high-priority flights. In response to the Munich Massacre during the 1972 Olympics, President Richard Nixon created the first Cabinet-level committee to deal with the terrorism issue. The Nixon Administration also formulated the "no concessions" policy following the kidnapping and execution of three Western officials in Sudan in 1973. Finally, this chapter will discuss attempts were made to pass a comprehensive anti-terrorism bill during the 1970s, though these efforts were unsuccessful and as the Iranian Hostage Crisis began, there was no comprehensive anti-terrorism legislation passed by the United States Congress.

Chapter two will discuss the Iranian Hostage Crisis, which began in 1979. Fifty-two Americans would end up spending 444 days as hostages after Islamic fundamentalist students stormed the American embassy in November 1979. This chapter will explain some of the context around the hostage-takings, the Carter Administration's response to the crisis and the reaction in the United States to these actions. President Jimmy Carter, who was up for re-election in 1980, authorized a

rescue mission in the spring of 1980 called Operation Eagle Claw. This mission failed as two of the aircraft crashed, killing eight American soldiers. This failure ensured that the crisis would be resolved peacefully and that a deal would have to be made with the Iranian government to free the hostages. Several rounds of negotiations would take place, finally culminating in the Algiers Accords, as the hostages were freed in January 1981. This chapter will also discuss the media's involvement in the crisis on the ground in Iran as well as national news programs like Ted Koppel's *America Held Hostage*.

The next chapter will discuss the hijacking of TWA Flight 847, which took place on June 14th 1985. This crisis was started by two Hezbollah members who hijacked the plane over the eastern Mediterranean Sea, eventually diverting it to Beirut, Lebanon. They specifically demanded the release of more than 700 Shiite militants in Israeli jails in exchange for the hostages on the plane. This chapter will discuss the motives and execution of the hijacking, the death of American Robert Stethem at the hands of the hijackers, as well as the response by the Reagan Administration to resolve the crisis. Ultimately the TWA Flight 847 hostage crisis was resolved through a deal which exchanged the hostages for the Shiite militants, which showed a clear departure from the "no concessions" policy. This section will also discuss some of the policy discussion and changes that occurred after this crisis, as well as the media's role during the hostage crisis.

The final chapter will discuss the Lebanese Hostage Crisis, which lasted for nearly a decade between 1982 and 1991. During this time, Hezbollah kidnapped nearly one hundred Western citizens, including seventeen Americans. Often these kidnappings were executed in order to facilitate a prisoner exchange between Hezbollah or its state sponsor Iran and a specific Western country that held a Hezbollah militant or Iranian

official prisoner. This chapter will discuss the ongoing Lebanese Civil War, the American intervention in Lebanon which culminated in the Marine Barracks Bombings by militants aligned with Hezbollah, and the motives of the hostage-takers in kidnapping Americans. At the time of the TWA Flight 847 hijacking in 1985, seven Americans were held hostage and efforts were made during the TWA Flight 847 resolution to free these seven hostages along with the TWA Flight 847 hostages. These efforts failed, which led to the Reagan Administration making a deal to sell weapons to Iran through Israel in exchange for Iranian help to free the American hostages under Hezbollah's control. This chapter will end with the botched arms-for-hostages trade as well as a discussion of the Iran-Contra Affair and the media's reaction to the scandal, the Tower Commission and its impact on Reagan Administration officials.

Before proceeding with the problem of negotiating with and giving concessions to terrorists, there needs to be a discussion on the meaning of the term "terrorism". The definition of terrorism itself is a much studied and controversial subject, and many definitions have been proposed, none of which are universally accepted. Often it is quite difficult to differentiate terrorism from simple criminal activity or guerilla warfare. In his book *Inside Terrorism* Bruce Hoffman discusses the variety of definitions and the changing meaning of the term "terrorism" over time. He discusses five key factors that describe what distinguishes terrorism from other forms of violence. These include the fact that terrorism is:

- Ineluctably political in aims and motives;
- Violent, or equally important, threatens violence;
- designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target;
- conducted *either* by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure (whose members wear no uniform or identifying insignia) or by individuals or a small collection of individuals directly influenced, motivated, or

inspired by the ideological aims or example of some existent terrorist movement and/or its leaders; and
- perpetrated by a sub-national group or non-state entity.[1]

These parameters would clearly differentiate terrorism from simple criminal activity, which certainly uses violence but is never political in its objective. The five factors also distinguish terrorism from guerilla warfare and insurgency, as guerillas usually operate in the open against the government, waging a coordinated war against an established power. Terrorists on the other hand would not openly act against a government or occupying force and avoid direct warfare against an opposing army.[2]

Hoffman later stated "We may therefore now attempt to define terrorism as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change."[3] The three case studies that I will discuss therefore fit these parameters as well as his definition. The Iran Hostage Crisis would be considered an act of terrorism as it threatened violence, was inspired by the Shiite fundamentalism and the Iranian Revolution and was perpetrated by a small group of individuals and had a major psychological effect on the United States due to the media coverage. Both the TWA Flight 847 hijacking and the ongoing Lebanese Hostage Crisis could be considered terrorism under this definition as both were carried out by Hezbollah, a small group who wanted to create a Shiite fundamentalist state within Lebanon. They threatened and carried out several acts of violence during these episodes, including killing Americans during both crises. They also had a major psychological effect on the United States through media involvement during these hostage takings.

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[1] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press. 2006) p. 40
[2] Hoffman, pp 35-37
[3] Hoffman, pp 40-41

Chapter One

The Evolution of American Counterterrorism Policy

In order to set this study of American counterterrorism policy in context, this thesis will begin with a review of the history and evolution of the policies in question. The issue of terrorism, although only recently a widely studied field, has been present in the United States long before the late 20th century. The word "terrorism" had been discussed in the United States at least as far back as two centuries ago. This occurred in a correspondence between former presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in response to violent disorder in American cities during the early 19th century. Referring to riots and violence in the city of Philadelphia, Adams wrote Jefferson in 1813 saying "What do you think of Terrorism Mr. Jefferson" [1]. The question was prescient and significant since it illustrated the conceptual problem of determining what was or was not considered terrorism even in the early 19th century.

Though more than 150 years would pass before the United States adopted a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy, incidents of domestic terrorism occurred occasionally within the country. At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, anarchists who advocated a revolutionary and violent overthrow of a number of countries around the world perpetrated numerous attacks, including a number of political assassinations. In the United States, President William McKinley was shot and killed by Leon Czoglosz in 1901.[2] A number of other attacks within the United States occurred during these years, most prominently the 1920 Wall Street bombing, where 38

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[1] *The Adams-Jefferson Correspondence John Adams to Thomas Jefferson 13 July 1813.* http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=875&chapter=64061&layout=html&Itemid=27

[2] Jeffrey Simon, *The Terrorist Trap: America's Experience with Terrorism.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 1994) p 38.

people were killed when a wagon carrying a bomb exploded outside the J.P Morgan Bank Building in New York.[3] Though these events were quite deadly, no national anti-terrorism strategy was developed until later in the 20th century.

The latter part of the 19th century also saw the birth of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) following the defeat of the South in the American Civil War. Great social change had occurred following the Civil War, specifically African-Americans being recognized as free citizens of the United States as well as being given the right to participate in elections. The KKK had been formed as a reactionary organization dedicated to restoring southern white supremacy. To accomplish this, the group often committed violent acts against African-Americans as well as whites who were sympathetic to the Union.[4] Though the group had declined by the end of the 1870s, it would be revived in the 20th century as prevailing anti-African-American sentiment would linger in the South long after the Civil War. Though they perpetrated a number of targeted killings, and made efforts to revert the Southern United States back to a white supremacist state, the vast majority of the discussion about the Ku Klux Klan has been approached via the lens of race. Anti-black violence was not usually classified as domestic terrorism although that is exactly what it was.

The Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S) was created in 1942 to organize and direct American intelligence and espionage operations during the Second World War. In 1943, the O.S.S created the X-2 Counter Espionage Branch (X-2). Originally, the intent was to have the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) head this intelligence and

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[3] Beverly Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in its First Age of Terror.* (New York: Oxford University Press. 2009). p.161

[4] Allen W Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction.* (New Orleans: Louisiana State Press 1995). pp 5-28

counterespionage service, but FBI director J. Edgar Hoover declined the offer. Following the D-Day invasion in 1944, working closely with the United Kingdom and the other Allied powers, X-2 agents were trained to carry out various tasks including espionage, capturing German agents in liberated Europe and supplying misinformation to German intelligence.[5] As the Allied forces in World War Two advanced into Belgium in late 1944, they captured a number of German soldiers who revealed a plot to impersonate American soldiers and assassinate Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower.[6] This plot failed, but by early 1945 Allied intelligence services were beginning to deduce a potential massive guerrilla uprising in Germany itself following an expected Allied conventional victory in World War Two.

As Germany continued to lose the war conventionally, the German S.S. devised a plan to undertake assassination missions, guerrilla warfare and other forms of destabilization to cause political upheaval in liberated Europe. This uprising was code-named "Werwolf" by the Nazis and was a last-ditch effort to undermine the Allied occupation of Europe. Werwolf operations included a number of actions on both fronts, though most of the violence was focused on the Eastern Front. Though casualties in Werwolf operations were minimal when compared with the conventional fighting, about 5000 people were killed, which included hundreds of revenge killings against ethnic German citizens, specifically in Usti, Czechoslovakia following a suspected bombing by German Werwolf operatives.[7] Indeed, with the populace weary of six years of constant warfare, the vast majority of Germans did not actively resist Allied

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[5] Timothy Naftali, *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2005). pp 2-11
[6] Naftali, pp. 1-3
[7] Perry Biddiscome, *Werwolf: The History of the National Socialist Guerilla Movement 1944-46* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1998). pp 237-240

occupation, and though the threat of guerrilla warfare was present, it was a relatively minor issue compared to the numerous other post-war challenges in rebuilding Germany.[8] Sporadic attacks continued in the months and years following the war but German resistance operations eventually ceased.

Although the counterintelligence operations against Nazi Germany were quite successful, the FBI's unwillingness to head the X-2 branch of the O.S.S led to two major counterintelligence agencies that often distrusted each other. The FBI and the O.S.S's post-war successor, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) often were plagued with jurisdictional issues between themselves and the rest of the United States intelligence community.[9] These interagency issues continue to trouble the American intelligence community today and have often hampered counter-terrorism efforts.

Following the defeat of Nazi Germany, the world was abruptly dragged into a Cold War between former allies the United States and the Soviet Union. Most American international effort was obviously going towards preparing for a conventional and possible nuclear war with the Soviets in Europe. In spite of this, there was fear concerning potential Soviet-trained assassins killing American officials abroad. This was heightened due to multiple KGB defectors to the United States who claimed they had been ordered to kill CIA agents in Moscow as well as to attempt to gain access to key military installations in the event of conflict between the United States and Soviet Union.[10] There was still a prevailing view that the Soviet Union could pursue some sort of terrorist activity against the United States. Even so, the possibility of Soviet-

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[8] Biddiscome, pp 276-285, specifically mentioned as a post-war issue the great famine, which killed many more people than Werwolf operations.
[9] William Regis Farrell, *The U.S. Government Response to Terrorism: In Search of an Effective Strategy* (Boulder: Westview Press 1982) pp 37-46
[10] Naftali, pp 13-16

sponsored nuclear terrorism was given little policy planning[11] as American leaders were convinced that the Soviets would not risk complete nuclear annihilation for a limited objective such as destroying a small city or military installation with a nuclear device.[12]

During the 1950s Puerto Rican nationalism was undergoing a revival and various anti-American uprisings had occurred in early 1950. As part of this, a group of Puerto Rican extremists made an unsuccessful assassination attempt on President Harry Truman. The nationalist revolt on the island was crushed soon after and even though there had been multiple attempts on the lives of American politicians, very little policy change came from this period.[13] In addition to these events, the killing of Ambassador John Mein in Guatemala occurred in 1968 was the first assassination of an American ambassador. Also in 1970, Tupamaro terrorists kidnapped and killed Dan Mitrione, a CIA agent who was working with Uruguayan police officers against these rebels.[14] These events occurred with little change in policy and no reprisal from the United States.

The first major terrorist threat to directly impact United States citizens came in the form of airplane hijacking. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s there were occasional airplane hijackings, with most of them occurring in the southern United States and the perpetrators would usually end up diverting the plane to Cuba. Early regulations by President John F. Kennedy's administration were fairly minimal. These included: bolting the cockpit door during flight, bulletproof glass for the pilots, making airplane hijacking an offense punishable by life imprisonment and even a plan to arm

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[11] *The Clandestine Introduction of Weapons of Mass Destruction into the United States*: Central Intelligence Agency March 13 1963.
http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000272910/DOC_0000272910.pdf
[12] Naftali, pp. 16-19
[13] Simon, pp. 51-53
[14] Abraham Miller, *Terrorism and Hostage Negotiations* (Boulder: Westview Studies Press, 1980). p. 57

pilots and flight crew in order to try and prevent the hijacking.[15] There were also plans to train FBI and other agents as sky marshals, in order to protect against hijackings. Though sky marshals were occasionally deployed, the presence of a marshal was never used in widespread practice throughout the next few decades. The hijackings of this period usually had peaceful ends and very few American citizens were harmed. Often ransom was paid or some concessions were made in order to facilitate the release of the plane, while other times the hijackers simply wished to obtain sanctuary outside the United States, usually in Havana.[16] The Cuban leader Fidel Castro usually offered amnesty and usually did not charge the hijackers with any crimes, letting them go if they let the hostages return to the United States.

The hijacking issue was largely a regional concern of the United States until 1968. In July, El Al Flight 426, an Israel-bound flight from Rome was hijacked by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Airline hijackings increased dramatically in 1968.[17] The main reason for this sudden surge in attacks is that George Habash (the leader of the PFLP) recognized that the great advances in communication, specifically television, would relay news and information very quickly around the entire world. Therefore a dramatic attack such as a hijacking would draw a lot of attention to the Palestinian cause. For these very reasons, this hijacking is often described as the first incident of modern international terrorism.[18] The El Al 426 incident and subsequent hijackings and attacks brought a new kind of threat to the United States and the world.

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[15] Simon, pp. 80-83.
[16] Naftali, pp. 19-23
[17] Simon, pp. 97-98
[18] Simon, p 97, See also Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press. 2004). p. 138

Very few policies to prevent hijackings had been in place before the El Al 426 hijacking and none followed immediately thereafter. This would change in the early 1970s. Between September 6th and September 9th 1970, five planes bound for the United States were hijacked by the PFLP and diverted to Dawson's Airfield in Jordan. After several days in Jordan, a deal was struck to free the hostages. The airplanes were evacuated and all five were blown up. In response, President Nixon stated that he would expand the number of air marshals on board American planes by four thousand to protect every American plane.[19] In addition to this, the United States made efforts to work multilaterally with the international community in order to prevent future air hijackings. This culminated in The Hague Convention of 1970[20] and Montreal Convention of 1971[21], where signatories agreed to extradite captured hijackers and sanction other states that harboured these fugitives. These agreements had limited effect as many countries around the world did not sign on to these conventions.[22]

Much of the framework of American counterterrorism policy was constructed during the presidency of Richard Nixon. Although the administration's focus was mostly on other issues, such as the prosecution of the Vietnam War, relations with China and later on in the presidency the Watergate Scandal, there was significant effort put into developing counterterrorism policy for the United States. A number of incidents occurred during this time, but none a more profound impact than the Munich Olympics massacre. This occurred in September 1972, when a Palestinian terrorist group called Black September kidnapped eleven Israeli athletes in the Olympic village.

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[19] Naftali, pp. 43-44

[20] *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft* The Hague, Netherlands December 16th 1970. http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/hague1970.html

[21] *Convention for the Suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of Civil Aviation* Montreal, Canada September 23rd 1971. http://treaties.un.org/doc/db/Terrorism/Conv3-english.pdf

[22] Simon, pp. 108-109

In the hostage-taking and failed rescue that followed, five of the eight Black September members were killed and all eleven Israeli athletes as well as a German police officer were killed. [23] Due to the massive around-the-clock media coverage of the event, the world learned of the tragedy shortly after it had begun. This incident spurred the Nixon Administration into creating contingency plans for the prevention of such an event occurring on American soil. [24] In the end, the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism was formed shortly after the Munich massacre.[25] Although it was replaced only a few years later, this was the first executive group to study terrorism and counterterrorism policy exclusively. This committee would play a role in the construction of the "no concessions to terrorists" policy later on in the decade.

