

1979

American Citizens

What should we do to get our hostages out of Iran?



Ayatollah Khomeini

It is November 1979. You are an American, and you are angry, worried, and confused. A few days ago, you and all America watched a terrible event happen on television. A mob of militant revolutionaries in Iran took over the American Embassy in Tehran, the capital. They kidnapped 66 Americans

who were working there. They put blindfolds on them and locked them up. They shouted bad things about America. The Embassy represents the U.S. in Iran. The government of Iran was supposed to protect the people who work for the embassy. However, Iran's government seems to be supporting the militants. Why?

For more than 20 years, the U.S. has supported the Shah of Iran. He was trying to modernize his country by bringing American culture to Iran. He opposed communism, and he let the U.S. have military bases in Iran. Under the Shah, Iran was a good friend of America.

However, many Iranians did not like the Shah. They said he was a cruel dictator. They believed that he was turning away from the Moslem religious beliefs. They did not want to be like the United States. They wanted a religious society and a religious government. Finally, the people of Iran overthrew the Shah

in January 1979. They supported Ayatollah Khomeini, a religious leader. The Shah fled from Iran and came to the U.S. He has cancer and needs medical attention.

The militants say the U.S. is the cause of all Iran's problems. They say the Shah is a criminal. They say he stole from the people of Iran. They say the Shah used to imprison, torture, and kill Iranians who disagreed with him. They say the U.S. helped him do these things. They want the U.S. to send him back to Iran for a trial. They kidnapped the American Embassy workers to force the U.S. to return the Shah. They say that some of the Embassy workers were spies. Maybe they will kill or torture the hostages.

All Americans want these hostages freed. They should immediately be sent home safely. What can America do?



Shah of Iran as a young man



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American Citizens: What should we do to get our hostages out of Iran *(continued)*

Comprehension

1. Who are you in this story?
2. What are Americans upset about?
3. Who put blindfolds on people?
4. Whom did they put the blindfolds on?
5. What do the Iranians want?
6. Who does not like the Shah?
7. Who is the Shah of Iran?
8. Why does the U.S. like the Shah?
9. In the fourth paragraph, who are They?
10. In the fourth paragraph, what do these things refer to?
11. Why are the Iranian revolutionaries angry at the U.S.?
12. Why are the Iranian revolutionaries angry at their Shah?
13. Why did the revolutionaries kidnap American Embassy workers?

Decision

- *What should the U.S. do to get American hostages back? Choose one or more of the following options:*
 - (a) Send the Shah back to Iran. We want our Americans back safely.
 - (b) Don't send the Shah back to Iran. He was our good friend, and we must protect him now.
 - (c) Send a military force to invade Iran and rescue the hostages.
 - (d) Ask the United Nations to punish Iran economically. All the countries should stop selling things to Iran and stop buying things from Iran. Then the country will be hurt and will release the hostages.
 - (e) Kidnap the Iranian Embassy workers in the U.S.
 - (f) Send all Iranian students who are studying in the U.S. back to Iran.
 - (g) Apologize to Iran for supporting the Shah. Try to make peace with the militants and the Iranian government.
 - (h) Wait. Let's see what happens. Don't do anything.
 - (i) Ask the Shah to go to another country.
 - (j) Take all the money that the Iranian government has in American banks. When the hostages are released, we will return this money to Iran.
 - (k) Other: _____
- *Why did you decide that way? Plan how you will explain your decision to your classmates. Write out your reasoning completely.*

