

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 11APHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
21 July 1983

Carter: CIA aided escape from Iran

Associated Press

TOKYO — CIA agents, some of them disguised as film crew members, helped Canadian diplomats smuggle six Americans out of Iran while Islamic militants held 63 others hostage, former President Jimmy Carter has disclosed.

Carter revealed details of the operation at a news conference Tuesday, during a private six-day visit he is making to Japan.

The six Americans fled to the Canadian Embassy in Tehran when militants of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's revolutionary Islamic regime seized the U.S. Embassy and the hostages Nov. 4, 1979.

After Canada informed the United States of the presence of the six Americans, Carter said, "I directed that intelligence agencies, primarily the CIA, begin to go into Tehran with disguises — sometimes as a motion picture crew, sometimes otherwise — to go privately into the Canadian Embassy and train these six Americans and the Canadians on how they might best be extracted from Tehran."

He described Ken Taylor, who was then the Canadian ambassador to Iran, as "justifiably an American hero."

Taylor, now the Canadian consul-general in New York, said the U.S. intelligence agents "made a vital contribution" to the escape of the six Americans, who flew out of Tehran

on Jan. 28, 1980, with forged Canadian passports and visas.

The Americans left Tehran on a morning flight with Canadian diplomatic personnel, and Taylor departed on an evening flight. The Canadian Embassy in the Iranian capital then was closed, but Canada and Iran have not severed diplomatic relations.

The last 52 American hostages were released through Algerian-sponsored mediation and left Tehran on Jan. 20, 1981, after 444 days as hostages. Eleven captives had been freed earlier.

Carter, discussing the CIA agents who entered Tehran to assist the Canadians, said that one using a West German passport was stopped by an Iranian immigration official but got through by recalling Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler.

Carter said the agent showed his passport, which carried the middle initial "H.", to the Iranian official, who told him, "Stop. Something's wrong."

The official then said, "I have been here 25 years and I have never seen a German passport with a middle initial, so I'll have to find out something more about you before you can pass," Carter told the news conference.

He said the "very quick-thinking CIA agent went back and said, 'Well, I wonder if I could talk to you privately'" and he then told the official, "I was born in the late 1930s, and my parents gave me the middle name of Hitler, and I've always gotten permission to conceal this fact in my passport."

Carter said the official then told the agent, "Well, I understand. You go right ahead."