

DĀNESH

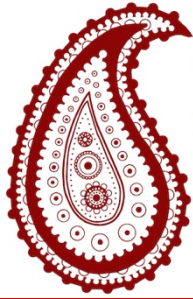
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Volume 4 (2019)



COLLEGE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA





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From the Faculty Advisors

Since its founding in 2016, *DĀNESH* has sought to provide a forum to showcase the original research produced by undergraduate students at the University of Oklahoma's Iranian Studies program. This fourth volume of the journal was produced through the able editorial leadership of **Corey Standley** (BA, 2019) and **Kayleigh Kuyon** (BA, 2019). As with their work on volume three, Corey and Kayleigh have ensured that *DĀNESH* has continued to thrive as a forum for the study of all aspects of the history, culture, society, and politics of Iran and the Persianate world.

The name of the journal, *DĀNESH*, comes from the Persian word meaning *knowledge, learning, and wisdom*. We believe this is a fitting name for a journal that seeks to foster deep and compassionate understanding of one of the world's most culturally rich and historically complex civilizations. It is with this in mind that we present this volume of *DĀNESH*.

Afshin Marashi

Farzaneh Family Chair in Modern Iranian History

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Manata Hashemi

Farzaneh Family Professor in the Sociology of Contemporary Iran

From the Editors-in-Chief

We are proud to present to you the fourth volume of the University of Oklahoma's Undergraduate Journal of Iranian Studies, *DĀNESH*. Through the past three editions of the journal we have seen wonderful presentations on varying regional topics, spanning the breadths of history and social strata. In the tradition of the meaning of *DĀNESH*, or knowledge, we present these articles as an offering to expand the collective dialogue on the understanding of the Iranian and Persian state. We are pleased to have worked on this edition with a group of driven authors to present an edition comprising of submissions focusing on both historical issues and events as well as contemporary issues that Iranians are currently facing.

This work is a collective effort among our undergraduate authors and editors. We would like to extend a humble thanks to our Associate Editors, without whom we would not be able to produce such a successful and professional journal. It would also be remiss of us to not extend a heartfelt thank you to the Farzaneh Family, for without their continued support of the Iranian Studies program none of this would be possible. The University of Oklahoma's Libraries and Printing Services are the unsung heroes of this endeavor, as without their support we would not have the ability to make *DĀNESH* so accessible, both our print and digital versions. Thank you to the tireless, diligent work of our authors, who have crafted these amazing works that we are proudly sharing with you.

And finally, we are wholly indebted to the continued and unwavering support of Dr. Afshin Marashi, whose guidance and advice was invaluable in this journal's creation and continuance. This work, and so much of the growth of the Iranian Studies program as a whole, would not be possible without your faith in us, and our institution. Your academic guidance, advice, and friendship have been invaluable to us.

Corey Standley (BA, 2019), Editor-in-Chief

Kayleigh Kuyon (BA, 2019), Editor-in-Chief

Lingering Effects: U.S. Media and the Case for Nationalism in the Iran Hostage Crisis

Lindsey T. Eisenmann*

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In his article on legitimacy and the Iran hostage crisis, R. K. Ramazani makes the claim that the hostility at play in foreign relations between Iran and the U.S. comes as a result of the Iran hostage crisis and the events that unfolded between 1979-1981. In 1978 Ayatollah Khomeini, an exiled Iranian Muslim leader, blamed President Carter for the “murderous regime” of Iran’s leader, Mohammad Reza Shah. He argued that, in spite of claiming to support freedom, America evidently supported repression.¹ Khomeini also spoke of the Shah as being a puppet of the U.S., which both demonized the U.S. and weakened the Shah at a time when his power was quickly dwindling in Iran.² Iranians lived through the oppressive regime of the Shah for years, and the revolution came as people grew tired of the Shah and were eager to see a change in the leadership of Iran. Soon enough, protests began erupting throughout Iran in opposition to the Shah, and the revolution was underway. Khomeini and his followers vied for “freedom from American domination,” which Khomeini believed would occur as a result of the revolution.³ On January 16, 1979, after months of protests and with no end in sight, the Shah fled Iran, and shortly after on February 1, Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile to lead the Islamic Revolution and create an Islamic state in Iran.⁴

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¹ David Farber, *Taken Hostage: The Iran hostage crisis and America’s first encounter with radical Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 86.