On November 11th 1972, three men hijacked Southern Airways Flight 49 and threatened to crash it into a nuclear reactor in Tennessee unless they were paid $10 million. Airport security was fairly poor at this time and only a limited search of passengers was done at American airports. This system had failed to detect the weapons that the men had brought on board. Certainly there was much fear of a nuclear disaster, and media coverage of this event was widespread throughout the United States. Thankfully, the incident ended peacefully with the capture of the hijackers in Cuba.[26] Two major counterterrorism policy changes took place following this event. Firstly, in 1973 the United States signed an agreement with the Castro regime in Cuba to curb airplane hijackings. The Cubans were tired of the hijackers of American planes

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[23] Naftali, pp 54-59

[24] J. Brent Wilson, "The United States' Response to International Terrorism" in David Charters, (ed.) *The Deadly Sin of Terrorism: Its Effect on Democracy and Civil Liberties.* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994). pp 176-177

[25] Richard Nixon, *Memorandum Establishing a Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism September 25th 1972* http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=3596#axzz1Pybe0b00

[26] Naftali, pp. 61-65

frequently landing in their country to demand amnesty, as the optics of these incidents reflected poorly on the regime.[27] This treaty would greatly reduce the number of hijackings that diverted their planes to Cuba, as both countries agreed to prosecute these criminals. In the end, the treaty followed a common theme in American counterterrorism policy. Even if a country is deemed an enemy of the United States and has no diplomatic relations with it, the United States would negotiate and give concessions to them regardless of the past history between the two countries if it benefitted the United States in either curbing hijackings or saving hostages.

The Southern Airways Flight 49 hijacking also was the main impetus behind the second initiative: an increase of airport security in the United States. Previously, very little screening of passengers and their luggage had occurred in the United States. However with the potential threat of a plane being used as a weapon to destroy a nuclear plant, by 1973 all passengers were required to have themselves and their luggage searched before boarding any plane.[28] These measures, which have continued and expanded throughout the past four decades, proved very effective in decreasing the amount of hijackings of planes in the United States.

Throughout American history, domestic terrorism within the United States was often a far smaller threat compared to attacks on Americans in foreign countries. However, the 1960s and 1970s showcased a number of domestic terrorism incidents in the United States. One of these factions labelled as domestic terrorists was The Weather Underground. As the Vietnam War intensified, many leftist groups were formed to protest the war, with some using violence as their form of dissent. The Weather

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[27] Farrell, pp. 100-102
[28] Naftali, pp. 66-68

Underground was responsible for a number of bombings throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, which they carried out in protest against a wide array of American policies mostly dealing with the Vietnam War or race relations in the United States. In 1970, the group issued a 'declaration of war' on the United States, stating their support for revolutionary overthrow of the American Empire.[29] One of the most significant attacks occurred in 1972 when operatives bombed the Pentagon in retaliation for the Americans bombing of Hanoi throughout the previous year.[30] At one point, members of the Weather Underground were on the FBI's Most Wanted List, but these charges were dropped in 1973. Though the group had some support from leftist groups and African-American organizations like the Black Panthers, these groups saw a decline in popularity as the United States had begun to pull out of Vietnam and make peace with the North Vietnamese. In addition, by the mid-1970s there were a number of divisions within the group with regards to the group's future strategy and actions.[31] Eventually in the late 1970s the group was disbanded and the leadership of the Weather Underground turned themselves in to authorities by 1980. Though the group had been active for a decade, there were no casualties from the various bombings perpetrated by the Weather Underground other than some members of the group being killed in an accident while attempting to construct bombs. Many Americans and their policymakers tended to view these episodes of domestic terrorism as much less of a concern than deadly attacks on American citizens abroad.[32]

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[29] Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, The Red Army Faction and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies.* (Los Angeles: University of California Press 2004). p 180

[30] Varon, pp. 125

[31] Varon, pp. 296-99

[32] Simon, pp. 96-97

Another group that was labelled as a domestic terrorist organization were known as the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA), who operated in the middle of the 1970s. The group was similar to the Weather Underground, in that it was staunchly left-wing and advocated a violent overthrow of the government of the United States. The group was very small, consisting of only about ten members at any one time. They were most well-known for kidnapping Patty Hearst, daughter of newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst in 1974. During the kidnapping, Hearst had come to identify with her kidnappers and when given the chance to be released, refused and became an active member of the group.[33] The SLA was responsible for a number of robberies and violent episodes in California between 1973 and 1975. In 1974 however, many of the members had been killed during a police shootout in May. In spite of the often well-publicized actions, only two civilian deaths had occurred during this time and the movement had been effectively neutralized. By the end of 1975, the remaining members had either been captured or exiled.[34]

Though a "no concessions to terrorists" policy had been discussed previously in the Nixon Administration, it was only after the March 1st 1973 attack on the Saudi Arabian embassy in Khartoum, Sudan that the policy was formally adopted by the United States. In the previous two decades, the United States often paid ransom for hostages or made other concessions to terrorist organizations and was not constrained by any policy of "no concessions".[35] In some cases like the Mitrione killing the United States firmly proclaimed they would give no concessions to the Tupamaros, though there was not a firm policy in place. In the attack by the Palestinian Black September

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[33] Naftali, p. 94
[34] Varon, p. 300
[35] Naftali, pp. 42-43

organization in Khartoum, five people including the Saudi and American ambassadors to Sudan were taken hostage. Black September demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners in Israel as well as Sirhan Sirhan, who had assassinated Senator Robert Kennedy in 1968.[36] The next day, President Nixon held a press conference and demanded the release of the five hostages, two of whom were American. He stated the United States would do what it could to get them released, but would not pay ransom or blackmail, strengthening the argument for a "no concessions to terrorists" policy.[37] The policy is obviously based on sound logic: if concessions are granted to terrorists in exchange for hostages, then they may continue committing violent acts in order to extract more concessions. In this case, Black September assassinated the American Ambassador Cleo Noel and another diplomat George Moore and attempted to negotiate the release of the other hostages for their safety. Many of the perpetrators were apprehended by Sudanese authorities and charged with murder, although several were freed and most were given short prison sentences.[38] Following this event, the formal "no concessions" policy was adopted by the United States.

During this time, as part of their counterterrorism policy, many Western countries developed specialized units that were capable of quick responses in the case of terrorist crises. In July 1976 Israeli Special Forces staged a daring raid on a hijacked aircraft at the Entebbe International Airport in Uganda, rescuing nearly all of the 106 hostages who had been taken captive in the hijacking, in a battle with both the hijackers and Ugandan army units that supported the hijackers. In addition to this in October 1977, a West German counterterrorist unit stormed the hijacked Lufthansa Flight 181 in

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[36] Simon, pp. 107-108
[37] Simon, pp. 109-110
[38] Naftali, pp. 70-73

Mogadishu, Somalia, killing or capturing all of the hijackers and rescuing the remaining hostages. These were sensational media events and showed the effectiveness of small counterterrorism units in resolving hostage crises through force rather than negotiations and concessions. In the United States, this unit was called the Delta Force, which was created in November 1977.[39] Delta Force's first major mission was Operation Eagle Claw, the failed attempt to rescue the American hostages trapped in Iran during the Iranian Hostage Crisis.[40] Though this mission was a failure, Delta Force has undertaken a number of counterterrorist actions in the past four decades, including a number of recent missions during the War on Terror.

Though acts of domestic terrorism continued to be fairly limited compared to foreign attacks, some incidents did still occur in the United States. In March 1977 a radical sect of Hanafi Islam took control of a number of buildings in downtown Washington D.C, killing a reporter and taking over one hundred hostages.[41] The siege of Washington D.C was led by Hamas Abdul Khaalis and a dozen other militants, who took over the City Hall, the Islamic Center of Washington and the B'nai Brith World Headquarters, which was an organization providing community services within Jewish communities in a number of countries. This standoff lasted for two days, and while another police officer died from injuries sustained during the siege, eventually Khaalis and the remaining hostage-takers gave up after an intervention by three Muslim ambassadors who served as mediators during the hostage-taking.[42]

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[39] Charles A Beckwith, *Delta Force* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishing 1983). p 118
[40] Beckwith, pp. 253-257
[41] Simon, pp. 124-125
[42] Naftali, pp. 99-100

President Jimmy Carter decided to order a review of American counterterrorism policy during the summer of 1977. His *Presidential Review Memorandum 30 (PRM30)* which was released in June 1977 details a number of ways in which American counterterrorism policy and intelligence gathering should be reviewed and handled in the future.[43] This led to the creation of the Working Group on Terrorism, which replaced the Cabinet Committee on Terrorism. During this summer however, further incidents took place throughout the United States. Puerto Rican nationalists, who had been dormant since the 1950s, executed a number of bombings throughout the north-eastern United States, killing several people. In addition, Cuban exiles who were opposed to Fidel Castro as well as to President Carter opening up diplomatic relations with his regime[44] planned and executed multiple bombings in Washington D.C. Though these attacks were fairly dramatic, there were very few deaths involved when compared with terrorism overseas.

Though terrorism was usually fairly low on the list of American priorities during this time, there were numerous attempts within the United States Government to strengthen counterterrorism policy and make it a more prominent topic in Washington D.C. Beginning in 1977 several bills were introduced in the United States Congress in order to create a more effective counterterrorism policy as well as elevating the committee to the level of a federal bureau, which meant giving it more resources and manpower to fight terrorism in the future.[45] In addition, these bills gave increased powers to Congress to sanction countries that were suspected of supporting terrorism.

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[43] James Carter, *Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM- 30)* June 2nd 1977. http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/prm/prm30.pdf

[44] Bruce Maxwell, *Terrorism: A Documentary History* (Washington D.C CQ Press 2003). pp 30-31

[45] One example: 1978 *Omnibus Antiterrorism Act* September 28th 1978 http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/1978/09/the-omnibus-antiterrorism-act

Though the original Omnibus Antiterrorism Act of 1977 had some support in Congress, it failed to pass the Senate. Also, there was pressure on the Democratic-controlled Congress by President Carter's advisors to vote against the bill, believing it gave too much power to Congress, while taking away power from the executive branch. Furthermore, even though attacks on American citizens had increased in the 1970s, most of it was outside the United States and viewed as a series of regional problems in the world. Less than one hundred Americans were killed by acts of terrorism in 1977.[46] Though this number was increasing in the 1970s, terrorism was nowhere near a leading cause of death for American citizens on the whole. None of these bills were signed into law and a comprehensive anti-terrorism bill was not passed in the United States Congress until 1995 following the first World Trade Centre bombing as well as the Oklahoma City bombing.

In addition to all of these factors, media involvement reporting on terrorism also played a role in how the terrorist action is viewed by policymakers. In the book *Terrorism and the Media*, Yonah Alexander and Richard Latter discuss ten specific questions that deal with the relationship between the media and policymakers. These include:

1. Do news reports cause or encourage terrorism?
2. Would terrorism decline if the media ignored events?
3. Should media coverage of an event be delayed and in what circumstances?
4. Should attempts be made to deny reporters access to information?
5. Is it possible to legislate "legitimate" media coverage of incidents?
6. What should be the media's relationship with the police?
7. Can the media take steps to minimize its exploitation by terrorists?
8. Is media self-censorship acceptable or even possible give competition between media agencies?
9. Should the media cover incidents in full?

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[46] Naftali, pp. 111-113

10. Will media self-censorship lead terrorists to escalate violence to ensure it is reported?[47]

Question seven is an important one to consider in this paper, as during these three case studies, specifically the TWA Flight 847 crisis, the media coverage was exploited quite well by Amal leader Nabih Berri to extract concessions from the United States and Israel.

These preceding events were some of the major forces behind the creation of a national American counterterrorism policy before 1979 as well as the policy's evolution during this time. Specifically they led to the "no concessions to terrorists" policy that was formally adopted during the Nixon Administration following the incident in Khartoum played a major role in three future events that will be discussed later on in the thesis.

[47] Yonah Alexander and Richard Latter, *Terrorism and the Media: Dilemmas for Government, Journalists and the Public* (New York: Maxwell McMillan 1990). pp. 2-3

Chapter Two

The Iranian Hostage Crisis

Between 1979 and 1981, a major hostage crisis unfolded in Iran as sixty-six American citizens were taken hostage. On November 4th 1979, several hundred fundamentalist Iranian students stormed the American Embassy and took control of it for 444 days. This prolonged occupation was only resolved by a negotiated solution between the United States and Iran in 1981. Though the negotiations were ultimately successful and all of the hostages were freed without any casualties, this shows another incident where the United States violated its "no concessions to terrorists" policy.

Background Context

The United States and Iran have had a long and complex relationship throughout modern history. Though American influence and interest in Iranian and Persian affairs was very limited in comparison with the United Kingdom and Russia in the 19th and early 20th century, this changed following the Second World War. Iran attempted to stay neutral during the Second World War, but there was fear on the part of the Allies that Iran's ruler, Reza Shah Pahlavi, would align himself with Nazi Germany and the Axis powers. This led to a British and Soviet invasion of the country in 1941 to secure the flow of oil and other supplies through Iran into the Soviet Union, which was being invaded at the time by the Axis powers. The Allied powers installed Pahlavi's son Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi as the new ruler of Iran in September 1941.[1]

Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi proved to be very friendly with Western powers throughout his reign, especially with the United States. His father had begun a process

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[1] Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution.* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2003). p 105-122

of modernization and Westernization in Iran during his two-decade reign and Mohammed continued these policies. Though these efforts made some improvements in the lives of Iranians, many were wary of the stranglehold that the United Kingdom held on Iran's oil profits. The National Front, an alliance of nationalist parties in Iran, was formed in the late 1940s. Its most important policy was the nationalization of Iranian oil fields owned by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), which had been created to give the United Kingdom the vast majority of oil profits from Iranian oil.[2] The most prominent of the National Front politicians was Mohammed Mossadegh, who assumed the role of Prime Minister in 1951, while enjoying strong support amongst the populace. Part of his support was derived from the left-wing Tudeh Party, which was noted for its communist leanings. Since the United States was fighting a protracted Cold War against the Communist Soviet Union, any government that was even remotely Soviet-friendly was seen as an enemy.

By 1953, the British had largely shut down oil production and embargoed Iranian ports to destabilize the Mossadegh government. In August, a CIA-sponsored coup d'état, led by armed forces loyal to the Shah, was able to recapture the capital and arrest Mossadegh.[3] The Shah, who had fled the country before the coup, was re-installed as the ruler of Iran. In order to stabilize the regime, a secret police force called SAVAK was created and trained mostly by the CIA. Beyond this, our knowledge is limited because much of the documentation that had been kept by the CIA during the coup was mysteriously destroyed in the years following the actions.[4]

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[2] Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2008). p 47-49
[3] Keddie, p123-131
[4] "C.I.A. Destroyed Files on 1953 Iran Coup" *New York Times*, May 29th 1997.

Though the Shah ruled for another twenty-five years, opposition to his rule continued on all sides and this resistance grew in the 1970s. The Tudeh Party and other leftist groups were continually opposed to his leadership and these factions were often the target of kidnappings and assassinations by the Shah's secret police. Another major source of opposition was the religious and traditionalist elements of Iranian society. These conservative groups feared that the Shah was making Iran more like a Western nation rather than one based on the dominant Shiite Islamic faith. During the latter part of his reign, Shah Pahlavi instituted the White Revolution. This was another policy designed to reform Iranian society and to improve living conditions for impoverished citizens. While this made some improvements in living conditions for the average Iranian as well as improvements in women's rights, opposition to the policy came from both sides.[5] Leftists believed that the revolution did not go far enough in reforming society, while clergy and large landowners saw much of their land given to small peasant farmers and their power and influence greatly reduced during the 1960s. One major critic of the Shah during this time was Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a leading Shiite cleric who denounced Shah Pahlavi as an infidel and traitor to the Shiite faith. Though exiled for his criticism, Khomeini would remain a powerful figure in Iranian politics and would play a central role in the coming revolution in 1979.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the United States remained very supportive of the Shah. Despite his unpopularity and frequent use of secret police on his opponents, the United States viewed the Shah's regime as an important ally in the Middle East and an important counterweight to containing Soviet influence in the region. The United

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[5] Yonah Alexander and Allen Nanes (eds), *The United States and Iran: A Documentary History.* (Fredericks MD: Aletheia Books, 1980). pp 349-361

States was a major supplier of aid to the Shah in the 1960s and 1970s and maintained a friendship with the Shah even as Iran's human rights record deteriorated.[6] In the United States, Jimmy Carter was elected President in 1976. Though the Carter Administration continued to support the Shah, they would be unable to foresee the events that occurred and the anti-American backlash that would occur by the end of the decade.

The Revolution and Hostage Takings

With increasing internal strife in the late 1970s, the opposition forces were gathering large crowds in protest against the Shah, consistently undermining his regime. The protests led to clashes with security forces, resulting in the deaths of demonstrators and causing more and larger demonstrations. This unrest included a country-wide general strike in the fall of 1978, which crippled the economy.[7] The United States, despite having aided Iran in the past, was unable to prevent the Iranian Revolution. By early 1979, Mohammed Pahlavi had fled to the United States, his authority having collapsed. Khomeini, who had been exiled for almost two decades, returned to Iran in February. Though he helped transition the Iranian government into a more moderate regime in the short-term, the real power remained with him and other Shiite clerics.

