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Serdar ÇAGIRGA

Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Uluslararası ilişkiler, serdarcagirga@gmail.com

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE LEADERSHIP STYLES OF JIMMY CARTER AND

AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI DURING THE IRAN HOSTAGE CRISIS

Abstract

This paper aims at making a comparison between the leadership styles of Jimmy Carter and Ayatollah Khomeini based on “one occasion for decision” during the Iran hostage crisis. In the first part, the atmosphere led to the crisis will be touched upon briefly. In the second part, more efforts will be devoted to the initial response of Iran and U.S. to the crisis. In addition to this, failed rescue attempt by the US, the reasons to take such an action, and the reasons of failure of the operation will be examined briefly. In the final part, decision making in the crisis will be examined by focusing on one occasion for decision for each actor, Jimmy Carter and Ayatollah Khomeini consecutively.

Key Words: Hostage crisis, Iran, United States, Jimmy Carter, Ayatollah Khomeini, Rescue Attempt, Leadership Style.

İRAN REHİNE KRİZİ SÜRECİNDE JIMMY CARTER VE AYETULLAH HUMEYİNİ’NİN LİDERLİK TARZLARININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

Özet

Bu çalışma, Jimmy Carter ile Ayetullah Humeyni’nin liderlik tarzlarını İran rehine krizi sürecindeki bir “karar gerektiren duruma” dayanarak kıyaslayacaktır. Çalışmanın birinci bölümünde, krize giden süreçteki ortam kısaca resmedilecektir. Takip eden bölümde, İran’ın ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’nin krize yönelik

tepkisi, ABD'nin krizi sona erdirmek için giriştiği kurtarma operasyonu, operasyon kararının nasıl alındığı ve neden başarısızlıkla sonuçlandığı gösterilecektir. Son olarak, kriz esnasındaki karar alma süreci Carter ve Humeyni'nin her biri için bir "karar gerektiren duruma" odaklanarak incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rehine krizi, İran, ABD, Jimmy Carter, Ayetullah Humeyni, Kurtarma Operasyonu, Liderlik Tarzı.

Introduction

On November 4, 1979, more than 3,000 Iranian militant students raided the American Embassy in Tehran, Iran. 66 Americans were seized and held hostage for 444 days. The result of this crisis would change the course of the American presidency, and affect the relations between the United States and Iran. Iran Hostage Crisis would prove to be a watershed moment in American-Iranian relations. For twenty-five years, the United States had taken for granted Iran as an ally and a stable country in the region whose existence had proven vital for the US interests in the region. As a result of strong opposition from leftist, Islamist, and nationalist groups, US-backed Shah Reza Pahlavi had to leave the country in search of asylum in the US. American officials were cognizant of the fact that anti-Americanism had gained momentum due to the suppressive and brutal policies of the Shah who had succeeded in remaining in power with the help of the US. Thus, at first, American officials were suspicious whether they should allow the Shah who had to leave Iran as a result of the Islamic Revolution as well as pressure from opposition groups to enter the US for medical treatment. After getting the assurance of Iranian officials to protect Americans in Iran, President Carter approved Shah entry into the US. However, this would prove destructive to the US as thousands of students took over the US Embassy compound in Tehran by seizing 66 American embassy staff for 444 days. The students gave the Shah entry into the US as their reason for taking over the embassy, fearing that US-backed Shah might seize power in Iran again.

President Carter was in favor of a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the crisis. Thus, before undertaking a military option, Carter's administration tried to use diplomatic channels to achieve the release of the hostages. President Carter was aware of the risks of taking a military option, since it would endanger lives of hostages and push Iran toward the Soviets. After exhausting nonviolent channels over six months after the seizure, President Carter undertook a dramatic military rescue attempt in 1980. The rescue attempt failed and made things even worse for Carter. Any subsequent attempt to achieve the hostages' release even became more difficult. Carter was not reelected in second presidency elections, and Ronald Reagan took Office in 1981 (Farber, 2005; Hunt, 1996:380-381; McDermott, 2001).

On the other hand, the hostage crisis lasted for so long partly because Khomeini wanted to take advantage of it to realize his own ambitions in a slippery environment in which a number of groups were striving to come to power in Iran. "By praising the students and labeling the United States "Great Satan," he fueled radical fervor and increased his own power. He used this to his advantage during elections in 1980 for the Majlis and a body called the Assembly of Experts, which would evaluate the proposed constitution" (Levy, 2010:35). Indeed, the overall aim of the manipulation of the students' takeover by Khomeini was to develop the institutions and infrastructure of the embryonic regime and to put an end to the Iranian alliance with the US

(Christopher, 1985:7). Khomeini succeeded in reaching his goals when a republican regime opposed to U.S. influence in the Middle East came to power in Iran.

This paper will provide a comparison between the leadership styles of Jimmy Carter and Ayatollah Khomeini based on one occasion for decision during the Iran hostage crisis. In this regard, the goal of the study does not include US-Iran relations encompassing all aspects after Islamic revolution. Firstly, the atmosphere led to the crisis will be addressed briefly. Following this section of the paper, more efforts will be devoted to the United States' initial response and examining the failed rescue attempt. The reasons to take such an action and the reasons of failure of the operation will be shown in brief. In the final part, decision making in the crisis will be examined by focusing on one occasion for decision for each actor, Jimmy Carter and Ayatollah Khomeini.