² *Ibid.*, 86.

³ R. K. Ramazani, “Iran’s Hostage Crisis: Legitimacy Matters,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25, no. 2 (2005): 274.

⁴ Farber, *Taken hostage*, 101 and 104.

On November 4, 1979, after a year of turmoil, militant students stormed the U.S. embassy, seizing 66 American citizens and holding 52 of them hostage for well over a year.⁵ Although it was initially planned to be a short three day ordeal, the hostage situation ended up lasting for 444 days.⁶ This event was a result of built up frustrations among Iranians in response to decades of U.S. interference. The tipping point came when the U.S. provided the Shah refuge, as well as cancer treatment, in New York.⁷ Iranians did not believe the stated seriousness of the Shah's ailment and demanded that the Shah be returned to Iran. Under no circumstance, however, would the U.S. government agree to their requests. As one ABC newscaster stated after the start of the hostage crisis, "there will be no bowing to the mob's demand for the return of the Shah."⁸ The hostage crisis began as a result of the U.S. sheltering and caring for the Shah, and it continued because of America's refusal to return the Shah to stand trial back in Iran. At a time when revolutionaries were emerging from the margins and attempting to take control of the chaotic mess in Iran, the hostage crisis served not only to weaken Iran's legitimacy in foreign affairs with the U.S., but to forge a deep hostility between the two nations which continues to this day. At this time, many Iranians were already discontented with decades of an overbearing U.S. presence in their governmental affairs and the hostage crisis resulted from this frustration. Throughout American media, the image of the hostage crisis was one of American innocence, alongside a terroristic portrayal of Iran. The deep-seated hostility of the U.S. toward Iran, and the innocence felt by most Americans throughout this incident, can largely be attributed to the role that U.S. media played in how it presented Iran and its citizens during the hostage crisis. By appealing to people's emotions as well as their sense of nationalism, American media worked to shape the minds of viewers to build up anger and hatred toward Iran and all that the revolution represented. The media played upon the viewers' emotions in a way that fostered nationalistic anger as well as hatred and distrust for the Iranian people and the Iranian nation as a whole, resulting in a tattered relationship between the two nations that continues to this day.

⁵ *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Iran hostage crisis."

⁶ Ramazani, "Iran's Hostage Crisis: Legitimacy Matters," 275.

⁷ "Why Carter Admitted the Shah," *The New York Times*, May 17, 1981, <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/05/17/magazine/why-carter-admitted-the-shah.html>.

⁸ "America Held Hostage: The Iran Crisis," *ABC News*, November 1979.

It is nearly impossible to succeed in discussing the media's influence on public opinion during the Iran hostage crisis without mentioning bias. One cannot assume that either of the opposing sides was blameless or innocent in this situation. The U.S. had been meddling in Iranian affairs since the start of the cold war, and had protected the Shah that oppressed the Iranian people and ruled the nation as a dictator.⁹ It was not only the religious sect of society that greatly opposed the Shah. Many others opposed his “anti-democratic rule” and suffered as a result of his oppressive regime. In spite of this, the hostage crisis directly violated international law and was by no means a justifiable action.¹⁰ The hostage taking was a condemnable action, and, in spite of Iranian frustration with the U.S., it was not warranted. Melani McAlister claimed in her book *Epic Encounters* that the hostage crisis was “both politically and morally wrong.”¹¹ That being said, when looking at the hostage crisis through the lens of American media, it is a significant example of how the media can use a tragic situation as a tool to stir up nationalism and hatred for the “other.” It is a difficult situation to address as there is blame on both sides, but it remains an important example of how the media can take a contentious issue and use it to further their own agenda.

Iran in the Media Pre-1979

Before analyzing how the U.S. media affected American views of Iranians during the hostage crisis, pre-hostage crisis media coverage must first be examined. Knowledge of Iran before the revolution was scarce, and Iran's media presence in the U.S. was minimal. For the entire decade between 1972-1981, news coverage was so limited that the hostage crisis accounted for 75 percent of all televised news coverage of Iran in the U.S.¹² In the brief moments that Iran was discussed in the news prior to the hostage crisis, the focus was almost exclusively on oil, and the media labeled Iran a “strong ally” to the U.S.¹³ Iran went from having little to no media coverage in the U.S. to having an outpouring of coverage. The average American knew close to nothing of Iran prior to the hostage crisis, and the crisis quickly became the

⁹ Farber, *Taken hostage*, 47.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 143.