Though he was able to flee successfully, the Shah's health had been failing and he remained in the United States to seek care for his illness. The revolutionary government demanded that the Shah be extradited to Iran to be imprisoned and executed, but he remained in exile. Since part of his exile was in the United States, this drove a further rift between the United States and the Iranian revolutionaries. The Shah

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[6] Mark Bowden, *Guests of the Ayatollah: the First Battle in America's War With Militant Islam.* (New York: Atlantic Press, 2006). pp 117-121

[7] Charles Kurzmann, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran.* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2004). pp 122-123

would later die from illness in 1980. Khomeini, staunchly anti-American, repeatedly referred to the United States as "The Great Satan" and claimed that they were still attempting to destabilize Iran through plots and covert operations.[8]

In February of 1979 the American Embassy in Tehran was occupied by Marxist revolutionaries. One worker was killed and more than 100 people were taken hostage. Oddly enough, in light of what happened later in November, Khomeini and the Islamic fundamentalists actually denounced this action, although mostly to try to marginalize the Marxists, who were now competing with Khomeini in order to influence a new Iranian state. This particular crisis was defused shortly after the seizure and the American hostages were set free,[9] in contrast to more famous seizure in November, which lasted for more than a year.

Khomeini took power by April 1979 under a new constitution, however Iran remained divided as numerous groups now protested Khomeini's leadership and the new Islamic Republic. Marxist guerrillas waged war against the Islamic revolutionaries and minority groups within Iran such as Arabs and Kurds also revolted against the Islamists, believing Khomeini to have excessive power in this new Iran. These revolts were fairly minor, but remained an obstacle to Khomeini uniting the country.[10] Two key events occurred in 1979 and 1980 that greatly strengthened the regime. The first of these key events was the Iranian Hostage Crisis and the second was the Iraqi invasion of Iran, which developed into the Iran-Iraq War. These events and the American response

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[8] Bowden, 423
[9] H.W. Brands, *Into the Labyrinth: The United States and the Middle East 1945-1993.* (New York: McGraw Hill Inc. 1994). pp 162-163
[10] Brands, p. 163

to them led to a major shift in American-Iranian relations and also a break with the "no concessions to terrorists" policy.

Though Khomeini had many opponents, he maintained fanatical support amongst parts of the population. Islamist university student organizations were amongst the most dedicated backers of Khomeini. On November 4th 1979, a group of such students called the "Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line" occupied the United States embassy and took 66 Americans hostage. They had acted without explicit backing from Khomeini and the revolutionary government but due to their successful occupation of the embassy, the regime endorsed the occupation and used it to enhance their position in Iran.[11] At the time, a moderate government under Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan was in office in Iran. Some thought that a liberal democratic government still could function in Iran, but Khomeini and the Revolutionary council held the real power. Bazargan's government was mostly ineffective during this time and resigned in protest after the hostage-taking.[12]

Though sixty-six Americans were captured by the Iranians, six other American embassy workers were able to avoid captivity due to the fact that they were not in the building that day. They achieved this by hiding in embassies of other countries and later residing in diplomatic compounds. These six were aided by Canadian Ambassador Ken Taylor, who arranged for the six Americans to later fly to Europe in January 1980 using fake Canadian passports.[13] They would later arrive in Switzerland and eventually were flown home to the United States. Although Iranian authorities were outraged over this,

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[11] Bowden, 8-12
[12] Warren Christopher, et al, *American Hostages in Iran: The Conduct of a Crisis*. (New Haven: Yale University Press 1985). p. 83
[13] CBC Archives: January 29 1980 http://archives.cbc.ca/on_this_day/01/28/

it did not derail negotiations between the United States and the Iranian government. Though fourteen American hostages were freed early on during the crisis, the remaining fifty-two remained in captivity as 1980 began.

The second major event that helped to stabilize the Iranian revolutionary government occurred in September 1980. Iran's neighbour Iraq had recently been taken over by the Ba'ath party. Its leader Saddam Hussein was a secular ruler and feared an Islamic revolution by Iraq's Shiite population in southern Iraq. In addition to this, Khomeini had spent much of his time in exile in Iraq and now that he consolidated his control in Iran, Khomeini called on Shiites of Iraq to revolt and to create a new Islamist Iraq similar to his Iran. Iraq decided to strike first, launching an invasion of Iran in 1980. They occupied a number of southern cities in Iran, but the invasion was stopped by Iranian troops and pushed back to the borders after two years of fighting. The invasion deflected attention away from stability issues within Iran and caused a rallying around the Khomeini regime in order to push out the invaders. Iran would end up pushing the Iraqi army back into Iraq, while occupying parts of southern Iraq. In the end, the war was mostly a bloody stalemate as it raged on through most of the 1980s.[14]

Public Reaction

The hostage-takings had a major effect on public opinion towards Iran. Many Americans reacted with fervent patriotism as well as strong anti-Iranian sentiment. A number of anti-Iranian demonstrations took place across the country, with occasional violence breaking out, including the murder of an Iranian student in California. Gatherings of Iranian students who supported the hostage-takings or other groups who opposed the United States' involvement in the Middle East were quickly suppressed and

[14] Keddie, pp. 263-265

dispersed. The Shah was often demonized and many people called for him to be brought back to Iran if it would free the hostages. Conservative elements of the population advocated a counter-strike against Iran in retaliation for the hostage-takings. Some of this sentiment was echoed by elected officials within the United States. For example, Barry Goldwater, long-time Senator and former presidential candidate for the Republican Party wanted to pursue a number of strikes against Iran's oil refineries and critical infrastructure.[15] Though a large-scale military strike was not pursued by the Carter Administration, public demonstrations continued to try to compel them to take stronger action against the Iranians.

The Iranian Hostage Crisis is also quite renowned for the amount of media coverage that was given to it. Major American news networks had been given the right by the Iranian Government to send journalists into Tehran and give news briefings to their American audience. Television coverage was almost around-the-clock, which gave viewers at home frequent daily updates on the conditions of the hostages as well as giving their audience a view on how the Iranians perceived the United States. In addition to the involvement by major news networks, local news stations often picked up these stories and placed their own perspective on the events, especially in areas where some of the hostages or their relatives resided. While most of the television programming focused on the hostages, journalists also showed many Iranian citizens who often chanted anti-American slogans.[16] Obviously Americans were usually not familiar with the history of Iranian-American relations, knowing very little about the CIA's involvement in the 1953 coup d'état as well as the continued aid for the Shah, but

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[15] Bowden, pp 210-212
[16] Bowden, pp 190-193

the anger shown by the Iranian crowds opened up the eyes of many Americans who did not understand the reason for the kidnapping of the embassy hostages.

The most well-known television show during the hostage crisis took was a nightly program shown by The American Broadcasting Company (ABC). ABC had begun to broadcast a program on their nightly newscast called *The Iran Crisis: America Held Hostage*. This provided daily information about developments in Iran and the conditions of the hostages. Originally, the United States were unwilling to provide the exact number of people held hostage within the embassy, but the media were eventually able to reveal the identities of all of the victims, leading to more stories on their relatives back home in the United States.[17] These interviews were often highly emotional, with parents and friends often crying while being interviewed and showing their grief for their captured family members. This brought a great deal of new coverage on the hostage-taking. Even though only a few dozen Americans had been taken hostage by the Iranians, it often felt that "America" itself had been taken hostage. The constant news flow from Iran continued the pressure against the Carter Administration to do something about the hostages.

Carter Administration Response

From the start of the hostage crisis, the Carter Administration began to take steps to apply diplomatic pressure on Iran. Shortly after the crisis erupted, President Carter ordered many Iranian diplomats to leave the United States. Later in November 1979, the Carter Administration froze all Iranian funds in American banks and

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[17] Bowden, pp 190-191

suspended most trade with Iran. [18] Though Iran did export oil to the United States during this time, the President declared an embargo of Iranian oil imports, hoping to isolate and weaken Iran's leverage with the hostages.[19] Iranian immigrants, specifically those who attended American universities, were also scrutinized more thoroughly. A possible rescue attempt was also discussed, though very little interest was shown by the Administration at this point.

On Christmas Day 1979, the Soviet Union began their invasion of Afghanistan. After quickly killing the President, Hafizullah Amin, they installed a puppet government under Soviet control. The invasion alarmed the United States, as a Soviet advance towards the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean would shift the balance of power towards the Soviet Union in the Middle East if they sought to occupy key oil producing regions. Still in the midst of the Cold War, the United States believed that an invasion of Iran by the Soviet Union was possible. During this time, a massive operation got underway to aid the mujaheddin, the anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan, which was funded mostly by Saudi Arabia and the United States. In spite of the continually deteriorating relations between the United States and Iran, the United States would have likely intervened to defend Iran against a Soviet invasion had that occurred.[20]

Within the Administration, there was often much disagreement among various officials. Some, like Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, supported a much more interventionist policy with regards to Iran. He advocated a complete cessation of trade with Iran and a blockade of its ports in the Persian Gulf, which would

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[18] Harold Saunders, "Diplomacy and Pressure: November 1979-1980" in Warren Christopher, et al, *American Hostages in Iran: The Conduct of a Crisis*. Yale University Press: New Haven 1985 pp. 93-95
[19] Jimmy Carter, *Carter Imposes Oil Embargo During Hostage Crisis* November 11th 1979. Speech found at http://www.history.com/audio/carter-imposes-oil-embargo-during-hostage-crisis
[20] Bowden, pp. 286-289

greatly diminish oil exports greatly harming Iran in the process. One of the more staunch anti-Soviet and anti-Khomeini members of the administration, Brzezinski had been a strong supporter of the Shah to keep Soviet influence out of Iran, in spite of the Shah's human rights violations throughout the past decades.[21] Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Brzezinski did moderate his views on military intervention to free the hostages, as this might cause an American-Iranian military conflict, but he still wanted the United States to pursue military options to free the hostages.[22] Brzezinski believed passionately in an activist United States that would help its allies when they were in trouble and was very much in favour of an attempted military rescue of the hostages.[23]

Other officials, specifically Cyrus Vance, the Secretary of State, were more concerned with issues of human rights and the improvement of relations between the United States and the rest of the world. The United States had damaged its prestige by supporting the Shah and his poor human rights record, and these American officials believed that their government should not support their allies if they carried out poor policies in their own countries. Vance was opposed to any military rescue missions to free the hostages, believing that any attempt would likely cause the Iranians to execute their captives.[24] The safety of the hostages was his main concern and he felt that a negotiated solution was the most likely way to end the crisis without provoking any major conflict with the Iranian Government.

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[21] Pierre Salinger, *American Held Hostage: The Secret Negotiations* (New York: Doubleday 1981). p 40
[22] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of a National Security Advisor* (Toronto: McGraw Hill Ltd. 1983). p 485
[23] Brzezinski, pp. 483-484
[24] Bowden, pp. 211-212

Early Negotiations

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan helped to spur the first major rounds of negotiations between the United States and Iran early in 1980. Though moderate politicians in Iran were increasingly marginalized, certain members of the government remained open to the idea of negotiating a solution with the United States concerning the hostages. One of these politicians was Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, Iran's foreign minister. Though he was a close aide to Khomeini, he was not as hard-line in his anti-Americanism as were many of the revolutionaries.[25] During January of 1980, large demonstrations occurred in Tehran showing great and continuing support for the hostage-taking and demanding the return of the Shah to face justice and certain death, making official negotiations very difficult.

American negotiations began in secret that January between Ghotbzadeh and two French emissaries, Hector Villalon and Christian Bourget, acting on behalf of the Americans. The issue of returning the Shah to Iran was prevalent in their discussions and the United States would not agree to this. Some of the discussion was centered on creating a United Nations commission to study the actions and crimes of the Shah during his reign as the starting point in freeing the hostages.[26] During this time, Ayatollah Khomeini's health was failing and a more moderate President of Iran, Abdul Hassan Bani-Sadr was elected, giving the United States more hope of a possible deal to free the hostages.

In addition to these negotiations, the Carter Administration sent Hamilton Jordan, Chief of Staff to President Carter, along with Villalon and Bourget to Paris to

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[25] David Farber, *Taken Hostage* (New York: Princeton University Press 2005). pp 167-168
[26] Bowden, p 328

meet with Ghotbzadeh. They met on February 17th 1980. Jordan notes in his memoirs that Ghotbzadeh had come to meet him at great personal risk to himself, since he would probably face death if Khomeini found out he was negotiating with Americans.[27] One way in which Ghotbzadeh believed that he could accelerate the progress on a deal to free the hostages was for the United States to kill the Shah, something Jordan said was completely out of the question. In spite of this Ghotbzadeh told Jordan that with the election of a more moderate President and discussions that he had in Iran that he believed that Iran might be "weeks away" from finalizing a deal to free the hostages.[28]

Nonetheless, this deal was thwarted by the Ayatollah Khomeini. In February 1980 he declared that the fate of the 52 remaining hostages would be decided by the Iranian Parliament, which was in the midst of elections and would not be resolved for at least another month. Ghotbzadeh believed that he had an agreement to free the hostages, but the public address by Khomeini made that impossible in the short term.[29] In addition, some of the other moderate politicians backed away from discussions about freeing the hostages for the time being. This failure spurred the Carter Administration to pursue other options in order to free the hostages.[30]

Rescue Attempt

In response to the hostage taking, a number of options were under discussion within the Carter Administration in order to exact retribution against Iran and attempt to free the hostages. Iran's economy continued to be dependent on its massive oil reserves and the option existed for the United States to bomb the oil refineries near the Persian

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[27] Hamilton Jordan, *Crisis: The Last Year of the Carter Presidency* (New York: C.P Putnam and Sons 1982). pp. 162-163
[28] Jordan, pp 165-166.
[29] Farber, p 169
[30] "Carter Tells Nation, 'We Cannot Deal with Inhumane People'" *Washington Post* April 30th 1980 p.1

Gulf, which would cripple Iran's export industry. These issues continued to be discussed within the Administration. However, fearing retribution by the Iranians and possible execution of the hostages, none of these policies were ever carried out.

After the failure of another round of negotiations in the spring, President Jimmy Carter authorized Operation Eagle Claw.[31] This was a helicopter rescue mission which took place on April 24th 1980. Several American helicopters would land first in the desert and later closer to Tehran, at which point the American troops would be transported into the capital by trucks to free the hostages inside the embassy.[32] Though three hostages were held outside the embassy, the vast majority were confirmed to be still held within the embassy. Unfortunately, dust storms caused poor visibility and while refuelling in the desert, two American aircraft collided and the resulting explosion killed eight Americans. The rescue mission was abandoned and the remaining American forces pulled out of Iran. This failed rescue attempt reflected very poorly on President Carter and boosted the status of Ayatollah Khomeini and his revolutionary government, in spite fact that the failure had nothing to do with any Iranian action. Though a number of other rescue plans were discussed later throughout 1980, only Operation Eagle Claw was carried out. Its failure ensured that the crisis would be resolved through peaceful negotiations.

Due to his opposition to Operation Eagle Claw, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance resigned from the Carter Cabinet just prior to the rescue mission. Vance discusses

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[31] J. Brent Wilson, "The United States' Response to International Terrorism" in the book Charters, David (ed.) *The Deadly Sin of Terrorism: Its Effect on Democracy and Civil Liberties.* (Westport: Greenwood Press 1994.) p. 190

[32] Charles A Beckwith, *Delta Force* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishing 1983). pp. 5-8

several important points that he brought up in opposition to the proposed rescue operation in his memoirs. He states:

> I reminded the group that even if the rescue mission freed some of our embassy staff, the Iranians could simply take more hostages from among the American journalists in Tehran. We could then be worse off than before, and the whole region would be inflamed by our action. Our national interests in the whole region would be severely injured and we might face an Islamic-Western War. Finally I said there was a real chance that we would force the Iranians into the arms of the Soviets.[33]

These are very important issues and it was true that some of the hostages were held outside of the embassy. In addition to this, many American journalists that were in Tehran were not invulnerable to being abducted by the Iranians if they saw fit to take more hostages. In spite of these concerns, the rescue mission was approved by Carter and Vance left his position in the Carter Administration.

Continuing Negotiations

As 1980 continued, Iran's position became increasingly undermined due to the ongoing embargo imposed by the United States. The Shah died on July 27th and his death ended the demands to return him to Iran, which had been a major obstacle with earlier negotiations.[34] In September, Iraq began its full-scale invasion of Iran following months of border skirmishes. The Iraqi army advanced quickly taking over several key cities in Southern Iran and winning many victories early in the war against the poorly-trained Iranian army. Iran was unable to export any oil during this time and suffered economically. They also had very few allies willing to sell them military equipment and supplies. The United States also supported Iraq financially during the early part of the war, believing that they could undermine the Iranian regime and possibly use this crisis

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[33] Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster 1983). p. 410

[34] Roy Assersohn, *The Biggest Deal* (London: Meuthen Press 1982). p. 161

to free their hostages sooner. These incidents caused an increased willingness for the Iranians to begin to seriously negotiate with the United States in order to make a deal to free the hostages in exchange for financial compensation.