1. The Hostage Crisis in the Context of Iranian Revolution of 1979

1.1. Brief History of US-Iran Relations Before the Revolution

The roots of Iranian Revolution of 1979 could be traced back to the 1953 Iranian coup d'état where the elected government of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh, Soviet-friendly and nationalist prime minister, was overthrown and replaced by Western and American-friendly Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi. The US was believed to be involved in the military coup. Operation Ajax, as it was known, had been endorsed by President Eisenhower and was conducted by American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Daugherty, 2001:29; Farber, 2005:13). Involvement in regime change in Iran was part of "Containment Policy", which was Cold War foreign policy of the US to prevent the spread of communism after the end of World War II, roughly (Kennan, 1947:566-582). The Shah in power in Iran relations with the US developed increasingly following the 1955 military-economic treaty of CENTO under U.S. supervision and the 1959 complementary mutual defense agreement (Behestani & Shahidani, 2015:21).

The Shah consolidated his power with American assistance and his nation's oil wealth. In 1957, the Shah assisted by the CIA formally created his own national security force, known as SAVAK (Farber, 2005:60). SAVAK soon became known as a repressive and often brutal organization (Houghton, 2004:71). By the late 1950s the Shah had strengthened his control over much of the country as SAVAK gradually expanding its networks and scrutinizing anyone recruited into the university, the civil service, and the large industrial plants (Abrahamian, 1982:420). Despite his bad reputation for being corrupt, brutal, and repressive at home, the Shah had been an important American ally in the Middle East. The Shah despised the Islamic clergy and rejected the sovereignty of Islamic law. He wanted to modernize Iran. Modernization, in the eyes of the Shah, would be achieved if Iran could be a secular country. He wanted to institute secular schools, limit the judicial role of the clergy, improve the status of women, equalize the role of non-Muslims in public life and create an open economy (Farber, 2005:61).

The clergy was a huge adversary of the Shah's regime and the US-Iran alliance as in the new context their power and income had been greatly diminished. Despite repression and extreme intolerance toward regime opponents, a religious and political figure, Ayatollah Khomeini, openly and uncompromisingly attacked the Shah and his secular regime and publicly castigated him for destroying the role of clergy in Iran. Inspired by Khomeini and other religious leaders, tens of thousands of people started demonstrations against the Shah and his regime in 1963.

SAVAK took an immediate action and dispersed protesters, arresting Khomeini and other religious figures (Farber, 2005:64). Demonstrations resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Iranians (Daugherty, 2001:44). One year after the arrest he was released and continued to make accusations toward the regime publicly. In 1965, he was expelled from Iran and was allowed to continue his exile in Iraq (Farber, 2005:67).

Being the leader of the “free world” and replacing France in Vietnam, the United States faced a heavy cost and searched for a “noble abandonment” from Vietnam. This search resulted in the doctrine known as “Nixon’s Doctrine”:

“First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments. Second, we shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or that of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security. Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall provide military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense” (Nixon, 1969).

President Nixon announcing this new strategy, it was acknowledged that the most vulnerable places were those in the borderlands of China and Soviet. Thus, *twin pillars policy* was going to be formulated accordingly with the Nixon’s Doctrine. In this regard, Iran and Saudi Arabia were two regional pillars of barriers against the spread of communism (Alvandi, 2012:338; Altoraifi, 2012:110-112; Behestani & Shahidani, 2015:27).

Iran being a very crucial pillar for the US influence in the Middle East, it had good relations with the US during Nixon administration (1969-1974). Iran under the Shah had been considered stable and a source of security. Good relations with Iran were to be carried out at Carter administration (1977-1981) as well. Carter’s sensitivity to human rights issues caused the Shah to make some efforts to offer his people more civil liberties. Being hosted by the Shah in Tehran at the end of 1977, the president made a remarkable toast to his host “Iran, because of the great leadership of the Shah, is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world...We have no other nation on Earth who is closer to us in planning for our mutual security...And there is no leader with whom I have a deeper sense of personal gratitude and personal friendship” (Farber, 2005:82). However, this was not the case in Iran. It seems that Carter administration was duped by the Shah into not seeing the picture of Iran. Iran was not as stable and secure as the president pointed out. Supporters of the Shah benefited a great deal from the corrupt regime, while others suffered from bad economic policies. The Shah also carried out modernization and secularization campaigns which proved counterproductive and politicizing Islam in Iran. The economic grievances combined with political polarization, combined with the fact that the Shah’s regime allowed people for few political channels to pursue their interests created an atmosphere conducive to radical changes (Abrahamian, 1982; Daugherty, 2001; Farber, 2005).

Just more than a year after President Carter referred to Iran as “an island of stability in one of the troubled areas of the world” escalating demonstrations and violence started to threaten the Shah’s regime. Those demonstrations continued more than a year and demoralized security forces, causing the Shah to leave Iran on January 16, 1979 (Farber, 2005:101). Ten days after the Shah left the country, exiled Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran. On January 11, 1979, the process that would led to the collapse of the Shah’s regime started (Foran, 1993:383).