¹¹ Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000*, (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2001), 201.

¹² James F. Larson, “Television and U.S. Foreign Policy: The Case of the Iran Hostage Crisis,” *Journal of Communication* 36 (1986): 122.

¹³ *Ibid*, 116.; *Ibid*, 119.

entirety of the average American's knowledge of Iran. When the hostage crisis occurred, Iran's label of "strong ally" quickly changed; Iran became an enemy of the U.S. as well as the American people, which allowed the "innocent America" narrative to take off in U.S. media.

Media coverage was a prominent aspect of the Iran hostage crisis from the beginning, and within days of the hostages being taken ABC began a news program entitled "The Iran Crisis: America Held Hostage." This nightly newscast eventually led to the start of the Monday-through-Thursday program "Nightline," which continues to this day to cover a wide range of topics.¹⁴ "Nightline" became significant during this time, as it rivaled late night talk shows and became a familiar voice for the American people during a time of crisis.¹⁵ As stated by James Larson, "Television network news usually follows or reinforces US government policy," and the hostage crisis provides clear evidence of this claim. "Nightline" played a significant role in the crisis, serving as a daily reminder of the crisis overseas in Iran. "Nightline" became a trusted source, and, because many Americans depended on it, "Nightline" succeeded in shaping the situation to fit their own political and social agenda. "Nightline," along with other U.S. media sources, ignored the Iranian grievances that resulted from the Shah's reign, and only presented the situation through the lens of a victimized America. The media left out important truths about the environment in Iran and presented the information in an arrogant and demeaning way in order to build up nationalism in the U.S. and potentially even a xenophobic outlook toward Iran.

The Early Days of the Crisis

American media did not hesitate to disperse images of the hostage taking that riled up and angered Americans from the start. The opening image for the first news coverage on November 8, 1979 presented hostage Barry Rosen blindfolded, handcuffed, and held by the hostage takers.¹⁶ Another image shown that night that would continue to be shown throughout the hostage crisis was a video of an angry Iranian mob burning the American flag outside of the embassy where the Americans remained in captivity.¹⁷ This video clip

¹⁴ David Yamada, "Thirty-five years ago: 'Nightline,' Ted Koppel, and the Iranian hostage crisis," *Musings of a Gen Joneser: A personal blog by David Yamada*, November 28, 2015., <https://generationjonesmusings.com/2015/11/28/thirty-five-years-ago-nightline-ted-koppel-and-the-iranian-hostage-crisis/>.

¹⁵ Yamada, "Thirty-five years ago."

¹⁶ McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, 202.

¹⁷ Farber, *Taken Hostage*, 147.

laid the foundation for American outrage toward Iranians. This depiction of the burning of the most significant symbol of the U.S. served to unify the American people. It created the belief that this situation was not an attack solely on the American government, but on the American people as a whole. Every image and video that followed served to fuel the fire. The book *Taken Hostage* includes street interviews conducted in the United States during the time of the hostage crisis. In these interviews, one man said “When I watch TV, the news, and I see what they do to that flag, it gets me in the heart.”¹⁸ This attack on the flag resonated as an attack on every individual American, and as news reporters showed these videos of the flag burning and average American citizens discussing how it affected them, it helped to propagate a sense of nationalism and defensiveness against Iranians. The appearance of those doing the burning also acted as an important part of this clip. In the clip, the viewer sees a swarm of Iranian men with long black beards as well as women clothed in the black chador.¹⁹ This was a perfect clip for the media to propagate, as it allowed the media to focus on the religious aspects of Iranian culture and to overemphasize the Islamic aspect of the hostage crisis.

The Islamic nature of the revolution was harshly criticized from the start of the crisis, and the U.S. media regularly condemned Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers. In a news article by the *New York Times* from November 14, 1979, Khomeini was analyzed by a group of “knowledgeable experts.” A quote from the article that frames the overarching intention of the author reads “the Ayatollah’s most prominent characteristic is an iron will that seems to defy any Western sense of moderation.”²⁰ Khomeini’s image quickly became the foremost symbol used by American media for the hostage crisis. In many news reports, an image of his anger-filled and fear-inspiring face hung in the background, or the camera would pan to posters of him in the streets of Tehran. In a nightly ABC report, one reporter stated “Holding Americans hostage is in character for the Ayatollah because he so strongly detests the U.S.”²¹ If the media could succeed in portraying Khomeini, an already questionable leader, as the face and leader of this movement, it would serve to greatly weaken his legitimacy and the theocracy he planned to establish.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Steven V. Roberts, “Experts Analyze Khomeini’s Attitudes; Reason for Iron Will; The Influence of Religion,” *The New York Times*, November 14, 1979, <https://www.nytimes.com/1979/11/14/archives/experts-analyze-khomeinis-attitudes-reason-for-iron-will-the.html>.

