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U.S. HOSTAGE POLICY: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RANSOM PAYMENTS ON THE DURATION IN CAPTIVITY FOR AMERICAN HOSTAGES

by

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September 2022

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The question of whether the U.S. government should negotiate for hostages and make concessions to hostage takers has been extensively discussed by policymakers and scholars. The issue of ransom has received less attention. This thesis assesses the impact of ransom on duration in captivity for American hostages through qualitative and quantitative research. Using a set of historical cases since 1801, the qualitative portion assesses the effectiveness of ransom in relation to objectives and motivation of hostage takers based on their phase within the hostage-taking cycle. The quantitative portion of this research correlates ransom and other forms of concessions with duration in captivity. It finds that Americans represent less than 2% of the hostage population worldwide, yet their duration in captivity is twice that of hostages from other countries when ransom is a condition of their release and four times the duration when concessions are utilized. When hostages of other nationalities are released through concessions, their duration in captivity is less that of American citizens released through ransom. This research concludes that, compared to concessions, ransom is effective in decreasing the duration in captivity for American hostages. However, American hostages hold value to hostage-takers as leverage in driving up ransom amounts and encouraging other countries to pay as well as for political gains and propaganda purposes, therefore, increasing their duration in captivity.

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U.S. HOSTAGE POLICY: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RANSOM PAYMENTS ON THE DURATION IN CAPTIVITY FOR AMERICAN HOSTAGES

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ABSTRACT

The question of whether the U.S. government should negotiate for hostages and make concessions to hostage takers has been extensively discussed by policymakers and scholars. The issue of ransom has received less attention. This thesis assesses the impact of ransom on duration in captivity for American hostages through qualitative and quantitative research. Using a set of historical cases since 1801, the qualitative portion assesses the effectiveness of ransom in relation to objectives and motivation of hostage takers based on their phase within the hostage-taking cycle. The quantitative portion of this research correlates ransom and other forms of concessions with duration in captivity. It finds that Americans represent less than 2% of the hostage population worldwide, yet their duration in captivity is twice that of hostages from other countries when ransom is a condition of their release and four times the duration when concessions are utilized. When hostages of other nationalities are released through concessions, their duration in captivity is less that of American citizens released through ransom. This research concludes that, compared to concessions, ransom is effective in decreasing the duration in captivity for American hostages. However, American hostages hold value to hostage-takers as leverage in driving up ransom amounts and encouraging other countries to pay as well as for political gains and propaganda purposes, therefore, increasing their duration in captivity.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BSO	Black September Organization
CTC	Combatting Terrorism Center
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOS	U.S. Department of State
EO/13698	Executive Order 13698: Hostage Recovery Activities
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
HRT	hostage rescue team
K&R	kidnap and ransom
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organizations
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
HR	hostage rescue
HRT	hostage rescue team
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JPRA	Joint Personnel Recovery Agency
NGA	National Geospatial Intelligence Agency
NSPD-12	National Security Presidential Directive 12
POW	prisoner of war
PPD-30	Presidential Policy Directive 30: U.S. Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad and Personnel Recovery Efforts
PR	personnel recovery
SERE	Survive Evade Resist Escape
START	National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
TWA	Trans World Airlines
UN	United Nations

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the beheadings of Western hostages by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014, concern for the safety of American citizens held hostage abroad shifted hostage policy dynamics. As part of this shift, the question as to whether the United States is doing enough to secure the release of American hostages has been extensively discussed by policymakers and among scholars. Still, the issue of ransom payments has received less attention. One perspective in this field of research argues that ransom is a quick means to bring American hostages home safely, whereas another perspective argues that paying ransom encourages future hostage taking. As the government continues to maintain a no-concessions U.S. hostage policy stance while brokering deals such as prisoner exchanges through third-party countries and other concessions to secure the release of American citizens, the question remains: "What is the appropriate response for securing the safe return of American citizens within U.S. hostage policy?"

To assist in resolving the impact of ransom on duration in captivity, this research answered the following questions: How effective are ransom payments in minimizing the duration in captivity for American hostages in hostage situations involving or including American citizens? If ransom payments are effective, should U.S. hostage policy be adjusted to encourage such payments? This research provides insight into resolving hostage situations via ransom payments through an analysis of high-profile historical hostage-taking incidents using a theoretical framework presented by Philip Gosse, allowing those executing U.S. hostage policy to evaluate and deploy the appropriate response within civil, diplomatic, and military guidelines of U.S. hostage policy.[1] In addition, a quantitative analysis on the impact of ransom on duration in captivity provides insight into the effectiveness of ransom relative to current U.S. hostage policy options.

The research finds that effective negotiations in hostage situations require~~s~~ understanding the hostage taker's purpose: their objectives and motivations.

[1] Philip Gosse, *The History of Piracy* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc, 2007).

Comprehending these objectives and motivations prior to addressing hostage situations assists in establishing effective dialog for resolving hostage negotiations. Accordingly, U.S. hostage-policy options are driven by the objectives and motivations of the hostage taker, which fall within the three phases of hostage taking—phase one: substance or criminal; phase two: profession or political; and phase three: independent state or pathological.[2] As countries have struggled internally, such as Somalia during the Somali pirates, Iran during the Iranian revolution, and Afghanistan through the Soviet–Afghan War and for decades following the war in the Middle East, hostage-taking organizations begin to form out of survival, starting the first phase of hostage taking. The progression of hostage-taking organizations is dependent on their successful transition into the second phase, profession, and potentially the third, an independent state. U.S. hostage policy options to resolve hostage situations is dependent upon the stage in which the hostage taker is in. As hostage-taking organizations advance through the phases over time, resolving hostage situations becomes complex, limiting U.S. hostage policy options when negotiating with groups that have progressed beyond motivation by monetary gains, the first phase, and desire for political concessions, the second phase. In the third phase, an independent state, monetary gains become ineffective as political demands and propaganda become the primary objective of hostage taking. Complicating hostage situations further for the United States is the current increase in government-detention hostage situations, posing a new threat to American citizens held hostage abroad as mechanisms for release expand beyond the limitations of U.S. hostage policy options.

The answers to the research questions are as follows:

How effective are ransom payments in minimizing the duration in captivity for American hostages in hostage situations involving or including American citizens?

Results from this research show that ransom is effective in decreasing the duration in captivity for Americans when compared to other forms of concessions within U.S. hostage policy. However, Americans nevertheless remain in captivity twice as long as

[2] Gosse.

hostages from other nationalities when their release is negotiated through ransom. In addition, when other forms of concessions are offered by hostage takers as terms for release, such as negotiations through third-party state actors or humanitarian aid organizations, American hostages remain in captivity up to four times longer than all other nationalities. Furthermore, hostages from other nationalities are released through concessions before American hostages are released through ransom payments.

If ransom payments are effective, should U.S. hostage policy be adjusted to encourage such payments?

Findings from this thesis support ransom as an effective method in securing the safe release of American hostages; however, findings also support that ransom becomes ineffective as a method of securing the safe release of American hostages when the hostage taker's objectives and motivations center on political gains or propaganda agendas. When the hostage takers' objectives are political, American hostages become vulnerable to extended time in captivity; therefore, U.S. hostage policy options will need to adapt to this shift in motivations. In phase-one hostage situations that are responsive to ransom, it is recommended that U.S. hostage policy continue to give families and employers the leeway to negotiate for the release of the hostage. It is further recommended that the effectiveness of current U.S. hostage policy options should be reviewed in situations where the hostage takers are not presenting demands, as in the current trend of government-detention hostage situations.

As a result of this research, it is recommended that the United States maintain its current stance on U.S. hostage policy of removing the threat of prosecution for the payment of ransom by family members or employers for the release of hostages in phase-one hostage situations. The ability to negotiate and pay ransom allows family members and employers to secure the release of American hostages while the United States continues to work through civil and diplomatic avenues, addressing demands from hostage takers for political gains and propaganda agendas in exchange for the safe return of American citizens.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For all those who have suffered a fate that escapes definition and those who knowingly go into hostile environments to bring back American citizens and tell their stories, there is value in keeping certain things from the public eye. Still, there is a duty to warn and protect what we can to prevent future unwanted outcomes. The stories of sacrifice and hardship suffered by citizens of the world are beyond value in keeping all citizens safe and doing what we can for those hostages still out there. I want to thank all those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice under every circumstance and hope that this research prevents others from suffering the same.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

On March 13, 2020, the *New York Times* published an article discussing the Trump administration's focus on American citizens held hostage abroad.[1] In particular, the article pointed to a renewed interest in American hostage Austin Tice, a former U.S. Marine and now journalist, abducted near Damascus, Syria, in 2012. Though the details surrounding Mr. Tice's captivity and current status remain in question, a statement provided by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared the return of American hostages to be President Trump's top priority.[2] As reported in an April 27, 2021, article from the *New York Times*, this same objective has been taken up by the Biden administration.[3] Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken has echoed Pompeo's sentiment, declaring that there is "no higher priority" than securing the release of Mr. Tice.[4] Roger D. Carstens, the State Department's hostage envoy, who also served under the Trump administration, confirmed this national security priority, expressing that "We owe it to hostages and detainees—as well as to their families—that they remain at the forefront of American foreign policy."[5]

In this context, a persistent question in U.S. hostage policy concerns whether the U.S. government should continue to allow ransom payments. Before October 2001 and the issuance of National Security Presidential Directive 12 (NSPD-12) *United States Citizens Taken Hostage Abroad*, no written U.S. hostage policy existed. NSPD-12 reinforced strict but informal no-concessions policies, making ransom payments to designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) subject to prosecution. However, the highly publicized Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) beheadings of several Western hostages from August

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[1] Adam Goldman and Julian Barnes, "White House Pushed to Recover Americans Held Overseas," *New York Times*, March 13, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/13/us/politics/trump-hostages.html.

[2] Goldman and Barnes.

[3] Adam Goldman and Julian Barnes, "Biden Administration Hopes to Learn Fate of U.S. Hostage in Syria," *New York Times*, April 27, 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/27/us/politics/austin-tice.html.

[4] Goldman and Barnes.

[5] Goldman and Barnes.

through November of 2014 prompted the Obama administration to review the United States' handling of hostage situations involving American citizens. The result was the issuance of Presidential Policy Directive 30 (PPD-30) *U.S. Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad and Personnel Recovery Efforts* and Executive Order 13698 (EO-13698) *Hostage Recovery Activities* in June 2015. PPD-30/EO-13698 superseded NSPD-12 with their continued reinforcement of no-concession hostage policy while removing the threat of prosecution for ransom payments administered on behalf of family members, offering the victim's family members a more agile response to securing the release of American citizens held hostage abroad. Furthermore, in 2015, the U.S. congressional hostage policy review teams evaluated NSPD-12 and PPD-30/EO-13698, finding this reconsideration of the prosecution of family members for the payment of ransom justified on the basis that U.S. hostage policy options under NSPD-12 were out of touch with the environment.[6]

Continued concern for the safety of American citizens held hostage abroad shifted policy dynamics following the beheadings of Western hostages by ISIS in 2014, raising the question as to whether the United States is doing enough to secure the release of American hostages. As hostage situations abroad increase, the safe return of American citizens continues to be threatened, particularly with regard to situations where foreign governments unlawfully detain Americans. The question of whether the U.S. government should negotiate for hostages and make concessions to hostage takers has been extensively discussed by policymakers and among scholars.[7] Still, the issue of ransom payments has received less attention. This thesis examines this issue by tracing the history of U.S. hostage

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[6] In this context, environment refers to the circumstances surrounding the hostage citation: Liana W. Rosen and John W. Rollins, *U.S. Hostage Policy: Recent Developments*, CRS Report No. IF10286 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015), ProQuest.

[7] As an indication of the continued focus on this problem, as this thesis was being completed the White House issued a presidential executive order designed to deter and punish the wrongful detention of American citizens abroad. Elizabeth Hagedorn, "Biden Issues Executive Order on Hostages amid Pressure from Families," *Al-Monitor*, July 19, 2022, https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/07/biden-issues-executive-order-hostages-amid-pressure-families; Jennifer Hansler, "White House Unveils New Executive Order on U.S. Hostages and Wrongful Detainees," CNN, July 19, 2022, https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/19/politics/executive-order-hostages-wrongful-detainees-biden/index.html; Office of the Press Secretary, *Executive Order on Bolstering Efforts to Bring Hostages and Wrongfully Detained United States National Home* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2022), https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/07/19/executive-order-on-bolstering-efforts-to-bring-hostages-and-wrongfully-detained-united-states-nationals-home/.

policy and procedures, analyzing the dynamics of hostage situations, and evaluating the impact of ransom payments on the duration of captivity of Americans taken hostage by Jihadist organizations. Conclusions and recommendations based on this analysis will assist policy makers as U.S. hostage policies continue to evolve, supporting the recovery of American citizens held hostage abroad.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How effective are ransom payments in minimizing the duration in captivity for American hostages in hostage situations involving or including American citizens? If ransom payments are effective, should U.S. hostage policy be adjusted to encourage such payments?

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review explores the controversies surrounding hostage policies and practices governing the recovery of American citizens who are kidnapped and held hostage abroad. This section presents literature on American sentiment concerning U.S. hostage policy and the execution of ransom payments. The review also explores literature that analyzes the impact of ethical dilemmas on U.S. hostage policy-making decisions and the role of legitimacy of the hostage takers in the hostage negotiation process. This literature review concludes with a discussion on concessions and negotiations in the hostage negotiation process and the impact of nationality while navigating the release of American hostages.

1. American Sentiment

The American public takes a keen interest in situations in which U.S. citizens are held hostage abroad, whether due to direct family relations or media attention. In a study published by the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Dominic Tierney addressed the impact of the American public on foreign policy through its obsession over prisoners of war

(POWs) and hostages.[8] Covering nearly six decades of hostage situations within and outside the boundaries of war, Tierney framed the issue of U.S. foreign policy with regard to American hostages as a reflection of the nation's principles: the value of human life, freedom, and compassion.

As Tierney pointed out, political attention on American hostages drives diplomatic negotiations and military action plans, as it yields "political benefits for a president who is viewed as freeing captives."[9] More broadly, the publicity allocated to a hostage situation brings political benefits to public officials who show their dedication to the safe release of American hostages abroad. In an article in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Danielle Gilbert addressed the actions of government officials following disproportionate media coverage of such events.[10] Gilbert argued that terrorists themselves shape American sentiment through media attention. High-impact events, such as the attacks on 9/11 and the globally publicized beheadings of Western hostages at the hands of ISIS, force media reporting, allowing terrorists to shape public perception of such events. Gilbert referred to the shaping of public perception through reporting as "gatekeeping the news," where the media is most likely to cover events receiving international attention, setting the public agenda based on the media's articulation of aspects of the story.[11] Gilbert and Tierney both concluded that excessive attention on the fate of American hostages contributes to escalating conflict, encouraging terrorist organizations to focus their hostage-taking activities on American citizens.

Joel Simon, a reporter for the *New Yorker* and author of *We Want to Negotiate: The Secret World of Kidnapping, Hostages, and Ransom*, pointed out the political benefits received by the Trump administration for its hostage recovery efforts, discussing American

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[8] Dominic Tierney, "Prisoner Dilemmas: The American Obsession with POWs and Hostages," *Orbis* 54, no. 1 (2010): 130–45, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2009.10.009.

[9] Tierney, 140.

[10] Danielle Gilbert, "The Oxygen of Publicity: Explaining U.S. Media Coverage of International Kidnapping," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, July 2020, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1792723.

[11] Gilbert.

captives as valuable bargaining chips.[12] Like Gilbert and Tierney, Simon contended that exaggerated attention to the fate of POWs and hostages contributes to escalating conflict, suggesting that the relationship between media and political attention are mutually reinforcing. In theory, if the U.S. president shows a personal interest in a hostage situation, the media coverage expands and the value of American hostages is increased. Journalists Adam Goldman and Julian E. Barnes focused on the Trump and Biden administrations' dedication to releasing Austin Tice, currently the longest-held American hostage.[13] The continued publication of this sentiment and the administration's dedication to bringing Mr. Tice home maintains the exaggerated attention toward the release of Mr. Tice while directing the focus of bringing American hostages home safely toward political agendas.

2. Ethics and Legitimacy

Combined with public attention and sentiment, ethical considerations are also essential in policy decision-making and appropriately handling situations involving American citizens held hostage abroad. Tom Keatinge and Joel Rogers de Waal studied the personal aspects of hostage policy, polling British citizens on the extent of their support for or opposition to ransom payments in exchange for hostages.[14] Fifty-eight percent of poll respondents strongly opposed paying a terrorist organization and only 11% expressed support.[15] Percentages were similar when the recipient of the ransom payment was not a terrorist organization but labeled as a bank robber or an organized crime group. When asked to consider the legitimacy of ransom payments to these entities, the respondents answered similarly, with 55% saying it should be illegal and 17% feeling the opposite.[16]

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[12] Joel Simon, "How Trump Has Reversed Decades of Hostage Policy," *New Yorker*, February 2, 2020, https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-trump-has-reversed-decades-of-american-hostage-policy.

