

**Document 6:** Iran Hostage Crisis

*On November 4, 1979, Iranian militants took over 60 Americans hostage in the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Dated November 6, 1979, this letter was written by President Jimmy Carter in the early days of the hostage crisis. President Carter's efforts, which included a failed military rescue mission, were ultimately fruitless, and the hostages were not released until January 20, 1981—moments after Carter officially turned the Presidency over to Ronald Reagan.*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 6, 1979

Dear Ayatollah Khomeini:

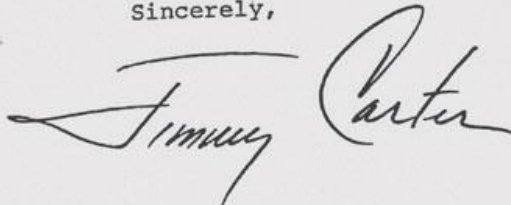
Based on the willingness of the Revolutionary Council to receive them, I am asking two distinguished Americans, Mr. Ramsey Clark and Mr. William G. Miller, to carry this letter to you and to discuss with you and your designees the situation in Tehran and the full range of current issues between the U.S. and Iran.

In the name of the American people, I ask that you release unharmed all Americans presently detained in Iran and those held with them and allow them to leave your country safely and without delay. I ask you to recognize the compelling humanitarian reasons, firmly based in international law, for doing so.

I have asked both men to meet with you and to hear from you your perspective on events in Iran and the problems which have arisen between our two countries. The people of the United States desire to have relations with Iran based upon equality, mutual respect, and friendship.

They will report to me immediately upon their return.

Sincerely,



His Excellency  
Ayatollah Khomeini  
Qom, Iran

DECLASSIFIED  
NSC 4/22/85 re MC-84-10  
BY ATF NARS. DATE 4/29/85

Letter from Jimmy Carter to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini regarding the Release of the Iranian Hostages, 11/06/1979