

Week Ending Friday, May 2, 1980

Presidential Commission on World Hunger

*Statement on the Commission's Report.
April 26, 1980*

The Report of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger represents a challenge to all Americans. I commend the members of the Commission for their comprehensive analysis and thoughtful proposals.

As Chairman Sol Linowitz has noted, few of the measures recommended by the Commission will be easy, and many of the most important will take time. Some will be difficult to implement quickly in the face of fiscal restraints imposed by our fight against inflation. But I agree with the Commission that our national security and our fundamental values compel us to mount a growing effort to build a world without hunger. I intend to make that effort.

I have today directed the appropriate departments and agencies of the Federal Government to examine promptly the Commission's proposals and to recommend to me both immediate and longer term action. The Commission's report will be a spur to new achievement; it will not gather dust in the files.

I intend to share the Commission's basic message with other national leaders in June at the economic summit conference in Venice, where I will make specific proposals for collective action.

I urge the Congress and all Americans to join me in a renewed commitment to

mobilize the world's resources in a larger, more effective, and continuing effort to overcome world hunger.

NOTE: The report is entitled "Overcoming World Hunger: The Challenge Ahead, Report of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger—March 1980" (Government Printing Office, 251 pages).

Rescue Attempt for American Hostages in Iran

*Letter to the Speaker of the House and the
President Pro Tempore of the Senate
Reporting on the Operation. April 26, 1980*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Because of my desire that Congress be informed on this matter and consistent with the reporting provisions of the War Powers Resolution of 1973 (Public Law 93-148), I submit this report.

On April 24, 1980, elements of the United States Armed Forces under my direction commenced the positioning stage of a rescue operation which was designed, if the subsequent stages had been executed, to effect the rescue of the American hostages who have been held captive in Iran since November 4, 1979, in clear violation of international law and the norms of civilized conduct among nations. The subsequent phases of the operation were not executed. Instead, for the reasons described below, all these elements were withdrawn from Iran and no hostilities occurred.

The sole objective of the operation that actually occurred was to position the rescue team for the subsequent effort to withdraw the American hostages. The rescue team was under my overall command and control and required my approval before executing the subsequent phases of the operation designed to effect the rescue itself. No such approval was requested or given because, as described below, the mission was aborted.

Beginning approximately 10:30 AM EST on April 24, six U.S. C-130 transport aircraft and eight RH-53 helicopters entered Iran airspace. Their crews were not equipped for combat. Some of the C-130 aircraft carried a force of approximately 90 members of the rescue team equipped for combat, plus various support personnel.

From approximately 2 to 4 PM EST the six transports and six of the eight helicopters landed at a remote desert site in Iran approximately 200 miles from Tehran where they disembarked the rescue team, commenced refueling operations and began to prepare for the subsequent phases.

During the flight to the remote desert site, two of the eight helicopters developed operating difficulties. One was forced to return to the carrier Nimitz; the second was forced to land in the desert, but its crew was taken aboard another of the helicopters and proceeded on to the landing site. Of the six helicopters which landed at the remote desert site, one developed a serious hydraulic problem and was unable to continue with the mission. The operational plans called for a minimum of six helicopters in good operational condition able to proceed from the desert site. Eight helicopters had been included in the force to provide sufficient redundancy without imposing excessive strains on the refueling and exit require-

ments of the operation. When the number of helicopters available to continue dropped to five, it was determined that the operation could not proceed as planned. Therefore, on the recommendation of the force commander and my military advisers, I decided to cancel the mission and ordered the United States Armed Forces involved to return from Iran.

During the process of withdrawal, one of the helicopters accidentally collided with one of the C-130 aircraft, which was preparing to take off, resulting in the death of eight personnel and the injury of several others. At this point, the decision was made to load all surviving personnel aboard the remaining C-130 aircraft and to abandon the remaining helicopters at the landing site. Altogether, the United States Armed Forces remained on the ground for a total of approximately three hours. The five remaining aircraft took off about 5:45 PM EST and departed from Iran airspace without further incident at about 8:00 PM EST on April 24. No United States Armed Forces remain in Iran.

The remote desert area was selected to conceal this phase of the mission from discovery. At no time during the temporary presence of United States Armed Forces in Iran did they encounter Iranian forces of any type. We believe, in fact, that no Iranian military forces were in the desert area, and that the Iranian forces were unaware of the presence of United States Armed Forces until after their departure from Iran. As planned, no hostilities occurred during this phase of the mission—the only phase that was executed.

At one point during the period in which United States Armed Forces elements were on the ground at the desert landing site a bus containing forty-four Iranian civilians happened to pass along a

nearby road. The bus was stopped and then disabled. Its occupants were detained by United States Armed Forces until their departure, and then released unharmed. One truck closely followed by a second vehicle also passed by while United States Armed Forces elements were on the ground. These elements stopped the truck by a shot into its headlights. The driver ran to the second vehicle which then escaped across the desert. Neither of these incidents affected the subsequent decision to terminate the mission.

Our rescue team knew, and I knew, that the operation was certain to be dangerous. We were all convinced that if and when the rescue phase of the operation had been commenced, it had an excellent chance of success. They were all volunteers; they were all highly trained. I met with their leaders before they went on this operation. They knew then what hopes of mine and of all Americans they carried with them. I share with the nation the highest respect and appreciation for the ability and bravery of all who participated in the mission.

To the families of those who died and who were injured, I have expressed the admiration I feel for the courage of their loved ones and the sorrow that I feel personally for their sacrifice.

The mission on which they were embarked was a humanitarian mission. It was not directed against Iran. It was not directed against the people of Iran. It caused no Iranian casualties.

This operation was ordered and conducted pursuant to the President's powers under the Constitution as Chief Executive and as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Armed Forces, expressly recognized in Section 8(d)(1) of the War Powers Resolution. In carrying out this operation, the United States was acting wholly within its right, in accordance with

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, to protect and rescue its citizens where the government of the territory in which they are located is unable or unwilling to protect them.

Sincerely,

JIMMY CARTER

NOTE: This is the text of identical letters addressed to Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Warren G. Magnuson, President pro tempore of the Senate.

The text of the letters was released on April 27.

Rescue Attempt for American Hostages in Iran

Message for the Memorial Service for the Eight Airmen Who Died During the Operation. April 27, 1980

I grieve with you for eight fine men who died in the service of America. You have as consolation in your sorrow the memory of their lives. These airmen were your family, your friends and fellow workers, and the job they gave you in their lives can help, in memory and in time, to cover the wound of their deaths.

To me and to their country they have left an equal gift: the legacy of their daring spirit. It is the quality which Pericles, some 2500 years ago, marked in the soldiers of his city, when he said:

"When Athens shall appear great to you, consider that her glories were produced by valiant men and by men who knew their duty, by men who felt the urgings of honor when they came to act." These men of your family, of America's family, acted for our nation's honor. Their bravery and their free acceptance of great hazards in the line of duty enoble not just them but all of us.