[13] Goldman and Barnes, "White House Pushed to Recover Americans Held Overseas"; Goldman and Barnes, "Biden Administration Hopes to Learn Fate of U.S. Hostage in Syria."

[14] Tom Keatinge and Joel Rogers de Waal, "The Policy Works Until It Gets Personal: Assessing Public Attitudes to Ransom Payment," YouGov, accessed August 20, 2020, https://yougov.co.uk/topics/international/articles-reports/2020/07/06/policy-works-until-it-gets-personal-assessing-publ.

[15] Keatinge and Rogers de Waal.

[16] Keatinge and Rogers de Waal.

Included in this poll were reports from other countries, showing that within the United States, 46% favored ransom payments being illegal and 23% felt that they should be allowed and not prosecuted. However, the tables in this poll turn when the situation becomes personal. When asked if they would support the same resolutions if the hostage were a relative, the positive response to outlawing ransom payments declined by up to 15%, even when respondents were told that their payment would be illegal. This poll conducted by Keatinge and Rogers de Waal provides a snapshot of sentiment's role in our ethical decision-making process in securing the release of American citizens held hostage.

Studies conducted by Maarten Visser evaluate the U.S. no-concessions hostage policy through the role of political motivation in the strategic and ethical decision-making process to pay ransom.[17] Visser dated political motivation in U.S. hostage negotiations to Khartoum, Sudan, in 1973, when President Nixon publicly proclaimed that the United States would not give in to terrorist demands.[18] Immediately following Nixon's public address, two of the hostages held at the Saudi Embassy, American diplomats, were killed by the Palestinian terrorist group Black September Organization (BSO).[19] Visser concluded through his research that it is ethically unjustifiable for countries to refuse negotiations with terrorists if that refusal endangers the lives of citizens. When governments choose to pay ransom, they should not announce it to manipulate political sentiment.[20]

Jeffrey W. Howard echoed Visser's and Tierney's focus on the United States' principles regarding American citizens held hostage by exploring the ethical debate raging

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[17] Maarten Visser, "Terrorism and Kidnapping for Ransom: Why No-Concession Policies Are Unwarranted," *International Affairs House*, July 1, 2020, https://www.internationalaffairshouse.org/terrorism-and-kidnapping-for-ransom-why-no-concessions-policies-are-unwarrranted/#_ftn3.

[18] Visser.

[19] Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training, "The Terrorist Attack on the Saudi Embassy - Khartoum, 1973," Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training, February 20, 2013, https://adst.org/2013/02/the-terrorist-attack-on-the-saudi-embassy-khartoum-1973/.

[20] Visser.

in the public domain on the payment of ransom to terrorist organizations.[21] Howard focused on the legitimacy of negotiations, ransom payments provided to terrorist organizations, and what he argues is the morally required path of saving significantly more lives by not paying ransom. In contrast to Visser's conclusion, Howard contended that "paying ransom to those who unstoppably spend that money on grave evil is not morally justified." Whereas Visser spoke to an ethical necessity of ransom payments in exchange for human life, Howard argued that ransom payments fund terrorist organizations, resulting in more deaths. Howard concluded that despite sentiment, one human life is not worth the risk of funding future terrorist attacks taking the lives of many.[22]

Howard's analysis countered an earlier study by Harmonie Torros. Torros addressed the legitimacy of the hostage taker when negotiating hostage situations from the angle of the complexity of the hostage-taking group and how their legitimacy impacts hostage negotiations. Torros argued that successful negotiations have the potential to reverse the isolating radicalizing process that encourages continued hostage taking.[23] Torros concludes that "negotiations in terrorist conflicts are thus not only possible, they are also potentially less destructive than most other responses to terrorism envisioned by academics and policymakers today, and, finally, they may offer a path of empowerment for the norm of nonviolent political contestation."[24] In keeping with Torros's view, PPD-30/EO-13698 prohibits monetary gains to designated FTOs to discourage their continued growth and threats to national security; it does not restrict negotiations through third-party state bargaining in the resolution of American hostages, therefore presenting flexibility to complex options.[25]

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[21] Jeffrey W. Howard, "Kidnapped: The Ethics of Paying Ransom," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35, no. 4 (2018): 675–88, https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12272.

[22] Howard.

[23] Harmonie Torros, "We Don't Negotiate with Terrorists!: Legitimacy and Complexity in Terrorist Conflicts," *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 4 (2008): 407–26, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010608094035.

[24] Torros, 423.

[25] Office of the Press Secretary, *U.S. Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad and Personnel Recovery Efforts*, Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-30 (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), ProQuest.

3. Concessions and Negotiations

Congressional research confirmed the continued debate between the public and U.S. officials over the effectiveness of the U.S. government's longstanding commitment to "no-concessions" policy.[26] The Obama administration's update to U.S. hostage policy followed the United Nations Security Council adoption of resolution 2133 (2014), "calling upon states to keep ransom payments [and] political concessions from benefiting terrorists."[27] Resolution 2133 (2014) reaffirmed a unified state response to suppressing terrorist organizations by denying them monetary or political gains.[28] Supporting the unified approach on resolution 2133 (2014), Walter Laqueur's research found that terror would be reduced in scale, if not entirely, if governments agreed to uniformly not give in to terrorist demands.[29] Laqueur's research further expanded on the willingness of a state to negotiate by concluding, "Democratic authorities will instinctively give in to blackmail—but only up to a point."[30] Limitations bind governments; therefore, the demand from hostage takers must be realistic. By contrast, Sandler and Scott have demonstrated that terrorists perceive no-concessions policies as failed attempts at eliminating concessions to terrorist organizations because if attacked, the state would concede and negotiate, as shown in the Iran hostage crisis and the Trans World Airlines (TWA) hostage situation.[31]

Navin Bapat's "State Bargaining with Transnational Terrorist Groups" concluded that successful negotiations with terrorist organizations rely on the ability of the host

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[26] Rosen and Rollins, U.S. Hostage Policy: Recent Developments.

[27] United Nations Security Council, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 2133 (2014)* (New York: United Nations Security Council, 2014), https://digitallibrary.un.org/.

[28] United Nations Security Council.

[29] Walter Laqueur, "The Futility of Terrorism," *Harper's Magazine Foundation*, 2003, ProQuest.

[30] Laqueur.

[31] Todd Sandler and John L. Scott, "Terrorist Success in Hostage-Taking Incidents: An Empirical Study," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31, no. 1 (March 1987): 35–53, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002787031001003.

country to apply moderate constraints on the hostage taker.[32] Host countries could stifle terrorist organizations by controlling political support, funding, and supplies, including weapons, among other incentives. The traditionally short life span of terrorist groups contributes to their inability to invest in a trustworthy reputation, thereby increasing the host nation's control. The instability of terrorist groups and their dependency on the host nation complements Laqueur's conclusion that terrorist groups are bound by limitations and emphasizes Bapat's conclusion that the host nation is the best measure of a terrorist group's reliability to come through on their part of the bargain.[33]

If the host country establishes that a terrorist group is trustworthy to negotiate with, then the question is directed at whether there will be a unified state response from the host country to hostage situations. As Western countries continue to sign agreements, like resolution 2133 (2014) and the Communique at the 2013 G8 Lough Erne Summit, calling for an end to ransom payments to terrorist organizations, some countries continue to pay. Rukmini Callimachi published an article focusing on concessions in ransom payments, bankrolled by Europe, dealing specifically with Al Qaeda.[34] As shown in Table 1, Europe was responsible for facilitating ransom payments totaling approximately $125 million between 2008 and 2013. Callimachi's research references a statement from the European ambassador that "the Americans told us over and over not to pay a ransom. And we said to them: 'We don't want to pay, but we can't lose our people.'"[35] The successful negotiations for the release of hostages and the payment of ransom and terms for release not only creates a source of continued financing for terrorist organizations but also gives validity to a group's reputation and credibility to transnational terrorist negotiations.

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[32] Navin A. Bapat, "State Bargaining with Transnational Terrorist Groups," *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (March 2006): 213–29.

[33] Bapat.

[34] Rukmini Callimachi, "Paying Ransoms, Europe Bankrolls Qaeda Terror," *New York Times*, July 30, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/30/world/africa/ransoming-citizens-europe-becomes-al-qaedas-patron.html.

[35] Callimachi.

Table 1. European Ransom Payments to Al Qaeda 2008–2013[36]

At least $125 million in ransom money has been paid to Al Qaeda and its direct affiliates since 2008 for kidnappings that have been reported.

$91.5 million has been paid to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

Year	Amount in 2014 Dollars	Paid By	Hostages
2010-13	**$40.4 million**	A state-controlled French company	4 French nationals
2010-11	**$17.7 million**	A state-controlled French company	1 French national, 1 from Togo and 1 from Madagascar
2009	**$12.4 million**	Switzerland	2 Swiss nationals and 1 German
2011-12	**$10.8 million**	Could not be determined	1 Italian and 2 Spaniards
2009-10	**$5.9 million**	Spain	3 Spaniards
2008	**$3.2 million**	Austria	2 Austrians
2008-9	**$1.1 million**	Could not be determined	2 Canadians

$5.1 million has been paid to the Shabab.

2011-13	**$5.1 million**	Spain	2 Spaniards

$29.9 million has been paid to Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

2012-13	**$20.4 million**	Qatar and Oman	2 Finnish nationals, 1 Austrian and 1 Swiss national
2011	**$9.5 million**	Could not be determined	3 French nationals

Note: Ransom amounts have been converted into U.S. dollars using the currency exchange rate from the year of the payment in cases where the payment was made in euros. The ransom amounts were then adjusted for inflation so that they are in 2014 dollars.

Studies conducting comparative analyses of countries' hostage policies and the impact that differing policies have on negotiations yielded inconsistent results. Brian Jenkins and Ralph Strauch reviewed the U.S. hostage policy, focusing on the frequency of kidnapping of diplomats and the effects of specific government responses to duration in captivity.[37] The research identified difficulties in correlating variations in countries' policies to concessions and increased abductions. Still, it determined that suppressing

[36] Source: Callimachi, A10.

[37] Brian Jenkins and Ralph Strauch, *Assessment of Current U.S. Policy on Kidnapping of Diplomats and Policy Alternatives* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1975).

kidnapping organizations had a more significant impact on hostage taking than did policies allowing concessions. In 2018, Jenkins conducted a study comparing the 1975 RAND research to recent research on kidnappings and no-concessions policies.[38] After analyzing four decades' worth of research, Jenkins could not identify statistical findings to support a clear pattern in the effects of no-concessions hostage policies on deterring the act of hostage taking, yet the White House posited in 2015 that an effective no-concessions hostage policy assumes that refusing the "benefits of ransom, prisoner release, policy changes, or other acts [of] concession" will deter and remove incentives for the kidnapping of American citizens.[39] Rigorous studies of this argument revealed that "empirical evidence for or against the effectiveness of a no-concessions policy" is thin and identified the possibility of contaminated data due to ransom payments and disguised concessions arbitrated through third parties or other governments.[40]

4. Impact of Nationality

Researchers continue to question the correlation between a strict no-concessions hostage policy and a decline in hostage taking due to lack of empirical evidence. A study conducted by Patrick T. Brandt, Justin George, and Todd Sandler focused on the adverse effects of making concessions to hostage takers and the frequency in which countries grant concessions.[41] Brandt, George, and Sandler analyzed concessions made between 1978 and 2013. In their research, before 2001, when the United States maintained a more flexible position toward a no-concessions policy, 23.1% of those held hostage worldwide were American citizens.[42] Following 2001, as the United States took a firmer stance on enforcing policy under the U.S. Patriot Act and NSPD-12, the number of American citizens

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[38] Brian Michael Jenkins, "Does the U.S. No-Concessions Policy Deter Kidnappings of Americans?" (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018).

[39] Office of the Press Secretary, *U.S. Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad and Personnel Recovery Efforts.*

[40] Jenkins, *Does the U.S. No-Concessions Policy Deter Kidnappings of Americans?*

[41] Patrick T. Brandt, Justin George, and Todd Sandler, "Why Concessions Should Not Be Made to Terrorist Kidnappers," *European Journal of Political Economy* 44, no. 4 (September 2016): 41–52.

[42] Brandt, George, and Sandler.

held hostage fell from 23.1 to 10.7%.[43] In Jenkins's review of Brandt, George, and Sandler's study, he interpreted the increased incidence of cases involving concessions before 2001 to reflect the United States' liberal concessions policy.[44] Coordinating through other governments helped secure the release of American hostages, especially since the terrorist attacks on 9/11 reinforced rather than loosened the no-concessions policy. The study conducted by Brandt, George, and Sandler did not specifically address the targeting of American citizens in hostage taking for ransom situations. Still, it concluded that when terrorists successfully won concessions in any circumstance, hostage taking worldwide increased because of the anticipated future payoffs.[45]

Callimachi noted that of the 53 hostages taken by Al Qaeda between 2008 and 2013, approximately 50% were European.[46] By contrast, Americans represented 5%, with only three known to have been taken hostage.[47] Supporting Callimachi's research, Daniel Milton and Seth Loertscher conducted a study of Westerners targeted by Jihadist groups abroad and the influence of specific characteristics. They determined that terrorists kidnap opportunistically, finding that government policies were ineffective as a deterrent to being targeted. "While nationality appears important in determining the fate of individuals once kidnapped, it does not appear to influence who gets kidnapped. Although kidnappings are often thought of as preplanned events against specific individuals, they often seem to occur opportunistically against individuals who are in the wrong place at the wrong time."[48]

Having conducted several studies directly related to policy, Brandt, George, and Sandler concluded that each successful negotiation resulted in additional hostage-taking events over time and violent ends to hostage situations encourage further hostage-taking

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[43] Brandt, George, and Sandler.

[44] Jenkins, *Does the U.S. No-Concessions Policy Deter Kidnappings of Americans?*

[45] Brandt, George, and Sandler, "Why Concessions Should Not Be Made to Terrorist Kidnappers."

[46] Callimachi, "Paying Ransoms, Europe Bankrolls Qaeda Terror."

[47] Callimachi.

[48] Daniel Milton and Seth Loertscher, *Held Hostage: Analyses of Kidnapping Across Time and Among Jihadist Organizations* (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, 2015).

events.[49] Likewise, Milton and Loertscher evaluated the impact of characteristics from the individual, group, and adversarial nations on the likelihood of release or execution. Without including a direct focus on policy in their study, Milton and Loertscher determined that hostages from countries rejecting negotiation were four times more likely to be killed and less likely to be released than those from the countries conceding to negotiations.[50]

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis conducts qualitative and quantitative analyses to determine the impact of ransom payments on the duration of captivity for Americans taken hostage. The qualitative portion of this research first analyzes the hostage-taking cycle by examining defined categories of hostage taking and how U.S. hostage policy has associated hostage taking with terrorism. The qualitative research then addresses the phase of the hostage taker within the hostage-taking cycle and applies this to the hostage negotiation process, assessing the hostage taker's objectives and motivations and the impact to U.S. hostage policy options. To assist in determining effective methods of securing the release of American hostages, the qualitative portion of this research conducts case studies of high-profile hostage situations from 1801–2020, assessing the history of U.S. hostage policy decisions and the impact of those decisions on the successful release of American hostages abroad.

To assess how ransom payments affect the duration in captivity for American hostages, this thesis conducts a quantitative analysis on Jihadist hostage-taking situations between 2008 and 2013, utilizing a dataset derived from the Combatting Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point Held Hostage dataset; the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), maintained by the University of Maryland National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START); open-source reporting; government documentation; and scholarly research. The analysis of the CTC Held Hostage study in this thesis focuses

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[49] Brandt, George, and Sandler, "Why Concessions Should Not Be Made to Terrorist Kidnappers."

[50] Milton and Loertscher, *Held Hostage: Analyses of Kidnapping Across Time and Among Jihadist Organizations*.

on duration in captivity for Westerners.[51] The 2015 CTC Held Hostage dataset covers 1,485 individuals taken hostage by Jihadist organizations from 2001–2013, of which 167 were American citizens.[52] The CTC Held Hostage study utilized the GTD to establish trends related to geographical and motivational shifts in hostage-taking situations.[53] The GTD is one of the more comprehensive databases on terrorism today; however, the dataset is limited with respect to detailed information on variables of relevance in this quantitative analysis. In addition, its "inconsistent collection of data" over time and lack of incident-specific details and sourcing have received criticism.[54] Nevertheless, the information maintained by GTD is valuable as a basis of analysis for conducting research into hostage situations amongst Jihadist organizations.