²¹ “America Held Hostage: The Iran Crisis,” *ABC News*, November 1979.

Near the end of that *New York Times* article, the author condemned Washington officials for not understanding Iranians' "depth of the rage felt toward the Shah."²² However, the article finishes in an accusing manner toward Iranians, as the author says that Washington officials also failed to understand that the Shah's cancer did not evoke "sympathy or human feelings in Iran[ians]."²³

The Shah was portrayed as a victim by the media multiple other times, including in the very first ABC newscast about the hostage crisis. The narrator dramatically begins the broadcast by telling the tale of "a king without a country" and "the fierce grip of Islamic fundamentalism."²⁴ This occurs in the introduction of the documentary, which is significant because it frames the situation in a biased way before the viewer is given the facts of what has happened. The phrase "a king without a country" seems to be an attempt to evoke sympathy for the Shah, as if he has been unjustly abandoned by his country. In a brief few seconds, this film managed to present the U.S. bias for the Shah, along with its bias against Islam and the revolution that aimed to rid Iran of the Shah that oppressed them.²⁵ This provides the framework for the comments made regarding the Iranians' lack of sympathy toward the Shah. Those statements vilified Iranians, suggesting that they were not justified in their dislike for the Shah and were inhumane for not feeling sympathy for a ruler that wreaked havoc on their nation. In the same ABC news report on the hostage crisis, the newscaster, Richard Anderson, stated that the hostage takers were expecting the U.S. to return the Shah "from his hospital bed in New York" in exchange for the hostages.²⁶ This seems to be a similar attempt to encourage compassion for the Shah and his illness, while failing to acknowledge the many reasons why the Iranian people chose to revolt against him in the first place. The image of a sick man being ripped from his hospital bed attempted to evoke sympathy in the American people, as well as to shame the Iranian people for not feeling concern for him. As well, the aforementioned article about Khomeini finishes with the conclusion "the Ayatollah and his followers are too blinded by their anger and self-righteousness to understand America's devotion to legal principles."²⁷ The writer of this piece over-generalized the Iranian people and vilified them in a

²² Roberts, "Experts Analyze Khomeini's Attitudes."

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "America Held Hostage: The Iran Crisis."

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Roberts, "Experts Analyze Khomeini's Attitudes."

way that encouraged the reader to do the same. It boiled Iranian frustration down to nothing more than frustration at the chaos the Shah brought upon Iran. Just like the ABC newscast on the hostage crisis, this article neglected to consider the deep sources of their frustration that had been building up for years so that the writer could portray the Iranian people as self-righteous and blinded by anger.

Magazine and Newspaper Portrayals of the Crisis

The *Time* cover page from November 19, 1979 provides a visual example of the ways in which media served to convey a biased image of Iran. The image



of the blindfolded Americans adorned the cover in a way that evokes a sense of helplessness. During the CBS evening news on November 7, 1979, referring to Iranian demands for the return of the Shah in exchange for the release of the hostages, the reporter stated, “If the U.S. ever yields to this kind of blackmail, there will never be an end to it.”²⁸ The rhetoric used by the media of Iran blackmailing the U.S. encouraged a sense of nationalism and a united fight against the Iranian “other.” Though the hostages were portrayed as helpless, this threat of blackmail, and the reporters’ call for the U.S. to resist their demands, made the

situation personal for the viewer. It was as if all Americans were victims of this situation. Another significant aspect of this cover is the way in which the magazine portrayed the hostage taker. The dark skin and turban, two images often stereotypically associated with Muslims, served to encourage

²⁸ CBS Evening News, November 7, 1979, <https://danratherjournalist.org/anchorman/breaking-news/iran-hostage-crisis/video-cbs-evening-news-november-7-1979>.