1.2. Takeover in Tehran

For the purpose of removing the Shah, widely opposing political groups including nationalists, Marxists, Islamists, and others had formed a coalition. Now that the Shah was gone and a battle for seizing power would begin. The struggle for power continued for months until Khomeini became Supreme Leader of the country in December 1979 (Abrahamian, 1982:496-529; Katouzian, 1992:332-352).

The events before Hostage Crisis were indeed signaling that the situation in Iran was a precarious one containing serious threats to the existence of Americans in the country. Some militant students had seized the US Embassy in February 1979. In that first seizure, the hostages were released with the help of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan serving as a successful intermediary (McDermott, 2001:45). The United States either ignored or underestimated the seriousness of the situation in Iran when it allowed the Shah who was seriously ill to enter the US for medical treatment on October 23, 1979 (Houghton, 2004:60). This would be the reason students gave for seizing the US embassy. Twelve days later, on November 4, as many as 3,000 students took over the US embassy in Tehran, taking 66 Americans hostage. The seizure of Americans was a kind of symbolic gesture as students expected the takeover to last only some days. However, when receiving endorsement and blessings of Khomeini, they continued to settle in for a quite longer time than originally anticipated. In brief, fifty-three¹ hostages were kept for 444 days until they were released on January 20, 1981, about two minutes into the Reagan presidency (Hunt, 1996:379-380; McDermott, 2001:46).

2. Dealing with the Crisis: Iran and the US

2.1. Iran and the Hostage Crisis

The students who seized the embassy and held Americans hostage had not actually intended a long sit-in. Most of the students seizing the embassy did not seem to have a clear plan. Circumstances had changed when Khomeini, forty-eight hours after the initial takeover, had endorsed the attack. Iranian Prime Minister Bazargan and Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi both had stated that they would protect American embassy and take all necessary measures in order to put and an end to takeover (Farber, 2005:141). However, within forty-eight hours of takeover Bazargan and Yazdi resigned (Hunt, 1996:380).

It appeared that Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of the country, had several reasons by taking such a stance. First of all, Iranians in large crowds gathered around the embassy to support students. Most of the Iranians thought that they were standing up to the United States after decades of American domination. Second, Khomeini had been informed that those students had nothing to do with leftists or other opponent groups. Thus, Khomeini thought that he could exploit the takeover to seize power in revolutionary Iran and to mobilize Iranians for his own purposes of creating a theocratic country (Limbert, 2009). He endorsed the takeover and even called it a second revolution (Takeyh, 2009:42).

¹ 13 of the hostages, mainly black and female had been released on November 18 and 19, 1979 (McDermott, 2001:193).

That being said, for the Americans there was no one in Iran to negotiate with but Khomeini, and Khomeini was not interested in negotiation. Rather than coming to a compromise with the US, Khomeini chose to exploit the seizure for short-term gains. The short-term gain for Khomeini was the opportunity to crush his opponents -nationalists, leftists and other groups. The extremists and their student supporters at the American embassy conducted a political campaign aim at discrediting the domestic opponents. Students published dozens of volumes of their documents found at the US embassy and made the relations and contacts of domestic groups with the American officials public. Soon it was going to be seen that the extremists' strategy of exploiting the seizure for domestic political purposes had been successful. By the end of crisis, the extremists' opponents were no longer a serious threat to the emerging theocratic regime. All in all, the United States was not the real target of the extremists. The real target of Khomeini and his supporters were those Iranians who had divergent political agendas and ideologies (Limbert, 2009; Christopher, 1985).

2.2. The United States and the Crisis: Operation Eagle Claw

President Carter faced a situation where he had to make critical decisions in order to bring 53 American hostages back to the United States safely. It was extremely important for President Carter to manage the crisis successfully. However, he faced external difficulties when the revolutionary Islamic power refused to negotiate directly with him. At the same time he was conducting a tough reelection campaign in the face of frustrated and impatient American public because of the hostage crisis. International prestige and credibility of the US was also declining as time went by and the US had not been able to solve the crisis (McDermott, 2001:47).

As noted earlier, Iran did not have a stable political system at the time and the revolution in Iran tied Carter's hand in negotiating directly with Iranian government. The United States, thus, exhausted the diplomatic and peaceful channels in the first five months of the crisis to produce a solution. However, once diplomacy failed to bring about a solution to the crisis, Washington's policy options were as follows (Sick, 1985:152):

- Choosing to do nothing and wait until Iran eventually releases the hostages.
- Locating alternative channels of communication to Khomeini, with the purpose of launching new negotiations.
- Imposing unilateral economic and political sanctions on Iran.
- Persuading international community to impose sanctions on Iran in the absence of a U.N. resolution.
- Mining Iranian harbors.
- Launching a rescue mission.
- Bombing Iranian targets, for example, refineries, power stations, docks.