A limitation of this research is the variation of definitions, categories, and motivating factors for hostage taking across countries and jurisdictions. The differing viewpoints on hostage taking creates a statistical gap in researching the true impact of hostage situations across the globe. As supported by research in the field:

> comparing crime statistics from different jurisdictions is a hazardous undertaking. For a start, the crime category for which any incidents are recorded relies on the legal definition of that type of crime in a particular country. Should the definition differ across countries, and indeed this is often the case, comparisons will not, in fact, be made of the same type of crime.[55]

A second impactful limitation of this research is that other current research does not generally include ransom payments as a variable in data on the safe and timely release of American hostages, as data on ransom requests and ransom payment is contingent on disclosure and reporting, creating obstacles when researching the impact of ransom on

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[51] Milton and Loertscher.

[50] Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point. "Held Hostage: Analyses of Kidnapping Across Time and Among Jihadist Organizations," 2015, https://s3.amazonaws.com/com-ter-cen/hostages/index.html.

[53] Milton and Loertscher, *Held Hostage: Analyses of Kidnapping Across Time and Among Jihadist Organizations*.

[54] Milton and Loertscher.

[55] Mohd Kassim Noor Mohamed, "Kidnap for Ransom in South East Asia: The Case for a Regional Record Standard," *Asian Criminology* 3 (2008): 37, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-007-9040-1.

hostage situations. Research reveals that the kidnap and ransom (K&R) insurance industry believes that keeping ransom demands from becoming public assists in regulating the hostage for ransom market and prevents the inflation of ransom demands.[56] In addition, family members and employers of individuals held hostage have reported their reluctance to report hostage situations, which they viewed as a waste of time or believed that "more harm would come to their family members or employees" if reported.[57] According to sources in Callimachi's research, which include former hostages, government officials, diplomats, and negotiators, the lack of empirical evidence on ransom payments is also attributable to payments being masked as developmental aid.[58] Due to the limited publication of ransom transactions, this thesis employs qualitative and quantitative analysis to comprehensively assess and analyze as much of the information as possible on hostage-taking situations and the impact of ransom payments on duration in captivity for American hostages.

E. HYPOTHESIS

This thesis is designed to focus on the effectiveness of ransom payments in securing the timely release of American hostages held abroad. The study hypothesizes that the negotiation of ransom payments increases the duration in captivity for American hostages relative to the duration in captivity for hostages of other nationalities, as the price tag for releasing American hostages is higher than that for hostages of other nationalities, resulting in prolonged captivity while funds are acquired. Furthermore, this work postulates that American citizens are valued by hostage takers as leverage to increase ransom payments for hostages of other nationalities, therefore prolonging their duration in captivity. However, the research also hypothesizes that as ransom payments are effective in decreasing the duration in captivity for American hostages relative to American hostages

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[56] Anja Shortland, *Kidnap: Inside the Ransom Business* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[57] Patrick L. Brockett et al., "Kidnap and Ransom Insurance: A Strategically Useful, Often Undiscussed, Marketplace Tool for International Operations," *Wiley Periodicals* 22, no. 4 (2019): 7, https://doi.org/10.1111/rmir.12134.

[58] Callimachi, "Paying Ransoms, Europe Bankrolls Qaeda Terror."

released through non-ransom concessions, the United States should support private ransom payments while taking a no-concessions stance at the same time.

F. CHAPTER ROAD MAP

The subsequent chapters introduce key factors impacting U.S. hostage policy and the reasoning behind the United States' strict no-concessions stance when dealing with terrorist organizations. American sentiment toward ransom payments as well as the ethics and legitimacy in hostage negotiations and the effect of nationality are discussed throughout this study related to concessions within the hostage-negotiation process. Chapter II addresses how U.S. hostage policy has historically linked hostage taking to terrorism and how the issuance of a formal U.S. hostage policy allows hostage takers the ability to determine, in advance, available options for negotiations in the release of American hostages. Categories of hostage taking are broken down into developmental phases rooted in the objectives and motivations of the hostage takers, correlating the appropriate U.S. hostage policy response to the group's phase in the hostage-taking cycle. Chapter III assesses U.S. hostage policy decisions from 1801–2020, identifying the historical origin of hostage taking and outlining the evolution of U.S. hostage policy. Case studies of hostage-taking situations are utilized throughout the chapter to identify the objectives and motivations of the hostage takers and establish a baseline for successful U.S. hostage policy outcomes. Qualitative analysis conducted in Chapter II and Chapter III emphasizes and supports quantitative findings. Chapter IV conducts the quantitative analysis, examining the impact of ransom on duration in captivity for American hostages. Finally, Chapter V summarizes the findings of this research and presents recommendations for U.S. hostage policy options. This research concludes that paying ransom is effective in decreasing time in captivity for American citizens held hostage when compared to other methods of recovering American hostages abroad within U.S. hostage policy guidelines.

II. THE CYCLE OF HOSTAGE TAKING

Analyzing the impact of ransom payments on the duration in captivity for American hostages first requires understanding hostage-taking situations through the perspective of the hostage taker. Aligning available U.S. hostage policy options with the objectives and motivations behind the act is particularly important for securing a desirable outcome. The motivation behind crimes of this intensity has been the focus of continued research and varies according to environment, situation, and country. This chapter explores hostage taking by first defining the categories of hostage taking in terms of the objectives and motivations of the hostage taker. The chapter then examines U.S. hostage policy, including an analysis of definitions of terrorism from agencies responsible for securing the safe release of American citizens and a discussion of how U.S. hostage policy links hostage taking with terrorism. The chapter concludes with a description of the hostage-taking cycle, explaining how the phase of the hostage taker influences the objectives and motivations of the hostage situation, therefore determining U.S. hostage policy options.

A. CATEGORIES OF HOSTAGE TAKING

Understanding how ransom affects duration in captivity requires knowing which forms of hostage taking are generally responsive to ransom payments. Hostage taking has no internationally recognized definition. The definition of hostage taking is rooted in the perspective of who is defining it and for what purpose.[59] Common aspects of the definition include, but are not limited to, detaining, seizing, or carrying away a person by unlawful force, fraud, or ransom. Hostage taking is also defined as a premeditated predatory crime that uses fear, coercion, or intimidation in the furtherance of political goals.[60] No matter the definition, trends of hostage taking has expanded, particularly in countries with

[59] For the purpose of this thesis, hostage-taking is a term that coexists with kidnapping as both situations involve physically moving the individual to a separate location as to prevent their escape and/or rescue, therefore all references to kidnapping will be defined as hostage-taking: Emmanuel Chukwujindu Asogwa, "Dangers of Kidnapping to the Development of the Nigerian Nation: The Role of the Church," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 18, no. 3 (2020): 73–87.

[60] Sandler and Scott, "Terrorist Success in Hostage-Taking Incidents," 35–53.

increasing levels of crime and corruption, weak judicial systems, and a history of political instability and conflict.[61] Researchers in the field view hostage taking as "an unexplored phenomenon that is growing in use and frequency through the world."[62]

Historically, hostage taking has been classified into two categories: criminal hostage taking and political hostage taking; however, as the phenomenon continues to expand, researchers have started to include a third: pathological hostage taking. Types of hostage taking exhibit characteristics defined by the objectives and motivations of the hostage taker. Each of the three categories defines the motivating factors and the target audience for the hostage situation. Table 2 compares the categories of hostage taking, identifying their objectives and motivations and the target audience for securing the release of hostages.

Table 2. Categories of Hostage Taking[63]

Category	Objective and Motivation	Target Audience
Criminal hostage taking	Financial gain through ransom	Families, employer, or business of hostage
Political hostage taking	Political gain through propaganda	Governments and families of hostage
Pathological hostage taking	Personal gain through exploitation	The individual hostage. No intentions of release.

[61] Mohamed, "Kidnap for Ransom in South East Asia: The Case for a Regional Record Standard." and Robyn Pharoah, "An Unknown Quantity: Kidnapping for Ransom in South Africa," *SA Crime Quarterly* 2005, no. 14 (December 2005): 23–28.

[62] Brian R. Johnson, Douglas G. McKenzie, and Greg L. Warchol, "Corporate Kidnapping: An Exploratory Study," *Journal of Security Administration* 26, no. 2 (December 2003): 13–30.

[63] Adapted from Brockett, Patrick L., Linda L. Golden, Stephan Zaparolli, and Jack M. Lum. "Kidnap and ransom insurance: A strategically useful, often undiscussed, marketplace tool for international operations," *Wiley Periodicals* 22 (2019): 421–440, DOI 10.1111/rmir.12134; and Mohamed, Mohd Kassim Noor, "Kidnap for Ransom in South East Asia: The Case for a Regional Recording Standard," *Asian Criminology* 3 (2008): 61–73, DOI 10.1007/s11417-007-9040-1; and Pharoah, Robyn, "An Unknown Quantity: Kidnapping for Ransom in South Africa," *SA Crime Quarterly* 14 (2005):23-28, ISSN 1991–3977.

The first category, criminal hostage taking, is considered by researchers to be an act motivated by ransom, paid by either the family or the victims' company.[64] Criminal hostage taking incorporates subcategories such as express hostage taking, virtual hostage taking, and tiger hostage taking, all motivated by the opportunity to extort quick payments without long-term hostage situations.[65] Express hostage taking involves physically detaining the individual against their will and forcing a quick cash payment for release, such as an ATM withdrawal. Virtual hostage taking is an abduction communicated to a specific individual, such as a member of the family, to make them believe that their relatives are in danger.[66] Both express and virtual hostage taking are described by researchers as non-violent acts with quick resolutions. Tiger hostage taking, however, requires force from the hostage taker, used to coerce action. Common examples of tiger hostage taking are when the hostage taker holds leverage over the victim—for example, holding their family members hostage while forcing them to conduct cash withdrawals at the bank.

The second category, political hostage taking, is defined as acts that further the perpetrator's political aims or movement. Common subcategories of political hostage taking include hijackings and other forms of barricade incidents where the hostage takers make political demands in addition to or in lieu of ransom transactions. The Combatting Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point and the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), maintained by the University of Maryland National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), which are the primary sources for the quantitative analysis conducted in this thesis, define hijacking, hostage taking (barricade incident), and hostage taking (kidnapping) as follows:

> **Hijacking:** An act whose primary objective is to take control of a vehicle such as an aircraft, boat, bus, etc., to divert it to an unprogrammed

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[64] Robyn Pharoah, "An Unknown Quantity: Kidnapping for Ransom in South Africa," *SA Crime Quarterly* 2005, no. 14 (December 2005): 23–28.

[65] Noble Amoako Sarkodie, Augustina Aggrey, and Elizabeth Dwomor, "Kidnapping Menace: Causes and Effects on Hotel Businesses in Ghana," *International Journal of Engineering Applied Sciences and Technology* 5, no. 4 (2020): 484–94.

[66] Sarkodie, Aggrey, and Dwomor.

> destination, force the release of prisoners, or some other political objective. Obtaining payment of ransom should not be the sole purpose of a Hijacking but can be one element of the incident so long as additional objectives have also been stated. Hijackings are distinct from Hostage Taking because the target is a vehicle, regardless of whether there are people/passengers in the vehicle.[67]
>
> **Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)**: An act whose primary objective is to take control of hostages for the purpose of achieving a political objective through concessions or through disruption of normal operations. Such attacks are distinguished from kidnapping since the incident occurs and usually plays out at the target location with little or no intention to hold the hostages for an extended period in a separate clandestine location.[68]
>
> **Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)**: An act whose primary objective is to take control of hostages for the purpose of achieving a political objective through concessions or through disruption of normal operations. Kidnappings are distinguished from barricade incidents in that they involve moving and holding the hostages in another location.[69]

The third, evolving category of hostage taking is pathological hostage taking, defined as acts involving parental abductions of children and sex or human trafficking. Pathological hostage taking is conducted for personal gain and the continued exploitation of the hostage. In the case of a criminal or political hostage situation, negotiations for release, commonly in the form of financial or political gains, and time in captivity hinge on the objectives and motivations of the hostage takers. Negotiations are irrelevant in the case of pathological hostage taking as the hostage is the gain and therefore has little to no hope of release through negotiation.

Defining the categories of hostage taking prior to addressing hostage situations allows for an understanding of the objectives and motivations of the hostage taker, therefore determining the dialogue of hostage negotiations. As indicated, criminal and political hostage-taking situations yield a higher probability of successful negotiations as there are options for the safe release of hostages through ransom or political concessions.

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[67] Global Terrorism Database (accessed March 20, 2020), https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/access/.

[68] Global Terrorism Database.

[69] Global Terrorism Database.

Pathological hostage taking becomes complicated as the gain to the hostage taker is the actual hostage themselves, limiting negotiations and options for their release. American citizens have been taken hostage in situations involving all three motivations. As Chapter III demonstrates, understanding these definitions allows for the effectiveness of ransom negotiations to be measured against that of other concessions presented in the form of U.S. hostage policy options.

B. HOSTAGE TAKING AS DEFINED BY U.S. HOSTAGE POLICY

Throughout the country's history, U.S. presidents have all announced that the United States will not negotiate with terrorists. Therefore, in addition to scholarly definitions of criminal, political, and pathological hostage taking, U.S. government agencies employ working definitions of terrorism to determine appropriate U.S. hostage policy options in response to hostage situations. To define hostage taking through U.S. hostage policy, this section examines U.S. government agencies responsible for the safe return of American hostages and their unique mission-driven definitions of terrorism. Understanding definitions of terrorism are important in the context of hostage taking, as defining an act as terrorism links the act to laws and legal ramifications and determines the feasibility and permissibility of U.S. hostage policy options in resolving hostage situations. In particular, the impact on the execution of ransom payments when a hostage takers actions are designated as an act of terrorism.

The agencies dedicated to resolving hostage situations are the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) through the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) through the hostage rescue team (HRT), and the U.S. Department of State (DOS). Each agency provides support to secure the release of American hostages in specified areas of expertise: DOD/JPRA with operational planning and support, FBI/HRT with hostage negotiations, and DOS with diplomatic relationships. In the case of all these agencies, U.S. hostage policy options rely on the definition of terrorism and the determining factors that define a group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). This section includes a discussion of how the definition of terrorism provided by each agency

supports U.S. hostage policy and how each agency holds an important role in the joint mission of securing the release of American hostages.

JPRA is a DOD entity responsible for developing operational plans for and supporting the execution of a hostage rescue (HR)/personnel recovery (PR) mission. As the PR mission covers both isolated individuals and those being held hostage, it "is the sum of military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel."[70] The circumstances of the situation and the parties involved determine the JPRA response, following the guidance in U.S. hostage policy, Presidential Policy Directive 30 (PPD-30), *U.S. Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad, and Personnel Recovery* Efforts, and Executive Order 13698 (EO-13698), *Hostage Recovery Efforts.*

Under the DOD Personnel Recovery System, understanding policy and doctrine, receiving the appropriate education and training, and possessing the proper equipment all prepare the isolated individual or hostage as well as the agencies developing operational procedures for rescue operations. Figure 1 depicts the support provided by the DOD for hostage recovery situations. This support is based on the core skills of preparation, planning, execution, and adaptation, manifested through proactive measures and training such as survival, evade, resist, and escape (SERE) training. SERE complements U.S. hostage policy and the JPRA by preparing individuals to assist in their own rescue, providing information imperative to avoid being taken hostage and to execute a successful recovery if captured.

