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444 Days: The Iran Hostage Crisis

The Iran Hostage Crisis was a major international crisis caused by the seizure of the U.S. Embassy, and its employees, by revolutionary Iranian students. The students, with support from the Ayatollah Khomeini-led government of Iran, held Embassy employees as hostages for 444 days. The crisis began 40 years ago on November 4, 1979 and ended with the release of the hostages on January 20, 1981.

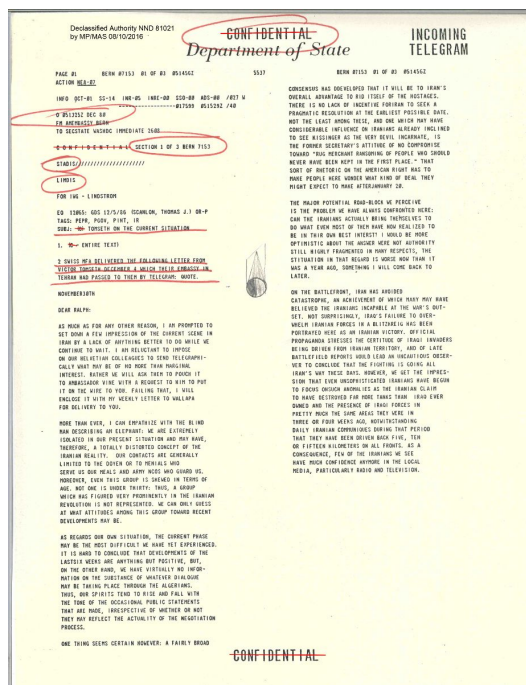
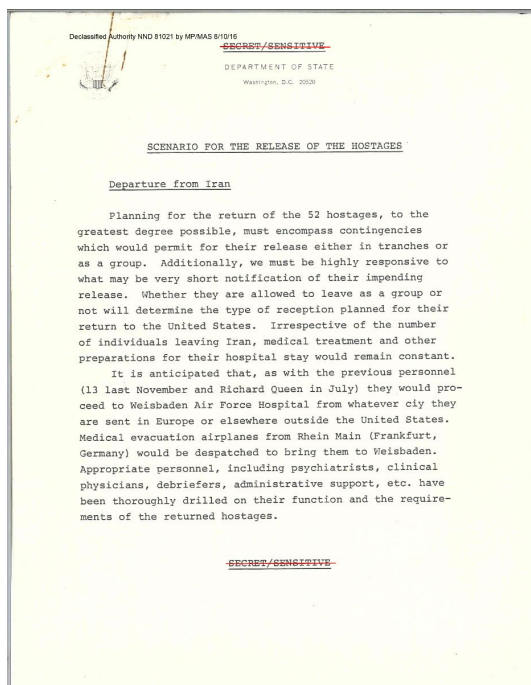


Left: A view of the crowd waiting to welcome the Americans held hostage by Iran home after their recent release, 1/27/1981 [National Archives Identifier 6351478](#)

Right: Spectators watch one of two C-9 Nightingale aircraft bringing in the 52 freed hostages after their release from Iran, 1/1/1981 [National Archives Identifier 6344603](#)

Beginning in January 2016, the National Declassification Center (NDC) began reviewing certain records series related to the Crisis and prepare them for release. A majority of the records came from the Department of State and documented the work done by various Department of State officials and working groups in trying to bring about a diplomatic end to the crisis. The NDC was specifically interested in records which had not been released before by the National Archives and which would thus be likely to provide additional information on the Crisis. Working in tandem with the NDC, staff at the Jimmy Carter

Presidential Library and Museum were able to release additional records related to the Hostage Crisis that had not been previously available. These records were then included as part of this special project for a total of approximately 7,200 pages of newly declassified records from several series.



Left: Report on Scenario for the Release of the Hostages, 8/1/1980 [National Archives Identifier 40493509](#)

Right: Telegram from U.S. (United States) Embassy Bern to Secretary of State, 12/5/1980 [National Archives Identifier 40493498](#)

The [Situation Reports \(Sitreps\)](#) were up-to-the-minute, informational reports about developments of the hostage crisis. The first one was issued on the day the hostages were taken, November 4th, 1979; the last one, Sitrep No. 561, was issued on January 19th, 1981, the day before the hostages were released. Generally, there was one Sitrep issued each day, and on some days, especially early in the crisis, several were issued per day. The Sitreps were created by an informal organization within the Department of State called the Iran Working Group (IWG). View the Sitreps in the [Catalog](#).

Learn more about this event and the records held by the National Archives on our [website](#). Additionally, the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library has a web page dedicated to the topic, "[The Hostage Crisis in Iran](#)".

Citizen Archivist Mission: Iran Hostage Crisis

In commemoration of this historic event, we've identified records related to the Iran Hostage Crisis for our latest [Citizen Archivist mission](#). Each of your contributions to these records will help make them easier to find in our Catalog for other users.



Vice President George Bush welcomes COL Thomas E. Schaefer home after his release from Iran where he was held hostage, 1/27/1981 [National Archives Identifier 6351466](#)

Get started transcribing!

Happy Halloween!

In celebration of today's holiday, we dug through our holdings to find some spooky, creepy and festive Halloween images. Trick or treat!



Top Left: Halloween Portrait of India, Miss Beazley and Barney, 10/31/2007, [National Archives Identifier 12237620](#)

Top Right: President George W. Bush Shares a Moment with a King During a Halloween Night Stop at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, 10/31/2006 [National Archives Identifier 75598009](#)

Bottom Left: First Lady Betty Ford Greeting Children Participating in Trick or Treat for UNICEF outside the White House, 10/31/1974 [National Archives Identifier 27575788](#)

Bottom Right: Halloween Activities Aboard STS-95 Discovery, Crewmembers Hold Up Masks of Senator John Glenn as their Halloween Disguises on Flight Day 3, [National Archives Identifier 23199672](#)

What terrifies our archivists? Our staff shared some pictures of the ten most frightening things they've encountered on the job!



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