The United States resorted to some of the options listed above, except the first and the last of the choices. President Carter felt the plight of the hostages deeply, and considered their safe return his personal responsibility. Right after the takeover, he embargoed Iranian oil on November 1979. He also tried to build pressure through economic sanctions, and froze its assets in the U.S. on November 14 (Farber, 2005:161; Houghton, 2004:106). In addition to these measures on April 7, 1980, the US broke diplomatic relations with Iran. On April 17, 1980, additional serious financial and travel restrictions were imposed including expelling Iranian diplomats and

students from the US; embargoing all imports; prohibiting all exports; prohibiting travel and all financial transactions and blocking telecommunication; and closing Iranian air, travel and financial institutions in the US (McDermott, 2001:53).

Once peaceful channels failed to resolve the problem, Carter decided to proceed with a risky option. Decision on a rescue mission was made five months after the initial takeover (Houghton, 2004:2). President Carter was convinced that only a successful rescue mission would bring hostages back home and restore the US image at home and internationally.

The Operation Eagle Claw appeared to be a highly complicated rescue attempt. According to the plan, eight RH-53D² helicopters stationed in the Arabian Sea would fly 600 miles to a field, Desert One, near an Iranian town, Tabas. These helicopters would fly under total radio silence at a low altitude to avoid Iranian radar detection. Once they arrive at Desert One, they were to meet with six C-130³ transport planes that were to fly in from the US military base in Oman. Three of these planes were to carry 120 professional soldiers; the other three were to carry fuel for the helicopters. Once they met, the C-130s were to refuel the helicopters and transfer operations men to the helicopters and return to base. The helicopters were then fly on to Desert Two located about 100 miles southeast of Tehran. The operational force was going to hide out during the day until they attacked the embassy as planned the following night. Some local American friends had already organized ground transportation to the embassy at that time. Once professional soldiers attacked the embassy by surprise and rescued hostages, the helicopters were going to pick up soldiers and hostages and fly them out of the country. Each phase was organized and timed to coincide. The rescue attempt was considered to be quite risky, both in terms of feasibility and its high likelihood of lives and material being lost. The initial phase of inserting of the aircraft into Iran without detection was a technically difficult operation. Although the first phase was accomplished and American aircraft entered Iran, the mission was aborted since only five helicopters reached Desert One. However, planners of the mission required a minimum six helicopters' arrival at Desert One in order to complete the task. President Carter ordered the rescue mission to be aborted. Following the decision, an accident occurred where eight American soldiers were killed and four of them were wounded (Bowden, 2006; Brzezinski, 1982; Grouya, 1985).

President Carter went on national television to take personal responsibility for the failure (Houghton, 2004:3). In the wake of the rescue mission failure administration officials continued to defend the decision of the rescue attempt. It was stated that the operation was risky; however, administration had a moral obligation to help his people and a political obligation to resolve the problem (McDermott, 2001:73).

On the other hand, Iran became aware of the attempt only when Carter issued an announcement. When the rescue attempt failed in April of 1980, the turmoil had been going on in Iran. Thus, Iran did not or could not take a retaliatory action against the failed mission. February through March of 1980, Iran held two stage parliamentary elections and the hard-line and ideological Islamist Republican Party won the elections. After these elections, Khomeini and his supporters gained complete control in Iran. After the parliament seated and a new

² A common name for the Sikorsky S-65 family of heavy lift transport helicopters.

³ Originally designed as a troop medical evacuation and cargo transport aircraft.

government was formed Iranians started to pay attention to the hostage problem (Christopher, 1985:7)

It was when he had power and the Shah died in August 1980 in Egypt that Khomeini decided to fix the hostage problem. Iranian officials contacted the German ambassador in Tehran seeking to enter negotiations with American officials with regard to the release of the hostages. German ambassador passed Iranian demands for release of the hostages to American officials. The demands were: an American pledge not to intervene in Iran's internal affairs; return of frozen Iranian assets; cancellation of American claims against Iran; and return of the Shah's wealth to Iran. Negotiations started between Iranian and American officials, however the negotiations soon ended with the outbreak of Iran-Iraq War in September 1980. Starting in November again, negotiations started and lasted the next two and a half months until eventually led to the eventual agreement that freed the hostages on January 20, 1981. As a result of the negotiations, the United States agreed to unfreeze Iranian assets and not to intervene directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran's internal affairs. The hostages were released on January 20, 1981 at the moment Reagan just became the president (Farber, 2005:183; Houghton, 2004:381).

The takeover of the American embassy had a profound effect on the US domestic affairs. President Carter was conducting a reelection campaign at home. In fact, if the rescue attempt had succeeded, history might look quite different, because Carter could have won in the presidential election of 1981 (McDermott, 2001).

The hostages were released by Iranians when they no longer could be exploited for internal political purposes. Carter chose a risky military option over political and economic sanctions. He chose military option because, if successful, this would offer a chance to recoup all the losses and regain the status quo. However, this policy option did not bring about the release of the hostages.

3. A Comparison Of Leadership Styles: Carter and Khomeini

The Iranian Hostage Crisis broke out during the last year of the Carter presidency. The United States and Iran had had good relations from 1953 to 1979 when Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi was in power in Iran. The alliance between the US and Iran ended with the Iranian Revolution of 1979 which led to a struggle for power between nationalists, Marxists, Islamists and some other groups and eventually resulted in an Islamic republic under Ayatollah Khomeini.