[70] Department of Defense, *Personnel Recovery*, Joint Publication 3-50 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2011), I-1

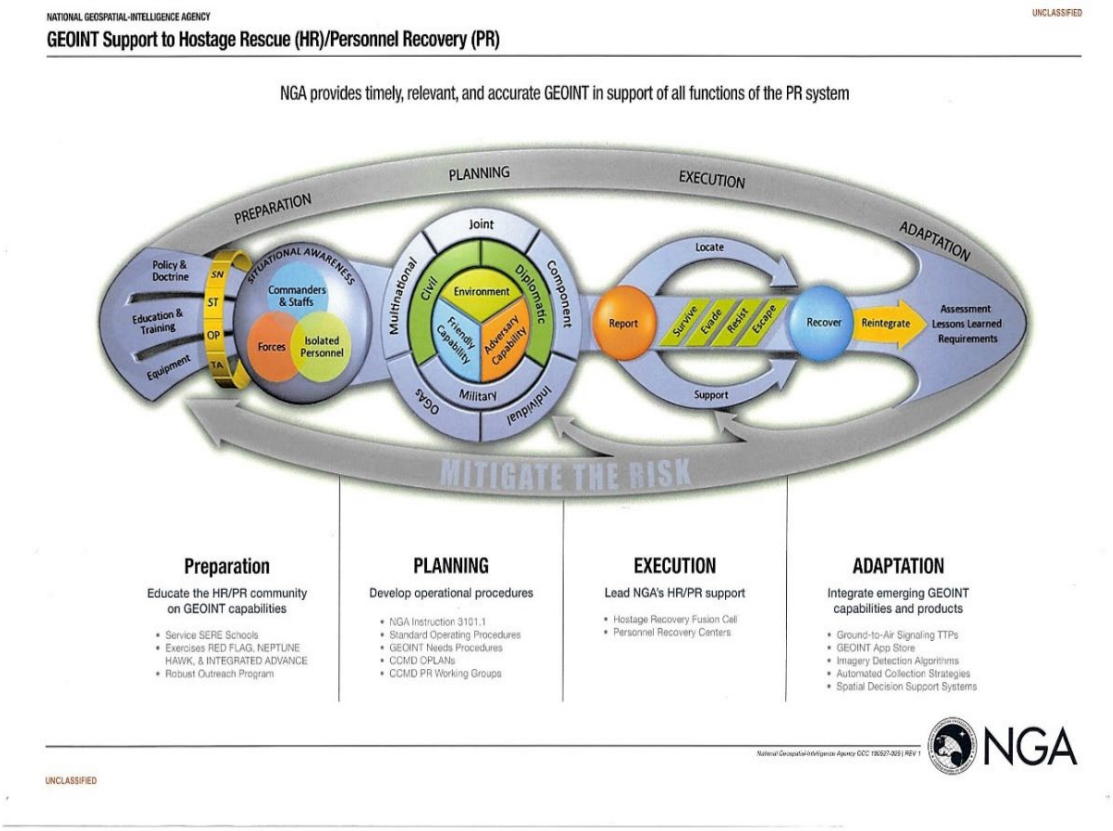

Figure 1. Department of Defense Personnel Recovery System[71]

The execution portion of this process supports negotiations, dependent on the environment where the hostage is located and the objectives and motivation of the hostage taker. Identifying the motivation for hostage taking assists the JPRA in developing, evaluating, and executing response plans while also contributing to an informed determination of military, diplomatic, or civil response as the best course of action. Additional factors surrounding the isolating event/hostage situation, such as adversary and friendly capabilities, likewise determine the appropriate action in recovering that individual through civil, diplomatic, or military operations or a combination thereof.

The categorization of the hostage taker and/or group as a FTO also determine the DOD/JPRA's recovery efforts within U.S. no-concessions hostage policy guidelines. PPD-

[71] Source: Department of Defense.

30/EO-13698 prohibits monetary gains to designated FTOs to discourage their continued growth and threats to national security. However, use of the term "terrorist" is limited within U.S. hostage policy, invoked only when discussing the denial of monetary gains to combat the financing of terrorism or other criminal enterprises.[72] The term "hostage takers" is widely used over the term "terrorist." By adopting the term "hostage takers," U.S. hostage policy supports communicating with hostage takers, intermediaries, and local governments to secure the safe release of American citizens, despite the strict no-concessions hostage policy.

As the lead governmental response agency facilitating negotiations for the release of hostages, both foreign and domestic, the FBI defines international and domestic terrorism differently. International terrorism is defined by the FBI as "violent, criminal acts committed by individuals or groups who are inspired by, or associated with, designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored)," whereas it defines domestic terrorism as "violent, criminal acts committed by individuals or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature."[73] The FBI does not mention hostage taking within its definition of terrorism nor does it define "hostage" in either definition despite its primary response function; however, its definition of international terrorism references FTOs directly, unifying its response with U.S. hostage policy.

As the agency in the best position to understand foreign culture and the environment of the hostage situation, The DOS plays an integral role in hostage situations and facilitating the designation of FTOs. The DOS defines hostage taking through an association with terrorism:

> To be an activity that (1) involves a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, property, or infrastructure; and (2) appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by

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[72] Office of the Press Secretary, U.S. Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad and Personnel Recovery Efforts.

[73] Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terrorism: What We Investigate," accessed February 12, 2020, https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism.

> intimidation or coercion; or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, kidnapping, or hostage taking.[74]

Using what it defines as terroristic characteristics, the DOS compiles detailed information on organizations that could be potential FTOs. Characteristics of such organizations include affiliation with other known FTOs, their affiliates, and their associates; promoting support of known FTOs through attacks on U.S. interests such as embassies or U.S. citizens; and undermining peace processes advocated by the United States.[75] This detailed information, also referred to as an "administrative record," is further evaluated by the intelligence community, which includes the Department of Treasury and Department of Justice.[76] The secretary of state then makes the ultimate decision on the inclusion of the organization on the FTO list, with the following three conditions:

> (1) The organization must be a foreign organization; (2) The organization must engage in terrorist activity or retains the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism; and (3) The organization's terrorist activity or terrorism must threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security of the United States.[77]

Thus, the definition of terrorism, as defined by DOD, DOS, and the FBI, reflects each agency's mission objectives and the acts that violate what they are sworn to protect. Table 3 presents each agency's key ideas about and focus definition of terrorism.

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[74] U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Designations and State Sponsors of Terrorism," Executive Order 13224, accessed February 12, 2021, https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224.

[75] Eileen Decker, "The Enemies List: The Foreign Terrorist Organization List and Its Role in Defining Terrorism" (master's thesis, Monterey, CA, Naval Postgraduate School, 2014), http://hdl.handle.net/10945/41367.

[76] Decker.

[77] U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Designations and State Sponsors of Terrorism."

Table 3. Key Ideas and Main Focus in Defining Terrorism[78]

Agency	Key Ideas	Focus
DOD/JPRA	Use or threat of violence motivated by Religious, Political or Other Ideological Beliefs	Political Agenda: Instill Fear, Coerce Governments or Societies
FBI—International	Violent "Criminal" Acts committed by an individual, or groups inspired by foreign organizations or nations	Influenced by or affiliated with designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs)
FBI—Domestic	Violent "Criminal" Acts to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences	Political, Religious, Social, Racial or Environmental in Nature
DOS	Violent Acts of Intimidation and Coercion, Dangerous to Human Life, Property, and Infrastructure	Political Agenda: Influence the Policies of Governments

The definition of terrorism from each agency shares overlapping features with the others, providing a unified response and balance in executing U.S. hostage policy options for securing the release of American hostages. All the definitions share intimidation, coercion, and political agendas as critical components in defining terrorism, which are addressed in academic research as motivating factors that trigger acts of terror. The FBI defines domestic and international terrorism as a criminal act, whereas the DOD and DOS view terrorism as rooted in political agendas. The DOS is the only entity to reference hostage taking within its definition of terrorism, also serving as the agency facilitating the designation of FTOs. The DOS, therefore, defines whether acts committed by an organization are acts of terrorism under U.S. hostage policy, which in turn defines whether hostage taking is terrorism. The FBI holds jurisdiction over DOS regarding hostage

[78]Adapted from Department of Defense, *Personnel Recovery*; Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terrorism: What We Investigate"; "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," U.S. Department of State, accessed February 7, 2021, https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/.

negotiations and links its response to DOS and U.S. hostage policy by referencing FTOs in its definition of terrorism.

Using each definition of terrorism in context to understand the objectives and motivations of the hostage taker as criminal, political, or pathological assists in determining the best permissible course of action for a timely and secure release of American hostages. The United States will engage in civil and diplomatic negotiations with hostage takers; however, policy options, particularly in the form of monetary gains through ransom payments, become limited when hostage takers are defined as an FTO. However, even under these circumstances, private ransom payments are still a viable option for release, dependent on the hostage takers' objectives and motivations and the family members' or employers' willingness to negotiate and administer ransom payments, as family members and employers of the hostages are no longer penalized by the threat of prosecution under PPD-30/EO-13698.

C. HOSTAGE TAKING DEFINED BY THE HOSTAGE TAKER

As this thesis examines the impact of ransom payments on duration in captivity, the phase of the hostage taker is another factor contributing to the effectiveness of negotiations. To accurately assess the effectiveness of ransom payments in hostage situations, scholars and policymakers need to understand the purpose of ransom and why ransom is still so marketable. What motivates the hostage taker is as elusive as the definition of hostage taking. Understanding objectives and motivations of a hostage situation is achieved through a comprehensive knowledge of the hostage-taking group—its origin and purpose. A historian of piracy, Philip Gosse, developed a theoretical framework summarizing three distinct phases of piracy organizations, which this thesis correlates to categories of hostage taking to explain the varying objectives and motivations of hostage situations. Evaluating the phases of hostage-taking organizations makes it possible to leverage a wider array of U.S. hostage policy options to which the organization might be responsive. Therefore, it is helpful to identify which phases exist within the organization where ransom is likely to be effective when negotiating to resolve hostage situations.

This section summarizes Gosse's three phases of piracy organizations: substance, profession, and the independent state, and correlates them to the categories of hostage taking: criminal, political, and pathological; concluding that the phase of the hostage taker directly influences the type of hostage situation, which therefore determines the appropriate response within U.S. hostage policy options.[79] It should be noted that not all hostage-taking organizations aspire to proceed through all the phases, either because they are not able to or because they do not demonstrate any real desire to officially govern.

The first phase of piracy organizations, substance, is driven by the organization's need for survival and is essentially criminal in nature, as the primary objective and demand for release of the vessel and the hostages is to secure financial gains and the furtherance of forming and establishing the group.[80] When a country is struggling internally, such as Somalia during a time of civil war and Afghanistan throughout the Soviet-Afghan War and for decades following in the war in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, hostage taking for ransom originates out of a need for a group's survival, starting phase one. In the case of the Somali pirates, inhabitants of marginal coastal regions, their first phase of evolution occurred following a drastic downturn in Somalia's fishing industry.[81] The world's busiest shipping lanes created a feeding frenzy for the Somali pirates just as the war in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan have for hostage taking throughout the Middle East, with an increased presence of military personnel, journalists, and humanitarian aid efforts. One particular hostage-taking group, labeled "insurgent terrorists" by researchers in the field, utilized tactics similar to those of the Somali pirates. Insurgent terrorism, as articulated by psychologists, is "a strategy of the weak, the use of violence by groups with little numerical, physical or direct political power to effect political or social change."[82] Essentially, "insurgent" terrorists start as small groups bound together by a grievance that then engage

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[79] Philip Gosse, *The History of Piracy* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2007).

[80] Gosse.

[81] Edward R Lucas, "Somalia's 'Pirate Cycle': The Three Phases of Somali Piracy," *Journal of Strategic Security* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 55–63.

[82] Andrew Silke, Terrorists, Victims and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and Its Consequences (West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003), xvi

in organized violence to campaign for their cause. As the hostage-taking organizations gain profitability, their membership increases and becomes more organized. The larger, more structured groups slowly swallow up the smaller ones, putting them out of business.

That said, in the circumstance of piracy for ransom and monetary gains, having smaller groups remain in existence is necessary to the larger, more sophisticated groups as they progress into the second phase. Smaller groups opportunistically kidnap individuals and may not possess the ability to negotiate the release of the hostages with other countries. These groups then sell them to larger groups, structured to facilitate financial transactions or to negotiate the release of the hostages for either monetary or political gains.[83] As the more prominent, structured groups successfully negotiate and release hostages, they become more organized, build capital, and obtain legitimacy with their host country and other hostage-taking groups. The ability to achieve legitimacy with the hostage taker's host country and other hostage-taking groups starts the progression into the second phase.

The second phase of piracy organizations, the profession, is achieved when the group acquires the ability to carry out coordinated attacks on larger targets.[84] While the second phase maintains aspects of criminal hostage taking, the pirates' priority shifts to characteristics of political hostage taking through increased demands for political agendas over financial gains. For the Somali pirates, the transition into the second phase was achieved in one of the most high-profile hijackings, the MV *Faina,* in August of 2008. The Somali pirates took control of the MV *Faina* as it was headed to South Sudan, where the country was arming itself against Sudan, showcasing the pirates' ability to carry out coordinated attacks and secure larger targets. The MV *Faina*, owned by a company in Panama, managed and operated by Ukraine, and sailing under a Belize flag with a Russian captain, housed 33 T-72 Soviet-designed tanks, 150 grenade launchers, six antiaircraft

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[83] Shortland, *Kidnap: Inside the Ransom Business.*

[84] Gosse, *The History of Piracy.*

guns, and pallets of ammunition.[85] The pirates maintained possession of the vessel through February 2009, when a ransom of $3.2 million was paid.[86]

Another organization making a successful transition into the second phase, Al-Qaeda, a radical Jihadist group, emerged as a phase-one organization following the Afghan-Soviet Soviet-Afghan War when Afghanistan was in ruins. Al-Qaeda built its organization with support from the Taliban and other radical Jihadist groups, allowing for the transition into the second phase as Al-Qaeda orchestrated and executed the most significant hostage-taking terrorist attack against the United States on U.S. soil. The events on 9/11 by Al-Qaeda not only established their organization as a hostage-taking organization capable of carrying out coordinated attacks against the largest of targets, but it also placed them in position to enter the third phase, an independent state, an "organization in a position to make a mutually useful alliance with another state against its enemies."[87]

In the third phase, the group is viewed as useful in alliances with states against common enemies and considered an independent state. Hostage-taking situations within the third phase of piracy organizations maintain a political nature, with the negotiations focused on furthering the organizations' political agendas; however, their primary agenda becomes propaganda, which associates the third phase to pathological hostage taking as the hostages themselves become the value in achieving the organizations' objectives over monetary or political demands for their release. In the case of the Somali pirates, their inability to successfully unload the cargo from the MV *Faina* for their own gain, which, had they succeeded, would have placed them in a position to be useful in an alliance with other independent states against mutual enemies and potentially viewed as an independent state, attributed to their inability to transition into the third phase. In addition to their inability to progress, the Somali pirates were without support from a government, therefore

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[85] Peter Eichstaedt, *Pirate State: Inside Somalia's Terrorism at Sea* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2010).

[86] Eichstaedt.

[87] Gosse, *The History of Piracy*, 1

unable to maintain their position. The success of the Somali pirates drastically declined from 2015 to 2019, with only eight attempted attacks, whereas they had attempted 358 attacks between 2010 and 2014.[88] Further marking the end of an era, the Somali pirates released the three remaining hostages in their custody on August 20, 2020. Fractions of the Somali pirates still operate along the shipping channels; however, their position in the cycle has returned to the first phase, substance, as they are without the resources needed to execute coordinated attacks on significant objectives.

On the other hand, the Taliban, another radical Jihadist group formed following the Soviet-Afghan War, successfully maintained its position in the second phase, which proved to be useful in alliances by provided support to Al-Qaeda in the furtherance of the attacks on 9/11. Following those attacks, the United States entered a war with Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, while enduring consistent threat to American citizens from Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other Jihadist insurgent groups such as ISIS. Jihadist groups continued to grow as the war spanned over two decades, finally coming to an end in 2022 when the United States withdrew all American troops from Afghanistan. Following this withdrawal and the end of the war, the Taliban successfully transitioned into the third phase, an independent state, as they successfully took control of Afghanistan.

Breaking down the objectives and motivations of hostage takers into phases creates an accurate assessment of the group's current needs and likely trajectory, allowing for a clear view of U.S. hostage policy options. Different groups maintain revenue from various sources, but they all extort money as they form within the first phase, substance. Danielle Gilbert confirms this through her research, explaining that even "the most prolific kidnappers increase hostage taking while profiting from resource-related extortion."[89] The starter groups require capital for continued operations and therefore negotiate for ransom. When it comes to negotiating the release of a hostage, the conversations start with a form of payment correlated to the phase of the hostage taker. As the group establishes ground

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[88] Jane's Group UK Limited, "JANES," accessed October 22, 2020, https://customer-janes-com.libproxy.nps.edu/janes/home.

[89] Danielle Gilbert, "The Logic of Kidnapping in Civil War: Evidence from Columbia," *American Political Science Review*, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000041, 3

through monetary gains and legitimacy, the negotiations for release move toward political objectives, establishing the group's value as a worthy ally against common enemies and providing it the resources to carry out coordinated attacks on larger targets.

D. CONCLUSION

Facilitating effective negotiations in hostage situations requires an understanding as to the hostage taker's purpose: What hostage taking aims to achieve for the hostage takers and what motivates those who carry out such acts? Comprehending these objectives and motivations prior to addressing hostage situations assists in establishing effective dialogue for resolving hostage negotiations. In addition, utilizing the theoretical framework presented by Gosse allows U.S. hostage policy to evaluate and deploy the appropriate hostage policy response through the agencies trained to manage and support hostage situations: DOD/JPRA, FBI/HRT, and the DOS, within the civil, diplomatic, and military guidelines of U.S. hostage policy.

U.S. hostage policy options are driven by the objectives and motivations of the hostage taker: criminal, political, and pathological. Limitations in the execution of U.S. hostage-policy options arise when hostage takers advance from the first phase: criminal/ substance, where monetary gains such as ransom payments are effective; into the second phase: political/profession, where ransom payments are still an option but the hostage taker's primary objective transforms into political agendas. The third phase, an independent state, is where ransom payments become ineffective as political demands and propaganda become the hostage taker's primary objectives, closely associating this phase with pathological hostage taking as the gain from the hostage situation is the continued exploitation of the hostage rather than monetary gains. As Chapter III demonstrates, American citizens have been taken hostage in situations involving all three motivations, stressing the importance of understanding the dynamics of each hostage situation in order to provide the best possible solution for a safe and timely release.