In September, Ayatollah Khomeini made public a list of demands in exchange for the freedom of the hostages. These demands included: a return of the Shah's assets to Iran, the unfreezing of Iranian financial assets in the United States, and a guarantee that the United States would not interfere in Iranian affairs.[35] This was the first pronouncement by the supreme leader with regards to a possible deal and became an important step on the way to opening the next round of negotiations with Iran. In October, The Iranian Parliament, the Majlis voted in favour of pursuing a deal to free the hostages in exchange for concessions. The demands that were agreed upon by the Majlis were quite similar to what Ayatollah Khomeini proposed. They insisted the United States should pledge to keep out of Iranian affairs, unfreeze Iranian assets which they would use to fight against Iraq, cancel the embargo on Iran made by President Carter and negate all foreign financial claims against Iran.[36]

In spite of the fact that much progress had been made, by the 1980 American presidential election, the hostages still had not been freed. These events seriously weakened Jimmy Carter's re-election prospects. During the election campaign, Carter spent much of his time at the White House attempting to resolve the hostage crisis rather than campaigning, which also hurt him in the election. Republicans nominated Ronald Reagan, who would go on to defeat Carter by nearly ten percent in popular vote, while handily winning the Electoral College. During the campaign, Reagan and the

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[35] Assersohn, p 182
[36] Assersohn, pp 192-195

Republicans had used strong anti-terrorism rhetoric,[37] hinting at a stronger willingness to use force as part of counterterrorism policy under his administration. He also campaigned strongly on the "no concessions to terrorists" policy during the 1980 campaign. However, like previous Presidents, Ronald Reagan would learn that military responses to terrorism would often be impossible due to circumstances of later events in the 1980s.

In spite of his defeat during the general election, President Carter worked tirelessly during his final three months in office to free the hostages.[38] Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, representing the United States, travelled abroad to negotiate with Iranian officials. While the United States and Iran did not have formal diplomatic relations, Algerian officials agreed to mediate the discussions. Even though Reagan had won the election, the Carter Administration used this to their advantage.[39] Christopher and his staff met the Iranians in Algiers and convinced them that if they did not negotiate a deal with the Carter Administration, the Reagan Administration would not likely be as accommodating in any future negotiations.[40] Eventually, after two more months of work, a deal was made, known today as the Algiers Accords.

Final Deal: Algiers Accords

With the signing of the Algiers Accord, all 52 remaining hostages were freed on January 21st 1981. This coincided with the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan. During the final days of the negotiations, Carter had been very worried that if the

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[37] 1980 Presidential Debates between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan http://www.history.com/topics/ronald-reagan/videos

[38] Jimmy Carter, *The White House Diary* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux 2010). pp 480-516. This describes the last three months of his term in office as noted in this book, with many mentions of the hostage crisis.

[39] Bowden, pp 562-564

[40] "Carter/Reagan split over hostages" *The Guardian* January 4th 1981 p. 7

hostages were not freed by the 21st, that the Reagan Administration would take drastic action in order to free them, including the possible use of military action.[41] This would be consistent with the hard-line rhetoric used during the election campaign by Reagan and some of his staunchest backers.[42] It was even believed that the United States might launch a full-scale invasion of Iran in early 1981 when Ronald Reagan became President.[43] Luckily, the agreement was reached just before the inauguration and it became Jimmy Carter's last major act as President of the United States.

The Algiers Accords had four main clauses. First of all, the accords stated that the United States would cease intervening in Iran's affairs. Secondly, the United States would unfreeze Iranian assets that had been seized early on during the crisis. This was very important as it released $8 billion to the Iranians, which allowed them to purchase weapons and supplies for their ongoing war with Iran as well as to settle outstanding debts with the United States.[44] Thirdly, the Algiers Accords created an international tribunal to settle claims between citizens of the two countries, known as the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal. The creation of this claims tribunal was vital in settling the many disputes between the two countries. For example, several American companies had invested large amounts of money in Iranian infrastructure and its oil industry, losing all of this when the revolution occurred.[45] Finally, though the Iranians had long since demanded the return of the Shah's property that was held overseas, the tribunal overruled their claims on the Shah's foreign estates.[46] In return, Iran would release all

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[41] "Muskie and Christopher Dispute Non-Negotiation Policy" *Washington Post* February 20th 1981 p. 6
[42] Bowden, p. 577
[43] For example "U.S. Invasion at Hand?" *The Daily Gleaner* December 31st 1980 p. 1
[44] *The Algiers Accords* http://www.parstimes.com/history/algiers_accords.pdf
[45] Bowden, p. 557
[46] *The Algiers Accords* http://www.parstimes.com/history/algiers_accords.pdf

fifty-two hostages. Though the hostage crisis ended thirty years ago, some claims still remain unsettled before the tribunal.

Conclusion

The Iranian Hostage Crisis came at a very inopportune time for the Carter Administration. The United States was suffering through stagnant economic growth, an energy crisis and massive price inflation in addition to the loss of Iran as a major Middle Eastern ally. As 1980 began, Carter was also facing a serious primary challenge by Edward Kennedy, who often led in national polling in the Democratic Party Primaries and ended up attacking Carter from the left wing of his party. The constant attacks from within his own party as well as the numerous issues plaguing the United States hindered the popularity of the President and also hindered his ability to manage the crisis, since much of his time was devoted to warding off a possible defeat in the Democratic Primaries in 1980.

In the end, the Administration broke with the "no concessions" policy to resolve this hostage crisis. The United States did grant several concessions to Iran in exchange for the fifty-two hostages. Luckily for the Americans, Iran had significant foreign policy challenges during this period, specifically their war with Iraq, which hastened their plans late in 1980 to get a deal done in order to fund their ongoing war. Iran, therefore, was not able to extract as significant concessions during the negotiation process. However, they did ensure that they received a large sum of frozen money from the United States and in spite of their early struggles in the Iran-Iraq War, they recaptured all of Iraq's gains and by 1981 were on the offensive themselves pushing towards the border with Iraq. In the end, the most significant shift that occurred after the Iranian Revolution and subsequent hostage crisis was the loss of a key American ally in the

Middle East and its replacement with a fundamentalist regime inherently hostile to the United States. The balance of power in the region had definitely shifted.

The Iranian hostage crisis played a pivotal role in re-shaping Iranian-American relations. Though the Iranian Revolution and subsequent hostage-takings greatly damaged diplomacy between the two countries, a negotiated solution to the crisis was made in order to facilitate a peaceful freeing of the hostages. Though officially the United States maintained no diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, they would later seek Iranian help, though often indirectly, in order to help with the resolution of two pivotal hostage crises in the 1980s, which would both be resolved by negotiations and concessions from the United States.

Chapter Three

The Hijacking of TWA Flight 847

The second significant case in which the United States made a dramatic departure from its "no concessions" policy occurred was during the hijacking of TWA Flight 847, in which 153 passengers and crew were taken captive on June 14th 1985. The hijacking and subsequent crisis lasted until the end of the month. It ended with a deal to free several hundred Lebanese Shiite militants in exchange for the TWA Flight 847 captives. This proved to be an important incident with regards to American counterterrorism policy and the "no concessions to terrorists" principle.

Context

As the Lebanese Civil War broke out in the mid-1970s, the country was thrown into chaos. Syria, which would play a role in the resolution of the TWA Flight 847 hijacking, was asked by the Christian government to intervene in Lebanon in 1976. While Syria and the Lebanese Christians were by no means allies, the Syrians were worried about fundamentalist Islamic groups near the border between Syria and Lebanon. Syria was led at the time by the Ba'athist Party, a secular Arab nationalist party that was often opposed by more hard-line fundamentalists within the Arab World. Interestingly, both Syria and Israel supported the Lebanese government during the early years of the Lebanese Civil War, with the Israelis sending large stockpiles of weapons to Christian forces while the Syrians intervened in the North.

During this time the Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO) also had a great deal of influence on the conflict. Earlier in the 1970s, the PLO had been expelled from Jordan and the leadership relocated to Lebanon. The PLO had been fighting the Christians since 1975 and had been operating quite effectively with its Muslim allies in

Lebanon against the Lebanese government. Syria would later intervene in Lebanon in 1976 occupying most of Northern and Eastern Lebanon. [1] Though their intervention helped to save the Lebanese government and temporarily push back the PLO, the Syrians were also interested in maintaining control of large portions of Lebanon, which they achieved long after the Lebanese Civil War ended in 1989.

While Israel was not militarily active during the first years of the Lebanese Civil War, this changed as the PLO began to use Lebanese territory to stage attacks into Israel itself. In March 1978, following a large-scale Palestinian attack against civilians, Israel invaded southern Lebanon and drove the Palestinians away from the Lebanon-Israel border. Though Israel had achieved a victory, the violence between Israel and the PLO continued into the 1980s. In 1982, Israel launched a full-scale invasion of Lebanon with the objective of driving the PLO out of the country.[2] Israeli forces pushed back the PLO and its allies and occupied about half the country including the capital of Beirut. The PLO leadership was forced to vacate Lebanon and move to Tunisia, which virtually eliminated them as a major player in the Lebanese civil war. Though Israel won a decisive military victory, following their retreat to South Lebanon the country was again thrown into chaos as fighting continued between the different sects until the end of the 1980s. Israel also captured a large number of prisoners during this war from a variety of sects in the country. This included many Shiite militants who were captured and held in Israel following the invasion. The Shiite prisoners that they captured would become an important bargaining chip in the TWA Flight 847 resolution.

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[1] Jeffrey Simon, *The Terrorist Trap: America's Experience with Terrorism.* (Indianapolis, Indiana University Press. 1994) p 172.
[2] Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis*, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1997) pp 30-33

Following the withdrawal of the PLO and the Israeli Army, the Multinational Force (MNF), a peacekeeping force led by United States Marines, was deployed near the capital of Beirut in 1982. These units were able to stabilize the capital and surrounding areas into 1983, but many groups resented the presence of a large force of Westerners in Lebanon, thinking they were mostly in Lebanon to provide support for the Christian government. In 1983, two momentous attacks took place against the United States-led MNF. The first of these attacks was the bombing of the American Embassy in April in Beirut, which killed sixty-four people, mostly civilians. The second and most significant of the attacks was the Beirut Barracks bombing in October where two suicide bombers driving truckloads of explosives detonated them inside the MNF barracks, killing 300 American and French soldiers, the vast majority being American Marines.[3] These events pressured the United States and the rest of the MNF to withdraw their forces by 1984. Though the American presence was diminished in Lebanon, lingering anti-American sentiment remained among many of the hard-line fundamentalist groups.

Another major player in the TWA Flight 847 hijacking was Iran. The Iranian Revolution had just occurred in 1979, bringing to power Shiite fundamentalists led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Iran was attacked by Iraq in 1980, leading to a decade-long struggle known as the Iran-Iraq War.[4] In spite of this, Iranian authorities had also begun to reach out and support various Shiite fundamentalist groups throughout the Middle East. Lebanon, with a significant Shiite population and a number of militant groups was an attractive place for Iranian influence. Though they supported a variety of anti-

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[3] Timothy Geraghty, *Peacekeepers at War: Beirut 1983*. (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books 2009). pp. 91-94.
[4] Mark Bowden, *Guests of the Ayatollah: the First Battle in America's War With Militant Islam*. (New York: Atlantic Press, 2006.) pp. 532-539

American militias in Lebanon, Iran would later be used as a key intermediary between the United States and the group that hijacked TWA Flight 847.

The most important of the Iranian-sponsored militias in Lebanon was Hezbollah. Along with Amal, another Shiite militia in Lebanon, Hezbollah was one of the key groups that came to prominence after the Israeli invasion in 1982. While Amal was often more suspicious of Iranian influence and later closely more aligned with Syria, Hezbollah was originally formed as an alliance of Shiite fundamentalists to spread Iranian revolutionary tactics to Lebanon. As such, they had a strong relationship with Iran, who acted as a state sponsor for Hezbollah since its inception.[5] Though Hezbollah and Amal were often rivals within the Lebanese Civil War, the TWA Flight 847 crisis showed that these groups could co-operate against larger enemies, specifically the United States. Indeed the hijacking and hostage crisis would be significant events in Hezbollah and Amal's history.

Motives and Background

The primary motivation for the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 was to free more than 700 Lebanese Shiite prisoners captured by Israel during its intervention in Lebanon in previous years.[6] In addition, on March 8th 1985, a car bomb had been detonated in Beirut in an attempted assassination of Mohammed Fadlallah, allegedly one of the leaders of Hezbollah. About eighty people died and 200 more were wounded, while Fadlallah escaped harm.[7] Although it is uncertain who ordered the assassination attempt, Hezbollah suspected either the United States or Israel had been behind the

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[5] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism.* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2005). p 79
[6] Ranstorp, pp. 95-98
[7] Timothy Naftali, *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism* (New York: Basic Books 2005). p 158

attack. This seemed to have been on the mind of the hijackers, since they demanded condemnation of that attack. Finally, in 1983 a series of bombings had occurred in Kuwait designed to attack the American embassy as well as to destroy major Kuwaiti oil production facilities. The attack had failed to cause major damage and seventeen of the perpetrators, who were Shiite militants sponsored by Iran, had been caught. One of the demands of the hijackers of TWA Flight 847 was the release of these seventeen men.[8] In addition to this, the hijackers demanded the release of several other Shiite militants held throughout the world and condemnation of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the United States' support for the state of Israel.[9] The last two requests would be very difficult to achieve, but the hijackers clearly had several practical demands.

It is also important to note that during the timeline of the hijacking of TWA Flight 847, an additional seven American hostages were held by Hezbollah in Lebanon. These hostages had been taken throughout 1984 and 1985 in multiple hostage-takings.[10] During the negotiations for the release of the hostages of TWA Flight 847, some effort was made to get these seven men liberated as well.[11] This effort failed, though it did gain some publicity for these hostages who were often overshadowed by the hostages on TWA Flight 847. Unfortunately, none of the seven would be released by Hezbollah following the resolution of the crisis. In the end out of the seven hostages William Buckley and Peter Kilburn would be killed by their captors in 1985 and 1986 respectively. The other five: David Jacobsen, Thomas Sutherland, Terry Anderson,

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[8] Ranstorp, p. 99
[9] David Martin and John Walcott, *Best Laid Plans: The Inside Story of America's War on Terror* (New York: Harper and Row 1988). p 169
[10] Naftali, pp.159-160
[11] Martin and Walcott, pp. 197-198

Laurence Jenco, and Jeremy Levin would eventually be freed. Terry Anderson spent six years as a hostage and was the last to be released in 1991.[12]

Hijacking

TWA Flight 847 was en route from Athens to London when it was hijacked over the eastern Mediterranean Sea. There were 153 passengers and crew on board, the vast majority being Americans. The hijacking was perpetrated by two Lebanese members of Hezbollah, who were unknown at the time. The hijackers were later identified as Mohammed Ali Hamadi and Hasan Izz-Al-Din, both of whom would evade capture during the hostage crisis.[13] The two men had an accomplice Ali Atwa, who was captured at the Athens airport. He was later freed as part of an exchange for some of the hostages on June 16th.

TWA Flight 847 was diverted to Beirut, Lebanon, where nineteen hostages, specifically women and children, were released in exchange for fuel. The plane made two trips between Beirut and Algiers, where more of the hostages were released on the14th of June. The plane refueled and headed back to Beirut. Though many passengers were freed, most remained under hijacker control. Upon arrival in Beirut the hijackers had received very little in terms of concessions. Frustrated, the hijackers killed Robert Stethem, an American hostage and a United States navy diver, leaving his body on the runway of the airport in Beirut.[14] At this point, members of Amal, a rival Shiite militia in Lebanon arrived. Hezbollah and Amal agreed to share the hostages and a number of Shiite militiamen were sent onto the plane to assist the hijackers. These reinforcements included Imad Mugniyah, who was to become one of the most dangerous men of the

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[12] Naftali, pp. 225-226
[13] Martin and Walcott, pp. 166-167
[14] Martin and Walcott, pp. 176-177

late twentieth century and at the time was one of the leading members of Hezbollah.[15] On June 16th the hijackers made another flight to Algiers, releasing more of the hostages. Ali Atwa, the accomplice who was captured in Athens, was reunited with the other militants in exchange for all of the hostages except the remaining American males. The plane returned to Beirut later on the 16th where Amal leader Nabih Berri took control of the hostages and brought them into the city.