Americans in their prejudice and Islamophobia. The quote presented above by Ayatollah Khomeini in which he stated, “America is the great Satan,” is one that was used often by the media during this time. The use of that specific quote on this cover page, alongside a helpless portrayal of America, constructed the image of the U.S. as a victim of religious fanaticism and violence. In an ABC nightly report, one reporter stated “[Khomeini] considers Americans ‘Satan’s people.’”²⁹ The media took Khomeini’s quote out of context, focusing it directly at the individual and encouraging the average American, who was not directly involved with U.S.-Iranian relations, to become defensive in the crisis situation. Rhetoric like this operated to provoke nationalist sentiments and rally the American people against Iran. This is a prime example of how the media took a purely governmental issue and turned it into a social concern in which all of America felt directly attacked and personally affected.

The *Time* article from the issue presented above opens with the statement, “It was an ugly, shocking image of innocence and impotence, of tyranny and terror, of madness and mob rule.”³⁰ This idea of innocence and impotence is striking and was a prominent theme in U.S. media portrayals of America at the time. In the U.S., where Iranian history and foreign relations with Iran were not common knowledge among the average citizen at this time, the media had the easy job of convincing Americans that the U.S. was blameless in the hostage situation. The description of “tyranny and terror” goes even further, as it presents the Iranian revolutionaries as tyrannical. This statement is both ironic and biased, considering that the Iranian revolt was a result of the tyrannical regime of the Shah. The media neglects to address the horrors that the Iranian people faced for decades from the Pahlavi dynasty, a dynasty that was continuously backed by the U.S.

The Media’s Focus on Religion

Media during the time of the hostage crisis often framed the situation to be purely religious in nature, which encouraged Islamophobic views of Iran. While those who committed the hostage taking were part of Khomeini’s followers, the revolution was made up of vastly different groups and the hostage taking in Iran became a unifying force for the Iranian nation. From liberals to religious conservatives, when it came to the revolution, all were

²⁹ “America Held Hostage: The Iran Crisis.”

³⁰ “Blackmailing the U.S: The lives of some 60 Americans hung in the balance in Tehran,” *Time Magazine*, November 19, 1979, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,948771,00.html#paid-wall>.

united in the desire to rid Iran of the Shah and his oppressive regime.³¹ This truth is necessary for understanding Iran; the media presented all of Iran to be radically Islamic, which greatly influenced the American belief that Iran was a terrorist threat and a nation not to be trusted. President Bush stated in his 2002 State of the Union address that Iran was in the business of “aggressively pursuing weapons” and “exporting terror,” and proceeded to call Iran a part of “the axis of evil.”³² President Bush stated that the nations in this axis of evil “threaten the peace of the world.”³³ This wording is similar to the rhetoric used by the U.S. media during the time of the hostage crisis. By presenting Iran as a nation that threatened world peace, it was assumed that without Iran, the world would attain peace. This erased the negative impact that U.S. involvement had had on many parts of the world, including Iran. It was once again assumed that the U.S. was an innocent victim of this “evil” nation. President Bush’s speech was made at a vulnerable time for the American people, as it had been only a few months since the injustices of 9/11. To make a claim like this about Iran at such a crucial time, when the American people needed something to cling to, does a great deal of harm to the reputation of Iranian people. The hostage crisis laid the foundation for this view of Iran as a terrorist threat, and since then Iran has become the image of terrorism for many in the United States. President Bush’s comments only served to fuel the fire and intensify hatred and distrust for Iran.

Xenophobic Responses to the Media’s Influence

US media during the Iranian hostage crisis did more than influence the relationship between the two nations; it also worked to create an American outlook that was racist and xenophobic toward Iranians, Iranian Americans, and those who “looked” Iranian. During the time of the hostage crisis, many Iranian Americans as well as Iranian students studying in the U.S. began taking to the streets and protesting the U.S. government's actions toward Iran.³⁴ Some U.S. district judges began outlawing protests on government property, and in spite of President Carter's request that Americans not use “foreigners as scapegoats,” many Americans were already responding with

³¹ McAlister, *Epic encounters*, 204.

³² News Clips: U.S., “The ‘Axis of Evil’ Speech,” *George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum*, 2002.