When students took over the embassy and seized 66 Americans on November 1979, it was not clear who they represented or what they hoped to achieve. What made it even more complicated was the fact that there was no a single actor who may have claimed authority (Christopher, 1985:6). Along with Majlis, students, after Khomeini's blessings, gained negotiating power and leverage. In addition to Majlis and students, Khomeini himself was another actor who was a very important figure in Iranian politics at the time. Indeed, Khomeini would like to have released hostages before he did but he could not because of Iranian political system at the time. He saw hostages as domestic tool to dismantle or weaken other opposition groups which were struggling for power, and he succeeded in doing so. President Carter, on the other hand, was conducting a reelection campaign at home while handling the hostage crisis. He

felt the plight of the hostages and deeply experienced the personal burden of his responsibilities. As mentioned above, there was no a single authority in Iran to negotiate with. President Carter, thus, tried to pressure Iran through economic sanctions, and froze its assets in the U.S. When negotiations failed to produce a deal, President Carter decided to proceed with the hostage rescue mission (McDermott, 2001).

3.1. Carter's Leadership Style Based On An Occasion For Decision: Should Carter Administration Conduct A Rescue Mission In Order To Free Hostages?

At the heart of foreign policy decision-making is the idea that leaders engage in “two-level games” where they simultaneously cope with the pressures and constraints of their own domestic political systems as well as with those of global environment (Hagan, 1995:117). The idea is that international politics is not merely driven by international system as realist would argue, but also the domestic configuration of a state matters a great deal. In other words, domestic politics is effective in determining leaders' choices of alternative political strategies which, in turn, have profound effects on foreign policy. These games and strategies have subtle effects on foreign policy and they condition how leaders respond to international pressures, although not the sole or primary determinant of foreign policy.

Concerning the topic in this paper, on the American side, there is some evidence that domestic political considerations played a key role in Carter's decisions regarding the hostage crisis. In formulating American foreign policy decisions, presidents are constrained by domestic political factors such as public opinion, popularity ratings, the mass media and Congress (Hagan, 1995:117-143; Houghton, 2004). Of particular interest is the fact that Carter was carrying a presidential campaign for the election of November 1980. The fact that he decided to proceed with the rescue mission only seven months prior to this election is to be of great significance.

Figure 1: Jimmy Carter Approval Ratings: 1977-1981⁴

American Presidency Project –Approval Ratings for Jimmy Carter⁵

Start Date	End Date	Approving	Disapproving	Unsure/NoData
12/05/1980	12/08/1980	34	55	11
11/18/1980	11/18/1980	31	56	12
09/09/1980	09/09/1980	37	54	7
08/12/1980	08/12/1980	32	54	13
07/08/1980	07/08/1980	32	54	12
06/24/1980	06/24/1980	30	58	10
06/10/1980	06/10/1980	32	55	11

⁴ Retrieved February 7, 2020, from <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/data/presidential-job-approval>.

⁵ Retrieved February 7, 2020, from <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/data/presidential-job-approval>.

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05/27/1980	05/27/1980	38	51	10
05/13/1980	05/13/1980	38	50	10
04/29/1980	04/29/1980	42	47	10
04/08/1980	04/08/1980	38	50	10
03/24/1980	03/24/1980	39	50	10
03/04/1980	03/04/1980	42	44	12
02/26/1980	02/26/1980	51	38	10
01/29/1980	01/29/1980	55	35	8
01/22/1980	01/22/1980	57	32	9
01/02/1980	01/02/1980	56	33	10
12/04/1979	12/04/1979	54	35	10
11/27/1979	11/27/1979	51	36	11
11/13/1979	11/13/1979	37	49	12
10/30/1979	10/30/1979	31	55	12
10/12/1979	10/15/1979	31	54	13
10/02/1979	10/02/1979	28	58	12
09/25/1979	09/25/1979	32	53	13
09/04/1979	09/04/1979	29	55	14
08/14/1979	08/14/1979	32	53	13
08/07/1979	08/07/1979	33	54	11
07/31/1979	07/31/1979	32	53	14
07/30/1979	07/30/1979	32	53	14
07/10/1979	07/10/1979	29	57	13
06/26/1979	06/26/1979	28	59	12
06/19/1979	06/19/1979	29	56	13
05/29/1979	05/29/1979	29	55	15
05/15/1979	05/15/1979	32	52	15
05/01/1979	05/01/1979	37	48	14
04/03/1979	04/03/1979	40	45	13
03/20/1979	03/20/1979	42	43	13
03/13/1979	03/13/1979	46	39	13
02/27/1979	02/27/1979	39	47	12
02/20/1979	02/20/1979	37	46	16
01/30/1979	01/30/1979	42	42	15

