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Italian hostage freed in Afghanistan

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10 June, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Italian hostage freed in Afghanistan

BNE: An Italian aid worker in Afghanistan has been set free by her kidnappers. Clementina Cantoni, 32, was kidnapped on May 16. She was driving through downtown Kabul when suddenly an armed gang forced her out of her car at gunpoint. They hurried her deep into central Kabul's maze of narrow streets. Her kidnapping sent shockwaves through the foreign community in Kabul.

Italian state television announced the news of her release in a news bulletin on Thursday evening. The Italian people kept their fingers crossed all day. Italy's defence minister Antonio Martino told the public that she would soon be free. The Italian government was working hard to negotiate with the kidnappers. It is believed no ransom was paid to the gang to secure her release.

Ms. Cantoni works for the aid agency CARE International helping Afghan widows and their children. She became the focus of attention for many Kabul residents. Thousands of schoolgirls campaigned in the streets for her swift release. The Kabul government also put a lot of effort into negotiating with her kidnappers. Needless to say, her family in Milan is over the moon. She will receive a hero's welcome in Italy.

WARM-UPS

1. HOSTAGE: Pairs / Groups. What would it be like to be kidnapped? What kinds of feelings would you have? What kinds of thoughts would you have? What would you think about these things:

My future / My past / My government / Sleep / Pain / My family / Food / Freedom

2. AID WORKER OPINIONS: Talk with your partner(s). Do you agree or disagree with these opinions.?

- a. Aid workers who go to Afghanistan or Iraq are crazy.
- b. Foreign governments should pay lots of money for the release of hostages.
- c. All aid workers should have personal bodyguards.
- d. Kidnappers of aid workers are the world's biggest cowards.
- e. I think doing aid work would be very exciting and interesting.
- f. Aid workers are too inexperienced. They shouldn't risk their lives.
- g. Everyone should do aid work at some time in their lives.
- h. Aid workers are saints.
- i. Kidnappings would stop if the world's press stopped reporting them.
- j. I want to be an aid worker, but somewhere safe.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Aid workers / Afghanistan / being kidnapped / armed gangs / Taliban / mazes / keeping your fingers crossed / freedom / aid agencies / schoolgirls / heroes

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. AID LOCATIONS: In pairs / groups, talk about in which of these locations you would choose to be an aid worker. Which would you avoid?

- a. Cambodia – clearing landmines
- b. Darfur, Sudan – helping famine victims
- c. Baghdad, Iraq – rebuilding people's lives
- d. Swaziland – working with patients dying from AIDS
- e. Sri Lanka – rebuilding homes destroyed in the Indian Ocean tsunami
- f. Bam, Iran – helping children recover from the trauma of the 2004 earthquake
- g. Brazil – helping indigenous people
- h. North Korea – providing medical care to children

5. KIDNAPPED: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "kidnapped". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. An Italian citizen has been released by her kidnappers in Kabul. | T / F |
| b. She was kidnapped at knifepoint. | T / F |
| c. An earthquake sent shockwaves through Kabul. | T / F |
| d. Italian people kept their fingers crossed all day. | T / F |
| e. Italy's government paid a \$100,000 ransom for her release. | T / F |
| f. The hostage worked in Kabul helping Afghan widows. | T / F |
| g. Kabul schoolgirls campaigned in the streets for her swift release. | T / F |
| h. The hostage's family is over the sun. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| a. set free | labyrinth |
| b. kidnapped | center / centre |
| c. maze | hoped |
| d. shockwaves | released |
| e. kept their fingers crossed | guarantee |
| f. negotiate | on cloud nine |
| g. secure | shudders |
| h. focus | speedy |
| i. swift | bargain |
| j. over the moon | abducted |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. set | bulletin |
| b. armed | was paid |
| c. central Kabul's maze | of attention |
| d. Her kidnapping sent shockwaves | free by her kidnappers |
| e. news | of narrow streets |
| f. The Italian people kept | effort into |
| g. no ransom | their fingers crossed |
| h. the focus | gang |
| i. put a lot of | welcome |
| j. receive a hero's | through the foreign community |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

ODD WORD OUT: Circle the choice from the groups of three in *italics* that does not fit.

