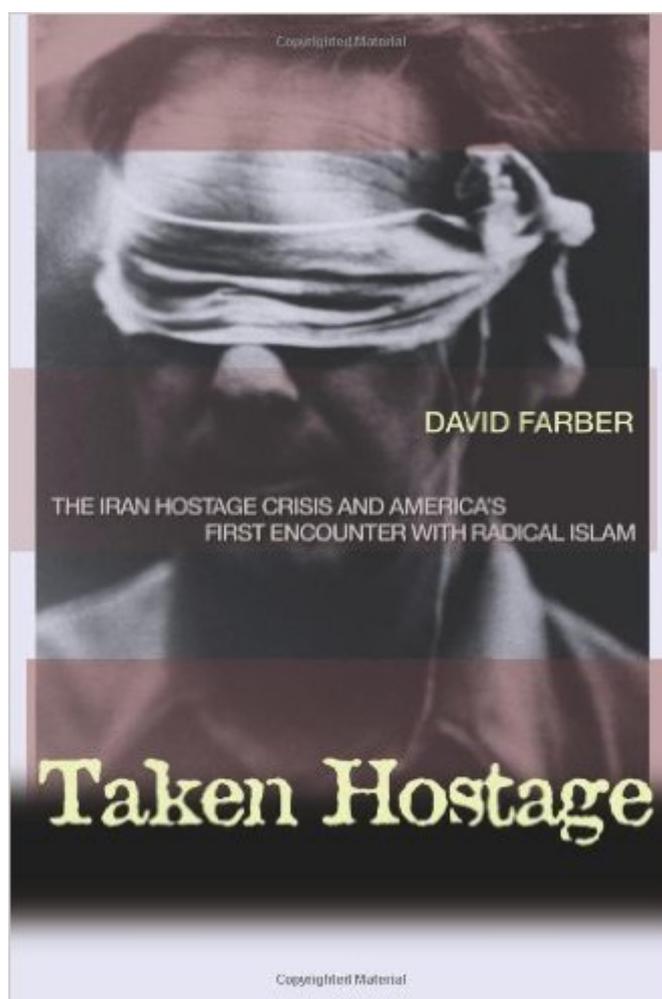


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Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis And America's First Encounter With Radical Islam (Politics And Society In Modern America)



Synopsis

On November 4, 1979, Iranian militants stormed the United States Embassy in Tehran and took sixty-six Americans captive. Thus began the Iran Hostage Crisis, an affair that captivated the American public for 444 days and marked America's first confrontation with the forces of radical Islam. Using hundreds of recently declassified government documents, historian David Farber takes the first in-depth look at the hostage crisis, examining its lessons for America's contemporary War on Terrorism. Unlike other histories of the subject, Farber's vivid and fast-paced narrative looks beyond the day-to-day circumstances of the crisis, using the events leading up to the ordeal as a means for understanding it. The book paints a portrait of the 1970s in the United States as an era of failed expectations in a nation plagued by uncertainty and anxiety. It reveals an American government ill prepared for the fall of the Shah of Iran and unable to reckon with the Ayatollah Khomeini and his militant Islamic followers. Farber's account is filled with fresh insights regarding the central players in the crisis: Khomeini emerges as an astute strategist, single-mindedly dedicated to creating an Islamic state. The Americans' student-captors appear as less-than-organized youths, having prepared for only a symbolic sit-in with just a three-day supply of food. ABC news chief Roone Arledge, newly installed and eager for ratings, is cited as a critical catalyst in elevating the hostages to cause célèbre status. Throughout the book there emerge eerie parallels to the current terrorism crisis. Then as now, Farber demonstrates, politicians failed to grasp the depth of anger that Islamic fundamentalists harbored toward the United States, and Americans dismissed threats from terrorist groups as the crusades of ineffectual madmen. Taken Hostage is a timely and revealing history of America's first engagement with terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, one that provides a chilling reminder that the past is only prologue.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is an outstandingly researched work and I applaud Farber's thoroughness. I just finished writing my final research paper for my historical methods class on the Iran hostage crisis and this text was an indispensable resource. It is so much more than just an account of the hostage crisis. Farber really delves beneath the surface of the events and decisions related to the crisis. He paints a picture for the reader of the sentiments prevalent among the citizenries of both the United States and Iran. He goes further by describing the reasons behind those sentiments. This puts the decisions made by the Carter administration, the actions taken by the Iranians, and the reactions to both of these by the American public in a context and framework essential to understanding the hostage crisis and its related issues. Highly Recommended.

I really enjoyed the book. It's an area of history that I've seen skimmed over in class after class. For me, this was an excellent jumping off point for looking into the Iran Hostage Crisis. The research is good, and the author incorporates good primary source documentation. Yet, this book still remains a general overview of what happened, focusing more on the U.S. side of things rather than what actually happened in Iran. It's a balanced history; I was just hoping it went a little more in depth.

Farber certainly earns 4 stars, at minimum. As with any survey, historical book, prose is of great importance, and his writing is clear, concise, and entertaining -- a valuable trait in this genre. His coverage of the Iran hostage crisis is illuminating and valuable to any citizen. This should be read in every history class rather than bland textbooks. I understand the 70s much more, and I have begun to understand why the U.S. interaction with the middle east was/is so plagued with conflict.

Excellent book, well documented, and very good perspective on hostage crisis in Iran. Really shows how the very narrow US focus on international issues can lead to big trouble.

I bought this book, because I wanted to read about Iranian hostage crisis... Was quite disappointed as it consists ca. 70% of US modern history, 20% other countries' history (Cuba, China, Cambodia, Venezuela etc. etc.), and 10% Iran. I understand, that one must give a wider explanation of those

decades, not only concentrate on Iranian events, in order to get the context, but for me there has left way too little about Iran/Middle East itself in this book.

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