III. ASSESSING HOSTAGE POLICY FROM 1801 TO 2020

Although U.S. hostage policy restricts the country's monetary concessions to terrorist organizations, as the previous chapter describes, it does not rule out negotiations or leveraging other hostage policy options to secure the release of American hostages. Indeed, throughout its history, the United States has brokered deals through third-party countries, prisoner exchanges, and other concessions to secure the release of American citizens. To assess the overall qualitative effectiveness of U.S. hostage policy, this chapter examines a set of historical cases since 1801, with an emphasis on Jihadist hostage-taking groups that began in 1973, establishing a baseline for negotiations and permissible actions under U.S. hostage policy guidelines and evaluating their success and failures. The outcomes of the hostage situations suggest that U.S. hostage policy options are sometimes limited by the hostage taker's objectives and motivations, which can render ransom an ineffective tool for decreasing duration in captivity and securing the safe return of American hostages. The findings in the chapter suggest that U.S. hostage policy is effective when hostage-taking organizations are in the first or second phase and where the United States has the ability to leverage international relationships as demands for release fall into monetary or short-term political gains. The effectiveness of U.S. hostage policy is challenged when hostage-taking organizations are in the third phase, an independent state, as the objectives and motivations of the hostage takers puts strain the United States ability to leverage international relationships and utilize third-party countries to facilitate negotiations and support concessions.

A. CASE STUDIES OF U.S. HOSTAGE POLICY

Despite not having an official written hostage policy until 2001, the United States has taken a no-concessions approach to hostage situations, showing an unwillingness to negotiate with terrorist organizations since the country's origin and has consistently stood by this approach in an effort to prevent future hostage situations. This analysis of hostage-taking events in U.S. history begins just as the United States was starting to finance the

building of its naval fleet while also battling continued hostage taking from the Barbary pirates. Lessons learned from the United States' interactions with the Barbary pirates provide context to hostage situations analyzed throughout this chapter. Hostage situations such as Khartoum, Sudan, the Iran hostage crisis, the hijacking of Trans World Airlines (TWA) flight 847, the Somali pirates, the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the execution of Daniel Pearl, and the execution of Western hostages in 2014 by ISIS provide insight into the evolution and effectiveness of U.S. hostage policy.

1. Barbary Pirates

Hostage taking has challenged the United States from the outset of American independence. Likewise, war and conflict have long defined the direction of the U.S. no-concessions hostage policy, originating during the conflict with the Barbary pirates. The United States—as a vulnerable new nation, separated from the support of the United Kingdom, with no money to pay extortion, and no Navy to intervene—fell victim to tactics of extortion and kidnapping for ransom from pirates along the Barbary Coast.[90] The Barbary pirates, having been an established piracy organization before the United States gained its independence from Great Britain, were within the second phase of Gosse's framework, profession, as they possessed the ability to carry out attacks on larger targets and making demands for both financial gains and political concessions in the form of trade. The focus of the Barbary pirates was on maintaining a criminal enterprise, therefore there was no desire to graduate into a government, or the third phase: an independent state. George Washington, the first president of the United States (1789–1797), attempted to negotiate with the governments supporting the Barbary pirates—Morocco, Algiers (Algeria), Tunis (Tunisia), and Tripoli (Libya) but talks were futile.[91] Therefore, to protect American citizens from kidnapping and extortion, the United States had to determine a course of action with respect to the Barbary pirates.

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[90] Allen W. Gardner, *Our Navy and the Barbary Corsairs* (New York, NY: The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1905), 13.

[91] Brendan January, *The Aftermath of the Wars Against the Barbary Pirates* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books, 2009).

Just as the United States was starting to finance the building of its naval fleet, it received a message from Algiers asking for $2.5 million and two frigates in exchange for the release of 119 American hostages.[92] After successful negotiations, the United States settled with a lump sum payment of $642,000 to Algiers, plus an additional $21,400 in perpetuity, paid for in weapons and ammunition.[93] Despite this agreement, the Barbary pirates continued to seize American vessels, using them as leverage to increase this payment. After a decade of continued negotiations, following several small undeclared wars initiated by the Barbary pirates, the United States conceded a second time to the demands, paying approximately $2.7 million for the release of additional hostages and later agreed to annual gifts to the Barbary pirates in the form of naval equipment.[94]

The Barbary pirates demanded not only ransom payments from the United States but also trade through diplomatic relations. Thomas Jefferson took a different approach as the nation's first secretary of state and the official responsible for U.S. relations with other countries. Jefferson declared three options for navigating the Barbary Pirate situation: "pay tribute each year, pay ransom when Americans were captured, or fight."[95] U.S. Ambassador John Adams, who later became the second president of the United States from 1797–1801, expressed concerns over the third option, believing that if the country chose to fight, it would be fighting forever.[96] An account of the negotiation proceedings by Adams and Jefferson with the Barbary pirates validated Adams's reservations:

> The U.S. officials contacted the Barbary States and tried to negotiate. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were U.S. ambassadors in Europe at the time. They contacted the ambassador of Tripoli for an explanation. Why did the Tripolitans commit acts of piracy? The Ambassador answered us that it is founded on the laws of the Prophet [Muhammad, the founder of Islam]. [Jefferson later wrote,] that it was written in their Koran [or Quran, the holy book of Islam], that all nations who should not have acknowledged

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[92] January.

[93] January.

[94] Bradley E. Smith, "America's First Response to Terrorism: The Barbary Pirates and the Tripolitan War of 1801," *Military Review* 85, no. 6 (December 2005): 65–69.

[95] January, The Aftermath of the Wars Against the Barbary Pirates.

[96] January.

> [Muslim] authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found and to make slaves of all they would take as Prisoners.[97]

The decisions made by the United States while interacting with the Barbary pirates established the foundation of U.S. hostage policy. Jefferson's three options for resolving the hostage-taking situations—pay ransom, pay tribute, or fight—correspond with current U.S. hostage policy response options for resolving hostage situations through civil, diplomatic, or military means. In the situation with the Barbary pirates, the United States was presented with options for financial payment and trade, which it complied with. However, without an established military capable of fighting, the Barbary pirates continued to exploit the United States for continued financial and political gains.

Following continued acts of hostage taking on behalf of the Barbary pirates, despite the payment and trade agreement, the United States determined that military action was necessary, resulting in the Tripolitan War of 1801, under President Thomas Jefferson (1801–1809).[98] Despite the United States' perceived victory following a treaty with Egypt, ending the Tripolitan War, the Barbary pirates persisted with acts of piracy and hostage taking. It was not until President James Madison Jr. (1809–1817) convinced Congress to authorize military action against Algiers in 1815 that the Barbary tribute finally ended.

The interactions with the Barbary pirates had a lasting impact on the United States and the formation of a U.S. no-concessions hostage policy stance as the United States was unsuccessful in resolving the conflict through negotiations, resulting in military action. The United States' first experience with hostage negotiations showed that as the Barbary pirates continued to be successful in hijacking their ships and taking Americans hostage, the acts continued, despite the receipt of payment and tribute. In the end, the United States successfully countered the Barbary pirates, who eventually dissolved through colonization. But the decision to go to war with the pirates has kept the United States in the crosshairs of an ideology that continues to this day.

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[97] January, 13.

[98] January.

2. Khartoum, Sudan

In 1973, the United Sates responded publicly to demands from hostage takers in Sudan, refusing to pay blackmail or negotiate, resulting in the loss of life for two American diplomats. Militant Jihadist hostage takers were holding two American diplomats hostage, following a terrorist attack on the Saudi Arabian embassy in Khartoum, coinciding with a farewell dinner in honor of U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) George Curtis Moore. On March 1, 1973, the Palestinian terrorist group Black September Organization (BSO) attacked the Saudi Arabian Embassy, resulting in DCM Moore, U.S. Ambassador Cleo Noel, the Saudi ambassador, his wife and four children, and the Belgian and Jordanian chargés taken hostage.[99] BSO demanded the release of Palestinian guerrillas imprisoned in Jordan, Israel, and the United States.[100]

President Richard Nixon (1969–1974) made history with the first ever public declaration of U.S. hostage policy, defying demands from the militant Jihadist hostage takers. On March 2, 1973, President Nixon declared at a news conference that the "U.S. would not pay blackmail."[101] Following President Nixon's announcement that the United States would not negotiate, BSO had the American hostages write a final letter home before executing them.[102]

BSO requested the release of Palestinian guerillas without the mention of ransom, showing the United States their focus on political objectives, positioning their organization in the second phase, profession, of hostage taking. As the United States expressed its immediate stance on no-concessions to blackmail, the hostage takers acted, killing the American hostages. As a phase-two hostage-taking organization, BSO was looking for political concessions, which the United States was not willing to discuss. This moment in history showed the United States the extent hostage takers are willing to go to while

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[99] "The Terrorist Attack on the Saudi Embassy - Khartoum, 1973," Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training, February 20, 2013, https://adst.org/2013/02/the-terrorist-attack-on-the-saudi-embassy-khartoum-1973/.

[100] Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training.

[101] Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training.

[102] Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training.

attempting to achieve their political objective. The public statement showcasing the United States' unwillingness to negotiate proved to be an ineffective approach in saving the lives of American hostages, therefore highlighting the Khartoum, Sudan, hostage situation as a negative impact to U.S. hostage policy.

3. Iran Hostage Crisis

Another high-profile hostage situation faced by the United States was the Iran hostage crisis in 1979, also the first major international struggle against the political forces of Islam since the Barbary pirates.[103] Iranian militants, a group positioned in the second phase, executed a coordinated attack on a fortified target, proving to the United States their motivation to maintain the Islamic revolutionary order in Iran and extinguish American influence.[104] This event was a significant failure of the U.S. no-concessions hostage policy, confirming that, contrary to President Nixon's statement, "democratic authorities will instinctively give in to blackmail," especially when the hostage takers can leverage their position and focus their demands on political agendas.[105] The Iran hostage crisis supports research by Atkinson, Sandler, Scott, and Tschirhart, who have demonstrated that terrorists perceive no-concessions policies as failed attempts at eliminating concessions to terrorist organizations because if attacked, the state would concede and negotiate.[106]

On November 4, 1979, militant Iranian student activists stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, taking 66 American citizens hostage. This event followed the Iranian Revolution, from January 1978–February 1979, during which the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, went into exile. Ayatollah Khomeini was placed into power in February

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[103] Although the Khartoum, Sudan hostage situation involved Islamic extremists and prompted the first publicized declaration of U.S. hostage policy, the incident was relatively brief compared to the Iran hostage crisis. The Iran hostage crisis traversed all available U.S. hostage policy options before conceding to a resolution, similar to the Barbary pirates: David Farber, *Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[104] Farber.

[105] Laqueur, "The Futility of Terrorism."

[106] Todd Sandler and John L. Scott, "Terrorist Success in Hostage-Taking Incidents: An Empirical Study," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31, no. 1 (March 1987): 35–53, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002787031001003; Scott E. Atkinson, Todd Sandler, and John Tschirhart, "Terrorism in a Bargaining Framework," *The Journal of Law & Economics* 30, no. 1 (April 1987): 1–21.

1979, following the dissolution of the Iranian monarchy. The ayatollah supported the embassy takeover, citing as justification the acceptance of the Shah into the United States for medical treatment.[107] Conditions for the release of the American hostages included returning the Shah to Iran.

Despite its strict no-concessions hostage policy, the United States resolved this crisis by leveraging financial incentives in exchange for American hostages. President Jimmy Carter (1977–1981) failed in his initial attempts to secure the hostages by cutting all diplomatic ties to Iran. President Carter then ordered an unsuccessful military rescue, Operation Eagle Claw, resulting in the loss of eight military personnel and contributing to his failure to secure a second term in office. As one of his last acts in office, President Carter secured the freedom of the remaining hostages by releasing $7 billion in seized Iranian assets.[108] The remaining hostages were set free the day President Ronald Reagan (1981–1989) entered the White House, January 20, 1981, a total number of 444 days after the attack.[109]

The United States' monetary concessions delivered to the hostage takers for the release of American hostages followed several failed attempts at implementing U.S. hostage policy options to resolve the Iran hostage crisis. Contributing to the failed attempts of U.S. hostage policy options were the objectives and motivations of the hostage takers and their drive to transition into the third phase, an independent Islamic State. In addition, the start of the Soviet-Afghan War in December of 1979 challenged the U.S. policy response to Islam in the Middle East as American policymakers were "still focused on the Cold War threat of the Soviets."[110] The United States chose to assist Afghanistan in its fight against Soviet troops by arming Islamic fundamentalists, not knowing that it was

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[107] National Archives, "444 Days: Selected Records Concerning the Iran Hostage Crisis 1979–1981," Foreign Affairs, January 9, 2017, https://www.archives.gov/research/foreign-policy/iran-hostage-crisis.

[108] Yeganeh Torbati and Joel Schectman, "American's Unending Hostage Crisis with Iran," Reuters Special Report, August 1, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-iran-student-special-report/special-report-americas-unending-hostage-crisis-with-iran-idUSKBN1KM4PT.

[109] National Archives, "444 Days: Selected Records Concerning the Iran Hostage Crisis 1979–1981."

[110] Farber, Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam, 4.

arming factions of Jihad that would eventually turn its attention to the United States.[111] While the United States was focused on what it viewed as the real danger in the region, it failed to recognized the level of devotion that Iranian Islamic militants had in creating an Islamic state, thereby transitioning their organization into the third phase and eliminating interference from the United States.[112] The devotion of the Iranian hostage takers, shown through their objectives and motivations, and the political focus of the United States on the Soviet Union impacted the effectiveness of civil, diplomatic, or military action on behalf of U.S. hostage policy in securing the release of the American hostages and resolving the crisis with Iran.

4. TWA Flight 847

President Reagan, who received positive acknowledgment from the American public for the successful release of the final hostages in the Iran hostage crisis, is also credited with successfully navigating the TWA hostage situation during his presidency, saving the lives of 157 hostages via negotiations for the release of prisoners through a third-party state. On June 14, 1985, TWA Flight 847 was hijacked by Shiite Hezbollah terrorists as it departed Athens, Greece, showcasing the group's ability as a second phase hostage-taking organization, to carry out a coordinated attack on a large target. Of the 158 passengers held hostage, 40 were American citizens. The terrorists focused on Jewish and Israeli passengers, diplomats, and U.S. military personnel, by separating them from other passengers. One U.S. Navy diver, Robert Stethem, was executed upon the plane's landing in Beirut, Lebanon, and thrown from the plane while the hostage takers demanded fuel.[113] The terrorists' stipulations for the release of the TWA hostages included the release of the 766 Arab detainees held by Israel.[114] President Reagan spoke out forcefully, rejecting the demands, explaining that "Americans will never make concessions to terrorists" and that

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[111] Farber.

[112] Farber.

[113] Jack Nelson, "Reagan Rules Out Negotiations with Muslim Hijackers," *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 1985, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-06-19-mn-9185-story.html.

[114] Nelson.

> to do so would only invite more terrorism. Nor will we ask nor pressure any other government to do so. Once we head down that path, there will be no end to it, no end to the suffering of innocent people, no end to the bloody ransom all civilized nations must pay.[115]

As President Reagan addressed this hostage situation, he strongly criticized the handling of the Iran hostage crisis by former president Jimmy Carter. President Reagan ruled out military action, refused negotiations with the hostage takers, and refused to put pressure to do so on Israel. Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman at the time, commented on the demand for release of the 766 Arab detainees in exchange for the hostages, saying that "we would like to see them [the Arab detainees] released, but only after the remaining American hostages are freed."[116] Speakes went on to say that "we firmly believe that this release can take place when the hijacking incident is successfully resolved, [adding that] the United States is neither asking nor directly encouraging Israel to free the detainees, in keeping with the administration's policy of refusing any concessions to terrorists."[117] The hostages were released on June 30, 1985—with the understanding that the hostage takers demands were met through Israel's agreement to release the Arab detainees.[118]

The navigation of the TWA hostage situation showcased the strengths of the United States' ability to communicate effectively and leverage diplomatic relationships, despite its lack of acknowledgement of any direct involvement with the release of the 766 Arab detainees. Similar to the hostage situation in Khartoum, President Reagan publicly declared that the United States would never make concessions to demands from terrorists. However,

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[115] Nelson, 1.

[116] Nelson.

[117] Nelson.

