**Six things you didn't know about the Iran hostage crisis**  
Susan Chun July 16, 2015 CNN

(CNN) It has been more than 35 years since a group of Iranian students stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and took a group of Americans hostage. You have seen this story play out in movies like "Argo" and shows like "Homeland," but here are six things about the Iran hostage crisis that you may not have known.  
  
**1) This conflict is often described as the United States' first brush with political Islam.**  
In 1979, the Ayatollah Khomeini installed an anti-Western Islamic theocracy, which replaced the pro-Western monarchy of the Shah of Iran. The U.S. was referred to as "the Great Satan" by the new Iranian government, and Iranians looked at the United States with suspicion because of its role in keeping the Shah in power. Iranians felt the United States meddled too much in Iran's internal affairs, and were afraid the CIA was plotting to return the Shah to power. The Ayatollah himself blessed the hostage-taking at the embassy, further fueling the government's hard line against the United States.

**2) The U.S. Embassy in Tehran warned Washington the embassy would be attacked.**  
By October 1979, the Shah had fled Iran and was staying in Mexico. There, doctors discovered the Shah was suffering from an aggressive cancer and recommended he be admitted to a hospital in the United States. The situation in Tehran was already tense, and the head of the diplomatic mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran sent several cables to Washington, saying that if the Shah was allowed to come to the United States for treatment, the embassy would be taken. President Jimmy Carter allowed the Shah into the United States, with much hesitation, and the Iranians were outraged. They saw this as an excuse to bring the Shah to the United States to plot his return to power. This was just weeks before the embassy was attacked.

**3) Some of the hostages were beaten and tortured, and even underwent a mock execution.**  
Iran has maintained a narrative that the hostages were treated well, but that is not true. Not all the hostages were treated the same. The two women, Ann Swift and Kathryn Koob, said they were treated "correctly" by their captors, but others, including Al Golacinski, John Limbert and Rick Kupke, were subject to a mock execution, where they were awakened in the middle of the night, forced to strip to their underwear and marched to a room in the basement where their guards made it seem they were about to be executed by firing squad. The guards fired their weapons, but they were not loaded. Then the guards laughed. Why did they do it? Limbert said it was because "they thought it would be fun."

**4) The hostages were released only after President Reagan was sworn in.**  
Ted Koppel described this as the Iranians' last act of cruelty toward President Carter. Even though the United States and Iran had come to an agreement to free the hostages in December, the Iranians waited literally until the hour President Reagan was sworn in before allowing the plane with the hostages to take off. The Iranians had a deep hatred of Carter and wanted to deny him this last moment of victory as President.

**5) After the hostages were released, they met with President Jimmy Carter.**  
William Daugherty, who was held in solitary confinement for almost the entire time he was a hostage, said, "It was not a warm welcome" when Jimmy Carter flew to the U.S. military base in Germany to meet the hostages right after their release. The hostages were split on their thinking. Many felt they were left unprotected in the embassy after Carter made the decision to allow the Shah into the United States. Daugherty said that during the meeting, Carter went around to hug all the hostages, and many remained still with their arms at their sides and did not return his hug.

**6) The former U.S. Embassy in Tehran has been preserved as a museum.**  
The embassy in Tehran is now an Islamic cultural center and a museum, preserved from the days when it was a prison in 1979. It stands as a symbol of the Iranian revolution, and is known in Iran as the "den of spies." Old typewriters, communication equipment, even old visa photos, are on display. Every year on the anniversary of the hostage taking, Iranians hold rallies where "Death to America" is chanted, just as it was in 1979.

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