Italian hostage freed in Afghanistan

BNE: An Italian aid worker in Afghanistan has been *set free / freed / freer* by her kidnappers. Clementina Cantoni, 32, was kidnapped on May 16. She was driving through *downtown / central / downsize* Kabul when suddenly an armed gang forced her out of her car at gunpoint. They hurried her deep into central Kabul's *maze / labyrinth / atlas* of narrow streets. Her kidnapping sent *e-mails / shockwaves / shudders* through the foreign community in Kabul.

Italian state television announced the news of her release in a news *bulletin / flash / documentary* on Thursday evening. The Italian *people / public / hands* kept their fingers crossed all day. Italy's defence minister Antonio Martino told the public that she would soon be *free / freedom / freed*. The Italian government was working hard to *negotiate / bargain / argue* with the kidnappers. It is believed no ransom was paid to the gang to *secure / insure / win* her release.

Ms. Cantoni works for the aid agency CARE International helping Afghan widows and their children. She became the *center / focus / edge* of attention for many Kabul *citizens / cities / residents*. Thousands of schoolgirls campaigned in the streets for her *swift / speedy / slow* release. The Kabul government also put a lot of effort into negotiating with her kidnappers. Needless to say, her family in Milan is *on cloud nine / over the moon / under the weather*. She will receive a hero's welcome in Italy.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'shock'** and **'wave'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. ODD WORD OUT: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about any relationships between the odd word in each group of three and the two correct words.

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT KIDNAPPING SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about kidnapping, ransoms and terror.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- set
- driving
- gunpoint
- shockwaves
- bulletin
- fingers
- negotiate
- ransom
- widows
- schoolgirls
- effort
- welcome

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you first think when you saw this headline?
- b. Do you follow news of what happens in Afghanistan?
- c. Do you think news of kidnappings has become boring?
- d. Do you think the world's TV should stop reporting on kidnappings so the kidnappers get no publicity?
- e. Do aid agencies have a responsibility to protect their workers?
- f. Should governments pay ransoms for the release of hostages?
- g. How do you feel when someone from your country is kidnapped?
- h. Are aid workers who go to dangerous places crazy?
- i. Why do terror groups kill their hostages?
- j. How much ransom would you want your government to pay for your release?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. Are you interested in Afghanistan?
- c. Would you like to go there?
- d. Would you think about doing aid or voluntary work overseas?
- e. If you were kidnapped, what would you do?
- f. What would you be most afraid of if you were kidnapped?
- g. What do you think of aid workers who go to dangerous places?
- h. Should aid agencies be stopped from working in danger zones?
- i. What aid agencies do you particularly like?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

AID WORKER ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not aid workers are safe enough to be working in the world's danger zones. Team up with classmates who have the same role as you and develop your ideas and "strategies".

Introduce yourself to the other role players before the role play begins.

Role A

You are the perfect aid worker. Your greatest desire in life is to help others. You don't care if you die helping others. You know governments will never help those who need it most. You fully accept the risks of being kidnapped. You do not expect your government to negotiate your release or pay a ransom. You have no skills. You have a big heart.

Role B

You are the boss of an aid agency. You need as many volunteers as you can get to help your work. Training isn't important. Your workers know all the risks. There is no need to waste aid money on bulletproof vests and bodyguards. You hate government officials who sit in their air-conditioned offices all day and tell you to be responsible.

Role C

You are a diplomat who has to do the negotiating and paperwork in a kidnapping. You are shocked that aid agencies don't care about their workers' safety. You strongly believe all aid workers should have bulletproof vests and a bodyguard. You think only UN peacekeepers or local people should do aid work.