Another complicating factor in the TWA Flight 847 hostage crisis was the presence of the American media in Beirut. The Cable News Network (CNN) was launched in 1980. This was the first 24-hour television news network and news technology had been increasing rapidly throughout the 1980s. Very shortly after hostages were released, news reporters from CNN and numerous American television stations conducted many interviews with the freed captives. This gave the hijackers an ability to increase their stature since so much attention was focused on them in June 1985.[16] The presence of the media certainly gave the incident a more human face to the millions of people watching at home. Around the clock coverage of the event on the various television channels in the United States placed a great deal of pressure on the Reagan Administration.[17] Though their stated policy was "no negotiations or concessions", the media coverage's focus on the captives and their relatives' plea for the government to free the remaining hostages likely played a role in the eventual deal to free the hostages and the Lebanese prisoners. An example of this is a particular news conference on June 19th 1985 where Nabih Berri had some of the hostages talk to the

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[15] Simon, pp 187-188
[16] Tony Atwater, "Network Evening News Coverage of the TWA Hostage Crisis" *Terrorism and the News Media Research Project.* (Boston: Emerson College. 1987). p 1-7.
[17] Martin and Walcott, pp 188-191

media. In this press conference the hostages, who were likely forced by Amal into making certain statements, voiced their support for a prisoner exchange stating that it was unlawful for Israel to hold Lebanese Shiites hostage, despite the fact that these Shiite militants were mostly prisoners of war, rather than civilians in a hijacked aircraft.[18] Some reporters even saw the hostage-takings as an attack on civilization itself.[19] President Reagan continued to dismiss the notion of giving concessions to these terrorists, but the pressure by the media continued over the next two weeks.[20]

It was later noted that the various news networks devoted large portions of their daily programming to the crisis, mostly focusing on interviews with Nabih Berri and Amal, or the hostages and their families. Much less time was dedicated to government officials and discussion of counterterrorism policy, which made adherence to the "no concessions or negotiations" policy much more difficult due to the emotional element of the various news programs. This also gave the hijackers a way to easily become known to the world and discuss their grievances and sought-after concessions for a negotiated end to the hijacking.[21]

Administration Response

As the crisis intensified, the United States Government began to respond. When the hijackers landed in Algiers on the 14th, the government discussed plans to storm the plane using American Delta Force commandos. Delta Force, which participated in the failed Operation Eagle Claw, was now under the Joint Special Operations Command, which was responsible for counterterrorism missions. In spite of the capability of these

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[18] Martin and Walcott, p 190
[19] "An Attack on Civilization" *Time Magazine* July 1st 1985 p. 8
[20] "President Bars Concessions, orders Anti-Hijacking Steps, 3 More TWA Hostages Freed" *New York Times* June 19th 1985 p. 1
[21] Simon, pp. 191-193

counterterrorism units, it would be very difficult for them to operate in neutral Algeria,[22] and nearly impossible for these soldiers to carry out a major rescue in Beirut with a large number of hostile militants holding the victims of the hijacking hostage, at multiple locations.

As the Administration convened in order to begin to resolve the crisis, it immediately discussed the possibility of negotiations with the Israelis for them to free seven hundred Shiite militants. President Reagan stated in his diary that:

> (Nabih Berri's) price is release of the 760 Shiites held by Israel. Israel is probably saying they will – but the U.S. at the highest level of govt. must ask them to do it. This of course means we, not they, would be violating our policy of not negotiating with terrorists. To do so of course is to encourage more terrorism. I suggested that if Israel said to Berri – we were going to release the detainees anyways, we'll expedite it if you let the Americans go --- no one would be giving in to terrorists. After all, Berri took the hostages away from the hijackers.[23]

This shows that Reagan believed in the stated policy but was clearly facing the pressure from the media and members of his own administration to contact the Israelis and have them broker a trade between their imprisoned Shiite militants and the TWA Flight 847 hostages.

Reagan's Secretary of State at the time was George P. Shultz. A former official in the Nixon Administration, Shultz joined the cabinet in 1982, and immediately after he was sworn in, David Dodge was kidnapped, which marked the beginning of the Lebanese Hostage Crisis. Leading up to the TWA Flight 847 hijacking, there had been a great deal of debate within the Administration on the terrorism issue. Shultz was often at odds with other members of the Cabinet. He believed that the United States should clarify its counterterrorism policy towards more of a preventative and pre-emptive

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[22] Martin and Walcott, pp 171-173
[23] Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries* (New York: HarperCollins Books 2007). p. 335

doctrine and should show more willingness to use force in small rescue missions in the case of hijackings.[24] In the case of the TWA Flight 847 hijacking, Shultz believed that the United States should try to intervene with Delta Force if the plane remained in Algiers, though it was clear that after the hijackers had flown back to Beirut no rescue option would be possible.[25]

Caspar Weinberger, the Secretary of Defense, viewed the terrorism issue more in the context of the Cold War, specifically that the Soviet Union was behind or at least supportive of much of the terrorist activity against the United States. Though he was in favor of building up counterterrorism and military forces, he was often reluctant to use them in minor rescue missions in foreign countries unless there was a clear agreement between the United States and a foreign government and the cost would be minimal.[26] Shultz criticized this as being very restrictive since he believed Weinberger's views would lead to a policy where the United States had very little middle ground between non-intervention and significant military intervention in a country with regards to even minor acts of terrorism.[27]

Weinberger also mentions in his own memoirs the various disagreements between him and Shultz. They had originally served together in the Nixon Administration and while they often disagreed on major issues,[28] both men remained major parts of the Reagan Administration during the mid-1980s. This debate between Shultz and Weinberger continued during this crisis, though once the hijackers finally

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[24] George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Macmillan Publishing 1993). pp 648-651
[25] Shultz, p. 655
[26] Caspar Weinberger, *In The Arena: A Memoir of the 20th Century* (Washington: Eagle Publishing Company 2001). pp 311-314.
[27] Shultz, p. 650
[28] Weinberger, pp. 296-297

returned to and stayed in Beirut after June 16th 1985, it was judged to be too difficult to pursue a rescue mission, so securing the release of the remaining hostages would require negotiations and eventually a deal with the hijackers.

Resolution

While most of the hostages had been freed by June 17th 1985, about forty remained in captivity in Lebanon. A military rescue was impossible, since the hostages were hidden in the Amal-controlled area in Beirut. While two weeks passed, the United States began talks with a number of parties to bring an end to the crisis.[29] Syrian president Hafez al-Assad was brought into the discussions by the United States to help facilitate the release of the hostages. This was very unusual since the United States had placed Syria on their "state sponsors of terrorism" list in 1979 and was not on friendly terms with the Syrians.[30] In spite of that, Syria controlled much of Lebanon and was a major power-broker in the region, making them an integral part of any negotiations. President Assad was able to convince Nabih Berri and Amal to release the hostages into Syrian custody as part of the impending deal.[31] However, since the hijacking and holding of the hostages was a combined Amal/Hezbollah operation, there were some disputes between the two groups, which meant the Iranians would also have to be part of the negotiations.

It was well-known at the time that Iran was an active state sponsor of Hezbollah, and including the Shiite nation in the negotiations helped to bring about an eventual

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[29] J. Brent Wilson "The United States' Response to International Terrorism" in the book David Charters, (ed.) *The Deadly Sin of Terrorism: Its Effect on Democracy and Civil Liberties.* (Westport: Greenwood Press. 1994). P. 187

[30] Naftali, pp. 30-32

[31] "Syrian Efforts to Free Hostages Said to Intensify" *Washington Post* June 26th 1985. p. 15.

solution.[32] As a state sponsor Iran exerted considerable influence over Hezbollah, so President al-Assad decided to contact a number of high ranking officials in the Iranian Government, including Hashemi Rafsanjani, who agreed to mediate the discussion between Hezbollah and the other parties involved. Relations between the United States and the Khomeini regime had never been very good since the Iranian Revolution, with the United States having also designated Iran as a "state sponsor of terrorism" due to its involvement in holding Americans hostage during the Iranian hostage crisis. These instances of bringing Syria and Iran into the negotiations showed that the United States would go to great lengths to negotiate with countries and groups that are sworn enemies and implicated in terrorist actions, which usually ends up breaking their "no concessions to terrorists" policy.

Thanks to the negotiations, a deal was reached where the hostages were released. As part of the agreement, Israel was to release about 700 Lebanese Shiite prisoners in exchange for the hostages' freedom.[33] While Israel and the United States maintained that the prisoner release was for other reasons, it was certain that it was part of a deal, freeing the militants for the hostages. Although Hezbollah tried to push for the freeing of more Shiite militants and freedom from retaliatory strikes, they settled instead for the United States government making a statement that they would respect the sovereignty of Lebanon.[34]

On June 30th 1985 all of the TWA hostages were released and taken to Damascus where they flew to Germany and then home to the United States the next day. Although the seven remaining hostages in Lebanon were part of the negotiations,

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[32] Byman, pp 80-84
[33] Wilson, p 187
[34] Martin and Walcott, pp 199-201

the deal that was made unfortunately did not provide for the release of any of them and the men remained in captivity. Although the murder of Robert Stethem was clearly perpetrated by the militants, the hijackers and their reinforcements were able to leave the scene unharmed and none of them were arrested by either Lebanese or Syrian authorities. These events infuriated President Reagan. In spite of President Assad's help in defusing the crisis, Reagan voiced his displeasure to the Syrian President in a phone call following the end of the crisis and the release of all the TWA hostages.[35]

American Policy Response

Even though the United States had maintained a clear "no negotiations or concessions with terrorists" policy since the Presidency of Richard Nixon,[36] the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 and subsequent hostage crisis represented another deviation from its guiding principles on counterterrorism. In spite of the clear divergence from their government's stated principles, the rhetoric of political leaders of this time still trumpeted the "no negotiations or concessions with terrorists" policy. This is particularly evident during President Reagan's speech "America Will Never Make Concessions to Terrorists" on June 18th 1985, as a response to the hijacking and the murder of Robert Stethem. In this speech Reagan stated:

> Let me further make it plain to the assassins in Beirut and their accomplices, wherever they may be, that America will never make any concessions to terrorists --- to do so would just invite more terrorism --- nor will we ask nor pressure any other government to do so. Once we head down that path there would be no end to it, no end to the suffering of innocent people, no end to the bloody ransom all civilized nations must pay.[37]

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[35] Martin and Walcott, pp. 201-202

[36] Marc Celmer, *Terrorism, US Strategy and Reagan Policies* (Westport: Greenwood Press 1987). pp 38-39

[37] Ronald Reagan, "America Will Never Make Concessions to Terrorists" June 18th 1985 accessed at http://cstl-cla.semo.edu/renka/modern_presidents/reagan_speeches.htm

This was strong rhetoric against the making of concessions to terrorists and followed a logical pattern: if you give concessions to terrorists, then they will continue to commit violent acts to extract more concessions from governments. Although this was a powerful quote, we clearly have seen the United States breaking this policy on multiple occasions. It is interesting to note that during the 1980 presidential election campaign, Reagan strongly advocated and campaigned on "no negotiations with terrorists" and seemed unwavering on this point during the debates with President Jimmy Carter.[38]

Reagan delivered another speech following the release of all of the hostages on June 30th. In this address he followed up the rhetoric of June 18th with similar words following the freeing of hostages.

> The United States gives terrorists no rewards and no guarantees. We make no concessions; we make no deals. Nations that harbor terrorists undermine their own stability and endanger their own people. Terrorists, be on notice, we will fight back against you, in Lebanon and elsewhere. We will fight back against your cowardly attacks on American citizens and property.[39]

This reinforced the earlier speech claiming the Americans make no concessions or deals with any terrorist organization or state sponsor. While technically the Americans made no direct concessions of their own to Hezbollah or Amal, the United States put significant pressure on Israel during the weeks following the hijacking to release the 700 Shiite prisoners, something Reagan stated in his earlier speech that he would not do.[40]

However, by the end of the crisis, even Reagan seemed to be distancing himself from the rigid rhetoric of the "no concessions" policy. In an interview toward the end of

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[38] 1980 Presidential Debates between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan http://www.history.com/topics/ronald-reagan/videos

[39] Ronald Reagan, "Remarks Announcing the Release of the Hostages from the Trans World Airlines Hijacking Incident" June 30, 1985. Accessed at http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1985/63085a.htm

[40] Reagan, "America Will Never Make Concessions to Terrorists".

the hostage crisis, Reagan was interviewed in Chicago and asked if it was a mistake to ask for the release of both the TWA hostages as well as the seven other hostages. He replied:

> I don't think anything that attempts to get people back who have been kidnapped by thugs, murderers and barbarians is wrong to do[41]

Many of Reagan's advisors were worried that his negative comments about the hijackers may have derailed the deal to free the hostages. Indeed, due to the media presence in Beirut, the hijackers and hostages learned of these remarks shortly after they were made. Many of the passengers feared that angering the hijackers put their lives more at risk than they had been.[42]

Though some effort was made to free the seven other hostages in Lebanon, it did not come to pass. President Reagan had met with a number of families of the TWA victims, but during June 1985 did not meet with the families of the seven other hostages in Iran. At the end of the month though, Reagan met with the family of Father Lawrence Jenco, who had been held in Beirut for several months. The family asked why the United States government could not simply negotiate and give some concessions for Jenco and the other six hostages. The president tried to explain the logic behind the "no concessions" policy, that giving into some of the demands of the hijackers and Hezbollah would encourage more hostage-taking in the future, though according to his advisors the family's emotional plea to Reagan clearly had an impact on him.[43] This would be a common theme of many hostage-takings: emotional pleas of families and friends of the victims to the government to "do something" about their citizens who

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[41] Simon, p. 190.
[42] Martin and Walcott, pp. 198-199
[43] Martin and Walcott, pp. 196-197

were held in foreign lands often persuaded governments to make deals due to public pressure.[44]

As 1985 came to a close, an interagency effort within the United States government, "The Task Force on Combating Terrorism" was charged with investigating and reviewing the United States' program to combat terrorism and its counterterrorism policies. It was created as a response to the TWA Flight 847 hijacking as well as other terrorist attacks against Americans in 1985. Reagan's Vice President, George H.W. Bush chaired the task force and it released its final report in February of 1986. One particularly interesting part of this document states:

> Our conclusion: the U.S. policy and program to combat terrorism is tough and resolute. We firmly oppose terrorism in all forms and wherever it takes place. We are prepared to act in concert with other nations or alone to prevent or respond to terrorist acts. We will make no concessions to terrorists. At the same time, we will use every available resource to gain the safe return of American citizens who are held hostage.[45]

The term "every available resource" appeared to mean anything from diplomatic pressure to military strikes. These strikes did occur as counterterrorist policy, specifically the 1986 bombing of Libya as retaliation for the Libyans bombing the Labelle Discotheque in Berlin which killed two Americans.[46] However "every available resource" usually meant diplomatic pressure on state sponsors of terrorism as well as on the terrorists themselves.

In spite of the obvious departures from the policy, the "no concessions" rhetoric would continually be stressed by various officials of the government of the United

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[44] Paul Pillar, *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press 2001) pp 35-37

[45] George H.W. Bush, "Task Force on Combating Terrorism" February 1986 in Alexander, Yonah and Michael Kraft (eds.) *The Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy* (New York: Greenwood Publishing 2008). p 1282

[46] Naftali, pp. 185-186

States. Ambassador at Large for Counterterrorism L. Paul Bremer gave a number of addresses on the subject of American counterterrorism policy. In one speech given on April 23rd 1987, Bremer stated the three cornerstones of American counterterrorism policy:

> -The first is that we not make concessions to terrorists
> -The second is to bring pressure on states supporting terrorism
> -The third is developing practical measures designed to identify, track, apprehend, prosecute and punish terrorists[47]

Bremer went on to expand on the first cornerstone when he stated:

> Our government believes that a policy of no concessions is the best way to discourage terrorist acts. For if terrorists can gain their objectives through terror one time, they will be encouraged to repeat terror in the future....
> It has been longstanding U.S. Government policy that we will talk to anyone who might be able to affect the safe release of Americans held hostage. That remains true. Speaking with hostage holders does not mean, however, that we will make concessions which would only further encourage terrorists to undertake such acts in the future.[48]

This echoes the rhetoric of Reagan following the TWA Flight 847 hijackings. Indeed, Bremer gave a number of speeches where he would strongly reiterate the government policy of "no concessions to terrorists", though his rhetoric did not address the obvious departure from the principle that the TWA Flight 847 deal represented.

The TWA Flight 847 hijacking also had a major impact on American policy with regards to aviation security regulations. Later in the summer, the United States Congress passed Public Law 99-83, the International Security and Development Cooperation Act, creating new measures to deal with airline hijacking. This bill led to the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) imposing Federal Aviation Regulation 108.14

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[47] Paul Bremer, "Terrorism and the Rule of Law" Address to the Commonwealth Club San Francisco April 23, 1987. In Alexander, Yonah and Michael Kraft (eds.) *The Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy* (New York: Greenwood Publishing 2008). pp 169-170
[48] Bremer, 170-171

which expanded the role and presence of sky marshals.[49] Airplane hijackings had been declining after the 1970s due to improved airport security and screening as well as the deals between the United States and Cuba to curb hijackings. Nonetheless, the TWA Flight 847 incident thrust the issue of airplane hijacking back into the spotlight, leading to the increased airline security measures by the FAA and a new national discussion on the issue.