[118] Brigitte Nacos, David P. Fan, and John T. Young, "Terrorism and the Print Media: The 1985 TWA Hostage Crisis," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 12, no. 2 (January 8, 2008): 107–15, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108908435773.

recognizing the failure in the handling of Khartoum and the Iran hostage crisis, President Reagan acknowledged that saving American lives warranted the leveraging of diplomatic negotiations through a third party. Despite the death of one American hostage and the release of the Arab detainees on behalf of Israel, the TWA hostage situation provides an example of the successful execution of U.S. hostage policy options, particularly in the wake of the Iran hostage crisis. The Shiite Hezbollah hostage takers were an organization in the second phase, profession, and they possessed the knowledge and experience to conduct successful negotiations in order to obtain their objective. The United States did not directly provide concessions in exchange for the release of American citizens. It did, however, successfully negotiate, through diplomatic processes, to determine the political objectives and motivations of the hostage takers and found a resolution.

5. Somali Pirates

The Somali pirates' ability to transform traditional piracy into hostage taking for ransom initiated a trend that continues to impact U.S. hostage policy options when navigating hostage situations. Unlike previous hostage negotiations with the Barbary pirates, the United States now possessed options, to include financial wherewithal as well as a robust military and naval fleet. The demand on effective U.S. hostage policy options presented by the Somali pirates, an organization representing the transition of phases throughout its existence, manifested through logistical challenges presented by the multinational crew members taken as hostages. Figure 2 illustrates both the shipping routes and piracy hot spots attributing to the success of the Somali pirates while also creating a systematic problem for the United States and all nations with a global presence.

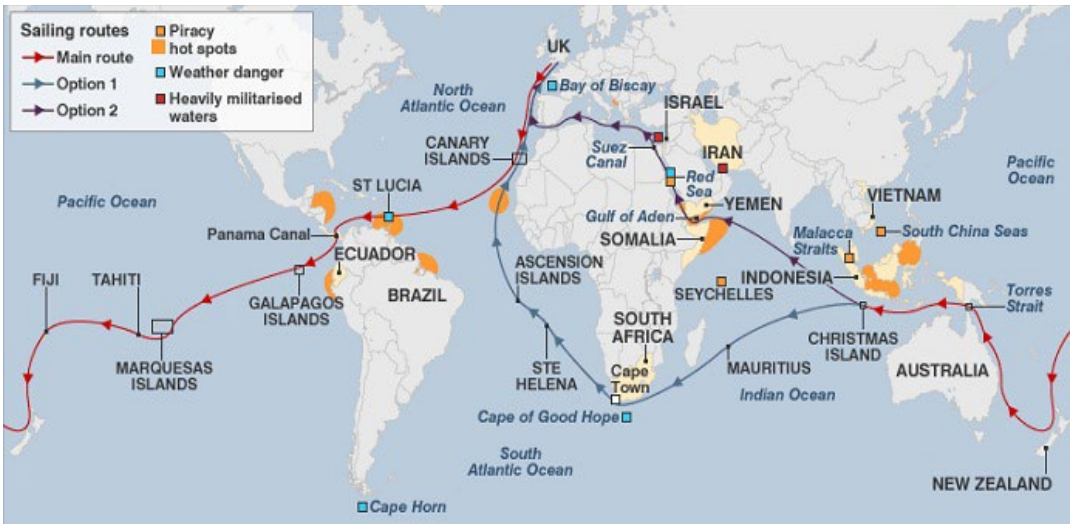

Figure 2. Sailing Routes with Piracy Hot Spots[119]

According to the United Nations, which passed a number of resolutions addressing piracy from 2008 through 2020, the Somali pirates were a global malady warranting "all necessary means to repress piracy and armed robbery at sea."[120] The threat presented by the Somali pirates was amplified through a unique set of dynamics that presented logistical and diplomatic challenges to countries when navigating hostage situations:

> The realities of international shipping and global commerce are such that in any given piracy case, you could have suspected Somali pirates intercepted and apprehended by a British naval vessel after trying to attack a Liberian-flagged ship, owned by a Canadian company, crewed by Ukrainians, Indians, and Filipinos, with a Russian captain and carrying cargo owned by a Turkish company, en route for delivery to a company in Dubai.[121]

The vessel's country of origin and the flag under which it operated, the nationality of the captain of the vessel, the nationality of each crew member, and the owner and recipient of the cargo all factored into the logistical and diplomatic challenges in resolving

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[119] Source: Nikita Marwaha Kraetzig, "An Overview of Maritime and Port Security," *UP42* (blog), March 21, 2022, https://up42.com/blog/tech/an-overview-of-maritime-and-port-security#:~:text=It%20refers%20to%20the%20security,other%20countries%20are%20enforced%20appropriately.

[120] Wanjohi Kabukuru, "Somali Piracy: In Search of Remedies for a Global Malady," *Africa Renewal Online*, accessed June 21, 2021, https://www.un.org/africarenewal/web-features/somali-piracy-remedies-global-malady.

[121] Kabukuru, 2.

the hostage situation, translating into concessions in response to the rising demands of the hostage takers.

The Somali pirates used these logistical and diplomatic challenges as leverage, which led them to engage in hostage taking for ransom rather than traditional piracy. Traditional piracy obtained returns from cargo and vessels, refurbished, and sold with forged papers—options not available to the Somali pirates due to their limited resources in the wake of the collapse of the fishing industry and the ongoing civil war within Somalia.[122] The Somali pirates instead found capital in cargo and crew for ransom. The ransom started between U.S. $20,000 and U.S. $300,000 per vessel but increased in 2007 when the *Donica White*, a small cargo ship with five Danish crew members, was taken hostage. It was released after the employer of the crew members and the owner of the vessel and cargo paid the hostage takers U.S. $1.5 million.[123]

This payment started the cascade: a Japanese tanker, *Golden Nori*, for a ransom of U.S. $1 million; a French luxury yacht, *Le Ponant*, for a ransom of U.S. $2 million; and a Spanish fishing trawler, the *Playa di Bakio*, for a ransom of U.S. $1.2 million.[124] The Somali pirates caught on to the vessels' value and continued to increase their demands. When they hijacked the CEC *Future*, the owner of the vessel and cargo went public by allowing a television crew to videotape the company's efforts to free the hostages and reclaim the ship.[125] In the end, ransom in the amount of U.S. $1.7 million was paid by the owner of the *CEC Future* to the hostage takers for the release of the vessel and all hostages.[126] At the peak of the Somali pirates' activity, the United Nations estimated the net income of the Somali pirates to be $177 million in 2009 and $238 million in 2010.[127]

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[122] Shortland, Kidnap: Inside the Ransom Business.

[123] Shortland.

[124] Shortland.

[125] Shortland.

[126] Shortland.

[127] Kabukuru, "Somali Piracy: In Search of Remedies for a Global Malady."

The worldwide response to the Somali pirates escalated as they advanced their trade of hostage taking for ransom by exploiting multinational aspects of each hostage situation. Concessions from countries that successfully negotiated the release of hostages established the value of the hostage, thereby setting the hostage takers' standard for what to request and receive from other countries. Those countries willing to pay for the release of their citizens continued the financing of future hostage-taking operations while also providing incentives for the hostage takers to increase future demands. Their increased success in ransom negotiations contributed to the Somali pirates' success in not only transforming traditional piracy into hostage taking for ransom but success in their progression from the first phase of hostage taking, substance, into the second phase, a profession.

The Somali pirates not only successfully challenged the world on a unified hostage situation response, but they also successfully formed an organization out of their need for survival (phase one), established a profession (phase two), and almost successfully transitioned into the third phase: an independent state. In doing so, the Somali pirates also exposed a weakness in the variations of hostage policy response between countries resistant to paying ransom and those countries willing to negotiate and make concessions. The Somali pirates' ability to exploit the differences in policy and sustain operations for nearly two decades presented a warning to the United States' no-concessions hostage policy and the ability to bring American hostages home safely.

6. Terrorist Attacks on 9/11

While the United States was still navigating hostage-taking situations with the Somali pirates, the most significant terrorist attack on U.S. soil occurred on September 11, 2001, using airliners and passengers aboard to execute coordinated attacks on targets in New York City and Washington, DC. The attacks on 9/11, while not a traditional hostage-taking event, resulted in the most extensive loss of American citizens at the hands of a terrorist group and fueled the first written U.S. hostage policy, National Security Presidential Directive 12 (NSPD-12) *United States Citizens Taken Hostage Abroad*, under the Bush administration. NSPD-12 held firm to the United States' strict no-concessions hostage policy stance, adding in the threat of prosecution to family members and

companies for the payment of ransom to hostage takers who were identified as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO).

In addition to putting its hostage policy in writing, following the attacks on 9/11 the United States increased the number of designated FTOs by nearly 53%, from just 30 organizations in 1997 to 68.[128] This development had an important impact on negotiations in hostage situations, as the payment of ransom to an FTO for the release of American hostages was a prosecutable offense under NSPD-12 on the basis that it contributes monetary gains to terrorist organizations and therefore leads to further lives lost and additional attacks against the United States.

The attacks on 9/11 signified a warning to the United States, heard around the world. The hostage takers, Al-Qaeda, an Islamic militant organization, orchestrated the attacks on 9/11 without presenting demands or entering negotiations with the United States. Al-Qaeda had progressed into the third phase of hostage taking: a desire to become an independent state, shown through their ability to coordinate orchestrated attacks and initiate hostage-taking situations without the need for monetary gains through ransom. The attacks on 9/11 also signified the continued focus on the United States by Jihadist militant organizations, as the war with the Middle East in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, resulted in an increase in American citizens within these regions and ultimately encouraged a feeding frenzy for hostage taking.

7. Execution of Daniel Pearl

Along with the increase in designated FTOs following 9/11, hostage taking of American citizens by a second-phase Jihadist organization significantly increased starting in 2002, most notably with the videotaped beheading of American journalist Daniel Pearl. Deploying U.S. hostage policy options for the release of Pearl was not an option, as the hostage takers made no demands following his abduction or prior to his execution. Pearl, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, was kidnapped on January 23, 2002, in Karachi, Pakistan, while reporting on the British terrorist, Richard Reid, known as the "shoe

[128] Decker, "The Enemies List."

bomber."[129] Pearl was executed on an unknown date, and a videotape of his beheading was released on the internet on February 21, 2002. This brazen execution soon became an internet sensation and is credited with the resurgence of the historical Islamic practice of beheading.[130]

Figure 3 represents hostage-taking situations worldwide from 1970–2019, showing an increase in hostage taking from Jihadist regions as it started to climb in 2003, spiking from 2012–2014.

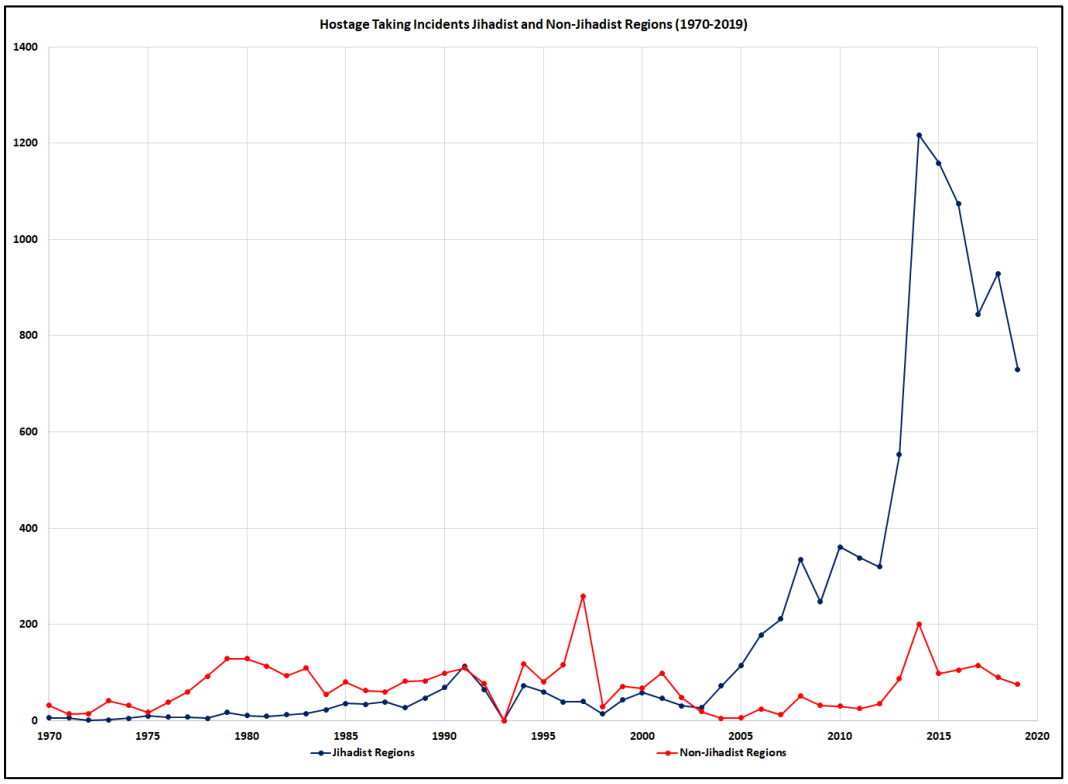

Figure 3. Hostage-Taking Incidents: Jihadist and Non-Jihadist Regions (1970–2019) [131]

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[129] Sophia Saifi, "Pakistan's Top Court Rules to Free Men Previously Convicted of Kidnapping and Murdering Daniel Pearl," CNN, January 29, 2021, https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/28/asia/daniel-pearl-pakistan-intl-hnk/index.html.

[130] Timothy R. Furnish, "Beheading in the Name of Islam," *Middle East Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 51–57.

[131] Adapted from Global Terrorism Database.

The war in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan contributed to an increased U.S. presence in the region through military action, contractors, aid workers, and journalists, creating a significant increase in hostage taking within Jihadist regions. The hostage takers' actions before making demands to the United States for Pearl's release exposed a weakness in the United States' ability to protect, through diplomatic negotiations, American citizens held hostage. Jihadist hostage-taking groups in the region, which included Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and ISIS, proved to be sophisticated phase-two— if not phase-three— organizations as they possessed the ability to manage complex hostage situations with hostages from multiple nationalities, while successfully negotiating and/or using the hostages as leverage in the furtherance of their political goals and propaganda agendas. The execution of Pearl provided the United States insight into the objectives and motivations, both for political and propaganda purposes, of the hostage takers while also showing a weakness in the country's ability to enact hostage-policy options in the form of civil, diplomatic, or military action for the safe return of American hostages.

8. Execution of Western Hostages

Nearly a decade after the death of Daniel Pearl, American journalist James Foley and British photojournalist John Cantlie were abducted in November 2012, near Aleppo, Syria, while covering the Syrian Civil War. Foley and Cantlie were two of several hostages abducted in the region by ISIS, an organization in the second phase, and other smaller hostage-taking groups. The abductions of Foley and Cantlie occurred near the peak of Jihadist hostage-taking operations, during which ISIS held hostage four other Americans: Steven Sotloff, Peter Kassig, Kayla Mueller, and Theo Curtis as well as citizens from multiple other countries. In exchange for the release of the five American hostages, ISIS did not demand monetary ransom, but rather demanded a concession in the form of discontinued U.S. airstrikes against ISIS in the region.[132]

The United States was unwilling to cease air strikes initiated by the Obama administration, providing relief to the Yazidi population, which ISIS was attempting to

[132] Lawrence Wright, "Five Hostages," *New Yorker*, June 24, 2015, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/07/06/five-hostages.

wipe out. Following one such airstrike in August 2014, ISIS aired a video showing the beheading of Foley on August 9, 2014. Following the beheading of Foley, ISIS presented video of a second hostage, Steven Sotloff, emphasizing that he would be next if their demands were not met. Sotloff was executed on September 2, 2014, followed by British Aid worker David Haines on September 13, 2014; a second British aid worker, Alan Henning, on October 3, 2014; and American aid worker Peter Kassig on November 16, 2014.[133]

As other countries navigating the spike in hostage taking from Jihadist groups conceded to paying ransom, the nature of the hostage takers' demands evolved. Danielle Gilbert identifies, in general, the primary demands for release of hostages is money, a prisoner exchange, or the furtherance of political objectives through the release of propaganda statements.[134] ISIS, as an organization striving to achieve an independent state, found greater value in leveraging American hostages in the furtherance of its political objectives and for propaganda purposes than in requesting ransom payments. Research on the United States' decision to pay or not to pay ransom in response to kidnappings of Westerners has determined that Jihadist hostage takers shift demands to extract what value they can from the hostages: monetary value when available or political agendas and propaganda when it serves their objectives and motivations:[135]

The beheading videos positioned ISIS as the world's preeminent Jihadist terrorist group and brought the group global attention, which is used as a recruiting tool. The possibility that this was more valuable to ISIS than a ransom payment must be considered.[136]

Until these gruesome beheadings, the United States had held firm to its no-concessions hostage policy stance and the threat of prosecution for the payment of ransom

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[133] Wright.