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01/16/1979	01/16/1979	43	41	15
01/02/1979	01/02/1979	50	35	13
12/05/1978	12/05/1978	51	33	15
11/28/1978	11/28/1978	50	33	16
10/24/1978	10/24/1978	49	36	14
09/19/1978	09/19/1978	47	34	18
09/11/1978	09/11/1978	44	40	15
09/05/1978	09/05/1978	42	41	16
08/15/1978	08/15/1978	42	40	16
08/08/1978	08/08/1978	40	43	16
08/01/1978	08/01/1978	39	43	17
07/18/1978	07/18/1978	38	44	17
07/05/1978	07/05/1978	40	41	18
06/13/1978	06/13/1978	42	42	15
05/30/1978	05/30/1978	43	40	15
05/16/1978	05/16/1978	42	43	14
05/03/1978	05/03/1978	41	42	15
04/25/1978	04/25/1978	41	41	17
04/11/1978	04/11/1978	40	43	15
03/28/1978	03/28/1978	47	38	13
03/07/1978	03/07/1978	49	34	15
03/01/1978	03/01/1978	48	33	18
02/21/1978	02/21/1978	50	33	16
02/11/1978	02/11/1978	46	34	18
01/17/1978	01/17/1978	51	28	19
01/03/1978	01/03/1978	54	26	18
12/06/1977	12/06/1977	56	27	16
11/15/1977	11/15/1977	55	29	14
11/01/1977	11/01/1977	54	30	15
10/25/1977	10/25/1977	51	30	18
10/18/1977	10/18/1977	54	29	16
10/11/1977	10/11/1977	54	29	15
09/27/1977	09/27/1977	59	23	17
09/06/1977	09/06/1977	53	29	17

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08/16/1977	08/16/1977	66	15	18
08/02/1977	08/02/1977	59	22	17
07/19/1977	07/19/1977	66	17	16
07/05/1977	07/05/1977	62	22	15
06/14/1977	06/14/1977	63	17	18
05/31/1977	05/31/1977	62	19	18
05/17/1977	05/17/1977	63	18	17
05/06/1977	05/09/1977	65	18	15
04/29/1977	05/02/1977	63	18	19
04/12/1977	04/12/1977	63	17	19
03/29/1977	03/29/1977	67	14	18
03/22/1977	03/22/1977	71	10	18
03/15/1977	03/15/1977	74	8	16
03/01/1977	03/01/1977	70	9	20
02/15/1977	02/15/1977	71	8	20
02/04/1977	02/07/1977	66	8	26

As seen in the figure 1, Carter's approval rating was around 30 per cent before the embassy seizure. For instance, on October 30, 1979, right before the initial takeover, Carter's approval rating was 31 per cent, while 55 per cent of Americans disapproved his overall foreign policy. However, Americans rallied around him when the hostages were originally taken and his approval rating doubled from 30 per cent to 57 per cent in the subsequent months. As time went by and Carter's policy toward the hostages did not produce a solution which would bring a safe return of the hostages, Carter's rating dropped significantly. As seen in figure 1, 16 days before the rescue mission, on April 8, 1980, only 38 per cent approved of his overall foreign policy performance, while 50 per cent disapproved. 5 days after the rescue mission (on April 29, 1980) approving rate increased to 42 per cent, while it decreased substantially in following months to 30 per cent. Overall, Carter decided to conduct the rescue mission because he was aware of the declining domestic support for him and in order to win the elections he had to be successful in bringing American hostages back home (McDermott, 2001).

Another factor affected Carter's choices regarding the hostage issue was the pressure exerted by the mass media, from the television in particular. On CBS, Walter Cronkite each night would sign off by announcing the number of days the Americans had been held hostage. On ABC, Ted Koppel began a nightly show updating Americans on the situation in Tehran, and emotive interviews with the hostages' families on this. Other television programs increased the pressure still further and affected Carter in his decision to go with a military operation (Larson, 2006:108-131). It is not likely that a presidential candidate will be challenged by his own party.

Carter faced a strong challenge not only from Republican candidate Ronald Reagan, but also from his own party in the form of Senator Ted Kennedy (Farber, 2005:116). In addition to this, Carter's handling of the crisis was a strong motivation for those running for a presidential party nomination in 1980. Republicans especially criticized him on being too soft on Iran and not taking appropriate actions which would pressure Iran to release the hostages. Former Texas Governor John Connally stated after the hostages were seized that "if appeasement were an art form, this Administration would be the Rembrandt of our time. The United States can't afford to be kicked around" (Houghton, 2004:175). All in all, pressure from Congress contributed to Carter's decisions.

Before he became President, Carter served as a U.S. Naval officer, served two terms as a Georgia State Senator and one as Governor of Georgia (1971-1975). Along with Dwight D. Eisenhower, Carter was the only American President in the twentieth century who had run for office as an outsider. In one of his speeches he stated: "I'm not a lawyer, I'm not a member of Congress, and I've never served in Washington" (Farber, 2005:27). Indeed, Carter had not had an active interest in as well as involvement with foreign and defense issues before he became president. As noted before, Carter deeply experienced the personal burden of his responsibilities. He clearly made freeing the hostages his number one priority. Carter stated in his testimony to Congress:

"It is a constantly a burden on my mind, no matter what I am thinking about. If I am worrying about an announcement that I am going to be a candidate for president or if I am worrying about the windfall profit tax or if I am worrying about anything else, I am always concerned about the hostages. It is just as though my wife was in hospital on the point of death and I had my duties to carry out and I did not know whether she was going to live or die. I worry just as much about those hostages, and I feel like they are all my own family" (McDermott, 2001:6).