Conclusion

During the year 1985 approximately twenty five Americans were killed worldwide by terrorist acts. Eighteen of them were members of the United States army, who had died during a bombing in Madrid. In spite of the low numbers of Americans killed during that year, 1985 was memorable for another widely reported terrorist attack. On the 7th of October, members of the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) seized the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* in the Mediterranean Sea. They intended to force the release of several Palestinian militants in Israeli prisons. The PLF hijackers singled out an American Jew, Leon Klinghoffer and killed him.[50] Klinghoffer, who was confined to a wheelchair, was shot and thrown overboard. The ship was eventually brought to Egypt where authorities were able to negotiate with the hijackers. The PLF team, whose leader Abu Abbas actually participated in the seizure of the Achille Lauro, was able to negotiate free passage by air from Egypt to Tunisia in exchange for freeing the captives.[51]

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[49] Alexander Wells, *Commercial Aviation Safety for the 21st Century* (New York: McGraw Hill Press 2004). p. 98
[50] Wilson, p 176
[51] Simon, pp. 193-195

Although the hostages were freed without giving any major concessions to the PLF, the death of an American citizen clouded a fairly successful negotiation between Egyptian authorities and the PLF. In the end, the hijackers were pursued by American aircraft and their aircraft was forced to land in Sicily, where Italian authorities took them into custody. Though their leader Abu Abbas was released, the four remaining hijackers were arrested and held in Italy for several years each. The diversion of an aircraft to Italian soil caused diplomatic problems between Italy and the United States due to sovereignty issues but this was a definite American success in dealing with terrorism. In contrast with the TWA Flight 847 hijacking; most of the PLF militants who seized the Achille Lauro were captured.[52] However, the killing of another American overseas with significant media attention likely heightened the public's awareness and fear of terrorism as the 1980s continued.

Despite the murder of Robert Stethem, the TWA hijackers and their accomplices were allowed to go free. Mohammed Hamadi was captured in Germany in 1987 and served almost twenty years in jail for numerous crimes including the murder of Robert Stethem. He was later released as part of an exchange for a German hostage held in the Middle East; though some reports state he had been killed recently in Afghanistan. Imad Mugniyah, one of the hijacker's reinforcements and a senior member of Hezbollah, was killed in a car bombing in 2008.[53] Ali Atwa and Hassan Iz-Al-Din remain at large and the United States continues to pursue them throughout the world.

In the end, the TWA Flight 847 hijacking represented another clear departure from the "no concessions to terrorists" policy. Although it can be argued that the United

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[52] Simon, pp. 195-196

[53] "Israel denies assassinating Hizbollah chief". *The Telegraph*. London February 13th 2008.http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2008/02/13/whizbollah213

States gave no direct concession of their own, it is evident that the agreement that was made to free the hostages was supported by the Americans and the negotiations that led to the deal had the government of the United States as an active participant. The media played a major role as well and no doubt showed a human and dramatic side to the hijackings that had rarely been seen before, which created serious public pressure on the Reagan Administration to make a deal, which they ultimately were forced to do even if it was against their stated policy.[54] Ultimately, though an American was killed by the hijackers, the other 152 hostages were freed, though at a great cost to American credibility.

[54] "What Lies Behind Reagan's Tough Talk?" *Manchester Guardian Weekly* July 14th 1985 p. 10

Chapter Four

The Lebanese Hostage Crisis

During the 1980s, another hostage crisis had been developing throughout Lebanon. Beginning in 1982, nearly 100 people were taken hostage by Hezbollah and other radical Shiite Muslim organizations. Of these hostages, eleven were killed in captivity, including three Americans. Although the United States would continue to preach the rhetoric of the "no concessions to terrorists" policy during this time, the ongoing pressure from the victims' families to get the government to take action and do something to save their loved ones would lead to yet another departure from their stated policy.

Context

The present-day country of Lebanon had long been a part of numerous empires throughout the course of human history. Following the Central Powers defeat in the First World War, the Ottoman Empire, which had controlled Lebanon for 400 years, dissolved and gave up most of their territory to the Allied powers. Lebanon and Syria were consolidated into a League of Nations Mandate and given to France. Lebanon achieved independence after the Second World War. An often tenuous democratic government was formed in the 1940s which gave the three major religious groups, Shiite Muslims, Sunni Muslims and Maronite Christians a voice in how the country was run. In spite of this, the Maronite Christians were able to exert control over the country and tensions would persist between them and the other religious groups.[1] This applied specifically to the Shiite Muslims who grew in population but whose role remained

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[1] Jon Western, *Selling Intervention and War: The Presidency, the Media, and the American Public* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 2005). pp. 66-68

marginal in government. This led to a crisis in 1958, where the Muslims wanted to join in a union with Syria and Egypt against Israel, while the Christians wanted to maintain a more pro-Western stance.[2] This coincided with much upheaval in the Middle East, including unrest in Jordan and Iraq as well as the formation of the United Arab Republic by Egypt and Syria. After the threats of an open rebellion by the Muslims against the Lebanese Government and violence throughout the country, President Camille Chamoun appealed to the United States to intervene and protect his pro-Western government. This led to several thousand American soldiers being deployed to protect the capital Beirut and key areas around the city in 1958, the first but certainly not the last United States intervention in Lebanon.[3] The threat to the Lebanese government swiftly dissipated, and this peace would last for another fifteen years, which is a long time of peace in Middle East terms during the second half of the twentieth century.

The decade and a half following the American intervention in Lebanon was filled with conflict throughout the Middle East. Israel and most of the surrounding Arab nations fought The Six Day War of 1967. Though outnumbered greatly, Israel was victorious in less than a week, gaining territory from Syria, Egypt and Jordan. Beginning after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, many hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had fled the newly-formed Israel to surrounding Arab nations. This also occurred following the Six Day War in 1967.[4] Many of these refugees fled into Jordan and the Palestinians soon made up a majority of the Jordanian population in 1970. King Hussein

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[2] Kamal Shaibi, *Crossroads to Civil War Lebanon 1958-1976* (New York: Caravan Books 1977). pp 2-4
[3] Western, pp. 62-65
[4] Michael Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East.* (New York: Rosetta Books 2004). p. 306

of Jordan viewed the Palestinians as a threat to his rule, as the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the PFLP were using Jordan's territory to carry out attacks on Israel without Jordanian permission. This caused Israel to attack Jordan in retaliation, first during the Six Day War, where Israel took the West Bank from Jordan, and later in the battle of Karameh in 1968 when Israel crossed the border into Jordan and attacked both PLO and Jordanian soldiers, destroying a PLO camp near the border with Israel.[5]

In addition to this, Jordan's government was much more pro-Western than the surrounding Arab states and wanted to maintain a stronger relationship with the United States and other Western powers, which would be harmed by facilitating Palestinian attacks against Israel. Following the Dawson's Field hijackings in 1970 and the repeated use of Jordanian territory to attack Israel, King Hussein used the Jordanian army to crack down on the PLO in Jordan in September 1970. By 1971, the PLO had been expelled from Jordan and thousands more made their way into Southern Lebanon.[6]

Though Lebanon had been fairly stable in the 1960s and 1970s, the Palestinian immigration destabilized the small country, since by the early 1970s more than three hundred thousand Palestinians resided in Lebanon. Under the Cairo Agreement of 1971 imposed on Lebanon, the PLO was allowed freedom of action to use territory in South Lebanon as a base for their ongoing struggle against Israel.[7] This effectively led to a semi-independent Palestinian state within Lebanon. In turn, it generated armed confrontation as the country lost sovereign control of a significant part of their territory.

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[5] James Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestinian Conflict One Hundred Years of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007). p 199.
[6] Edgar O'Ballance, *Civil War in Lebanon 1975-92* (New York: Palgrave Publishing 1998). p. 16
[7] Abdullah Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine.* (London: Zed Books 1983). pp 124-131

Conflict continued between the Maronite Christians, resentful of their loss of sovereignty in Southern Lebanon, and the Palestinians in 1975 and 1976.

Much of the violence of the late 1970s was between the Christian militias and the PLO, with many deaths on both sides. However in 1976 Syria, which borders Lebanon to the east, intervened and occupied North-Eastern Lebanon, fighting against the PLO and remaining in control of large parts of the country throughout the entire Lebanese Civil War. The PLO used Southern Lebanon to launch various attacks on Northern Israel in the 1970s, which put them at odds with the Lebanese government as well as Israel. As attacks against Israel by the PLO continued into the 1980s, Israel began to plan an invasion, which they carried out in June 1982. The Israelis quickly occupied the southern half of the country in the summer and besieged the Palestinian-held section of Beirut. Eventually a ceasefire was agreed upon where the Israelis along with the PLO would withdraw from Lebanon. The PLO leadership was forced to relocate to Tunis, Tunisia and their influence in the Lebanese Civil War would be diminished.[8] Israel would withdraw from Beirut after the PLO relocation, but would continue to occupy much of Southern Lebanon.

An American-led peacekeeping force, the Multinational Force in Lebanon (MNF) was sent into the country in 1982. Its original objectives were to try to maintain the ceasefire between the PLO and Israel. However, Lebanon would be destabilized once again as President Bashir Gemayel, a Christian, was assassinated in September 1982. The MNF was ordered to protect the new Lebanese government and the national army. In spite of the MNF being a neutral party, some of the factions in the Lebanese Civil War viewed it very negatively. By this point, with the PLO out of the conflict, the

[8] O'Ballance p 116

main opposition to the Lebanese government was Shiite militias. Shiite Muslims were the largest religious group in Lebanon at the time and many of them viewed the MNF as simply propping up the Christian government, to which they were opposed. The two main Shiite militias, Hezbollah and Amal, though they were often rivals shared the goal of driving the MNF and Israel out of Lebanon.[9]

Beirut Bombings

During the MNF's deployment in Lebanon, two major attacks were orchestrated against the American presence. Firstly, in April 1983 the United States Embassy in Lebanon was destroyed by a suicide bomb, killing sixty-four people.[10] Though most casualties were not American, the CIA station chief, several CIA agents and US Marines were among the casualties. Many of these agents were very important CIA assets and with the evacuation of CIA agents from Iran and Iraq earlier in the 1980s, American intelligence- gathering had suffered a tremendous amount of damage in the Middle East. Islamic extremists closely aligned with Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad took responsibility for the bombings.[11]

The second and more dramatic attack occurred on October 23, 1983 when two trucks filled with explosives were detonated outside the United States Marine barracks and French Army barracks in Beirut. More than 300 people were killed in the explosion, including 241 US Marines.[12] In the days immediately following the Marine Barracks Bombing, President Reagan continued to insist that the United States would maintain a strong presence in Lebanon during the civil war. Though administration officials

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[9] Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (London: IB Tauris 2005). pp 36-39
[10] Eric Hammel, *The Root: The Marines in Beirut 1982-1984* (St. Paul: Zenith Publishing 2005). pp 77-80
[11] Jeffrey Simon, *The Terrorist Trap: America's Experience with Terrorism.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press). 1994 pp 173-175
[12] Timothy Geraghty, *Peacekeepers at War: Beirut 1983.* (Dulles VA: Potomac Books 2009). p 229

evoked strong rhetoric about maintaining an armed presence,[13] significant pressure applied by Congress and citizens on President Reagan to bring the troops home would eventually succeed in doing so.

Significant tension also remained between the United States and Syria. The Americans flew reconnaissance missions over Syrian-controlled territory searching for possible Hezbollah training camps and were occasionally fired upon by the Syrians. In December, two American aircraft were shot down by Syrian anti-aircraft missiles. One pilot, Mark Lange, was killed and another pilot Robert Goodman was captured and held by the Syrians for a month. This increased the pressure on the United States to bring their soldiers home. Secretary of State George Shultz noted in his memoirs that the capture of Goodman and the media fanfare around his captivity and journey back home to the United States was pivotal in rallying public and congressional support around bringing the troops home.[14]

Following the Marine barracks bombing, the Reagan Administration began to plan for a possible major counterattack against Hezbollah. Plans were made to strike at the Sheikh Abdullah barracks in Baalbek, Lebanon, as this was a major training camp for Hezbollah. A great debate occurred within the administration whether or not to carry out the attack. While many officials supported a strike against Hezbollah, Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger argued strongly against it, believing that it might provoke a hostile response from other Arab nations if the attack went badly. President Reagan eventually decided against the attack. The United States and other members of the MNF

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[13] Thomas E Friedman, "Beirut Death Toll at 161 Americans; French Casualties Rise in Bombings; Reagan Insists Marines Will Remain." *New York Times* October 24th 1983. p. 1

[14] George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Macmillan Publishing 1993). pp. 228-229

did occasionally retaliate through covert actions later in the decade but no large-scale intervention occurred after the withdrawal.[15] Even some of the administration's strongest supporters of maintaining an American presence saw that it would be politically untenable. Reagan pledged in December 1983 that when "internal stability is established and withdrawal of the other foreign forces is assured, the Marines will leave",[16] but slowly backed away from this statement. Other minor attacks against the MNF occurred throughout 1983 and into 1984. After being pressured for months, President Reagan announced in February that all Marines would withdraw promptly. By the end of the spring of 1984 the United States and the other countries that comprised the MNF soldiers had withdrawn all of their forces.

The Lebanese Civil War would continue for nearly another decade, but another major American crisis would begin following the withdrawal of the MNF in Lebanon. This is of course, the Lebanese Hostage Crisis during which a number of American and other foreign citizens were captured by Hezbollah, which would be an important event with regards to American counterterrorism policy and would test the limits of the "no concessions to terrorists" policy as well.

Hostage Takings

Although the MNF had retreated from Lebanon in 1984, Hezbollah, its state sponsors Iran, and other Shiite militants were still worried about future American intervention in Lebanon. The Lebanese war continued to drag on throughout the 1980s and though it did not occur, the possibility remained that the United States and other

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[15] France launched a number of airstrikes against some of the factions they believed to be responsible, while the United States later bombarded the coast with USS New Jersey as well as bombing attacks that were often supported by the CIA against militants.
[16] Shultz, p. 230

MNF nations might exact some kind of retribution against the perpetrators of the Marine barracks bombing. The Shiite groups' primary goal at the beginning of the Lebanese Hostage Crisis was to keep the United States and MNF armies out of Lebanon for the remainder of the Lebanese Civil War.[17] Hezbollah and associated groups therefore began to actively kidnap Western hostages and continued to do so throughout the 1980s. About 100 people were taken, mostly Americans or citizens of other Western nations.

Both Iran and Hezbollah believed that the hostage takings would enable Hezbollah to expand their position in Lebanon. Since Shiite Muslims form the largest religious group in Lebanon, the Iranian government believed there was the potential of creating a fundamentalist Shiite Muslim state friendly to Iranian interests.[18] Although the Iranians did not directly kidnap any Western hostages, they ended up benefitting greatly from these events later in the 1980s.

The first American hostage taken was David Dodge, president of the American University of Beirut. He was taken captive in the summer of 1982. This particular kidnapping was supposedly undertaken in response to the abduction of Shiite Iranian officials by Christian militias in Lebanon. Though almost all of the hostages would be held in Lebanon during the decade, Dodge was transferred by the militants to Iran, where he was imprisoned. He was held for a full year before being freed by the Iranians in 1983, before the withdrawal of the MNF. Though there were few Americans in Beirut during the Lebanese civil war, many of them were present near the university, which led to a number of staff being kidnapped over the rest of the crisis.

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[17] Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1997). pp. 56-57

[18] Ibid, pp. 54-56

Following President Reagan's announcement on February 7th 1984 that the Marines would be withdrawn from Beirut, a significant number of kidnappings of Americans occurred. By the end of the year, five Americans would be abducted by Hezbollah and allied groups. These included Jeremy Levin, a CNN reporter, Frank Regier and Peter Kilburn, who both worked at the American University in Beirut as well as Benjamin Weir, a minister and missionary who worked in the Middle East. While Frank Regier was rescued by the Amal militia shortly after he was captured in the spring of 1984, the other three remained in captivity into 1985.