[134] Gilbert, "The Logic of Kidnapping in Civil War: Evidence from Columbia."

[135] Christopher Mellon, Peter Bergen, and David Sterman, "To Pay Ransom or Not to Pay Ransom?: An Examination of Western Hostage Policies" (policy paper, New America, January 2017).

[136] Mellon, Bergen, and Sterman.

to FTOs. Following the execution of Western hostages; however, the Obama administration conducted a re-evaluation of U.S. hostage policy as family members lobbied that the United States did not do enough to secure the release of the American hostages.[137] This assessment led to the signing of Presidential Policy Directive 30 (PPD-30) *U.S. Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad and Personnel Recovery Efforts* and Executive Order 13698 (EO-13698) *Hostage Recovery Activities* on June 26, 2015. PPD-30/EO-13698 superseded NSPD-12 with continued reinforcement of the no-concessions policy while alleviating the threat of prosecution to friends and families and employers of the hostage for the payment of ransom. While deflecting the direct payment of ransom to family members and employers, the United States remains focused on civil, diplomatic, and military action as means of securing the release of American hostages, holding firm against contributing monetary gains to FTOs.

The execution of the five Western hostages was a failure of U.S. hostage policy. The United States was unable to leverage civil, diplomatic, or military action in securing the release of the American hostages due to the objectives and motivation of the hostage takers. Unlike the Barbary pirates and other Jihadist extremist groups such as Hezbollah, ISIS aspired to become an independent state, representing the third phase of the hostage-taking cycle, where political agendas and propaganda are the primary focus. As in pathological hostage taking, in this phase the hostages themselves serve a greater value than monetary gains or other concessions obtained for their release, therefore preventing release as an option, further restricting U.S. hostage policy options and exposing limitations in the United States' ability to execute and leverage civil, diplomatic, and military action as a resolution.

B. DETENTION BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS

An increase in Western military action followed the beheadings of Western hostages at the hands of ISIS, contributing to a decline in the number of American citizens taken hostage by Jihadist hostage-taking groups; however, according to Kate Woodsome,

[137] Joel Simon, We Want to Negotiate: The Secret World of Kidnapping, Hostages and Ransom (New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2019).

Jason Rezaian, and Ray Whitehouse, the "number of Americans wrongfully detained by foreign governments for political gains began to rise."[138] The *Washington Post* cites Cynthia Loertscher, research director at the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, who disclosed that as of 2021, 19 American citizens were held hostage by militant or other criminal groups, while state sponsors were wrongfully detaining at least 43 Americans.[139] According to the report, "foreign governments now surpass terrorist and militant groups as predominant hostage takers of U.S. nationals across the globe."[140]

According to the James Foley Foundation webpage, among those detained by foreign governments, with their families requesting public advocacy, are:

- Austin Tice, a freelance journalist, was kidnapped while reporting in Syria in 2012.
- Paul Overby, an American author, disappeared in Pakistan in 2014.
- Siamak Namazi, an Iranian-American businessman, was detained in Iran in 2015 while attending a funeral.
- Baquer Namazi, an Iranian-American and father of Siamak Namazi, was detained in Iran in October 2015 while visiting his son while detained.
- Jeffery Woodky, an American missionary and aid worker, was kidnapped in Niger in October 2016.
- Majd Kamalmaz, a psychotherapist, was detained in Damascus in February of 2017.

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[138] Kate Woodsome, Jason Rezaian, and Ray Whitehouse, "Opinion: More Countries Are Taking Americans Hostage. The U.S. Is Losing Its Ability to Stop It," *Washington Post*, accessed November 16, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/interactive/2021/hostage-taking-americans-foreign-governments/?itid=hp_opinions.

[139] Woodsome, Rezaian, and Whitehouse.

[140] Woodsome, Rezaian, and Whitehouse.

- Dr. Walid Fitaihi, a Saudi-American physician, was detained in Saudi Arabia in November 2017 for criminal charges. Fitaihi was released in August 2019 however remains in Saudi Arabia with his family under a strict travel ban.

- Paul Whelan, an American businessman, was detained in Moscow, Russia, in December of 2018 while visiting as a tourist.

- Mark Frerichs, a commercial contractor, was kidnapped in Afghanistan in January of 2020.

- Kai Li, a Chinese-American, was detained in China in September of 2016 and is currently serving a 10- year sentence for stealing "state secrets."

- Aziza Al-Yousef, a human rights activist, was arrested in Saudi Arabia in May of 2018. However, she was released in March of 2019 and remains in Saudi Arabia under a strict travel ban.

- Salah Al-Haidar, the son of a human rights activist, was arrested in Saudi Arabia in April 2019. However, he was released in February of 2021 and remains in Saudi Arabia under a strict travel ban.

- Bader Al-Ibrahim, a journalist, was detained in Saudi Arabia in April of 2019. However, he was released in February of 2021 and remains in Saudi Arabia under a strict travel ban.

- Paul Rusesabagina, a U.S. permanent legal resident who was the inspiration behind the film *Hotel Rwanda* as he was responsible for saving hundreds of Rwandans by providing them shelter in his hotel, was kidnapped while en route to Burundi in August of 2020.

- Alina Lopez, a south Florida schoolteacher, was detained in Cuba in January of 2017 and is serving a 13-year prison sentence.

- Matthew Heath, a retired U.S. Marine from Tennessee, was arrested in Venezuela in September 2020.
- Airan Berry and Luke Denman, both retired U.S. Army Special Forces, were detained in Venezuela in May 2020.
- The CITGO 6, Tomeu Vadell, Jorge Toledo, Alirio Zambrano, Jose Luis Zambrano, and Gustavo Cardenas were all detained in Venezuela in November of 2017 following an unexpected business meeting in Caracas.[141]

This change in hostage-taking situations continues to challenge U.S. hostage policy; the demands do not follow previously identified courses of action for negotiations, such as ransom payments when dealing with criminal hostage taking or political concessions when dealing with political hostage takers that are striving to become an independent state. Government-detention hostage situations are political; however, they start to cross into pathological hostage taking as the objective and motivation becomes political gains through exploitation, with no intentions of releasing the hostage, further limiting U.S. hostage policy options.

In the case of American hostages currently detained in Saudi Arabia, Dr. Fitaihi, Al-Yousef, Al-Haidar, and Al-Ibrahim all have been released from physical custody; however, they are not allowed to leave the country, creating a correlation to labor trafficking, a form of pathological hostage taking where maintaining control over the hostage is more valuable than negotiations for their release.[142] Characteristics of pathological hostage taking limit negotiations for release that are primarily centered on the

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[141] James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, "Advocate for the Freedom of All Americans Held Hostage or Wrongfully Detained Abroad," accessed February 8, 2022, https://jamesfoleyfoundation.org/american-hostage-advocacy.

[142] Woodsome, Rezaian, and Whitehouse, "Opinion: More Countries Are Taking Americans Hostage. The U.S. Is Losing Its Ability to Stop It." and Mohamed, Mohd Kassim Noor, "Kidnap for Ransom in South East Asia: The Case for a Regional Recording Standard," *Asian Criminology* 3 (2008): 61–73, DOI 10.1007/s11417-007-9040-1

exchange of ransom or other political gains.[143] The increasing prevalence of government detention hostage situations is a warning to U.S. hostage policy options, requiring research beyond the scope of this thesis.

C. CONCLUSION

High-profile hostage situations throughout U.S. history reveal common trends in what factors and approaches lead to successful or unsuccessful implementation of U.S. hostage policy and the ability to bring American hostages home safely. One trend is that the objectives and motivations behind hostage-taking situations relates to the phase of the hostage-taking organization, therefore determining effective resolutions within U.S. hostage policy options. "We will not negotiate with terrorists" is the stance that every administration has taken since the days of the Barbary pirates when executing U.S. hostage policy. As U.S. hostage policy was first formulated due to the Unites States' engagement with the Barbary pirates, the situation echoed warnings to the future execution of U.S. hostage policy options as the United States initially paid ransom and provided other concessions in the form of tribute. This action encouraged continued hostage taking, advancing the Barbary pirates into the second phase, forcing the United States to resort to military action in order to resolve hostage taking at the hands of the Barbary pirates. The progression of the situation with the Barbary pirates, as their organization was transitioning from the first phase, substance, into the second phase, profession, pushed the United States to establish U.S. hostage policy through civil, diplomatic, and military action, as we refer to it today.

As the United States continues to maintain a no-concession U.S. hostage policy stance, the invariable question remains: What is the appropriate response for securing the safe return of American citizens? The hijacking of TWA flight 847, in the wake of Khartoum and the Iran hostage crises, challenged the execution of U.S. hostage policy options. As the TWA hostage situation received extensive media attention following President Reagan's announcement proclaiming the United States would not negotiate with

[143] Brockett et al., "Kidnap and Ransom Insurance: A Strategically Useful, Often Undiscussed, Marketplace Tool for International Operations."

terrorists or encourage any others to do, the United States, recognizing the failures in the handling of previous hostage situations, delivered its message with emphasis on a resolution that would satisfy all parties involved. In the end, the almost all of the hostages from TWA flight 847 were released through the leveraging of international relationships and diplomatic resolutions, proving to be a successful execution of U.S. hostage policy options.

The Somali pirates, who further capitalized on hostage taking for ransom, exposing leverage for increasing ransom demands through the hostages' multiple nationalities, presented further challenges to U.S. hostage policy as Americans remained in captivity while hostages from other countries willing to pay ransom were released. The Somali pirates used their position as a phase-two hostage-taking organization to leverage political agendas where it could while still maintaining some form of financial gain. The war in the Middle East following the attacks on 9/11 added to hostage situations as hostage taking among Jihadist groups increased. Jihadist hostage-taking organizations adopted tactics similar to those of the Somali pirates, using logistical and diplomatic challenges as leverage while also forcing political agendas and propaganda. As Jihadist hostage-taking organizations advanced from the second phase into the third phase, an independent state, U.S. hostage policy options was under further strain. Hostage situations have continued in complexity, as government-detention hostage situations, representing the third phase, an independent state, are increasing.

As countries have struggled internally, such as Somalia during the Somali pirates' activities, Iran during Iranian revolution, and Afghanistan through the Soviet-Afghan War and for decades following the war in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, hostage-taking organizations begin to form out of survival, starting the first phase. The progression of hostage-taking organizations is dependent on their successful transition into the second phase, profession, and potentially the third, an independent state. For organizations in the first two phases, the most effective U.S. hostage policy option has been monetary or short-term political gains, leveraged through third-party international relationships. As hostage-taking organizations advance through the phases, resolutions for hostage situations becomes more complex. When hostage-taking organizations are in the third phase, their

objectives and motivations present a challenge to U.S. hostage policy, making certain options unavailable due to the ineffectiveness of utilizing third-party countries and leveraging international relationships. Complicating hostage situations further is the current increase in government-detention hostage situations posing a new threat to American citizens held hostage abroad, as release options expand beyond the limitations of U.S. hostage policy options.

IV. ANALYSIS

The previous chapters have established that effective U.S. hostage policy options are determined through understanding the objectives and motivations of the hostage takers. Categories of hostage taking play an important role in assessing the phase of the hostage taker, which influences the hostage taker's objectives and motivations. The phase that pertains to the specific hostage taker then calls for certain U.S. hostage policy options to resolve hostage situations. That said, U.S. hostage policy options become limited when negotiating with groups that have progressed beyond motivation by monetary gains and desire political concessions. History shows that the United States has success in securing the release of American hostages when leveraging international relationships within the negotiation process to execute concessions on its behalf. Nevertheless, the United States is criticized for its strict no-concession hostage policy when American hostages remain in captivity while other countries negotiate ransom payments for the release of their citizens who are held hostage. To determine whether this criticism is warranted, the quantitative portion of this thesis examines the effectiveness of ransom payments in minimizing the duration in captivity of American hostages taken by Jihadist groups.

This chapter first describes the dataset used to evaluate the effectiveness of ransom payments on duration in captivity, including variables such as nationality and the provision of ransom. Descriptive data and additional information discussed in this chapter provides the context of hostage-taking incidents worldwide and the impact of ransom on American citizens in captivity, indicating that Americans, who make up less than 2% of the population of hostages worldwide, can become a critical factor in the negotiation process depending upon the hostage takers' objectives and motivations. This finding contributes to the conclusion that the impact of ransom on the duration of captivity for Americans is statistically significant compared to its impact for all other nationalities. Moreover, ransom is effective in decreasing the duration in captivity for Americans when compared to other forms of concessions within U.S. hostage policy. However, Americans nevertheless remain in captivity twice as long as hostages from other nationalities when their release is negotiated through ransom. In addition, when other forms of concessions are offered by

hostage takers as terms for release, there is a notable increase in duration in captivity for American hostages over hostages from other nationalities.

A. DERIVED DATASET

The dataset used in this thesis is sourced from the Combatting Terrorism Center (CTC) Held Hostage 2015 dataset, covering 1,455 individuals kidnapped from 2001–2014, of which 158 incidents involved American citizens.[144] The dataset derived for this thesis consists of 694 hostage situations from 2008–2013, of which 55 involved American citizens. The time period between 2008 and 2013 was selected for its correlation to Callimachi's study conducted on the payment of ransom to Al-Qaeda from European countries from 2008–2013, discussed in Chapters I and III. The hostage-taking incidents selected for this research are kidnapping incidents where the hostage taker successfully assumed control of the individual. Barricade incidents are excluded from this study, they are defined as an incident that "occurs and usually plays out at a target location with little or no intention to hold hostages for an extended period in a separate clandestine location."[145]

In addition to the Held Hostage dataset parameters, this research incorporates the variables of "ransom requested" and "ransom paid," which were not included in the CTC Held Hostage study. Due to the discretionary disclosure of and reporting on the payment of ransom for the release of hostages, this thesis utilizes scholarly documents, government documentation, and open-source reporting to source this information. Ransom requested and ransom paid are categorized into the following categories: "Yes" if there is mention that ransom was requested or paid, "No" if there is mention that ransom was not requested or paid, "Unknown" if there is no mention of ransom being requested or paid, and "Concession" if any other form of compromise was mentioned as a condition of release, such as prisoner exchanges, humanitarian efforts, and political concessions.

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144 Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, "Held Hostage."

145 Global Terrorism Database Ideological Motivations of Terrorism in the United States, 2017, http://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/SACQNK.

B. IMPACT OF RANSOM ON DURATION OF CAPTIVITY

Examining the relationship between ransom and duration in captivity requires comparing Americans' time in captivity in situations in which ransom is requested and paid to situations in which other concessions are negotiated to secure their release. It is important to separate conditions of ransom requested and ransom paid as the request for ransom assists in determining the objectives and motivation, or phase of the hostage taker, and if the payment of ransom is a feasible option for release. It is also important to compare American citizens to other nationalities in hostage situations as American hostages are often used for political agendas and propaganda purposes over monetary gains, supported through research conducted by Callimachi and throughout this thesis in chapters I, II, and III. It is important to conduct separate analyses on the request for ransom versus the fulfillment of ransom as the requested amount is not always the paid amount in hostage situations. It is also important to compare the effects of these variables on American citizens held hostage and hostages of other nationalities because Callimachi research results have shown us that some countries are willing to pay for the release of their citizens, while others remain in captivity. The findings of this research are based on isolating variables of ransom payment by discounting any concessions awarded for the release of hostages. This research was not designed to address specifics on the impact of concessions on duration in captivity. Table 4 shows the relationship between ransom demanded/paid and concessions demanded/granted to duration in captivity.

For the sample of all nationalities held hostage, the average number of days in captivity when ransom is requested is significantly higher for American citizens than for other nationalities ($M_{American} = 213$ compared to $M_{Other\ Nationalities} = 149$). One variable that could be contributing to the increased duration for American hostages, under these circumstances, is the higher amounts of ransom requested, requiring more time to acquire the funds. As indicated in the historical case analysis of American hostage situations, American hostages are valuable to hostage takers for leverage, political gains, and propaganda, therefore increasing the ransom payments that hostage takers demand for their release. The extended time it takes to collect large amounts of ransom prolongs Americans' duration in captivity, increasing the hostage takers' opportunity of maintaining American

hostages for political gains and propaganda, which serves a higher purpose than monetary gains for hostage takers. Shortland acknowledges in her research, which is focused on the business of kidnap for ransom, that American citizens represent less than 2% of hostage situations worldwide; however, the impact on hostage takers achieving their objectives magnifies their duration in captivity.[146] As research and personal accounts from non-American hostages indicate, the longer American hostages remain in captivity, the greater the chance they have to become leverage in the negotiation process, driving up ransom demands for countries willing to pay for the release of their citizens.