The main perspectives that most strongly influenced President Carter are those of his advisors, namely Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, and the White House Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan. Secretary of State Vance, from the outset, strongly opposed to the rescue mission and saw it as being too risky from both military and political standpoints. When Carter decided to go with the rescue, Vance resigned because he believed that the mission could not work and should not be conducted because it would be too dangerous. Brzezinski, on the other hand, was a strong supporter of the rescue mission. Indeed, he was a powerful force in the decision to launch the mission. The White House Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan was also in favor of military action (Farber, 2005; Houghton, 2004; Hunt, 1996).

Throughout the duration of the hostage crisis, Carter negotiated for the Americans' release. He even decided to conduct the rescue mission which did not prove successful and ended in the death of eight Americans. In effect, Carter was not an individual for the use of violence. Throughout his presidency he supported promotion of "democracy", "human rights" and "peace". Rosalynn Carter reminds us of her husband's peaceful and compassionate trait, "No one can know how much pressure there was on Jimmy to do something. I would go out and campaigning and come back and say, 'Why don't you do something?' And he said, 'What would you want me to do?' I said, 'Mine the harbors.' He said, 'Okay, suppose I mine the

harbors, and they decide to take one hostage out every day and kill him. What am I going to do then?" (Geraghty, 2006:61).

Based on Carter's decision to proceed with the Operation Eagle Claw regarding occasion for decision whether or not Carter should conduct a rescue mission in order to free hostages, one can conclude that President Carter was a *strategist* in his leadership style⁶ (See figure 2). Critical to "strategist leadership style" is being relatively open to information and having ways of gathering information from across a variety of perspectives. These leaders challenge political constraints as well (Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998:250). They have a set of agenda about what their goal is but they seek the information that is most feasible to achieve their objective (Khandal, 2018:17). President Carter was sensitive to the political context, meaning that he was open to information from others. He used peaceful channels and waited five months before he decided to conduct the rescue mission. When he was convinced that diplomatic means would not bring a solution to the problem, he took the riskiest option. Based on the characteristics outlined here, one can conclude that Carter was a *strategist*.

President Jimmy Carter was clearly operating in a domain of losses at the time of his decision to proceed with the rescue mission (See approving rates in figure 1). He faced a situation where things did not go well, and indeed they continued to worsen as time went by and the hostages remained in captivity. A tough reelection campaign, a growing sense of desperation about the safety and the release of the hostages, and a declining international prestige and credibility for the U.S. government in the wake of the hostage crisis could have caused Carter to see himself as operating in a domain of losses. Carter's failure to take an action which would bring about the release of the hostages over the subsequent five months after the initial takeover caused his popularity to decline rapidly on the domestic front. By the time military action was on the table as an option and the military preparations were underway, Carter's support had declined substantially from what it had been in previous months. According to a Time poll conducted in March 1980, 60 percent of the American public felt that Carter was not tough enough on Iran. In addition, just prior to the decision of the rescue mission, Carter's reelection campaign was going badly and Republican president candidate Ronald Reagan appeared to be a serious opponent in the election polls (McDermott, 2001:49). By the time of the rescue mission, Carter was badly in need of compensating for his losses. If the hostages could be released, Carter could have reasonably expected that domestic and international image of the US would be restored, and his political fortune might turn upward.

The rescue mission was regarded by the Carter administration as the best balance of political and military risk. If the mission succeeded, the hostages would be released, Carter would be a hero, and America's international image would be salvaged. On the other hand, the rescue mission could result in quite negative consequences: the Iranians might harm the hostages in retaliation; America would appear militarily impotent before the world, the Soviet Union might

⁶ Apart from strategists, there are some other types of leadership styles: crusaders, opportunists, pragmatists. Crusaders tend to challenge constraints and are relatively closed to information. They strive for a position and are generally not sensitive to political constraints challenging them. They are able to construct a convincing narrative for themselves and others around them. Opportunists, on the other hand, resembles crusaders in that they respect the political constraints and are open to new information. Finally, pragmatists respect constraints but are generally close to new information. They know their boundaries and pursue their goals looking for the right time to push. For more information (Hermann et al. 2001; Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998:243-263; Khandal, 2018).

be encouraged to intervene, and Carter might possibly lose the election. Although not all these negative outcomes took place, many of them occurred in the wake of the failed rescue mission. At that time, the rescue mission was the option that offered to recoup all previous losses and to return to the status quo that existed before the hostages had been taken in November.

Responsiveness to Constraints	Openness to Information	Motivation	
		Problem Focus	Relationship Focus
Challenges Constraints (Becomes a crusader)	Closed to Information	<i>Expansionistic</i> (Focus is on expanding one's power and influence)	<i>Evangelistic</i> (Focus is on persuading others to accept one's message and join one's cause)
Challenges Constraints (Is generally strategic)	Open to Information	<i>Incremental</i> (Focus is on maintaining one's maneuverability and flexibility while avoiding the obstacles that continually try to limit both)	<i>Charismatic</i> (Focus is on achieving one's agenda by engaging others in the process and persuading them to act)
Respects Constraints (Inclined toward pragmatism)	Closed to Information	<i>Directive</i> (Focus is on personally guiding policy along paths consistent with one's own views while still working within the norms and rules of one's current position)	<i>Consultative</i> (Focus is on monitoring that important others will support, or not actively oppose, what one wants to do in a particular situation)
Respects Constraints (Is usually opportunistic)	Open to Information	<i>Reactive</i> (Focus is on assessing what is possible in the current situation given the nature of the problem and considering what important constituencies will allow)	<i>Accommodative</i> (Focus is on reconciling differences and building consensus, empowering others and sharing accountability in the process)

Figure 2: Leadership Style as a Function of Responsiveness to Constraints, Openness to Information, and Motivation (Hermann et al. 2001:95).