Role D

You are the Afghan leader of a local aid team in Afghanistan. You are angry with the foreigners that come to your country to "help". All they do is get in the way. They cannot speak your language. They do not know your people. They are paid too much. The aid money should be spent on medicine, salaries for local aid workers and food for the needy.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

Talk about whether you agreed with what you said in your roles.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Italian hostage freed in Afghanistan

BNE: An Italian aid worker in Afghanistan has been _____ her kidnappers. Clementina Cantoni, 32, was kidnapped on May 16. She was driving through downtown Kabul when suddenly _____ forced her out of her car at gunpoint. They hurried her deep into central Kabul's _____ streets. Her kidnapping _____ the foreign community in Kabul.

Italian state television announced the news _____ in a news bulletin on Thursday evening. The Italian people kept _____ all day. Italy's defence minister Antonio Martino _____ that she would soon be free. The Italian government was working hard to negotiate with the kidnappers. It is believed _____ to the gang to secure her release.

Ms. Cantoni works for the aid agency CARE International helping _____ and their children. She became the _____ for many Kabul residents. Thousands of schoolgirls campaigned in the streets for _____. The Kabul government also put _____ negotiating with her kidnappers. Needless to say, her family in Milan is _____. She will receive a hero's welcome in Italy.

HOMEWORK

- 1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

- 2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on Afghanistan today. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

- 3. HOSTAGE INSTRUCTIONS:** Write some instructions for what someone should do if they were taken hostage. Show your instructions to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you have the same ideas?

- 4. DIARY / JOURNAL:** Imagine you have been taken hostage in Afghanistan. Write a diary / journal entry for one day in captivity. What happened to you on that day? Write about your fears and hopes. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. T e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| a. set free | released |
| b. kidnapped | abducted |
| c. maze | labyrinth |
| d. shockwaves | shudders |
| e. kept their fingers crossed | hoped |
| f. negotiate | bargain |
| g. secure | guarantee |
| h. focus | center / centre |
| i. swift | speedy |
| j. over the moon | on cloud nine |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. set | free by her kidnapers |
| b. armed | gang |
| c. central Kabul's maze | of narrow streets |
| d. Her kidnapping sent shockwaves | through the foreign community |
| e. news | bulletin |
| f. The Italian people kept | their fingers crossed |
| g. no ransom | was paid |
| h. the focus | of attention |
| i. put a lot of | effort into |
| j. receive a hero's | welcome |

ODD WORD OUT:

Italian hostage freed in Afghanistan

BNE: An Italian aid worker in Afghanistan has been *set free / freed / ~~free~~* by her kidnapers. Clementina Cantoni, 32, was kidnapped on May 16. She was driving through *downtown / central / ~~downsize~~* Kabul when suddenly an armed gang forced her out of her car at gunpoint. They hurried her deep into central Kabul's *maze / labyrinth / ~~atlas~~* of narrow streets. Her kidnapping sent *e-mails / shockwaves / shudders* through the foreign community in Kabul.

Italian state television announced the news of her release in a news *bulletin / flash / ~~documentary~~* on Thursday evening. The Italian *people / public / ~~hands~~* kept their fingers crossed all day. Italy's defence minister Antonio Martino told the public that she would soon be *free / ~~freedom~~ / freed*. The Italian government was working hard to *negotiate / bargain / ~~argue~~* with the kidnapers. It is believed no ransom was paid to the gang to *secure / ~~insure~~ / win* her release.

Ms. Cantoni works for the aid agency CARE International helping Afghan widows and their children. She became the *center / focus / ~~edge~~* of attention for many Kabul *citizens / ~~cities~~ / residents*. Thousands of schoolgirls campaigned in the streets for her *swift / speedy / ~~slow~~* release. The Kabul government also put a lot of effort into negotiating with her kidnapers. Needless to say, her family in Milan is *on cloud nine / over the moon / ~~under the weather~~*. She will receive a hero's welcome in Italy.