Table 4. Ransom Demanded/Paid and Concessions Demanded/Granted in Relation to Days in Captivity

Group	Variable	Number of Hostage Situations	Average Number of Days in Captivity
American Citizens (55)	Ransom Demanded	18	213
	Ransom Paid	5	286
	Concessions Demanded	6	313
	Concessions Granted	2	939
Other Nationalities (641)	Ransom Demanded	226	149
	Ransom Paid	115	106
	Concessions Demanded	131	146
	Concessions Granted	58	238

When negotiations for concessions are the condition for release rather than ransom, American citizens remain in captivity twice as long, on average, as all other nationalities ($M_{American}$ = 313 compared to $M_{Other\ Nationalities}$ = 146). When comparing ransom and concessions as the mechanism of release for hostages of other nationalities, the difference in duration of captivity under these two release conditions is not statistically significant as the number of days in captivity for release through ransom is almost equal the number of days in captivity for release through concessions (M_{Ransom} = 149 compared to $M_{Concessions}$ = 146). By contrast, for American hostages, the duration of captivity increases significantly

[146] Shortland, Kidnap: Inside the Ransom Business.

when negotiating through concessions relative to ransom (M_{Ransom} = 213 compared to $M_{Concession}$ = 313). These results show that negotiations through concessions yield longer duration in captivity for American citizens compared to the method of ransom, whereas concessions for other nationalities yield the same duration as ransom. These findings are consistent with the findings from Milton and Loertscher regarding the impact of nationality on duration in captivity, showing that hostages from countries rejecting negotiations were four times less likely to be released than those from countries conceding to negotiations.[147] One variable that could contribute to the impact of nationality on duration in captivity is the United States' strict no-concessions hostage policy, as the United States is not viewed by hostage takers as a country willing to negotiate, therefore extending the duration in captivity for American hostages. It is not a priority for the hostage takers to formulate demands for the release of American hostages as it is not an immediate gain for their organization.

As ransom is requested through negotiations but not always paid, this thesis also isolates the impact of ransom paid on duration in captivity. The average number of days in captivity in situations in which ransom is paid is more than double for American citizens compared to hostages of other nationalities ($M_{American}$ = 286 compared to $M_{Other\ Nationalities}$ = 106). When other concessions are granted, American citizens remain in captivity close to four times longer than all other nationalities ($M_{American}$ = 939 compared to $M_{Other\ Nationalities}$ = 238). When comparing ransom and concessions as the mechanism of release for hostages of other nationalities, honored concessions double the duration in captivity versus when ransom is paid ($M_{Concessions}$ = 238 compared to M_{Ransom} = 106). For American hostages, the duration in captivity triples when granting concessions relative to paying ransom ($M_{Concessions}$ = 939 compared to M_{Ransom} = 286). In addition, granting concessions for hostages of other nationalities yield a shorter duration in captivity than when American hostages are released through ransom payments. ($M_{Other\ Nationalities\ -\ Concessions}$ = 238 compared to $M_{American\ -\ Ransom}$ = 286).

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[147] Milton and Loertscher, *Held Hostage.*

The unexpected result of this study is that concessions have a significant impact in prolonging the duration in captivity for all hostages, yet hostages of other nationalities are released through concessions before American citizens are released through ransom payments. Table 5 shows the relationship between ransom and concessions as it relates to duration in captivity.

Table 5. Impact of Ransom and Concessions on Duration in Captivity

Release Option/Demand	Nationality	Average Number of Days in Captivity
Ransom Requested	American Citizens	213.00
	All Other Nationalities	149.96
Concessions Requested	American Citizens	313.50
	All Other Nationalities	146.68
Ransom Paid	American Citizens	286.40
	All Other Nationalities	106.14
Concessions Granted	American Citizens	939.00
	All Other Nationalities	238.12

The research findings show that when looking solely at American hostages and effective methods of release, the payment of ransom decreases the time in captivity when compared to concessions as a form of release. However, when considering all nationalities in hostage situations, American hostages remain in captivity twice as long as hostages from other nationalities released through ransom payments. In addition, hostages from other nationalities are, on average, released through concessions in less time than American hostages who are released as the result of a ransom payment.

C. CONCLUSION

Results from the quantitative portion of this thesis show the impact of the U.S. no-concessions hostage policy on duration in captivity and outcome in hostage situations. This analysis of the correlation between nationality and duration in captivity supports research in the field showing that American citizens remain in captivity longer than hostages from

other countries willing to pay and or make concessions. Introducing the variable of ransom as a condition of release doubles the duration in captivity for American hostages compared to all other nationalities. In addition, when other forms of concession are considered as terms for release, such as negotiations through third-party state actors or humanitarian aid organizations, American hostages remain in captivity up to four times longer than all other nationalities released through ransom or other forms of concessions. Furthermore, hostages from other nationalities are released through concessions before American hostages are released through ransom payments. These vast variations of days in captivity for American hostages and other nationalities suggest that U.S. hostage policy is effective when it maintains the flexibility for ransom payments from family members and/or employers while focusing on civil, diplomatic, and military resolutions. However, U.S. hostage policy is ineffective when it comes to decreasing the duration in captivity for American hostages and protecting them from being exploited for political agendas and propaganda purposes.

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V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One perspective in the field of research on hostage situations argues that ransom is a quick means to an end to bringing American citizens home safely. On the other hand, a second perspective argues that the payment of ransom also increases the frequency of hostage taking. This thesis provides insight to resolving hostage situations via ransom payments through an analysis of high-profile historical hostage-taking incidents using a theoretical framework focused on the objectives and motivations of the hostage takers. In addition, a quantitative analysis on the impact of ransom on duration in captivity has provided insight into the effectiveness of ransom relative to current U.S. hostage policy options.

This chapter discusses the results of this research in relation to previous studies on the United States' no-concessions hostage policy and the effectiveness of ransom payments in securing the release of American citizens. This chapter concludes with recommendations for navigating future negotiations to secure the safe release of American citizens abroad through U.S. hostage policy. Findings from this thesis support paying ransom as an effective method in securing the safe release of American hostages; however, findings also support that paying ransom becomes ineffective as a method of securing the safe release of American hostages when the hostage takers' objectives and motivations center on political gains or propaganda agendas. When the hostage takers' objectives are political, American hostages become vulnerable to extended time in captivity; therefore, U.S. hostage policy options will need to adapt to the shift in motivations. In hostage situations that are responsive to ransom, it is recommended that U.S. hostage policy continue to give families and employers of hostages the leeway to negotiate for the release of the hostage. It is further recommended that U.S. hostage policy is reviewed for the effectiveness of current U.S. hostage policy options in light of the absence of demands from the hostage takers and the current trend of government-detention hostage situations.

A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This research produced findings consistent with research in the field, confirming that Americans remain in captivity longer than citizens of countries willing to pay ransom. This dynamic arises from historical hostage situations, starting with the Barbary pirates, who started the United States on the path of navigating hostage situations and using diplomacy by leveraging international relationships. Somali pirates also proved to make a significant impact on hostage taking by using the world stage to transform traditional piracy into financial gains through hostage taking for ransom, leveraging the nationalities of hostages to increase and force the ransom payment. This tactic also exposed a dynamic of logistical and diplomatic challenges when navigating hostage situations involving multiple jurisdictions and hostages from multiple countries.

Tactics adopted by the Somali pirates expanded beyond merchant shipping routes with the war in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan as kidnapping among Jihadist groups began to climb in 2002, following the gruesome beheading of American journalist Daniel Pearl. An increased presence of American citizens in the region due to the war and humanitarian aid efforts created a feeding frenzy of hostage situations across multiple countries of origin, compounding the logistical and diplomatic challenges for the United States as it attempted to secure the release of American hostages. Reports from other hostages who were held with victims James Foley, Steven Sotloff, David Haines, Alan Henning, and Peter Kassig depicted excessive cruelty toward American hostages. Reports of this cruelty in addition to the successful recovery of hostages of other nationalities support the following research findings: other countries are more willing to pay for the release of their citizens when presented with the ethical decision of paying ransom or allowing their citizens to endure prolonged hardship in captivity.[148]

As presented throughout this research, the nature and effectiveness of negotiations with hostage takers depend on the legitimacy and complexity of the group and its objectives and motivations. If the group is in its substance stage, the hostage takers will primarily

[148] Callimachi, "Paying Ransoms, Europe Bankrolls Qaeda Terror."

focus on financial gains to sustain the organization. When the hostage takers are financially stable or have other means of maintaining substance, their demands tend to be more political and in furtherance of their ability to establish legitimacy with other hostage takers and those negotiating for the release of their citizens. Negotiations become difficult when the hostage takers represent an independent state such as a host government or an organization "able to make a mutually useful alliance with another state against its enemies."[149] Literature supports the idea that those negotiations are successful when the host government can apply moderate constraints on the hostage taker as leverage for the release of hostages. A review of historical hostage-taking incidents supports the United States' success in negotiations arbitrated through third parties or other governments that can verify the legitimacy of the hostage taker and apply such constraints.

Results of the quantitative analysis depict the impact of ransom on duration in captivity for American hostages relative to other forms of concessions. Results show that, on average, Americans, for whom ransom is paid, remain in captivity twice as long of other nationalities when ransom is used to secure the release of hostages. When other concessions are a condition of release, American citizens remain in captivity four times longer than hostages of other nationalities. In addition, when hostages of other nationalities are released through concessions, their duration in captivity is less than that of American citizens who are release through ransom.

Results of this research therefore indicate that when ransom is demanded and paid, it is effective in decreasing the duration in captivity for American hostages compared to release through other concessions. By contrast, ransom is not as effective at decreasing duration in captivity for American hostages when they are held in captivity with hostages of other nationalities. This finding supports qualitative research showing that ransom demands for American citizens are often set beyond the capacity of family members or companies of the hostage to secure in a short period of time.

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[149] Lucas, "Somalia's 'Pirate Cycle': The Three Phases of Somali Piracy."

The collective results of this thesis provide insight into the impact that ransom payments have on duration in captivity for American citizens and the relationship between ransom and other forms of concessions. Results confirm that ransom is an effective method in decreasing duration in captivity for American hostages when compared to negotiating other concessions. The results have also, however, revealed that despite these ransom payments, American hostages remain in captivity longer than hostages from other nationalities, making them vulnerable to exploitation during captivity. Therefore, the payment of ransom for the release of American hostages has the potential to reduce hostage takers' opportunity to exploit them while in captivity. Decreasing the duration in captivity through ransom limits the ability of hostage takers to use American hostages as leverage in the furtherance of political and propaganda agendas while bringing American hostages home safely.

The findings of this research examine the impact of ransom on duration of existing captivity, not probability of further hostage taking. Comprehensively assessing ransom as an effective mechanism for release would call for a study of both duration of existing captivity and frequency of hostage-taking situations. However, this research focused on assessing the effectiveness of ransom in decreasing the duration in captivity for American hostages rather than the use of ransom as a deterrent to future hostage taking.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The first recommendation is that the United States should continue to afford family members and employers of the hostage the flexibility to negotiate ransom in exchange for their release. Based on these findings, ransom negotiations for American hostages decrease their duration in captivity nearly four times relative to situations in which other concessions present conditions of their release. This further supports the U.S. Congressional Research Service evaluation of Presidential Policy Directive 30 (PPD-30) *U.S. Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad and Personnel Recovery Efforts* and Executive Order 13698 (EO-13698) *Hostage Recovery Activities*, conducted in August of 2015, concluding that the shifting

dynamics in hostage situations necessitate a reconsideration to the threat of prosecution of family members and employees for the payment of ransom.[150]

Furthermore, the United States should continue to provide the family members and employers of American hostages' support for the negotiation of hostage situations. Inclusion of the DOS and the FBI within the private hostage negotiation process could be utilized as an opportunity for intelligence gathering on the hostage takers and provide further analytics regarding the shifting dynamics of hostage situations in relation to objectives and motivations of the hostage takers. As this research concludes, negotiations are effective when the objectives and motivations of the hostage taker are known, allowing timely resolutions to hostage situations.

Finally, as the act of hostage taking continues to evolve and the number of American hostages detained by foreign governments increases, U.S. hostage policy should consider re-evaluating options for securing the safe release of American citizens. This research supports the effectiveness of ransom in securing the safe release of American hostages when financial gains are the objective or motivation of the hostage taker. When ransom is not an effective solution, the United States has proven its ability to negotiate effectively through third-party state bargaining; however, both ransom and third-party state bargaining methods become ineffective when the third-party state is the hostage taker. It is therefore necessary to continue with recurring re-evaluations of U.S. hostage policy, ensuring that U.S. hostage policy options are keeping up with the shifting dynamics and consistently evolving landscape of hostage taking.

C. TOPICS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis suggests that further research into the impact of ransom on American citizens held hostage abroad can increase the effectiveness of hostage negotiations. This thesis does not examine the argument that paying ransom will make future hostage taking more likely and it is recommended that additional research is conducted in this area.

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[150] Rosen and Rollins, U.S. Hostage Policy: Recent Developments.

Another important area for future research into the impact of ransom payments on hostage situations is the kidnap and ransom (K&R) business model. Negotiations not only occur on behalf of the government but potentially involve the victim(s) themselves, their family members, the victim's employer, or the K&R insurance industry. All parties play an important role in the negotiation process and decreasing the duration in captivity, but the K&R insurance industry adds an especially important variable as the industry follows a business model designed to stop the inflation of ransom demands and secure the release of hostages with minimal concessions. This research has detailed how American citizens are exploited for the purpose of driving up ransom demands and forcing payment from other countries. Further research is suggested to investigate the significance as to the amount of ransom requested in relation to the duration in captivity. Furthermore, assessing the potential application of the K&R business model to U.S. hostage policy options is recommended in the interest of decreasing duration in captivity for American citizens.

Another recommendation for future research is an exploration into the relationship between the percentage of Americans held in captivity to their value and extended duration as hostages. As U.S. hostage policy is based on the idea that paying ransom encourages future hostage taking, American citizens comprise less than 2% of the hostage population worldwide yet remain in captivity twice as long as hostages from other nationalities. Understanding the significance on the impact of ransom payment on continued hostage taking is important as it relates to the extended duration in captivity. Therefore, future research is suggested to investigate the tradeoff of fewer hostages over increased durations in captivity for American citizens.

An additional recommendation for future research is to investigate the impact of media attention on the outcome for American citizens in hostage situations. As the United States has not wavered from a strict no-concessions hostage policy stance, American citizens are already put in difficult positions when attempting to negotiate their freedom from hostage situations. Media attention creates a concern for the inflation of ransom demands and other retaliation to the strict no-concession U.S. hostage policy. The impact of media attention on a variety of variables, to include inflation of ransom demands,

duration in captivity, and outcome for American hostages is important to establishing future negotiation tactics and maintaining an effective U.S. hostage policy.

D. CONCLUSION

The relationship between ransom demands and ransom payments on the duration in captivity for American hostages is a complex one, but this research finds that paying ransom can be effective in decreasing the duration in captivity and secure the release of American hostages. Nonetheless, however, American hostages still remain in captivity twice as long as hostages from other nationalities when ransom is requested, and hostages of other nationalities are released through concessions in less time than American hostages are released through ransom negotiations. This research also shows that American hostages are seen by hostage takers as having more value as leverage for driving up ransom amounts and encouraging other countries to pay as well as for political gains and propaganda purposes.

Even as ransom is shown to be an effective solution in minimizing the duration in captivity for American citizens in comparison to alternatives, U.S. hostage policy continues to restrict financial gains to Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs). As PPD-30/EO-13698 prohibits monetary gains to designated FTOs to discourage their continued growth and threats to national security, it does not restrict negotiations through third-party state bargaining in the resolution of American hostages. The limitations, however, on ransom as a negotiation tactic motivate hostage takers to use American hostages for other gains.

A key takeaway from the results of this thesis is that when ransom is a viable term for negotiation based on hostage taker's objectives and motivations, duration in captivity for American hostages could be minimized. Furthermore, U.S. hostage policy is a government system. It is not designed to take away the ability of citizens to negotiate and pay ransom; it is, however, designed to prioritize national security. Therefore, the current stance of U.S. hostage policy regarding the removal of the threat of prosecution for the payment of ransom by family members or employers for the release of hostages is an appropriate response in providing options for the safe release of American citizens. The ability to negotiate and pay ransom allows family members and employers to secure the

release of American hostages through avenues of financial payments while the United States continues to work through civil and diplomatic avenues, addressing demands from hostage takers for political gains and propaganda agendas in exchange for the safe return of American citizens.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL

The following is a description of the data provided as supplemental material to this thesis. For access to this supplemental data, please contact the Naval Postgraduate School Library.

Thesis Dataset. The dataset utilized for the research in this thesis is derived from the Combatting Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point Held Hostage dataset; the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), maintained by the University of Maryland National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START); open-source reporting; government documentation; and scholarly research. This dataset incorporates the variables of ransom requested and ransom paid for an analysis on the impact of ransom to duration in captivity.

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