3.2. Khomeini's Leadership Style Based On An Occasion For Decision: Should

Khomeini release American Embassy staff taken hostage in Tehran?

As it is already stated in previous pages of the paper, American hostages were useful to Khomeini as a domestic tool to dismantle or weaken his rivals. As it happened, Khomeini did not instigate the seizure of the embassy, nor did he have much direct involvement in the negotiations with the US. But once the crisis escalated he exploited it successfully to achieve his ends. Khomeini and his supporters had been able to overthrow the Shah with the help of other groups such as nationalists, liberals, Marxists, and other religious factions. Once the revolution triumphed he made his goal clear. His goal was to secure the Islamic character of the revolution. He was aware that this would be ensured if he were at the center of the political process. At the time, the clergy-dominated Islamic Republican Party (IRP) was in a severe competition for power. On the left, there was the communist Tudeh Party and an armed guerilla movement, the Mujahidin-e Khalq. In the center there was the secular-nationalist National Front which was a shadow of what it had been in Mossadegh's time. On the right, there were some other factions who did not side themselves with the IRP (Foran, 1993:397-400). By exploiting the seizure, Khomeini created an anti-Western atmosphere, gained support of the majority of Iranians and forced other opposition forces to side themselves with the students and thus, with Khomeini.

Right after the initial takeover, Khomeini seized the opportunity and endorsed students' action in order to accomplish those goals. The situation was characterized by a desperate search for political survival and a need for policy legitimization. The fact that "foreign policy is a correspondingly viable means for unifying the public and discrediting domestic adversaries" (Houghton, 2004:174) seems convincing as it offers as to why Iran might have challenged an adversary which is much more powerful. That is to say that Iranian position in the hostage crisis resulted from domestic rivalries rather than from its opposition in the international system. Even though Khomeini might appear to be a predominant leader, given the situation in Iran in the wake of revolution of 1979, there is no evidence that Khomeini acted as a predominant leader. Iranian political system at the time was not stable and there were a number of groups struggling for power. Khomeini did not have the power to assume leadership; however, being the Supreme Leader, he was an important figure involved in Iranian politics. Indeed, Iran did not have a working political system at the time, on November 4, 1979, when the embassy takeover took place. The Interim Government of 1979 was the first government established in Iran after the Islamic Revolution. This government was headed by Mehdi Bazargan and formed on the order of Khomeini. Bazargan's interim government consisted primarily of moderates and liberals (Abrahamian, 1982:527-528). However, Bazargan resigned along with his cabinet on November following the US Embassy takeover. He disagreed with Khomeini on the endorsement of the takeover because he was against the use of violence. Bazargan's resignation can be considered recognition of his government's inability to free the hostages (Farber, 2005:142). In addition to Bazargan's interim government, the students were also a part of the multiple autonomous actors.

Given the fact that Khomeini exploited and manipulated the hostage crisis in order to achieve his own ambitions, consolidating his regime while dismantling his rivals one can come to

conclusion he was a *crusader* in his leadership style based on the occasion for decision articulated. This seems especially valid as he only focused on expanding his power and influence and was close to information and challenged constraints as far as he could.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to compare leadership styles of Jimmy Carter and Ayatollah Khomeini based on a single occasion for decision concerning the hostage crisis. For that specific purpose, in the first place, Iranian hostage crisis is placed in the context of Cold War, in which Iran emerged with Saudi Arabia, as one of the pillars of the “Containment Policy” of the US in the Middle East until 1979. “Twin pillars policy” suddenly collapsed in 1979 when the Shah of Iran was overthrown in a revolution that brought an Islamic regime to power opposed to the US influence in the region. Allowing the Shah to enter the US for medical treatment was put forward the main reason when about 3,000 students stormed the US embassy in Tehran, holding 66 Americans for 444 days. In the following part, initial responses of both countries are given as the crisis begins to escalate. Khomeini opted for manipulating the crisis for the sake of consolidating the nascent Islamic regime; while Carter took all peaceful measures before taking a very risky military operation. In the final section of the paper, leadership styles of Carter and Khomeini is compared based on a specific occasion for decision: whether or not Carter should proceed with military action in order to save hostages, and whether or not Khomeini should release hostages. In the final analysis, based on the criteria provided by Hermann et al (2001) (see figure 2) the paper concludes that Carter was a *strategist* in his leadership style given his openness and taking the riskiest option after consuming all necessary measures. On the other hand, using the situation for the sake of reinforcing his embryonic regime, his stubbornness to terminate his rivals at home, and his position to challenge constraints arising from the crisis, it is deduced that Khomeini was a *crusader* in his leadership style. In this regard, Carter and Khomeini appeared to display two fundamentally different leadership styles that arose from domestic configurations of both countries and the stance and power of their countries in international system.

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