³³ *Ibid.*”

³⁴ CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite, November 16, 1979, <https://danratherjournalist.org/anchorman/breaking-news/iran-hostage-crisis/video-cbs-evening-news-november-16-1979>.

hate, and Iranians suffered as a result.³⁵ Media responses did not help the situation. During the CBS evening news on November 16, 1979, the reporter quoted a U.S. citizen saying he “wouldn’t blame Americans for throwing rocks or eggs or anything else at Iranian students protesting in the country,” and that he felt like “taking a punch at one myself.”³⁶ Although the reporter did not directly agree with these statements, he also did not condemn them. Including this interview in the broadcast and failing to denounce the statements encouraged Americans to say, think, and act in the same violent and hateful ways this man described. The reporter then went into detail about the challenges Iranian businesses were facing as a result of the hate and fear expressed towards them in the U.S. They showed an Iranian man’s auto shop that was vandalized and discussed how Iranian businesses have been boycotted as a result of the hostage crisis. Some businesses in the U.S. went so far as to place signs up that said things such as, “We reserve the right to refuse service to Iranian citizens.”³⁷ While some cities forced the owners to remove such signs, law enforcement in many cities simply chose to look the other way. The attempt by the media to reveal some of the outright racism experienced by Iranian Americans could have had a positive effect, as it humanized Iranians and gave a face to the issue. However, the way in which it was executed in this newscast seemed to only encourage more hate, as the wrongs already committed were neither condemned nor discouraged. Because the media had already presented the hostage crisis in a way that made it feel like a personal attack on Americans, many American citizens responded defensively and fought back in violent and hateful ways against those who were not to blame for the situation. Just as it was true that not all of America was innocent in this situation, it was also true that not every Iranian was guilty or supported the hostage taking. However, the media did not allow for a dialogue to be created, and instead sought to pit the “innocent” against the “guilty.”

Conclusion

Since the return of the hostages on the day of President Reagan's inauguration, politicians have clung to President Reagan's supposed superhuman strength in getting the hostages released immediately, and some have used that feat to fuel their own personal campaigns. Many politicians who have sided with the GOP have claimed that President Carter was weak, and credited the release

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite.

of the hostages to Iran's fear of President Reagan.³⁸ In the 2016 American election campaigns, both Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz (on separate occasions) took to the media to proclaim that they would exert the same power over Iran that President Reagan did 35 years prior. Both men shamed President Obama for being "weak" in regard to how he dealt with the seizure of U.S. sailors by Iran.³⁹ Rubio claimed that "When I become President... our adversaries around the world will know that America is no longer under the command of someone weak like Barack Obama." These men's statements were the result of the false belief that the hostages were released out of fear of President Reagan and ignored the negotiations of the Carter administration. It is a prime example of how the media and politicians continue to use the Iran hostage crisis to further their own agenda.

The Iran Hostage Crisis was an unjust and condemnable response to years of U.S. interference in Iran and built up frustrations of the Iranian people. Iran was practically unknown to the American people, who never viewed it as a threat, but the hostage crisis significantly changed American views and beliefs about Iran in ways that continue to this day. The U.S. media played an integral part in shaping how Americans view Iran. The media thrived off of the image of an "innocent America," and created an image of Iran as being under the control of religious fanatics who used terror to get their way. U.S. media at the time of the crisis used the faces of the hostages to encourage the growth of nationalism in America. Media newscasters and writers served as the leaders of this movement, sowing seeds of hatred and distrust toward Iran into the hearts of Americans as everyone watched the events of the hostage crisis unfold from their television screens and newspaper articles. The rhetoric used by the media succeeded in fostering hatred for the Iranian people in America, and Iranians in the U.S. suffered from increasing accounts of racism and bigotry during the time of the crisis and onward. America's overall lack of knowledge about the cultural and political state of Iran at the time of the crisis allowed the media to feed off American ignorance. The media presented the news in a biased way that ignored the facts of how Iran got to where it was and why the people chose to revolt against the Shah in the first place. The injustices that took place throughout the 444 days that Americans were held hostage by Iranian students should not be discussed without condemnation for the students' actions. However, it is clear that because of

³⁸ Amanda Taub, "The Republican myth of Ronald Reagan and the Iran hostages, debunked," *Vox*, January 25, 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/1/25/10826056/reagan-iran-hostage-negotiation>.

³⁹ Taub, "The Republican myth."

U.S. media involvement during this tragic situation, Iran suffered the consequences of being seen by America as a terrorist threat and a nation not to be trusted.