The most prominent hostage to be taken during this time was William Buckley, the CIA station chief in Beirut. Buckley had originally been stationed in Damascus, Syria, during his last tour of duty in the Middle East however Syrian authorities figured out he was working for the CIA and he was forced to leave the Middle East in 1979 after having his cover blown. The United States Embassy bombing in Beirut in March 1983 killed a number of CIA operatives, which dealt a major blow to Middle Eastern intelligence gathering. Buckley was sent to Beirut to help replenish CIA presence in the area.[19] In December 1983, coordinated bombings took place in Kuwait, meant to destroy the American Embassy, the French Embassy as well as the international airport and major chemical infrastructure within the country. The Kuwait bombings largely failed as the explosives malfunctioned, though they caused six deaths. The seventeen men, including three Lebanese militants associated with Hezbollah, were captured.[20] In response to the capture of these men, Hezbollah continued the abduction of Western hostages. Hezbollah knew Buckley was the CIA station chief in Beirut and they

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[19] David Martin and John Walcott, *Best Laid Plans: The Inside Story of America's War on Terror* (New York: Harper and Row 1988). p. 207
[20] Simon, p. 177

captured him in March 1984, in addition to the other American hostages abducted around this time. While one of the main reasons William Buckley, Jeremy Levin, Frank Regier and Peter Kilburn were kidnapped was to try to secure the release of the militants responsible for the Kuwait bombings, these seventeen Shiite militants remained in prison until the early 1990s. William Buckley was the first of three Americans hostages killed in the 1980s, dying from a heart attack that was brought on by torture that occurred at the hands of his captors.[21]

The number of hostages continued to increase as the decade continued. Jeremy Levin escaped capture early in 1985, but three more American hostages were taken early in the year. These included Terry Anderson, a journalist and David Jacobsen and Thomas Sutherland, another two employees from the American University in Beirut. Anderson was kidnapped largely in retaliation to the failed attack on Sheikh Mohammed Fadlallah, a Shiite cleric who had ties with various militant groups. This attack was seen by Hezbollah as being CIA-supported.[22] These were the seven men that were held hostage by Hezbollah when the TWA Flight 847 hijacking and subsequent hostage crisis occurred in June and July of 1985.

Though there had been many efforts to try to get at least some of the seven hostages freed throughout 1984 and 1985, these hostages would be overshadowed in the summer of 1985 by the TWA Flight 847 hijacking and the negotiations that followed. Pressure from the families of the seven men held hostage in Lebanon led the Reagan Administration to look into the possibility of including them in the deal to free the

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[21] Martin and Walcott, pp. 224-225
[22] Ranstorp, pp. 94-95

TWA hostages. While some effort was made in this regard, the deal ultimately failed to free them.[23]

The Lebanese hostage crisis also included several dozen hostage-takings perpetrated against other Western countries, as well as the Soviet Union. Though the United States suffered the most hostage-takings during this decade, Hezbollah and associated groups also kidnapped nearly 100 people in total, and over the course of the decade six non-American hostages were either killed or died in captivity. Many countries did not have strict "no concessions" policies and often dealt directly with Hezbollah and Lebanon to free their hostages. For example West Germany successfully freed two hostages in exchange for lessening prison sentences on Hezbollah members captured in Germany.[24] These actions undermined the American "no concessions" policy and usually drew criticism from the United States, because it made their policy quite difficult to uphold.[25]

As the 1980s progressed, the Iran-Iraq war continued to drain both countries economically and militarily. By the middle of the 1980s Iran had suffered much more damage than Iraq and was looking for weapons from foreign sources. In spite of the failure to free the hostages in June of 1985 as part of the TWA Flight 847 deal, the United States and Israel agreed to a proposal where the Israelis would sell weapons to Iran and the United States would re-supply Israel. President Reagan authorized the arms-for-hostages dealings in July of 1985. They hoped that by giving the Iranians concessions, Iran would use its state sponsor status to pressure Hezbollah into giving up

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[23] Martin and Walcott, pp. 196-199
[24] "West Germany Said to Seek Hostage Deal" *Washington Post* May 26, 1987 p. 1
[25] Ranstorp p.93, discusses Swiss hostage Eric Wehrli, kidnapped in March 1985 and quickly released after the Swiss released Hussein Al-Taalat, a member of Hezbollah.

the hostages. Though the strict "no concessions to terrorists" policy was still maintained publicly, there can be no doubt that this was a blatant arms-for-hostages trade and a clear violation of the policy. By the end of 1986, Israel had sold Iran more than 2000 anti-tank missiles in order to facilitate the release of the remaining hostages.[26]

The deal freed Benjamin Weir in September 1985 as well as Peter Jacobsen and Laurence Jenco in 1986 following Iranian pressure on Hezbollah. In spite of this breakthrough, three more Americans were kidnapped in 1986 and another five in 1987.[27] It was clear that the arms-for-hostages deal was being undermined, as these years produced the highest number of abductions of American citizens by Hezbollah. In addition in to the new kidnappings, Peter Kilburn, who had been held hostage in 1984, was the second American killed by his captors in April 1986. Hezbollah killed him in response to the American bombing of Libya. The bombing of Libya was itself in retaliation to the Libyan agents bombing the La Belle Discotheque in Berlin earlier in the year, which killed two American soldiers.[28]

The last American hostage to be kidnapped by Hezbollah was United States Marine Colonel William Higgins, who was serving as a United Nations observer and was taken captive in 1988. At this point, nine Americans remained imprisoned in Lebanon, in addition to several others from Western Europe and Israel. Israel, which remained a major player during the Lebanese civil war, launched an operation in July 1989 to capture a key Hezbollah leader, Sheik Abdel Obeid, in Southern Lebanon. They captured him on July 28th, hoping to exchange Obeid with Hezbollah for some of the

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[26] J. Brent Wilson, "The United States' Response to International Terrorism" in the book Charters, David (ed.) *The Deadly Sin of Terrorism: Its Effect on Democracy and Civil Liberties.* Greenwood Press, Westport 1994. pp. 187-188

[27] Simon, pp. 206-207

[28] Timothy Naftali, *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism* Basic Books New York 2005. pp. 185-186

Israeli and Western hostages. Hezbollah refused and in retaliation to the Israeli move they killed Higgins, broadcasting his death to the United States. This set off a minor crisis in the United States and there was a great deal of media coverage on the subject.[29] There was some pressure on President Bush to intervene and save the hostages, but he refused to authorize any military action that would endanger the remaining prisoners.[30] Interestingly, Sheikh Mohammed Fadlallah, in 1985 a target of an assassination that had CIA backing, offered to use his influence to help free the remaining hostages as well as end to the hostage crisis.[31] Of course Fadlallah argued for the release of Sheik Obeid and other Hezbollah members imprisoned by Israel and the West as concessions for a deal to free the remaining Western hostages. In addition to this, Hashemi Rafsanjani, now President of Iran and a pivotal figure in the deal to free the TWA flight 847 hostages in 1985, intervened to help free the hostages and to convince Hezbollah to not kill any more of them.[32]

End of the Crisis

By 1989 the Lebanese Civil War was beginning to draw to a close. After fifteen years of conflict, all major warring parties had signed on to the Taif Agreement, which was aimed at disarming all of the militias and ending the war. However, the agreement left only a semi-independent Lebanon. Syria controlled most of Northern and Eastern Lebanon, while Israel still controlled much of Southern Lebanon. Even at this point, Hezbollah still held a number of Western hostages and they used this as leverage to maintain their ability to remain as an armed force even though all of the other Lebanese

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[29] "Bush on hostages: Talk, yes; deal, no" *Washington Times* August 10th 1989 p. 1
[30] "Mr. Bush's realistic response" *Hartford Courant* August 10th 1989 p. D10
[31] "Top Shiite Offers Aid On Captives" *Washington Post* August 12th 1989 p.1
[32] Simon, p. 239

militias were disbanded. Hezbollah continued to have much influence in Southern Lebanon during their ongoing conflict with Israeli forces throughout the next decade.

In addition to the Taif Agreement, the early 1990s brought about major changes in world politics. Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, sparking the 1991 Persian Gulf War. This war brought together a large coalition of Western and Arab nations against Iraq, which included Syria, who was trying to curry favour with the United States and other Western nations. In addition to this, the early 1990s saw the collapse of the Soviet Union and their support for many Arab nations, which included Syria and Iraq. Finally, the Iraq-Iran war had ended in 1988 and Iran, exhausted from constant warfare, wanted to improve ties to the United States as well. This allowed Syria and Iran to bring pressure on Hezbollah to end the hostage crisis, which was pivotal in ending the decade-long crisis. In spite of these efforts by Syria and Iran, Israel had to free another ninety-one Arab militants in order to facilitate the end of the Lebanese Hostage Crisis. By the end of 1991, all of the remaining American hostages were freed.[33]

Though they remained an armed group in Southern Lebanon, following the Taif Agreement Hezbollah had begun to transform into a more political organization. They began to contest elections in Lebanon beginning in 1992, abandoning earlier demands that Lebanon become a fundamentalist Islamic state like their state sponsors in Iran.[34] This turn towards a more political organization, rather than solely a revolutionary one was another factor that led to the freeing of the remaining hostages in the early 1990s following the Taif Agreement. In spite of the freeing of all Western hostages by 1992, Hezbollah remained active in Southern Lebanon, fighting with Israel and the South

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[33] "Hostage Taking Had Outlived its Usefulness" *Guardian Weekly* December 15th 1991. p. 10
[34] Harik, pp. 75-77

Lebanon Army throughout the rest of the 1990s. Israel would withdraw from the border area in South Lebanon in 2000 and the South Lebanon Army was largely neutralized, leaving Hezbollah as the strongest force in Southern Lebanon by the end of the century.

Throughout the decade, seventeen Americans and several dozen other hostages were kidnapped and held for varying amounts of time in and around Lebanon.[35] Some of the Western hostages were held as specific prisoner exchange for an imprisoned militant. If the trade was made, these hostages were often released after only several days in captivity. However, most of the American hostages were kidnapped specifically in order to deter any sort of American intervention against Hezbollah and its allies. This led to a number of these hostages being held for many years, including Terry Anderson, the longest held captive, who was only released in December 1991. Though most hostages were eventually freed without being harmed, three Americans, William Buckley in 1985, Peter Kilburn in 1986 and William Higgins in 1989, were killed by their captors.

American Response

The American response to the Lebanese hostage crisis eventually led to another major break from the "no concessions" policy, but with some important changes. Beginning in April 1984, President Reagan signed NSDD-138,[36] a clear and concise policy trying to outline how the administration would try to prevent future acts of terrorism. This occurred just after three Americans had been kidnapped in Lebanon. Reagan laid out his plans to pass four new pieces of legislation in order to re-emphasize

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[35] Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born With a Vengeance.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1997 pp. 113-114

[36] *National Security Decision Directive 138.* April 26th 1984 http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/23-2227a.gif

American support to combat terrorism. These included two bills for prosecuting hostage-takers and airplane hijackers, a third dealing with rewarding people for important information on terrorism and the other discussing how to prosecute terrorists under American law.[37] While this effort remained bogged down in Congress for most of the year, it was clear that the various acts were designed as a reaction mainly to the hostage crisis in Lebanon.

Even though there was no large-scale American retribution against Hezbollah during the remainder of the Lebanese Civil War, some minor events did occur that were largely believed to be American sponsored. As the MNF was withdrawing from Lebanon, the battleship USS New Jersey was often used to bombard enemy positions that were believed to have shelled American Marines. On March 8th 1985, a car bomb had been detonated in an attempted assassination, purportedly with CIA backing, of Mohammed Fadlallah, allegedly one of the leaders of Hezbollah.[38] In addition to this, a number of plans were discussed in the middle of the decade in order to attack suspected training grounds for Hezbollah and other militants. None of these would be carried out as there was reluctance by the Reagan Administration to use overwhelming force for fear of civilian casualties and severe backlash against the kidnapped hostages.

As was discussed earlier, with the hijacking of TWA Flight 847, a large number of American hostages were taken by Amal and Hezbollah in the summer of 1985. This tended to dominate American counter-terrorism policy at the beginning of the summer and the seven Americans in captivity were overshadowed by the forty Americans still held at the end of June 1985. At the end of the month, Reagan met with the family of

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[37] *National Security Decision Directive 138*. April 26th 1984
http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/23-2227a.gif
[38] Naftali, p 158

Father Lawrence Jenco, who had been held in Beirut for several months. Jenco's family asked why the United States government would not give some concessions for Jenco and the other six hostages. The president tried to explain the logic behind the "no concessions" policy, though according to his advisors, the family's emotional plea to Reagan clearly had an impact on him.[39] National Security Adviser Bud McFarlane accompanied Reagan during these meetings with victims' families', noting in his memoirs about the difficulties of maintaining the "no concessions" policy when faced with the human side of the hostage crisis.[40] Mounting public pressure on the Reagan Administration to do something about the hostages in Lebanon continued.[41] However, the attempt to include the seven hostages as part of the TWA Flight 847 deal failed and the hostages remained in captivity in Lebanon, in spite of the freeing of more than 700 Shiite militants in exchange for the remaining forty hostages.

Another change in American counterterrorism policy that occurred during this time was instituting the death penalty for committing acts of terrorism. Following the William Higgins killing in 1989, the United States Senate voted to authorize the death penalty for acts of terrorism, where previously the maximum penalty had been life imprisonment.[42] While a strong majority of senators voted in favour of this, many others instead supported a guaranteed life imprisonment for terrorist actions, arguing that killing terrorists may make them martyrs to their respective causes.[43] Nonetheless this act passed in October 1989, clearly influenced by the ongoing hostage crisis.

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[39] Martin and Walcott, pp 196-197
[40] Robert "Bud" McFarlane *Special Trust: Memoirs of a National Security Advisor* (New York: Caddell and Davis 1994). pp 22-23
[41] Wilson, p 187
[42] "Senate Backs Death Penalty For Terrorist Who Murder" *Washington Post* October 27th 1989 p 6.
[43] "Senate Votes Death Penalty For Overseas Terrorists" *New York Times* October 27th 1989. p.13

The Iran-Contra Affair

In the United States itself, the hostage crisis is more well-known for its connection to the Iran-Contra Affair. During the 1980s, Nicaragua was involved in a decade-long civil war. Originally, Dictator Anastasio Somoza was ousted by a popular revolution led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), who were brought to power to reform the country along more leftist policies. The United States were alarmed by another potentially Marxist government near its borders, so when Ronald Reagan was elected President, he cut off all aid to the FSLN, and the CIA began to fund rebel groups and former Somoza supporters in an attempt to retake the country. These rebels were called Contras and their insurrection destabilized the country through much of the 1980s.[44]

Due to the terms of this arms deal between the United States, Israel and Iran, the United States profited financially from the arms-for-hostages trade. The Reagan Administration used some of this money to finance the anti-communist Contra rebels in Nicaragua, which was prohibited by Congress. This led to a major scandal, known today as the Iran-Contra Affair. The "arms-for-hostages" trade was exposed by a Lebanese journal article in November 1986 and confirmed by the Iranians as well as American officials later in the month. The scandal sparked a media frenzy over the issue in the United States and the scandal was front-page news throughout the country during the winter of 1986.[45]

President Reagan was forced to take action and address the nation on November 13th 1986. In his speech, he stated:

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[44] Simon, pp. 221-224

[45] "Iran Payment Found Diverted to Contras" *New York Times* November 25th 1986 p.1 as one example

> The charge has been made that the United States has shipped weapons to Iran as ransom payment for the release of American hostages in Lebanon that the United States undercut its allies and secretly violated American policy against trafficking with terrorists. Those charges are utterly false. The United States has not made concessions to those who hold our people captive in Lebanon. And we will not.[46]

Reagan and other government officials vehemently denied they had made any concessions to Hezbollah and that the trading of weapons to Iran was part of a plan to harmonize relations between the two countries, which had been very poor since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the subsequent Iranian hostage crisis that only ended in 1981. Reagan would go on to reiterate these points later on in the speech where he states:

> To summarize: Our government has a firm policy not to capitulate to terrorist demands. That no concessions policy remains in force, in spite of the wildly speculative and false stories about arms for hostages and alleged ransom payments. We did not -- repeat -- did not trade weapons or anything else for hostages, nor will we. Those who think that we have gone soft on terrorism should take up the question with Colonel Qadhafi. We have not, nor will we, capitulate to terrorists.[47]

Though he continued to claim the "no concessions" policy was still in place, many people realized the government had been in clear violation of the policy.

The serious departure from the "no concessions" policy had noticeable impact on many senior officials in the Reagan Administration. After he became the Ambassador at-large and Coordinator for Counterterrorism in the United States in October 1986, Paul Bremer spent much of his three years in this position trying to restore lost credibility. He gave a number of speeches on these issues and would go on to note in an interview:

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[46] Ronald Reagan, *Address to the Nation on the Iran Arms Contra Aid Controversy* accessed at http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1986/111386c.htm

[47] Ronald Reagan *Address to the Nation on the Iran Arms Contra Aid Controversy* accessed at http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1986/111386c.htm

> The effect of the arms-for-hostages deal was to completely undermine the basic premise of American counterterrorism policy. I therefore spent a lot of time and energy in my three years at the job basically trying to re-establish the credibility of the policy and that became my main objective.[48]

This seems to be a clear admittance that the policy had been violated specifically by the arms-for hostages' trade with Iran.

The resulting scandal had a significant effect on the United States Government. An inquiry into the Iran Contra affair, the Tower Commission was launched. Its report in 1987 criticized the Reagan Administration for the arms-for-hostages trade and for pursuing of contradictory policies during this time. Most importantly, the commissions was critical of the Reagan Administration making the arms-for-hostages trade and selling weapons to Iran in an attempt to free the hostages in Lebanon while rhetorically pressuring American allies to not sell weapons to Iran or make any concessions to terrorists.[49] The Commission goes on to criticize the decision-making process, believing that not enough discussion occurred within the Administration about the proposed arms-for-hostages trade and subsequent diversion of money from the sales towards Contra rebels in Nicaragua.[50] Later in the report, there is criticism about not discussing the proposed idea before Congress, which had already prohibited funding for the Contras, before making any major policy decisions like selling arms-for-hostages.[51] Some of its main conclusions and recommendations included: expanding the role of the National Security Advisor, who was seen as an impartial official by the commission; maintaining objectivity and integrity within the intelligence community as well as with

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[48] Simon p. 201
[49] John Tower, *Report of the President's Special Review Board* (*Tower Commission Report*) February 26th 1987. p IV-2
[50] *Tower Commission Report* pp. IV-3 – IV-6
[51] *Tower Commission Report* pp. IV-7 – IV-10

policymakers; and being more careful in dealing with intermediaries, while noting that they may often exploit the United States.[52] In the case of the Lebanese hostage crisis, a great deal of power was placed in the hands of the Iranian intermediaries and though they helped to secure the release of some hostages, they were unable to prevent other hostage-takings by Hezbollah later in the 1980s.

The Iran-Contra Affair also sparked a number of convictions of senior members of the Reagan Administration for various crimes associated with the scandal. These included Caspar Weinberger, Bud McFarlane, who was National Security Advisor at the time, as well as Colonel Oliver North. North became known across the United States during these proceedings and became infamous as a result of the proceedings. He had helped create a sponsorship network for the Contras and had suggested the original deal to divert money from the arms-for-hostages trade with Iran towards the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.[53] North was tried and convicted of felonies related to obstruction and his destroying of federal documents. In addition to the Tower Commission Report, several hearings were held in 1987 in order to question various members of the Reagan Administration who were involved with the Iran-Contra Affair before Congress.[54] The scandal also caused much damage to the President's approval ratings, even though Reagan was unaware of some of the dealings with the Contra rebels.[55] In the end, though many were charged, all of the officials who were charged with wrongdoings were eventually pardoned of any crimes by George H.W. Bush during his term as President of the United States.

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[52] *Tower Commission Report* pp. V-4 – V-7
[53] *Tower Commission Report* pp. III-21 – III-24
[54] A record of some of North's testimony in the Iran-Contra Scandal Hearings. http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLA00FE15B93903F9C&feature=plcp
[55] Reagan pp 453-454

Conclusion

After the release of Terry Anderson, the United States had finally recovered all of their hostages from Lebanon. However, this was not without significant cost. An article in the December 16th 1991 edition of *Newsweek* enumerated several of the concessions that were given to Hezbollah and Iran during this time from the United States and other Western powers who had citizens taken hostage. Some of these concessions included:

> "One terrorist freed in France; eight Western hostages murdered; 91 additional Arab Prisoners released by Israel, $278 million released to Iran and implicit recognition give to the kidnappers by the United Nations."[56]

Moreover with the arms-for-hostages trade to Iran, the subsequent scandal and a number of other prisoner exchanges between Western nations and Hezbollah, the political cost was significantly higher than mentioned in this article. Also, with Hezbollah not disarmed by the Taif Agreement, they continued to fight against Israel and its Lebanese allies for control of Southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese hostage crisis had a lasting effect on American counterterrorism credibility. Magnus Ranstorp stated that due to the ongoing hostage crisis and arms-for-hostages trade that:

> "U.S. willingness to engage in concessions with Iran and the Hezbollah not only signalled to its adversaries that hostage-taking was an extremely useful instrument in extracting political and financial concessions for the West but also undermined any credibility of U.S. criticism of other states' deviation from the principles of no-negotiation and no concession to terrorists and their demands."[57]

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[56] "Were the Deals Worth It?" *Newsweek* December 16th 1991 p. 38
[57] Ranstorp, 202-203

Indeed this was the clearest, most publicized and most damaging departure from the "no concessions" policy and greatly diminished American prestige in the counterterrorism community.

In the end, the Lebanese hostage crisis represents yet another major departure from the "no concessions to terrorists" policy. In fact, this event is likely the most well-known divergence from the policy as it led directly to the Iran-Contra scandal and the Tower Commission Report, which was well-publicized in the American media. This scandal would be very damaging to the Reagan Administration's credibility on the terrorism issue. Reagan himself was nearing the end of his final term of the presidency, which ended in 1988. In spite of the scandal, Reagan's Vice President George H.W. Bush would win the 1988 presidential election quite strongly for the Republican Party. It was under his administration that the final American hostages were freed in 1991 and the crisis finally ended.

Thesis Conclusion

We can clearly see from these three case studies that the United States has violated their clearly enunciated "no concessions to terrorists" policy multiple times since its formal creation in 1974 during the Nixon Administration. At the end of 1979, the seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran by Islamic fundamentalist groups forced the Carter Administration into its greatest period of crisis. During the Iranian hostage crisis, the failure of Operation Eagle Claw as a potential rescue operation to free the hostages forced the President to make a deal with the Iranian Government, in spite of America's stated policy. This deal, known as the Algiers Accords, gave Iran a number of concessions. These accords would put an end to the Iranian hostage crisis. After spending 444 days in captivity in Tehran, the remaining fifty-two hostages were freed in January 1981.

The second major divergence from the "no concessions" policy came during the TWA Flight 847 Crisis, when the flight was hijacked on June 14th 1985. While many hostages were freed by the hijackers at the beginning of the crisis, the remaining forty hostages were imprisoned in Beirut for seventeen days after the original hijacking on June 14th. Only after a period of negotiations and bringing in intermediaries from Syria and Iran was this crisis resolved and the hostages finally freed. The price was very steep though, and the deal included as its centerpiece the freeing of 700 Shiite militants who had been captured by Israel over the course of the 1980s as the centerpiece. Though President Reagan and his officials tried to maintain that they had not made concessions to free the TWA Flight 847 hostages, it was clear that the United States made a serious departure from their stated policy by pressuring Israel to release these prisoners as a part of the deal.

Finally, the third and most well-known deviation from the "no concessions" policy occurred during the ongoing Lebanese hostage crisis of the 1980s. Seventeen Americans had been kidnapped by Hezbollah throughout the decade and some had been held for several years. Though military options had been discussed by the Reagan Administration to retaliate against Hezbollah after the Marine barracks bombing in 1983 and later to free the hostages, it was deemed too difficult to pursue military action against them during the Lebanese Civil War. However, public pressure mounted and forced the Reagan Administration to do something. Because of this, the arms-for-hostages trade was instituted whereby the United States would sell weapons to Iran through Israel as an intermediary. Iran was then to pressure Hezbollah to free the American hostages. Though this freed some of them, Hezbollah simply took more, which prolonged the crisis. The arms-for-hostages story and diversion of some of its profits to fund Contra rebels in Nicaragua led to a scandal that is known today as the Iran-Contra Affair, which significantly damaged the credibility of the Reagan Administration and led to several officials being charged and convicted of crimes. The failure of the arms-for-hostages trade prolonged the crisis until 1991, when the final American hostage was freed, though not before more concessions to Hezbollah, including nearly one hundred more prisoners freed by Israel in 1991. Indeed the Lebanese Hostage Crisis remains the most significant violation of the "no concessions" policy.

In addition to these major breaks in the policy, a number of other issues also became apparent. Neither the cabinet nor the National Security Council was designed to deal with these types of crises. Due to the lack of a crisis management team to deal with hostage situations the United States government developed its responses in an ad hoc

manner. The lack of clear leadership and direction meant that the media's involvement usually drove the crisis, putting even more pressure on the policymakers. Debates would often occur within the government about whether or not to use military force in order to free hostages. This often posed many problems as it was usually quite difficult to have concrete intelligence as to where the hostages were located and if all of the hostages were held together. In addition to this, Americans operating on foreign soil often had sovereignty issues to worry about. Even if the country where a hostage-taking occurred was fairly friendly towards the United States, they often were apprehensive about letting American Delta Force or other soldiers operate in their country. In a future study, it would be very interesting to compare the United States and Israel, another country with a "no concessions" policy and one who has shown in the past to have a greater willingness to use force to deal with terrorism. Discussing the political culture of the United States and Israel, as well as their policies and special counterterrorism forces, would likely be an interesting extension of this topic.

In spite of the departures by the United States, the "no concessions" policy is based on sound logic. If states give any concessions to terrorist groups, they will realize that by continuing to hijack airplanes or take hostages, they can continue to extract significant concessions from those governments, believing that every time they commit one of these actions, they will be rewarded. However in practice, adherence to this policy is much more difficult. Pressure from the victims' families and the media on a government to do something often forces the government to act, even if these actions do not adhere to their stated policy. Many other Western nations had their citizens kidnapped by Hezbollah. Most of these countries did not have specific "no concessions" policies. They were under no policy restraints to not give any concessions to the

hostage-takers and would usually deal directly with hostage-takers in order to free their citizens. This undermined the American position, specifically during the Lebanese hostage crisis.

Rhetorically, the United States still follows the "no concessions" policy in present-day. Both in the past and the present, the need to use strong rhetoric in the face of terrorism is politically understandable. In fact playing to a domestic audience may be the policy's only real value. But these three cases clearly demonstrate the limits of "no concessions" rhetoric. The 'human face' of terrorist victims, in particular civilians who were taken hostages, presented to the government by the media, gave the terrorists great leverage that challenges the viability of any "no concessions" policy.

This presents the United States government with a difficult dilemma. Either they adhere to the policy and jeopardize the lives of hostages, or undercut and violate their policy, make concessions to save these lives, which rewards the terrorists and possibly encourages future attacks. The fact that in all three cases presented here the United States government felt compelled to make concessions suggests that "no concessions to terrorists" was an untenable policy from its beginnings under Nixon. Following it rhetorically while abandoning it in practice made multiple presidential administrations look foolish while gaining nothing from the policy itself.

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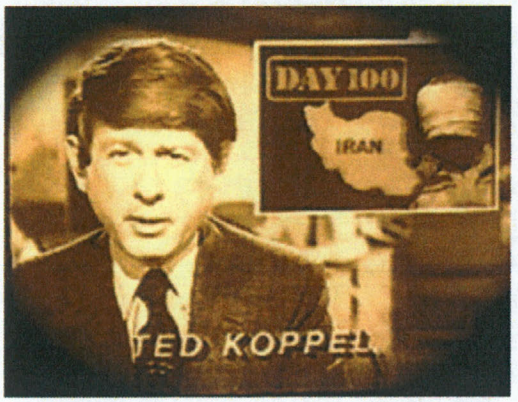
APPENDIX A: Iranian Hostage Crisis Photos



1. Ted Koppel, Host of ABC's *America Held Hostage*. Daily updates on the hostage crisis shaped the public's knowledge of the crisis and pressured the Carter Administration to free the hostages. It felt that "America" itself was being held hostage due to the non-stop media coverage and failure of the Carter Administration to free the hostages quickly.

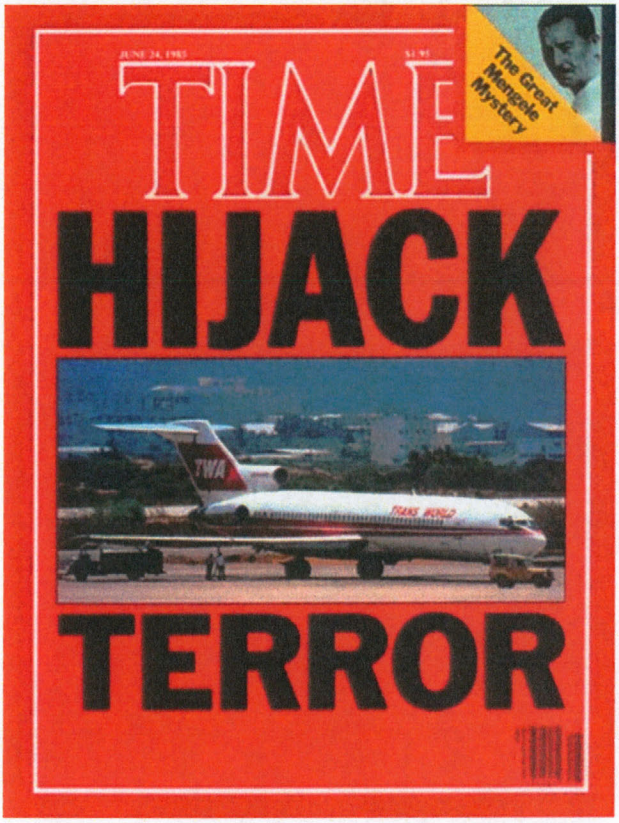


2. Anti-Iranian protest in the United States. The Hostage Crisis provoked major anti-Iranian backlash by the United States public. This included murders of Iranian students in California, repeated calls for military strikes against Iran and a number of other anti-Iranian incidents



3. Large gathering outside the American Embassy in Tehran shortly after the hostage-taking. Many rallies took place here during the 444 day hostage crisis, and thousands of supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini

APPENDIX B: TWA Flight 847 Photos



1. Time Magazine Cover, June 24th 1985. The TWA Flight 847 hijacking was front-page news during much of June 1985. Largely promoting the emotional side of the hostage-taking, this undermined the "no concessions" policy.



2. After two days where none of their demands were met, the hijackers killed Robert Stethem, an American Navy Diver. Stethem was the only casualty during this crisis.

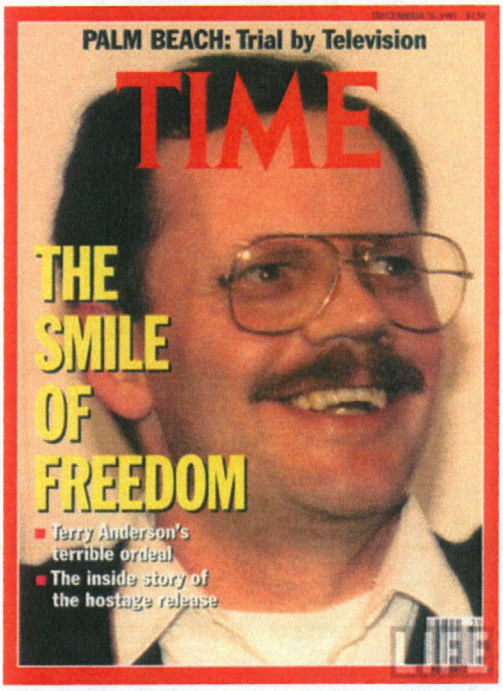


3. A picture of an unknown militant. During the crisis a number of hijackers wanted to get on television and be photographed, often appearing in staged scenes with the pilots, while carrying unloaded weapons.

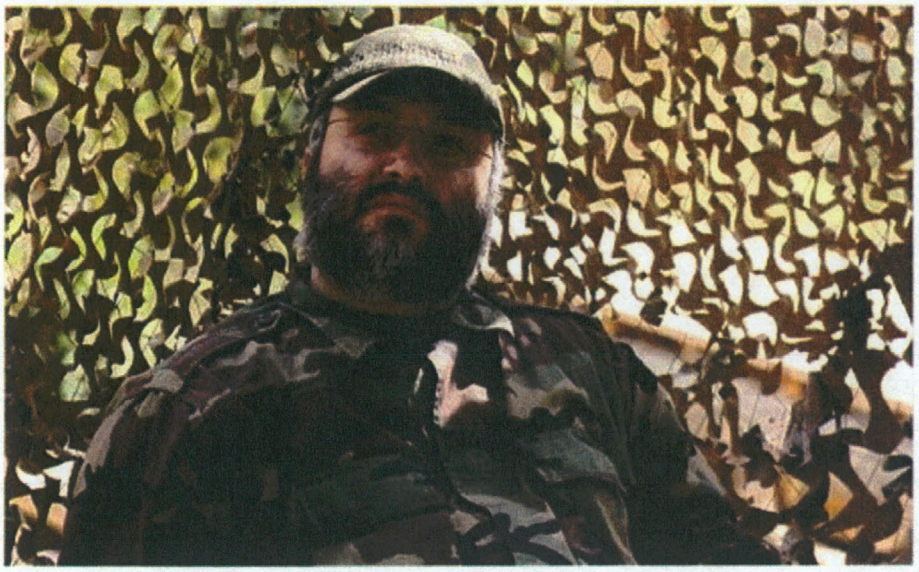
APPENDIX C: Lebanese Hostage Crisis Photos



1. Colonel William Higgins, the last of three Americans killed during the decade-long hostage crisis. His death brought about new focus on the American hostages in Lebanon, which led to the final deals to free the remaining prisoners by the end of 1991.



2. Terry Anderson, the final American hostage to be freed.



3. Imad Mugniyah, member of Hezbollah who played a major role in the TWA Flight 847 hijacking as well as helping capture a number of Western citizens during the Lebanese Hostage Crisis.

Curriculum Vitae

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